

He crusades to help Hispanic businesses

Running a business is hard enough, but it's especially frustrating when you're a minority.

Unfortunately, that's a common situation for many Hispanic businesspersons in the Detroit metro area. But help is available, from an association organized to aid the Hispanic business community.

The group is the Hispanic Business Alliance (HBA), and its president is Birmingham resident Armando Ojeda. HBA is the only organization in Michigan which provides information and referral services to Hispanic businesspersons in the state.

"It's a big issue for minorities in gen-

eral, and Hispanics specifically," Ojeda said.

Hispanics have an entrepreneurial tradition, Ojeda said. In this area the most common types of Hispanic-owned businesses are restaurants and construction companies, he added.

Contractors, already hard hit by the economy, face special problems lining up work. "The trouble is that they don't have access to many corporate sources," Ojeda said. "They don't know the procedures, or who to talk to."

TO HELP correct that, HBA and the Southeastern Michigan Business Development Center sponsored a "Closing

the Gap" conference on May 26.

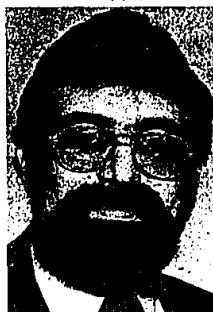
The meeting provided Hispanic contractors with information on procurement procedures and gave them an opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns. Representatives from several large corporations were also on hand to meet with the contractors.

The conference was the latest HBA project aimed at "unplugging the gaps" between Hispanic businesses and market sources, Ojeda said. HBA has been working at that type of advocacy throughout its three-year history — a period intertwined with Ojeda's own career.

"HBA's founders were originally members of New Detroit's economic development committee," Ojeda said. "They were frustrated by what they perceived as a resistance to Hispanic issues, so they started fighting for more Hispanic clout."

At about the time the alliance was formed, Ojeda and partner Don Vaquera were forming their own public relations and advertising agency in Lathrup Village.

Ojeda's experience included years as a broadcast journalist, most recently for WJR radio in Detroit.



Armando Ojeda heads alliance

skills were being used to the best advantage, and I was tired of doing the same things," Ojeda said. But more important, "I found I didn't have the objectivity toward Hispanic issues," he explained. "I was just too involved with them."

When HBA began its work, Ojeda and Vaquera were in a unique position to help both the alliance and their own firm.

"We offered to lend them our public relations skills and media contacts," Ojeda said. "It was in our interest, too. Both HBA and our company needed recognition."

The alliance now boasts 20 members, including accountants, attorneys, manufacturers and contractors. Ojeda admits the yearly dues may be steep, but HBA isn't interested in members who aren't willing to actively participate in the organization.

tract with an Ann Arbor office of Nissan, a Japanese automaker.

Nissan told the contractor he'd need to post a performance bond within 24 hours or the work would be canceled. Ojeda and his partner made a series of phone calls to the contractor's former clients, who then called various bond companies.

Nissan was told the contractor's work was indeed bondable, and the contractor was able to post a bond within a more reasonable deadline.

Things are getting better, Ojeda said. Many companies in Southfield do business in Hispanic markets. "And the consequence is that they have to work with Hispanics to do that," he explained.

Car care booklet will help you cope

Regular maintenance is a crucial factor in the life of your car. And according to the U.S. General Services Administration, a few easy checks can help you avoid a broken fan belt on the road or more serious engine problems.

Learn the routine maintenance you can perform in Car Care and Service \$1.25 from the Consumer Information Center, Dept. 104K, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

You should check your oil at least every other time you fill up with gasoline. Don't add oil until you're a quart low, but when you reach this point, put in a can of all-weather oil.

IF THE oil warning light ever comes on while your engine is running, turn off the ignition immediately. Continued operation could result in major engine damage.

Periodically check the fluid in your manual or automatic transmission. Cars with automatic transmissions must be checked while the engine is running. If the car whines while it's shifting, it could mean your car's transmission needs service.

Check your tire pressure at least once a month. Buy a tire gauge and learn how to use it.

And learn how to "read" the tires themselves: wear on the edges indicates your tires are underinflated, while wear in the middle means they're overinflated. Maintaining the correct pressure not only prolongs tire life, it

can also improve your gasoline mileage.

WHENEVER YOU take your car in for routine maintenance, ask the mechanic to check your hoses for soundness and your fan belt for correct tension.

Every spring and fall, have the anti-freeze-water mixture tested. This can help you avoid a freeze-up or boilover.

If your car ever does overheat while you're driving, pull over and turn off the engine to let it cool. If you're stuck in traffic and can't pull over, shift into neutral and press the accelerator one quarter down.

Then turn on your heater. It will drain some of the excess heat from the engine while you look for an opportunity to stop and turn off the ignition. Of course you'll get a little warm with the heater on, but you'd get a lot warmer pushing the car, rather than letting the engine do that.

THE BOOKLET also contains tips on how to get the best service for your automobile. And when you order Car Care and Service you'll receive a free copy of the Consumer Information Catalog.

The catalogue is published quarterly by the U.S. General Services Administration's Consumer Information Center and lists more than 200 free and low-cost booklets of general consumer interest.

BORN IN Los Angeles, he received a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Michigan State University. "I have a whole list of call letters for stations I worked for," he said with a smile. "That's how I came to Detroit about five years ago, to work for WJR."

Ojeda's decision to start an agency with Vaquera was partially based on his dissatisfaction with work in the broadcast field.

"I didn't think my organizational

worked for," he said with a smile. "That's how I came to Detroit about five years ago, to work for WJR."

Ojeda's decision to start an agency with Vaquera was partially based on his dissatisfaction with work in the broadcast field.

"I didn't think my organizational

OJEDA & VAQUERA Associates Inc. has grown, too. "We have a lot of business contacts, and we can refer businesspeople to where we think they'll get the best type of help," Ojeda said. "Unfortunately, the process is a tedious one."

What advice would the company give to a client?

That depends on what the problem is. Ojeda gives an example of a steel erecting contractor who secured a con-

NOT ONLY THAT, but nine of the "Hispanic Business 400" rated firms are located in Michigan, and most are in the metro Detroit area.

"More federal dollars are now available," Ojeda said. "Contrary to popular belief, the Reagan administration is very aggressively pursuing business opportunities for minorities."

Ojeda said the present program for aiding Hispanic contractors in their search for markets is a relatively new form of business advocacy.

"It's interesting," he said. "It's never been done as an organized thing before. This is the year procurement is an issue."

Hispanic Alliance elects new board

The Hispanic Business Alliance (HBA) elected five new members to the HBA board of directors at its June 15 meeting at the Rebeck Club.

Elected to one-year terms are: Albert Alcalá, president, Hispanic Employment Services, Southfield; Lee Barthel, president, Barthel Contracting, Detroit; Raymond Lozano, man-

ager, public affairs, Michigan Consolidated Gas Co., Detroit; Mariano Palares, agent, New York Life Insurance Co., Dearborn; and Sergio Sanchez, marketing representative, Michigan HMO Plans, Inc., Detroit.

Alcalá also was elected to serve as HBA vice chairman, succeeding Anthony Estrada of Realton Corp., Livonia.

Other HBA board members are: Armando Ojeda, chairman, Ojeda & Vaquera Associates, Lathrup Village; Rafael Almáguera, treasurer, Almáguera & McLennan, Troy; Rudolph Vaquera, secretary, Smith and Andrews Construction, Oak Park; Judge Isidore Torres, 36th District Court, Detroit; Agustín Arbulu, tax attorney, Detroit;

and Don Vaquera, president, Ojeda & Vaquera Associates, Lathrup Village.

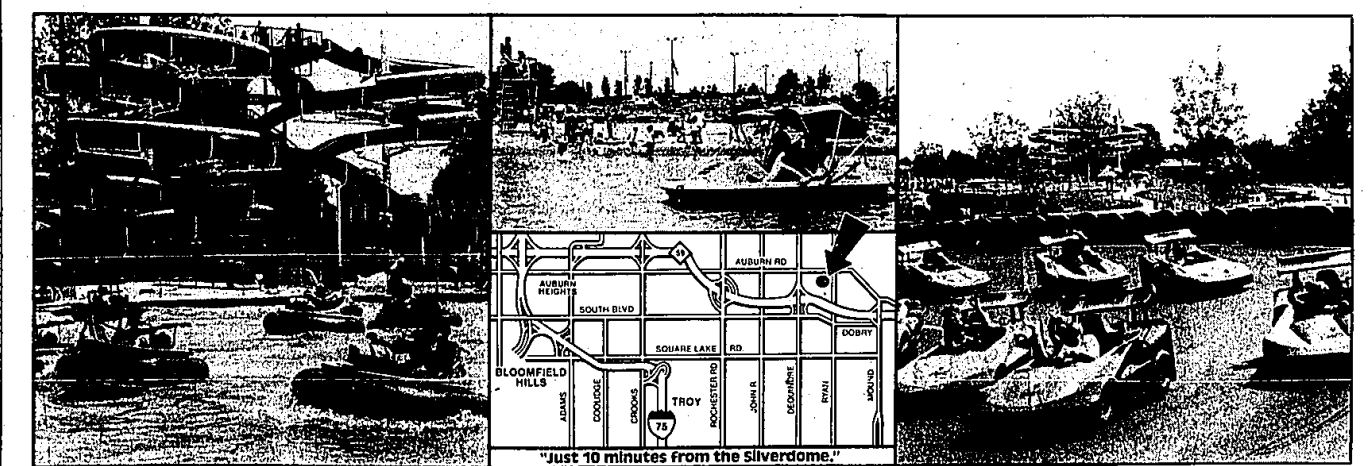
The Hispanic Business Alliance is a professional trade association which works as an advocate to promote economic development opportunities for Hispanic businessmen and businesswomen.

HAGGERTY LUMBER & SUPPLY CO.
WALLED LAKE
2055 Haggerty Rd.
(313) 388-8185 / (313) 824-4581
Mon.-Fri. 8-6, Sat. 8-5 • Sun. 10-3

Westland GARDEN CENTER AND NURSERY
Summer Sale
up to 50% OFF
All Nursery Stock
32593 Cherry Hill - Westland
(Between Mortimer & Vanoy)
Mon.-Fri. 9-6, Sat. & Sun. 9-5
721-8810

Visit our spacious showroom now! See the latest in home decor. Our professional Interior Designers will point out the many sale items we are now featuring.
Michigan's first Drexel Heritage store
Ray Interiors
33300 Secum Dr., Farmington 476-7272

Four Bears Water Park announces optional "pay-one-price" for \$9.95!



Announcing Four Bears Water Park new pay-one-price admission policy.

Now, you and your family can enjoy a day filled with sun, water fun and action-filled attractions...for just one low price of \$9.95 each! That entitles you to all the activities, water slide, miniature golf, paddleboats, the beach and swimming areas and one ride on the Can-Am cars and bumperboats. (Bating cages and arcade games require extra tokens). Plus, children 5 and under are free! or, if you just want to sit on the beach or go swimming, the admission is \$2 per person, with children 5 and under free, and the attractions are individually priced. Admission only free after 8:00 p.m. No alcoholic beverages or glass containers, please.

Here's what you get with pay-one-price!

All-day admission to the following:

- 50-foot water slide
- 56-acre man-made lake and white, sandy beach (Beach closes at 8:00 p.m.)
- Paddleboats (closes at dusk)
- Miniature golf
- 2 tickets to motorized attractions: Can-Am cars and/or bumperboats, 70-game video arcade (tokens required)
- Bating cages (tokens required)

Additional facilities

- Honey Bear restaurant
- Gift shop

Hours: 10 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. pay-one-price

Call 739-5860
for group rates and picnic rates.

FOUR BEARS
Water Park and Recreation Area