

Economic development conference set

By James Dowd
Tuesday, August 18, 2009

Capitalizing on last year's success, organizers of the second annual Economic Development Fair expect an even larger turnout at the upcoming conference.

The event kicks off Aug. 26 with "Jazz on the River," an executive business reception featuring musical entertainment by Joyce Cobb.

The mixer will be 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Memphis Cook Convention Center, and will be followed by two days of seminars and workshops.

The conference is a project of the [Mid-South Minority Business Council](#) and will feature guest speakers who include [Farrah Gray](#), entrepreneur and author of "Get Real, Get Rich"; Sharon Patterson, president and chief executive officer of the [Billion Dollar Roundtable](#); and Cedric Sparks, executive director of [Youth Services](#) of Birmingham, Ala.

The fair is aimed at assisting local minority and female business owners and promoting entrepreneurship, said Luke Yancy III, president and CEO of the minority business council.

"We're seeing the upward trend of minority- and female-owned businesses contributing to a growing economy and adding jobs to our community," Yancy said. "We want to use this series to highlight these achievements and bring greater awareness to the positive impact of doing business with these entities."

In addition to workshops and seminars, top officials from several Memphis companies will participate in a roundtable discussion about the value of inclusion. Panelists will include representatives from [The Leadership Academy](#), [SunTrust Bank](#), [Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center](#) and [Methodist Health Care](#).

Nancy Coffee, CEO and president of Leadership Academy, will serve as moderator for the leaders forum.

"The conference makes good sense for the Memphis business community," Coffee said. "Gone are the days when people of like minds sat around a table thinking of solutions. Today, people of diverse minds are around that same table and bringing with them innovative and creative ideas about how to move this city forward."

The variety of programming is designed to appeal to a wide demographic, Yancy said, from entrepreneurs to business executives to corporate leaders.

Participants may attend all seminars, or sign up for individual sessions.

Seating is limited for the conference, and registration is required. A variety of ticket packages and sponsorship options are available.

For more information, call 525-6512 or visit online at mmbc-memphis.org

-- James Dowd: 529-2737

2009 Economic Development Fair

Sponsor: Mid-South Minority Business Council

When: Aug. 26-28

Where: Memphis Cook Convention Center

Address: 250 N. Front

Registration: Call 525-6512

Online: mmbc-memphis.org



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