



## Katrina Moves National Black MBA Association's Annual Conference to San Diego Oct. 11th-16th

*San Diego, October 11, 2005* – Thousands of the more than 11,000 expected African American business professionals began streaming to San Diego by train, plane and automobile Tuesday as the National Black MBA Association (NBMBA), Inc. prepared to kickoff its 27th annual Conference and Career Fair in California's second largest city.

As the organization's executive leadership conducted their annual pre-conference business meetings, convention center workers hurried to put the finishing touches on the conference exhibit halls expected to cover several acres of the downtown convention center.

The NBMBA's conference is the country's preeminent event for black business professionals. The event features the nation's largest minority Career Fair where this year 368 Fortune 500 companies and universities will convene over two days with hopes of connecting with new, diverse, potential candidates.

"We are excited to bring our annual conference and our unique organization, which shows people what it means to be an African American professional, to the city of San Diego," President and CEO Barbara Thomas said. "San Diego has truly welcomed our attendees who range from high school students to seasoned professionals," she said.

The organization, celebrating its 35th anniversary, had originally planned to hold its 2005 annual conference in New Orleans. But after Hurricane Katrina's devastation became known, the NBMBA was one of hundreds of professional and trade groups forced to move its annual event from the now closed Crescent City. After a whirlwind tour of 12 new alternative cities in no less than 10 days, the NBMBA decided to relocate its event to San Diego.

New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin, Dan Packer, president and CEO of Entergy New Orleans, and Xavier University President Dr. Norman Francis remain the conference co-chairs.

"Relocating our conference to San Diego is a minor inconvenience compared to the disruption of life on the Gulf Coast," Thomas said.

Responding to the devastation suffered from Hurricane Katrina, the NBMBA has launched a Student Empowerment Relief Fund with a goal of raising \$1 million to assist MBA students with essential expenses associated with continuing their education.

Despite the venue change, the more than 350 corporate sponsors are continuing their participation. Those include: Abercrombie & Fitch, American Airlines, Black Enterprise, Citigroup, The Coca-Cola Company, Coors, DaimlerChrysler, Dell, Delphi, ExxonMobil, Ford Motor Company, GM, Hewitt Associates, Hewlett-Packard, The Home Depot, IBM, Intel, Marriott, Mars, Microsoft, PepsiCo, Pitney Bowes, Sprint Nextel, Target, Verizon, Wachovia and Walt Disney.

Some companies, like Deloitte Consulting LLP, find the NMBBAA conference offers them a unique opportunity.

“This year we are sending more than 60 representatives to recruit and attract talent,” said Tonie Leatherberry, director of Deloitte Consulting LLP, seated with NMBBAA representatives at a press conference Tuesday. “We realize that a company can’t be homogeneous, and the NMBBAA conference and career fair is clearly the place to be to increase our representation of women and minorities.”

Besides the leadership workshops featuring some of the nation’s foremost business leaders such as Jack Canfield, author of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, motivational speaker Les Brown and educator Dr. Dennis Kimbro, the conference will also offer career development programs including the Career Success NetworkSM, which includes demonstrations of NtentialSM, the new state-of-the-art career enhancement service that combines the latest on-line technology with personal executive coaching and the NMBBAA Employment Network®, in which attendees participate in pre-arranged interviews with corporate recruiters.

The conference ends on the evening of October 15th with a black tie gala hosted by actress Lynn Whitfield. Spiritual leader Bishop T.D. Jakes will receive the organization’s prestigious Chairman’s Award for service.

For students, the NMBBAA will also announce Saturday the winners of more than \$300,000 in scholarships and gifts to doctoral, graduate, undergraduate and high school students. For current MBA students, the NMBBAA will also announce winners of its annual Case Competition. Teams from 30 universities will compete for scholarships and employment positions. GMAT test preparation courses will be offered for perspective MBA students as well as seminars to educate participants on the advantages of earning an MBA.

Other networking and social events throughout the week will include a soul-stirring concert featuring the Isley Brothers as well as nightly Club MBA jazz and R&B music lounges.

The National Black MBA Association is dedicated to creating partnerships that result in intellectual and economic wealth in the black community. With more than 6,000 members, the association, which is headquartered in Chicago, represents 100,000 MBA graduates. The NMBBAA has 39 local chapters across the United States.

For more information on the NMBBAA or the 27th Annual Conference and Expo, please visit [www.nbmbaa.org](http://www.nbmbaa.org)

Press Contact:  
Audrey Pinn  
202.641.2044  
[Audrey@westinrinehart.com](mailto:Audrey@westinrinehart.com)

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