



DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

Over Twenty Years of Service to America's Diverse Communities

Mini-Newsletter, January 15, 2014

Congratulations to Maria Contreras-Sweet

The post of Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, which had been vacant since the departure of Karen Mills in 2013, has now seen the advent of a replacement, the estimable entrepreneur and executive Maria Contreras-Sweet of Los Angeles, California. Ms. Contreras-Sweet was nominated today by the President to fill the post of chief in this classic agency for the advancement of entrepreneurship among the hardy venturers, diverse in ethnicity and gender and class, who form the continuing wave of new business entities that, at its best, characterize the American social and economic scene. The SBA Administrator Designate awaits confirmation in the Senate for this post, which has cabinet status in the in the modern organization of the executive department.



She came with her family at the age of five from their home in Guadalajara, Mexico, settling in southern California. Her contemporary reputation in the State grows out of her banking business,



centered in a community bank, founded by her, that has moved effectively to extend credit to Latino-owned small enterprises for which the flow of credit is the essential condition for unleashing the native energies of these entrepreneurs. She thus enjoys a respectful regard among both the business community and the other elements in the civic world of California. She was administrator of a mega agency in the California government, as Secretary, with cabinet status, of the Department of Business, Transport,

and Housing, under an earlier administration, serving from 1999 to 2003.

Alongside her midwifing of the successes of countless small business firms through the operations of the Proamerica Bank, now the Proamerica Bank with head offices in downtown Los Angeles, Ms. Contreras-Sweet founded and managed a private equity firm, Fortius Holdings, which concentrated its financing work in the numerous Latino population. She is thus poised to hit the ground, as it is said, running, with the experience of both public-sector and private-sector management, and with the productive mindset of both large and small enterprises part of her intellectual fiber.

Dialogue on Diversity, since its founding 24 years ago, has maintained a strong strain of concern for entrepreneurship and its practitioners, the army of small, ethnic business owners, the bold streak of vitality that is historically the pride of American society, and has nurtured a close collaboration on numerous projects with the Small Business Administration. I have been honored on many occasions to greet Ms. Contreras-Sweet, often in the company of our Board Member Rep. Grace Napolitano, during her frequent visits to Washington. We hope to continue Dialogue on Diversity's teamwork with the SBA, and to collaborate with its new Administrator, Ms. Maria Contreras-Sweet.

MA. CRISTINA CABALLERO, PRESIDENT/CEO, DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

ABOUT DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY – Founded in 1990, Dialogue on Diversity, a §501(c)(3) organization, is a national network of women entrepreneurs and professionals, seeking to promote constructive dialogue among Latino and other diverse ethnic and cultural communities on a range of essential social and policy issues, with especial emphasis on economic viability through entrepreneurship.