



**News Release**  
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**For More Information**  
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**The Native American Business Alliance Fund's (NABA)**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Business/Procurement Conference Overview**

Dearborn, MI-The Native American Business Alliance Fund (NABA) hosted its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Business/Procurement Conference on April 27 – 29, 2008 at the Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, Mississippi. The resort is located on Tribal Land of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Chrysler Corporation, LLC served as this year's event sponsor. This Conference, themed "*Creating Wealth in Indian Country*", provided multiple opportunities for Native American business leaders, tribal officials, governmental agencies and corporate purchasing representatives from Fortune 500 Companies to network and exchange business opportunities. One of the best-received events during the Conference was an in-depth tour of the industrial community of Choctaw Business Development; nearly all of the corporate representatives who attended the Conference participated in this tour, as well as a large number of Native American business owners. There were also several workshops which highlighted cutting-edge paths to success that have been followed by many Native American business owners. Nearly 200 NABA members and representatives from other companies attended this intimate annual event. Several of the attendees participated in the Business Resource Room and met one-on-one with Corporate Purchasing Representatives.

Throughout the three-day Conference, keynote speakers shared their stories of business success, entrepreneurial leadership and their position on the state of economic development within Indian Country. Seminar topics such as *Certifying as an 8(a)* and *What the Corporate Buyer is Looking for in a Supplier*, among others, emphasized the theme of the Conference and provided an educational and entrepreneurial focus for Native American business owners, tribal officials and leaders looking to do business with Corporate America, and corporate representatives seeking Native American (MBE) suppliers.

Some of the many sponsors for the NABA conference included: the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Ford Motor Company, UPS, Inc., Kellogg Co., General Motors Corporation, Dakota Integrated Systems, Toyota Motor Engineer & Manufacturing, Starwood Corporation, American Express, Choctaw-Kaul Distribution Co., The Home Depot, Prystup Packaging, The Coca-Cola Company, and Systrand Manufacturing Corporation. A full list of the 2008 Conference sponsors can be found at <http://www.native-american-bus.org/2008Conf.htm>.

"This year's Conference was an amazing experience," said Jackie Gant, NABA National Executive Director and enrolled member of the Oneida Nation of the Thames. She added, "The Corporate turnout was strong, our workshops offered working solutions to Native American companies faced with a difficult economy, and our networking events resulted in great

connections being made between procurement officers and our Native American business owners. The Mississippi Choctaw offered us a great deal of practical support from start to finish and, more importantly, they truly opened their community to us. The positive response from our attendees has been overwhelming. I couldn't have asked for a better Conference.”

The NABA Conference opened on Sunday April 27<sup>th</sup> with a Golf Mixer. The proceeds of this Golf Mixer will support NABA's Small Business Scholarship Fund. The Golf Mixer was followed by two exceptional evening receptions: NABA saluted its Corporate Partners with a Corporate Appreciation Reception. This was immediately followed by a more general Welcome Reception, where attendees enjoyed outstanding food and entertainment and experienced the first official networking event of the Conference. Day Two (Monday) served as the official kick-off of the 2008 Conference and featured a cultural presentation by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian Dancers and Drummers and opening addresses by Jethro Joseph of Event Sponsor Chrysler, LLC; the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian's Miko Beasley Denson; Lee Pepion (*Blackfoot*), NABA Board President; Kenny Tubby (*Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*), President of Choctaw-Kaul Distribution Co.; and Adrienne Trimble from Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing, NA. Following the opening ceremony, attendees participated in a networking luncheon; attended thought-provoking seminars; toured the industrial community of Choctaw Business Development; and ended the evening under the southern sky with a networking event at the Dancing Rabbit Golf Club. The final day of the Conference (Tuesday) opened with an all-day Business Resource Room featuring table top displays. This event was designed to help showcase not only Native American-owned businesses but corporations looking to exchange business materials on their respective companies. A well-attended Member-to-Member session was also held for Native American-owned businesses wanting to meet face-to-face with Corporate Representatives to discuss procurement opportunities.

Other major speakers during the Conference included Burt Wells, President of Beard Mechanical and President of American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Texas; Professor Joseph P. Kalt, Co-Director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development; and Steven J. Morello, Director, Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Energy.

The Conference concluded with an exclusive Tribal and Corporate Networking Session and evening cultural presentation, a Gala Dinner, and an awards ceremony. Attendees had a final opportunity to network and enjoy themselves at a fabulous Farewell Reception.

#### NABA Awards

During the Gala Dinner, several members of the Native American Business Alliance were recognized for their achievements by being given NABA Awards. These annual awards are presented to NABA members who have shown outstanding qualities in several categories. This year's awardees were: Spirit Award – Andra Rush (*Mohawk*) of Rush Trucking Corporation; Corporation of the Year – Kellogg Company; New Member of the Year – Kingfish Worldwide, Inc.; and Native American Business of the Year – Choctaw-Kaul Distribution Company.

## 2009 Conference

The 2009 NABA Fund National Business Conference will be held April 26-28, 2009 at the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mount Pleasant, MI.

## About NABA

Founded in 1995 by four Native American business owners, NABA provides independently owned and tribally-based businesses in the United States and Canada with the opportunity to develop relationships with purchasing representatives from Fortune 500 companies and more. NABA also provides corporations with opportunities to understand and enjoy Native American traditions through culturally enriching conferences and networking events. NABA currently has over 300 members and works with over 10,000 Native American-owned businesses registered as suppliers in the United States and Canada.

For information on the Native American Business Alliance, including how to become a member, please contact the NABA National Office at (248) 988-9344 or go to the NABA website: [www.native-american-bus.org](http://www.native-american-bus.org).

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