

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# Turning the economic crisis into opportunities

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couldn't have been more apt since the conference recognizes the travails of businesses in the current economic landscape and offers strategic approaches to thrive in the marketplace.

Allen is optimistic that the end of the recession is near.

"I see a bright spot on the horizon and I am confident that we can collectively help to weather the storm, revitalize the economy, grow our business and come out as big winners," she said.

Department of Commerce Secretary Gary Locke shares Allen's vision in helping fast-track the economy through various means.

"The theme of this year's event is a prime example of the American entrepreneurial spirit that will lead us to overcome the current global economic challenges. Through these difficult economic times, the Department of Commerce and the Minority Business Development Agency are committed to supporting Asian American and Pacific Islander businesses. Together we will meet the demands of our times and reinvigorate our economy," Locke said in a written message.

Filipino-American businesswoman Juanito Dakis, looks forward to this annual business conference with such fervor.

"I have been participating for the past four to five years and I am very happy with the quality of people I meet and the business partnerships that I get to cultivate with existing and prospective clients," Dakis, director at X Green Energy told the *Asian Journal*.

Dakis, formerly a restaurateur in the San Francisco Bay Area, is now involved with a green power consultancy firm.

New York State Governor David Paterson in a written message to conference participants lauded USPAACC for serving a thriving business community.

"This annual conference continues to provide a forum that brings together leaders whose diverse experience and common cultural background will foster new prospects for your community in the future," Paterson said.

**Opportunities abound**

The conference showed businesses how to thrive even during economic downturns, how to get (and do) business in the Obama Administration's "green" energy movement, and how to win a piece of the \$787 billion Economic Stimulus package.

Over 40 Fortune 500 Corporations and 16 Asian American Business Enterprises (ABEs) participated at CelebrAsian '09 while more than 100 Asian American-owned businesses were represented alongside 600 Asian American suppliers and business owners during the three-day Conference.

"We are honored by the diverse roster of Fortune 500 Corporations who once again supported our flagship event," Allen added. "We thank our corporate partners who have worked with us for many years now—for their generosity and steadfast commitment to helping Asian American and other minority businesses to succeed in today's dynamic marketplace."

Allen noted that USPAACC Education Foundation also works closely with the Federal, State and Local government agencies, ABEs and other national minority business organizations, such as the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, to form a far-reaching network of strategic resources for small and minority businesses nationwide.

USPAACC Education Foundation has established a network of 12,000 Asian American businesses through its Regional Chapters in Northern and Southern California, New York, Texas, Illinois, Georgia, and Washington, DC-Maryland-Virginia in the National Capital Area.

CelebrAsian—the oldest and largest pan Asian American business opportunity conference in the United States—connects hundreds of top-caliber Asian American suppliers and business owners with buyers from Fortune 500 corporations, the Federal, State and Local government, and the small and minority business community, through pre-scheduled one-on-one matchmaking business meetings, informative summits, workshops, and networking events.

**75% Average Growth**

Over a billion in sales were

generated by 50 Asian American Businesses in 2008, with individual companies generating as much as 400 percent growth rate within a three-year period.

The revenues and growth rates were cumulated at the final ranking of USPAACC Education Foundation's "Fast 50 Asian American Businesses," and were officially revealed during the Excellence Awards Gala Dinner.

"The robust growth shown by Asian American-owned businesses—a rare feat in these economic times—is a proud testament to the enduring quality of Asian Americans who, through innovation, hard work and ingenuity, remain at the forefront as engines of growth in our national economy," said Allen.

To qualify for the ranking, companies must be owned by one or more Asian Americans (at least 51% ownership), among other eligibility criteria. Based on percentage revenue growth over three years, selection was determined through direct applications and nominations.

"These companies' growth is a sheer testament to the resiliency of the Asian American entrepreneur. But for every one successful business, there are ten others who are failing. There

are Asian-owned businesses that are met with roadblocks such as language barriers and cultural differences. This is where we come in. We kick the doors open with our high heels," Allen said as she congratulated the 50 businesses who made it to the list this year.

Finalists were independently verified by the New York-based accounting and consulting firm of Holtz Rubenstein Reminick LLP.

**Wells Fargo Honors Three Asian Businesses**

Wells Fargo Asian Business Services announced during the conference that it has reached its 10-year goal to lend \$3 billion to Asian business owners nationwide—three years ahead of schedule.

The goal was established at the program's inception in 2002. The company also announced they have expanded the goal to \$5 billion by the end of 2013. Wells Fargo's Asian Business Services program works closely with key community alliances to provide education and outreach to Asian businesses.

"Wells Fargo is proud to celebrate the success of the Asian business community," said Patrick Yalung, regional president

for the company's Washington region and national spokesperson for Wells Fargo's Asian Business Services. "This Wells Fargo milestone is a testament to the contributions and success of Asian American business owners in their communities."

Wells Fargo and USPAACC-EF also recognized three Asian business owners with the 6th Annual USPAACC-EF/Wells Fargo Asian Business Leadership Award with each winner receiving a \$5,000 cash prize and trophy.

The winners were selected from a nationwide pool of applicants and evaluated based on their business vision, success and community contributions. This year's winners are: Topline Products Company Inc., based in Wayne, NJ; Lori S. C. Yokoyama & Associates P.C., based in Chicago and AppleSeed Montessori Inc., based in Sunnyvale, CA

"The winners of this year's Asian Business Leadership award exemplify the spirit of the award," said Yalung. "These businesses provide different types of products and services and represent the wide range of contributions Asian business owners make to the US economy." ■

## Lakas, Kampi formally merge

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be held next year.

During the formal launching of the merger of the two political parties now called Lakas-Kampi-CMD, the President said the elections in 2010 will definitely push through.

"After all, electoral reforms, especially automation, are a priority item in our administration's 10-point agenda," the President

added.

Speaker Prospero Nograles, the prime mover in the efforts to amend the Constitution, expressed support for the merger.

Nograles said that elections would take place next year notwithstanding efforts to tinker with the Constitution.

He said Charter change efforts could simply taper off due to lack of time. ■

## RP entry a finalist in Democracy Video Challenge of US State Department

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In the trips, the winners will visit television/film sets, meet with film professionals, democracy advocates, the media, and government officials. Their winning videos will also be featured in special screenings.

The Democracy Video Challenge was launched online at the United Nations on International Democracy Day on Sept. 15, 2008.

It was created through a unique partnership consisting of democracy and youth organizations, film and entertainment industry, academia and the US Govern-

ment.

Partners include the Center for International Private Enterprise, Directors Guild of America, International Republican Institute, International Youth Foundation, Motion Picture Association of America, NBC Universal, National Democratic Institute, New York University Tisch School of the Arts, TakingITGlobal, University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, and the US Department of State.

YouTube is providing the video platform, and the William Morris Agency is contributing part of the prize package. ■

## Fil-Am summa cum laude in Georgetown U

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"We kept telling him early on that the only legacy we can give him is the best education," said Mrs. Tolentino, a registered nurse, in a telephone interview. "We told him to study well and keep your heritage," she added.

Tolentino also graduated valedictorian of his high school class at the Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas, Texas.

A visibly proud Tolentino held the Philippine flag high during the Seniors' Convocation at Georgetown University.

Throughout his studies at Georgetown University, Tolentino was an active member of the University's Club Filipino which aims to promote Filipino culture, diversity, and understanding within the Georgetown community.

Tolentino interned with the Migration Policy Institute in Washington DC and was described by policy analyst lawyer Laureen Laglagaron as an "exceptional intern whom the Filipino American community could rightly be proud of." ■

## Fil-Am honored for AIDS advocacy

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ing, and HIV primary care.

New York State Governor David Paterson recently named her to the New York State Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

On Dec. 6, 1999 at the *AIDS in the New Millennium* World AIDS Day observance, former Manhattan Borough president Virginia Fields honored Rodriguez for her efforts in advancing education on HIV/AIDS.

*Rodriguez is among the outstanding Filipinas cited in Joy Buensalido's book 100 Women of the Philippines, Celebrating Filipina Womanhood in the New Millennium.*

President Barack Obama underscored the importance of this traditional celebration when he issued a presidential proclamation on May 1 declaring May 2009 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

In the proclamation, Obama called on the people of the United States to learn more about the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and observe the month with appropriate programs and activities. (*Philstar.com*)



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