

U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 21st Annual National Convention and Business Expo

The annual convention and business exposition of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), entitled "Hispanic Commerce in the New Economy" was held recently in Washington, D.C. The event provided over 9,000 business owners, government leaders and corporate executives a forum for the exchange of business and career opportunities, as well as the opportunity to attend a series of comprehensive business sessions focused on fostering growth and development of the Hispanic entrepreneur in the new economy.



Manny Chavez, and Mistress of ceremonies **Lynda Baquero**.

The Business Expo featured over 200 exhibitors ranging from Hispanic and international enterprises to Fortune 500 companies and government agencies. In addition, Procurement, Franchise, and Workforce Diversity pavilions were created so that vendors could meet one-on-one with procurement representatives.

Ivan Seidenberg, president and co-chief executive officer, Verizon Communications and honorary convention chairman, served as the keynote speaker at the opening breakfast and announced Verizon's \$10 million investment in the recently formed Private Equity Fund, L.P. sponsored by the USHCC. The national capital venture fund is intended to provide much needed capital for the growth and expansion of small and medium size Hispanic businesses in the U.S. The fund's goal is to raise between \$50-\$75 million from institutional and individual investors. The fund will focus on established manufacturing, service and distribution companies with revenues in excess of \$15 million, a strong track record, and a recent history of positive cash flows.

Other guest speakers included **Senator John S. McCain (R-AZ)**; **Antonia Novello, M.D.**, commissioner, New York State Department of Health; **George Munoz**, president and CEO, Overseas Private Investment Corporation; and **Roy Barnes**, the Governor of Georgia.

A Town Hall Meeting entitled "Strategic Alliances for the New Economy," was held and featured such notable panelists as **Earl G. Graves, Sr.**, chairman and publisher, *Black Enterprise* magazine; **Fernando Ferrer**,

borough president, Bronx, New York; **Stacey H. Davis**, president and CEO, Fannie Mae Foundation; and **Andy Unanue**, CEO, Goya Foods.



Cutting the ribbon at the Business Expo are (center, left to right) **Ray Arvizu**, board member; **Mark Hogan**, president, e-GM; USHCC Chair **Elisabeth Lisboa-Farrow**; and **George Herrera**, president and CEO, USHCC.

At the 4-day convention, **Elizabeth Lisboa-Farrow**, president and CEO of LISBOA, Inc., was elected chair of the Board of Directors of the USHCC.

National awards were presented during the Gala Awards Banquet at the National Building Museum by **George Herrera**, president and CEO, USHCC, and **Ray Arvizu**, chairman of the board, USHCC. The recipients were **Bank One Corporation**, Corporation of the Year award; **James Richardson Gonzales**, Verizon Communications, Corporate Hispanic Business Advocate of the Year; **WNBC-TV**, New York, the Chairman's award; **Xavier Romeu**, secretary, Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce, Government Hispanic Business Advocate of the Year; **Martha C. de La Torre**, El Clasificado, Hispanic Businesswoman of the Year; **Manny Chavez**, Harvard Manufacturing, Inc., Hispanic Businessman of the Year; and **Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**, Large Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of the Year. The Sanchez to Sanchez to Smith Award was presented to **Union Trading Company, LLC**. This award is given to companies whose involvement in international trade benefits both Hispanic businesses in the United States and the international business community.

The USHCC represents the interests of more than 1.4 million Hispanic owned businesses in the United States and Puerto Rico. It serves as the umbrella organization for the 250 local Hispanic chambers nationwide and actively promotes the economic growth and development of Hispanic entrepreneurs.



Martha C. de La Torre

The 2001 conference and business expo will be held September 18-22 in Atlanta, Georgia.