

The Unheralded Voice

Commentary of Urban Economic Development Issues



February 2011

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The Unheralded Voice is a bimonthly publication of inclusion. Too often, dialog and written commentary involving issues of economic development surrounding businesses owned by people of color and the wealth created by those businesses have been devoid of any consideration. *The Unheralded Voice* has been created to explore those and other issues surrounding urban economic development.

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Wisconsin Minority Business Survey Results

During the first week of February 2011, Wisconsin-based Minority Business owners were asked to provide their input and insight concerning issues facing minority-owned businesses and how those issues might be addressed by State government, if given the opportunity.

Preliminary results from more than 150 responses (as of 8 February 2011) have been tabulated. An abbreviated overview is provided below.

- "Government contracting and procurement goals" were listed as the biggest opportunity to aid the formation and viability of minority-owned businesses.
- The Minority Business Development Bureau of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce was identified as the State agency providing the most support to minority businesses.
- 54% identified selling goods and services as the biggest challenge to minority business formation and viability today.
- 72% indicated they (and possibly their employees) would be willing to travel to the Wisconsin State Capitol this spring to engage elected officials concerning their views regarding State of Wisconsin programs designed to help minority-owned businesses.

[Click here](#) to view the results of this survey in their entirety as of 8 February 2011.

An Opinion ...

Op-ed Telecommunication Modernization

The swearing in of the new Wisconsin State Legislature affords our elected representatives the opportunity to pass legislation that will help attract much-needed private sector investment and jobs to Wisconsin. With our economy yet to recover from the national recession, lawmakers should focus on establishing an environment that enhances growth and is fair and free of regulatory constraints for Wisconsin businesses. The elimination of regulations that stifle business investment must be a priority within the first 100 days of legislative activity.

The modernization of Wisconsin's outdated telecommunications laws must occur sooner than later.

Last updated in 1994, Wisconsin's current regulations are handcuffing providers by requiring them to invest their resources in technologies of the past. Today's generation has probably never seen or heard of a rotary dial phone. Yet, the traditional landline companies that now provide the networks for their smart phones are still required by law to invest resources in technologies of a "long gone era" instead of in the latest technology. At the same time, their competitors are not hampered by these heavy regulations.

That begs the question, "How can the State of Wisconsin expect these traditional telecom companies to continue to make network investments, create jobs and deploy new technologies when archaic state regulations bind them to the past?"

[Read more ...](#)

Just a Thought ... Black Male Joblessness

As discussion grows concerning how jobs must be created to move our economy forward, it may be wise to re-calibrate our thinking about the enormity of the issue. Joblessness in African American communities throughout our state and country are often thought to be understated. Below, please see statistics gathered by Professor Marc Levine of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Given that businesses owned by people of color hire more people of color than non minority-owned businesses, why is the enthusiasm for the support of minority-owned businesses waning?

Just a thought ...

Please see the full report, [The Crisis Deepens: Black Male Joblessness in Milwaukee 2009](#) by Marc Levine.

Male Jobless Rates in Selected Metropolitan Areas, By Race: 2009
 Percentage of working-age (16-64) males either
 unemployed or out of the labor force

Metro Area	Black Jobless %	White Jobless %	Black/White Ratio	Pct. Gap in Black/White
Detroit	59.5	31.8	1.87	27.7
Milwaukee	53.3	22.3	2.39	31
Buffalo	52.3	26	2.01	26.3
Cleveland	52.3	26.3	1.99	26
Chicago	50.3	23.9	2.1	26.4
Pittsburgh	50.3	26.1	1.93	24
San Francisco	48.1	22.2	2.17	25.9
St. Louis	47.9	24.3	1.97	23.6
Cincinnati	47.5	25.8	2.03	21.7
San Diego	47.3	32.5	1.46	14.8
Memphis	47.1	23.1	2.04	24
Seattle	46.1	25.7	1.79	20.4
Los Angeles	45.1	25.9	1.74	19.2
Kansas City	44.7	22	1.84	22.7
Portland	44.7	28.1	1.59	16.6
Miami	44.6	28	1.59	16.6
Jacksonville	44.4	27.5	1.61	16.9
Indianapolis	44.2	23.6	1.87	20.6
Philadelphia	44	24.6	1.8	19.6
Phoenix	44	26.3	1.67	17.7
Hartford	42.9	23.1	1.86	19.8
Omaha	42.7	19.5	2.19	23.2
Nashville	42.1	24.7	1.7	17.4
Columbus	41.4	25.5	1.62	15.9
Oakland	41.4	27.4	1.51	14
Baltimore	41.3	23.5	1.76	17.8
Newark	41.2	24.2	1.7	17
New Orleans	40.9	25.2	1.62	15.7
New York	40.4	21.4	1.89	19
Boston	40.4	23.2	1.74	17.2
Birmingham	40.4	26.4	1.53	14
Richmond	40.1	24.3	1.65	15.8
Atlanta	39.7	20.8	1.91	18.9
Dallas	38.6	21.5	1.8	17.1
Houston	38.4	21.5	1.79	16.9
Denver	36.7	21.3	1.72	15.4
Charlotte	35.5	23.5	1.51	12
Las Vegas	33.4	26.8	1.25	6.6
Washington, D.C	31.6	20.5	1.54	11.1
Minneapolis	30.1	20.8	1.88	18.3