

## Simon calls for more women-owned businesses in Illinois

Written by Ted Nelson  
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CHICAGO – March 27, 2013. Working to promote entrepreneurship and increase the number of women-owned businesses in Illinois, Lt. Governor Sheila Simon will address participants at 11 a.m. on Thursday during the 2nd Annual 2014 Women Business Owners Symposium (WBOS) at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago.

“The business leaders of tomorrow are gathered here today,” said Simon. “Since January 2010, Illinois has added 257,000 private sector jobs, many of which can be attributed to women-owned businesses. From home offices to board rooms, women are a vital force creating jobs and providing economic opportunities in our state.”

With over 1,300 registered participants, the full-day program will gather many of Illinois’ innovators, trendsetters and business leaders for a symposium on developing and advancing business goals. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) touts the event as an opportunity to receive resources like information on state programs and grants and on-site counseling in key areas of business development and sustainability. For more information, please visit [www.ildceo.net/WBOS](http://www.ildceo.net/WBOS) or call [\(217\) 558-1630](tel:2175581630).

Panel discussions at the event will examine state-funded programming and procurement opportunities, access to capital, Affordable Care Act and small business opportunities, the women equal pay initiative, information technology and accessing new markets in both the public and private sectors. Moderated by *Chicago Tribune* Business Columnist Melissa Harris, the free event will include Acting Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration Marianne O’Brien Markowitz and Nicor Gas President Beth Reese as keynote speakers.

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According to the National Women's Business Council, women-owned firms make up 28.7 percent of all non-farm businesses across the country and generate \$1.2 trillion in total receipts. Top industries for women-owned businesses include: educational services (45.9 percent of all businesses are women-owned), administration and support and waste management and remediation services (37.0 percent), retail trade (34.4 percent), and arts, entertainment, and recreation (30.4 percent).

As chair of the Interagency Military Base Support and Economic Development Committee (IMBSEDC) and 25-member Governor's Rural Affairs Council (GRAC), Simon is working to expand economic opportunities and encourage job growth throughout Illinois.

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