

The View from Capitol Hill

Having just returned from Washington D.C., it has hit home for me that the proposed cuts to Federal funding for small business programs are extremely serious. President Obama's budget calls for significant cuts to the SBA Microloan program and the SBA 7(a) loan program. The budget completely zeroes out the SBA PRIME program, and reduces SBA funding for SBDCs by nearly 9%. Further, the Continuing Resolution recently passed by the House would cut funding to the CDBG program by 62%.

Congress is in recess this week but it is not too late to call your elected officials and remind them of the impact that these programs are having in your communities. You can visit this website:

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/home.htm> and locate your US Legislators as well as your State representatives. As Congress returns from recess next week, if you have not already contacted your representatives and senators, **please do so next week**. You can let them know that if one out of every three microenterprises created a job, the US would be at full employment. There is no better time to increase support for entrepreneurs!

Trainings You Won't Want to Miss

The annual Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) conference is coming up in early May, and the conference theme this year is "*Main Street Bounce Back*". Early bird registration rates have been extended to April 1st! Go to <https://www.signup4.net/Public/ap.aspx?EID=20TH15E> for registration information.

OMEN's annual Summit on Entrepreneurship is taking place on October 12th and 13th in Portland. Our Call for Sessions announcement will be sent out in the coming weeks, and we can't wait to showcase all of the innovative strategies to support entrepreneurs that you've developed in the past year!

Many OMEN members are holding regional trainings in the coming weeks – be sure to check out the *Trainings, Events and Workshops* section of this month's MicroMusings newsletter.

OMEN at Your Service

The programs and services that OMEN offers continue to expand and grow to meet our members' needs. For your clients' market research needs, OMEN's MarketLink staff is available to help your clients expand their market reach. The MarketLink team is working to serve all of Portland as well as each of Oregon's 36 counties, so please contact them – and know that no Oregon business is too rural to receive support from OMEN! We're also proud to report that OMEN was recently certified as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), and we are actively seeking additional rural partners in order

to help meet the capital access needs identified by entrepreneurs and OMEN's rural members. Also, OMEN's capacity building program, the Asset Building Corps (ABC), has just wrapped up its RFP process for new VISTA host sites and is thrilled to be welcoming 20 VISTA host sites into next year's ABC program. This year's Corps of VISTAs has been doing amazing work for OMEN member organizations, and we're excited to expand our reach – next program year, 60% of the VISTA sites will be new partners for OMEN! Lastly, don't forget to complete the 2011-2012 Member Directory Survey at this link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OMEN2012ResourceGuideSurvey>. As always, OMEN will publish the Directory and distribute it widely to entrepreneurs and service providers throughout Oregon so that local entrepreneurs can get connected with the resources they need to grow!

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Valerie Plummer". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the text "In partnership,".