

# Small business sector urged to increase political action

By SANDRA ARMBRUSTER

Business owners can do a lot to pull themselves out of the economic slump now enveloping the state. That was the message Lt. Gov. William Brickley delivered last week before a crowd of 177 men and women at a luncheon meeting of the West Suburban Council of Chambers.

The council of chambers includes representatives from local chambers in Wayne, Westland, Belleville, Canton Township, Plymouth, Redford Township, Novi, Northville, Farmington, Livonia and Romulus.

Representatives meet monthly to discuss problems common to the business community in the western metropolitan area.

"There is a tendency to think that government creates prosperity. But government wasn't intended to be productive. Wealth is created in the private sector," Brickley told the audience. "Some of the economic ills we have now are the result of ignoring that lesson."

"WHILE THE 'delicate balance' of the free enterprise system is now off center, Brickley said that the current recession is teaching lessons that won't be repeated.

"It takes a great deal of effort to bring about the obvious," he added.

One such lesson is what Brickley called the increasing appreciation of the role of business.

"The more successful you are, the more comes into state and federal coffers," he said.

Another lesson teaches how jobs are created, Brickley said that government can only stimulate the growth of jobs, not create them. He added that he was surprised to learn that 90 percent new jobs in this state are created by small businesses.

Despite those lessons, Brickley said the voice of small businesses will have to become louder if problems are to be solved.

"The viewpoint of small business has never been well articulated," he said. "You need to concentrate on the political action needed to achieve those goals."

HE URGED business people to become involved in the state conference on small business. That conference will be a way of educating the business community as well as focusing on ways to help it, he said.

"The perception of government as hurting small business can become as damaging as if the facts were there to support it," Brickley continued.

The state small business conference will begin with 12 forums throughout the state in which delegates will be chosen by area business people to begin to look at the issues. Four area forums are now scheduled for Nov. 4 in Warren, Dec. 11 at the Troy Hilton, Jan. 8 at the Detroit Plaza and Jan. 15 in Flint.

After those forums are concluded, four regional meetings will follow. Tentative plans call for concluding those hearings, which are yet to be scheduled, by Small Business Week during the second week in May.

An executive council of the state conference will write a final report to be submitted to the governor.

AUDIENCE members criticized a White House conference on small business which defines a business with less than 500 employees as small. The audience was told that the Michigan delegation to the recent White House conference had argued unsuccessfully for a definition with a maximum of 249 employees.

The U.S. Small Business Administration permits businesses with up to 2,500 employees to be classified as small.

Other questions for Brickley included the issues of workman's compensation and the tax cut proposals on the November ballot.

Workman's compensation is the "single most important issue related to job and economic development in Michigan," Brickley said. He then accused Democrats of not being ready "to back a proposal that lowers costs and corrects abuses."

Brickley said he was pleased that the state chamber of commerce opposes the Tishch proposal which calls for a 50-percent cut in property taxes.

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