



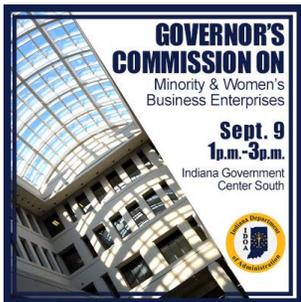
September 2013

The Link to Supplier Diversity

Indiana's Minority & Women's Business Enterprises Division

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Business Voice: Sweet Poppin's, LLC

By: Tashia Johnson-St. Clair, *Sweet Poppin's, LLC*

In July 2003, God showed me the recipe for the popcorn in a dream.

Sweet Poppin's, LLC offers gourmet chocolate covered popcorn in a variety of flavors.

Our flavors don't taste artificial. They are true to form!! If I give you a sample of Lemon Pound Cake Sweet Poppin's, guess what it'll taste like? Lemon Pound Cake of course!

We have about 15 different locations that are carrying our product. We closed our retail store the first of July to concentrate on doing events, fundraising, online and wholesale. Our fundraisers are very profitable for non-profit

groups. The groups earn 25% profit from selling our product.

We have participated in the Kentucky Derby Gala, the Soul Train Awards, and have been featured in magazines, newspapers and on television.

In February 2009, I had the great privilege to participate in the African Americans for Obama Campaign and took volunteer phone calls with First Lady Michelle Obama. WHAT an honor!!

Sweet Poppin's will also be the feature popcorn in an independent movie, *Kid's Spooky Movie*.

The worst thing that hap-



Tashia Johnson-St. Clair
Sweet Poppin's, LLC

pened to my business was spending money on products or advertising that I thought was going to help me expand. I resolved it by really thinking about asking more ques-

Continued on pg. 2...

Hear more about Tashia's business at the Northern Indiana Business Conference coming October 3.

Northern Indiana Business Conference: A Sneak Peek

By: Nate Lofton, *MWBE Business Development & Outreach Manager*

The IDOA Minority & Women's Business Enterprises (MWBE) Division will be in Michigan City for the Northern Indiana Business Conference on Thursday, October 3.

The conference will include a full day of business development activities including: workshops, networking, and a special presentation

from one of our certified companies.

We hope this event helps people see the value of the certification that the State of Indiana offers.

Two of the workshops will be certification clinics from the MWBE Division and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).

Sweet Poppin's, a MWBE certified company, will be the keynote speaker during our networking lunch.

The conference is hosted by the Blue Chip Casino Stardust Event Center. Anyone can attend for free.

Find additional information and register online:

www.in.gov/idoa/mwbe/2749.htm



Business Voice continued...

tions and talking to others who were doing the same type of advertising to see if it really worked.

Sweet Poppin's won best in show for food product and quality last April, at the Indiana Artisan Marketplace at the Fairgrounds. It was our first year participating in this event. Seven judges were sent out to judge both the food and the art artisans.

I don't consider myself to be crafty at all, but my booth was given rave reviews! The Artisans were normally given a blue ribbon for this honor, but this year I received a nice plaque.

In our retail store, we had a celebrity wall that extended from one end of the building to the other. There were celebrities ranging from Stedman Graham and Bill Cosby to Danny Glover and Kandi Burruss from the Atlanta Housewives show.

For more information about Sweet Poppin's LLC, check out our website: www.sweetpoppins.com.



Business Tip

For those thinking about starting a business, make sure you know your market. Just because you have a unique food or product and you are the only one in the area, does NOT mean you will be successful. Try the prod-

uct/concept out on people at farmer's markets, non-expensive venues, etc. before going into a store front. And even if people say they would support your business, don't believe all of them!

-Tashia Johnson-St.Clair

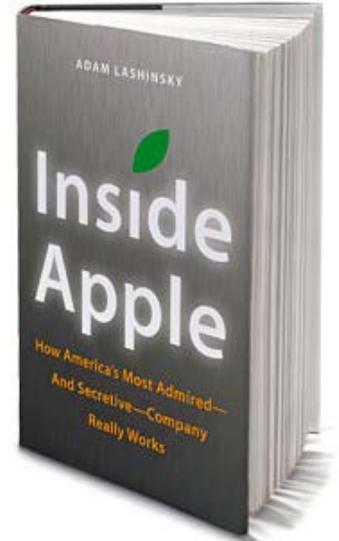


Subcontractor & Other Bidding Opportunities

Project Name	Due Date	Contact Information
Indianapolis Airport Authority - Rehabilitate Airport Roads 2013 - Other Project No. 1-13-025B	Tuesday, Sept. 10	Milestone Contractors Joel McClenney Phone: (317) 616-4885 Fax: (317) 788-1098
3rd Floor OT/PT Space SCWAM Building Bid No. B0022523	Thursday, Sept. 12	Indiana State University Scott Duell Phone: (317) 951-9192 sduell@arcDESIGN.US
Indiana Army National Guard South Bend Armed Forces Reserve Center Addition/Alteration	Wednesday, Sept. 18	Weigand Construction Phone: (260) 490-7449 Fax: (260) 490-6449

Business Reads

Inside Apple
Adam Lashinsky



An analysis of the systems, tactics, and leadership strategies that have contributed to Apple's successes and profiles such practices as the direct accountability of employees and shares insider perspectives on Apple's plans after the loss of Steve Jobs.

Save the Date



Indiana MWBE Business Development Week

October 21-23
Indiana Government Center South

Want Your Voice Heard?

Contact jethayer@idoa.in.gov to learn about getting featured in the monthly newsletter.

Congratulations to the Certified MWBEs

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Business Q&As

Q: What's your personal philosophy on how you handle business?

A: I always try to make the customer happy. I always try to make sure their visit to the store was always an enjoyable one.

Q: What might someone be surprised to know about you?

A: I can be very shy at times. If I play Monopoly and I'm the banker, you better watch me!!

Q: When you're not running your business, what are you doing instead, or what would like more time to do?

A: When I'm not running my business, I spend time trying to come up with better ways to run the business, other ways to increase revenue.

Q: What do you find most challenging about running your own business and how do you handle it?

A: I find that trying to advertise to let people know where my store was located was the most difficult - also, not having the funds to do it. I tried to do as many community events, donations and fundraisers as I could to make people aware of whom and where I was.



Tashia Johnson-St. Clair
Sweet Poppin's, LLC

Want Your Voice Heard?

Contact jethayer@idoa.in.gov to learn about getting featured in the monthly newsletter.

Congratulations to the Certified MWBEs

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