

More than one thousand come to business summit

By Vince Sullivan
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SPRINGFIELD - More than 1,000 people showed up at the Springfield Country Club on March 27 for a Business Procurement Summit hosted by Congressman Joe Sestak (D-7). Interested individuals had the opportunity to visit many prospective employers during the all-day event. Representatives from more than 50 companies and government agencies were on hand to inform businesspeople and government officials about the process for securing federal and state funding in these tough economic times.

Dr. Mark Zandi, chief economist and co-founder at Moody's economy.com, was the keynote speaker during the mid-day luncheon. He and Congressman Sestak spoke before the luncheon to reporters about the ways government can support business.

"Cyrrntly, 6.7 percent of all government contracts go to small businesses," Sestak said. "That number should be 23 percent." Sestak also noted that small businesses receive \$240 million in government contracts.

A similar summit was held last year by Sestak, and according to him, about 440 people attended and at least two contracts resulted from the event. Dr. Zandi focused his luncheon speech on what is happening in the economy right now, and how long it will take to get better.

"The economic downturn will end at about 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 15, 2009," Zandi said half-jokingly. He clarified that the worst of what is happening in terms of unemployment and personal bankruptcy will be over around

December, but that it will take some time for everything to be normalized.

"In Spring 2010, unemployment will be at about 10 percent," he said. "We won't be

would have allocated more money than Congress did.

"There is no way out of this in a graceful way, unless policymakers act aggressively, which they have done," he said. "The

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Dr. Mark Zandi
Moody's Economy.com

back at full employment, which is about 5 percent unemployed, until 2013 or 2014.

Zandi declared his support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed in February, although he says he

package is good. I would have made it bigger and included more tax cuts."

Zandi and Sestak both agreed that the ARRA is already making progress is helping the nation dig itself out of the finan-

cial mess it has found itself in over the last 18 months.

"The \$787 billion has already started to flow and the tax cuts are already in effect," Zandi said. "The ARRA is forestalling job cuts. Stimulus is already happening."

He warned that nobody is certain that this package will save the economy.

"We won't know for sure how it's all working out until the fall," Zandi said. "In late summer into early fall, we will begin to see palpable signs that the stimulus is working."

The most important thing, according to Zandi, is not to panic. Inflation, a problem that has followed economic downturns in the past, making for even tougher times, is not an issue right now. Americans must be confident in their government if we are to get out of this quickly, he said.

"Confidence is a fickle thing; it can reappear as quickly as it disappears," Zandi said.

Some of the exhibitors at the summit included Boeing, one of the largest employers in the county. As part of their display, they had a decommissioned fuselage of an HH-64 helicopter. The chopper's body was brought in on a flatbed truck, and attendees could walk through it and watch informational videos with demonstrations of its effectiveness. The fuselage was part of a helicopter that had been used in Afghanistan as a combat search and rescue vehicle.

Lockheed Martin also had a table in the exhibition area, among many other private firms.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Navy and air Force were present at the summit.

Small businesses can benefit from government resources

By Vince Sullivan
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SPRINGFIELD - Congressman Joe Sestak's Business Procurement Summit held on March 27 at the Springfield Country Club was a chance for businesspeople to make contacts with contractors and take advantage of government funding allocations. The goal was to get some of this federal funding out on the streets and put people to work, especially small businesses.

As a testament to this goal, Congressman Sestak highlighted two businesses whose work with federal government resources helped them to expand their business. Nielsen-Kellerman Company, based in Boothwyn in Delaware County, designs and manufactures waterproof electronics for use in water sports, especially rowing.

"We'd like to brag that our equipment was used by the gold-medal winning rowing team," CEO Alix Kocker said. "But they were used in every boat from first to last."

Nielsen-Kellerman is a small company with less than 50 employees, and they provide a very specialized line of products, so they have a limited consumer base. With the help of the U.S. Commercial Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce, they were able to take their products overseas and market them.

"Rowing products sell themselves," Kocher said, clarifying that her company has faced very little competition over the years. "But we are now exporting half of the million dollars of business we do in a year."

An International Trade Specialist from the Commercial Service helped Nielsen-

Kellerman to take their products to other nations via a trade show in Turkey in April 2008.

"They helped us identify where to focus our resources," Kocher said. "They were a tremendous help with the tradeshow support, providing us with translators and getting us in touch with key partners."

Nielsen-Kellerman has since expanded their product line to include wind-measuring instruments that have been popular overseas.

"Firefighting is an industry where our products are a valuable resource," Kocher said. "There isn't much demand for them central Africa where they don't have wildfires, but they do in Australia. The Commercial Service helped us to identify those potential markets so we didn't waste our time."

Merit Systems LLC, designs and implements professional

development programs for corporations. The company, based out of Wayne, developed a new project to export their services to the African nation of Liberia after their civil war had ended.

CEO John Juzbasich contacted trade specialists with the Department of Commerce to help streamline the process of documentation and licensing requirements. After all of the necessary items were properly documented and ready to be shipped, Juzbasich and trade specialist Amy Ryan were able to include donated items like children's shoes and books in the shipments. Since 2005, Merit Systems has shipped over 100 personal computers and 26,000 books, as well as other items.

"We were able to combine business with goodwill through the work of the trade specialists," Juzbasich said. "If you make the effort to find out how

to make a difference, business will find you."

Tony Ceballos, Director of the U.S. Commercial Service's Philadelphia office, talked about the potential in overseas marketing.

"Ninety-five percent of consumers are outside the United States," Ceballos said. "Sixty percent of businesses in the U.S. only export to one market."

Like Nielsen-Kellerman, whose products are now used all over the world in rowing, firefighting, farming, forestry and construction, it is possible for a small company with relatively few employees to become successful with the proper guidance.

In the current state of the economy, Nielsen-Kellerman has remained afloat, breaking

the curve of "contraction." While many companies have lost business or net worth to the tune of 30 percent, Nielsen-Kellerman has only accrued a loss of 10 percent.

"When you diversify you keep contraction down," Kocher said. When you have penetrated more markets, like Nielsen-Kellerman has done, you're more protected in an economic downturn, according to Kocher.

Exporting can have a healing effect on business losses as well, according to Ceballos. There are 13,000 exporters in Pennsylvania alone, Ceballos said, and they account for 220,000 jobs.

"It is possible to grow out of a recession through exporting," Ceballos said.

Broomall Scout reaches Eagle status

BROOMALL - The most prestigious rank that a Boy Scout can earn is that of Eagle Scout. On Sunday, April 4, 2009, at Marple Presbyterian Church in Broomall, that honor was conferred upon Stephen Robbins of Troop 468 at a traditional Eagle Scout Court of Honor attended by Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07).

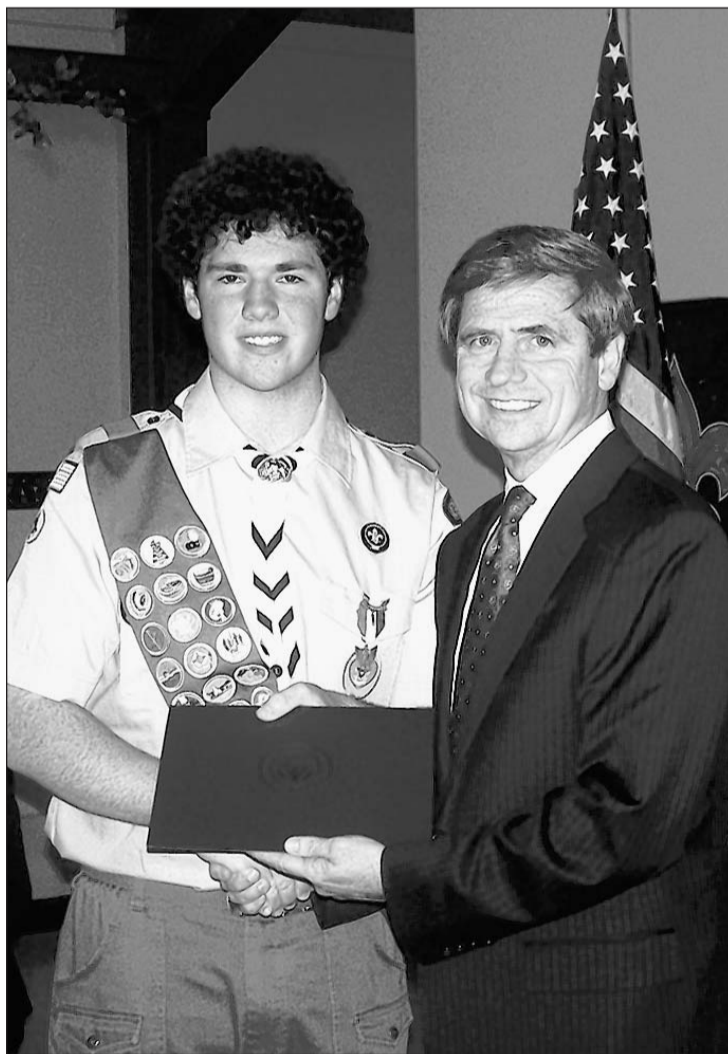
In the course of those proceedings, there were many testimonials to Eagle Scout Robbins's strength of character, leadership, and intelligence by his Scout leaders and fellow Scouts. However, the most important part of the ceremony occurs when the new "Eagle" thanks his family for their love and support throughout the long climb to that challenging rank. The Congressman commended Stephen's Eagle Scout project, for which he cleaned, prepped, and painted the interior walls of the Church's Christian Education Center.

In his remarks acknowledging Stephen's achievement, Congressman Sestak commented that, "the rank of Eagle Scout requires tremendous effort and is meant to recognize young men, like Stephen, who respect their community and nation. Stephen has made a public commitment to serve his community with honor, and I thank him for

that. He has set an important example for other young men to follow. I join all of the residents of the 7th Congressional District in saluting Stephen, his troop, and, most importantly, his parents for all working together to raise such an outstanding young man."

"As someone who wore the cloth of this nation for 31 years in the Navy, I have a deep appreciation for those who truly understand what it means to serve their country," added Congressman Sestak. "I thank Stephen for his past and future service to our community and to our country."

Reaching the rank of Eagle Scout has always carried a special significance. Scouts that reach that level typically go on to success in higher education, and then to purposeful careers in business, industry, community service, and science. The award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years. Only about 5 percent of all boys who join Boy Scout troops earn the Eagle Scout rank. Approximately 1.7 million Boy Scouts have earned the rank since 1912. The goals of Scouting—citizenship training, character development, and personal fitness—remain important for all Scouts, whether or not they attain the Eagle Scout rank.



Broomall Boy Scout Stephen Robbins was recently made an Eagle Scout, the highest honor a Scout can attain. He is pictured with Congressman Sestak.

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