

For immediate release

Contact: Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations (913) 362-4541

Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners Announces Formation

Kansas City, MO (December 4, 2001): The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners (KC-CWBO) announced its formation at a press conference today, according to Nancy Zurbuchen, director of the organization. The KC-CWBO has been established specifically to benefit area women who own larger established businesses in the metro area.

The purpose of the KC-CWBO, according to Zurbuchen, is to create an opportunity for a better business climate for all women business owners by capitalizing on our member's collective influence, contacts, and knowledge in a braintrust that identifies and solves problems affecting women business owners. "Currently, there is no other group in Kansas City with the agenda and focus of the KC-CWBO," says Zurbuchen.

The KC-CWBO is a dues-based organization. Membership is based on a two-year time period and criteria for joining include owning business for seven years or longer, having the equivalent of 15 full-time employees and having a yearly gross revenue of \$2 million or more.

The KC-CWBO plans to meet four times per year and hold workshops that will address important issues that members face. The organization also plans to track public policy issues that affect women business owners, educate members on those issues and advocate public policy that benefits women business owners.

The KC-CWBO is the brainchild of Zurbuchen, who is an Internet developer and strategist, owns Motional Multimedia, and Becky S. Wilson is the founder of WDS Marketing and Public Relations, a ten-year old agency based in Mission. Both women have been active and involved in other entrepreneurial organizations for a number of years.

Wilson and Zurbuchen saw the need for an organization specifically targeted to women who own larger companies. "This council is unique in that it seeks to affect positive change for its members through their collective clout," explains Zurbuchen. "Unlike other groups, there is a specific agenda established every year by members. More than just networking and hearing speakers, our members identify challenges, then create an action plan to address them," adds Wilson.

Founding members of The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners include Kiersten Spencer, Accommodations by Apple; Loretta Nichols, LJS Graphics;

Rosana Privitera Biondo, Mark One Electric; Jane Weiland, Gateway Building Products; JoAnne Mina, J.M. Neill & Associates; and Pat Worth, Harworth Construction. The founding Corporate Partner for the KC-CWBO is Joy D. Wheeler, FirstGuard Health Plan.

For more information about The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners, contact Nancy Zurbuchen, Director, at (816) 452-4700. To schedule interviews with members, contact Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations at (913) 362-4541.

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Zurbuchen to Serve as Director of Newly Formed Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners

Kansas City, MO: (February 26, 2002) Nancy Zurbuchen, owner of Motional Multimedia, is now serving as Director of the newly formed Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners (KC-CWBO). The KC-CWBO was established in October of 2001 specifically to benefit women who own larger established businesses in the metro Kansas City area, according to Zurbuchen.

The stated purpose of the KC-CWBO is to create an opportunity for a better business climate for all women business owners by capitalizing on the KC-CWBO's members' influence, contacts, and knowledge in a braintrust that identifies and solves problems affecting women business owners.

"The Council is unique in that it seeks to affect positive change for its members through their collective clout," explains Zurbuchen. "There is a specific agenda established every year by our membership. More than just networking and hearing speakers, our members identify business challenges, then create an action plan to address them," adds Zurbuchen.

The KC-CWBO meets four times per year in a workshop format to discuss important topics that have been agreed upon by the membership. The organization tracks public policy issues that affect women business owners, educates members on those issues, and advocates public policy that benefits women business owners.

A recent KC-CWBO workshop presented information about the benefits and types of WBE certification available and the challenges associated with becoming certified. Also covered was how to locate and establish relationships with companies who seek to do business with women business owners.

Zurbuchen's duties include assisting in strategic planning for the organization, representing the KC-CWBO at local, state and national conferences and meetings, membership recruitment, member communications, and programming. Zurbuchen will represent the KC-CWBO at the White House "Women Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century" conference in Washington, DC on March 18, 2002.

The KC-CWBO is a dues-based organization. Membership is based on a two-year time period and criteria for joining include owning business for seven years or longer, having the equivalent of 15 full-time employees and having a yearly gross revenue of \$2 million or more.

Current membership includes Kiersten Spencer, Accommodations by Apple; Loretta Nichols, LJS Graphics; Rosana Privitera Biondo, Mark One Electric; Jane Weiland, Gateway Building Products; JoAnne Mina, J.M. Neill & Associates; Pat Worth, Harworth Construction; Carol Howell, Howell Construction; and Melody Warren, Transportation Logistics Systems, Inc. The KC-CWBO Corporate Partner is FirstGuard Health Plan.

For more information about The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners, contact Nancy Zurbuchen, Director, at (816) 452-4700 or Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations at (913) 362-4541.

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President of National Women Business Owners Corporation to Educate Top Area Women Business Owners about Importance of Certification On Friday

Kansas City, MO: (February 6, 2002) Although women business owners represent the fastest growing segment of the American economy now totaling more than 8 million in the United States, women-owned businesses receive only 2 percent of all federal procurement awards each year, according to Janet Harris-Lange, President of The National Women Business Owners Corporation (NWBOC). Harris-Lange will be in Kansas City on Friday to speak at a special workshop on certification and procurement for the newly-formed Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners, according to Nancy Zurbuchen, Director.

The NWBOC is a national, not-for-profit organization with a mission to increase the number of bona fide women-owned businesses that can meet the requirements of private and public sector contractors. It is based in Lakeland Florida. The NWBOC has been established to increase competition for corporate and government contracts through implementation of a pioneering economic development strategy for women business owners. "The NWBOC developed the national certification standards for review which is used for reviewing applications from businesses seeking to be certified as women-owned and -controlled," according to Zurbuchen. The NWBOC National Certification Program is a private, national certification program that verifies ownership and control of businesses by women. More than 100 major corporations, agencies and organizations accept NWBOC certification.

NWBOC's pioneering programs are designed to address the lack of participation by women suppliers in corporate and government solicitations. Because no national certification program for businesses owned and controlled by women had existed before NWBOC, women found it necessary to have their businesses certified a multiple of times to compete for contracts with different corporations and government agencies, according to Harris-Lange. "NWBOC's single verification process will eliminate redundant certification reviews and facilitate doing business with corporations and governments, thereby substantially reducing this burden." For more information, check out their website at NWBOC.org.

Janet Harris-Lange She has been a small business owner since 1972 and is president of Agenda Dynamics, Inc., a meeting and event management company in the West Palm Beach, Florida area. Among her accomplishments, Janet has been a member of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) since 1982 and served as its national President in 1991-1992. She was a member of the Small Business Advisory Council for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta from 1993-1996 and was a delegate to the 1986 White House Conference on Small Business, and co-Chair of the

Florida Delegation for the 1995 White House Conference on Small Business. Her awards are numerous including the 1993 Entrepreneur of the Year Award by Inc. Magazine and the Gillian Rudd Leadership Award in 1994. She has been featured in many publications, and on television and radio and authored a monthly article for a business magazine for women.

The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners (KC-CWBO) is an organization established specifically to benefit area women business owners of larger established businesses. Founding members include Kiersten Spencer, Accommodations by Apple; Loretta Nichols, LJS Graphics, Rosana Privitera Biondo, Mark One Electric; Jane Weiland, Gateway Building Products; JoAnne Mina, J.M. Neill & Associates; and Pat Worth, Harworth Construction. The founding Corporate Partner for the KC-CWBO is Joy D. Wheeler, FirstGuard Heath Plan.

For more information about The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners, contact Nancy Zurbuchen, Director, (816) 916-3121. To schedule interviews with members, contact Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations (913) 362-4541.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Members of Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners Attend Important White House Conference in Washington, DC

Kansas City, MO (April 1, 2002): Several members of the Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners (KC-CWBO) attended the highly successful “Women Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century” White House conference on March 18-19, in Washington, DC, according to Nancy Zurbuchen, KC-CWBO Director.

The Department of Labor, along with The Public Forum Institute and the United States Small Business Administration, co-sponsored the legislative conference that offered cutting-edge insights on the most pressing concerns of women business owners. Over 1300 women entrepreneurs from across the country joined together to hear from Congressional and Administrative leadership in the Bush administration and to contribute and participate in meaningful dialogue with them. The Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership was one of the corporate sponsors of the event.

“The folks on Capitol Hill are sitting up and taking notice about the growth and success rate of women business owners today,” says Zurbuchen. “They are keenly interested in what we think, and I believe this is associated with the perception that women usually vote the Democratic ticket while, in general, most business owners are thought to vote for Republicans. I also think that we are confusing to legislators because we do not fit the traditional mold, and they are trying to better understand us. I see the reason being that women business owners currently also represent the fastest growing segment of the voting population.

Representing the KC-CWBO at the conference were Kierstin Higgins Spencer, Accommodations by Apple, Joanne Mina, J.M. Neil & Associates, Nancy Zurbuchen, Motional MultiMedia, Director of KC-CWBO and Council Co-founder, and Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations, Co-founder and public relations agency for the KC-CWBO.

On Tuesday morning, March 19, President George W. Bush addressed the group of over 900 women business owners. The main focus of his speech was to let the audience know that the interests of women business owners and small business owners are of utmost importance to his administration. His agenda includes the implementation of association health plans, improving the government procurement process, and eliminating the bundling of government contracts.

Ms. Elaine Chao, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, also reaffirmed the President’s message and made point of the fact that President Bush has more women in positions of power in his administration than any other president has had. Other conference speakers included Mr. Paul O’Neill, Secretary, U.S. Department of the

Treasury, Mr. Hector V. Barreto, Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administrator, Ms. Anne Phelps, White House Office of Domestic Policy, and Missouri Senator, Senator Christopher S. (Kit) Bond. The conference also offered workshops that focused on access to capital for women business owners, health insurance costs, understanding the tax code, new technology for business, and achieving a satisfying work/life balance.

"I was excited to learn that President Bush recognizes the need to bring accountability and leadership to the government procurement process," adds Joanne Mina, J.M. Neil and Associates, a Kansas City based full-service staffing agency. "Women own 38% of the businesses in the U.S. and there is a 5% target for WBE's to receive government contracts. That goal has not been achieved, only 2.5% are awarded to women business owners. In order to get the economy on a continued upswing, the President also recognizes the importance of aiding all small businesses as they currently contribute 49% of the jobs in the United States workforce."

The KC-CWBO membership received their invitation to the conference through Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), a national bi-partisan public policy organization that advocates on-behalf of women business owners and is led by Ms. Terry Neese. Neese and her staff were in charge of coordinating the Washington event and worked to ensure that a good cross section of women in business had the opportunity to attend and be heard, and also to ensure that the topics were relevant to women business owners. Neese has been recognized as one of the most respected advocates for women business owners in the United States and was a presenter at a recent KC-CWBO workshop. Membership in WIPP is a part of the membership package of the KC-CWBO.

The KC-CWBO is a dues-based organization. Membership is based on a two-year time period and criteria for joining include owning business for seven years or longer, having the equivalent of 15 full-time employees and having yearly gross revenue of \$2 million or more. The purpose of the KC-CWBO is to create an opportunity for a better business climate for all women business owners by capitalizing on member's collective influence, contacts, and knowledge in a braintrust that identifies and solves problems affecting women business owners. The KC-CWBO meets four times per year to hold workshops that address important issues that members face. The organization plans to track public policy issues that affect women business owners, educate members on those issues and advocate public policy that benefits women business owners. Another important issue is to obtain a better understanding the certification and procurement process on a local, state and national level.

Current membership includes Kiersten Spencer, Accommodations by Apple; Loretta Nichols, LJS Graphics; Rosana Privitera Biondo, Mark One Electric; Jane Weiland, Gateway Building Products; JoAnne Mina, J.M. Neill & Associates; Pat Worth, Harworth Construction; Carol Howell, Howell Construction; and Melody Warren, Transportation Logistics Systems, Inc. The KC-CWBO Corporate Partner is FirstGuard Health Plan. For more information about The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners, contact Nancy Zurbuchen, Director, at (816) 452-4700 or Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations at (913) 362-4541. * * *

NEWS RELEASE

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Zurbuchen and Wheeler Attend Rally in St. Louis in Support of Affordable Healthcare Plans for Small Business

Kansas City, MO (May 7, 2002) –Nancy Zurbuchen, owner, Motional Multimedia, and Joy Wheeler, FirstGuard Health Plan, attended the Association Health Plans (AHPs) rally on Monday, May 6, in St. Louis. The rally focused on the need for providing small businesses access to affordable, quality healthcare for their employees. The ladies were invited to attend the event as members of Women Impacting Public Policy, (WIPP), a national non-profit, bi-partisan public policy organization that advocates on behalf on women in business.

“Why shouldn’t America’s small businesses have access to the same healthcare benefits as Fortune 500 companies?” asks Zurbuchen, a WIPP Founding Partner, and Director of the Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners (KC-CWBO). “We are demanding that Congress authorize Association Health Plans for small businesses. The reason we took part in the rally was because we are frustrated with the lack of action by Congress on this vital issue.”

A recent U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) study reveals a ‘disturbing concentration’ of market power amount major insurance carriers who offer small group coverage. “The study’s findings further underlines the drastic need for AHPs,” says Terry Neese, WIPP President. “What more evidence does The Senate need to realize that America’s small businesses are being shut our of affordable health care? Why, in a country that has been built on freedom, are small businesses shackled with unfair high insurance costs? Why are insurance companies raising premiums as much as 71%, yet reporting mega profits in the first quarter of 2002?”

Neese adds that CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield reported in March that higher premiums and the addition of 92,000 members helped the company make a reported profit of \$98.7 million in 2001, which is an increase of \$63.8 million over profits in 2000.

The GAO study, which was requested by Senator Christopher (Kit) Bond (R-MO), ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, shows that the five largest carriers, when combined, represent three-quarters or more of the market in 19 of 34 states that supplied information. These same carriers also represent more than 90% of the market in seven of those states. Senator Bond initiated the GAO study in response to frequent complaints from small business owners who state that lack of competition in small group markets have resulted in inflated costs and limited choice for their insurance coverage.

AHPs will allow small businesses across the country to pool together and access health insurance through their membership in bona fide trade or professional trade organizations. While several AHPs currently exist, they are hampered by federal regulations that require them to comply with 50 different sets of state insurance laws. In order for AHPs to be successful in offering affordable health insurance to the employees of small businesses, federal laws must be changed to allow AHPs to operate under the same uniform rules that now govern larger union health and employee plans. It is estimated that AHPs could save small businesses between 15 to 20% or more in insurance fees.

“The high concentration among large carriers is just appalling,” says Neese. “Without competition among carriers, insurance companies almost can do anything they choose, including canceling policies and raising rates unfairly. It is time for the U.S. Senate to follow the lead of the House of Representatives and approve legislation that allows small businesses access to affordable healthcare through Association Health Plans.”

Neese cited that there are several bills in Congress that address access to affordable healthcare for small businesses, but S.858 the ‘Small Business Health Fairness Act,’ which has been authorized by Senator Bond, is the ideal vehicle for The Senate to approve. “Our WIPP members are in strong support of S.858, as well as other legislation that removes the barriers of AHPs,” Neese adds. “WIPP members are keeping a close watch on how The Senate responds to our demands for passage of AHPs, and we will remember their action when we go to the polls in November.”

Women Impacting Public Policy currently has more than 250,000 members. More information can be found at WIPP.org.

The Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners (KC-CWBO) was established in October of 2001 by Zurbuchen and Becky S. Wilson, WDS Marketing and Public Relations, specifically to benefit women who own larger established businesses in the metro Kansas City area. The stated purpose of the KC-CWBO is to create an opportunity for a better business climate for all women business owners by capitalizing on the KC-CWBO’s members’ influence, contacts, and knowledge in a braintrust that identifies and solves problems affecting women business owners. Membership dues for the KC-CWBO include a membership in WIPP.

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