

# Ross: State boosts help to businesswomen

Women entrepreneurs will have better access to state services, government contracts and capital under changes in the Michigan Commerce Department, according to Director Doug Ross.

Ross announced the expansion of the department's Office of Women Business Owners (OWBO) last week when he addressed the National Association of Women Business Owners in Southfield.

"Earlier this year," Ross said, the Commerce Department sponsored two meetings with women business owners throughout the state, during which they expressed concerns about the need for increased access to economic development opportunities in Michigan.

"In response to this need, we have initiated the expansion of services available through our Office of Women Business Owners," said Ross, a former state senator from Southfield.

THE EXPANDED state program will include:

- Establishing a toll-free hotline (800-631-9090) through which business information and assistance will be provided.

- Providing procurement assistance for state and federal contracts by helping women business owners meet certification required to secure government contracts, and to provide notification when those contracts were available.

- Providing service and training through community economic development networks, such as Community Growth Alliances and Small Business Centers across the state.

The state will also hold annual procurement trade fairs with women business owners and state purchasing agents.

Ross said seven new staff positions have been created, bringing the total number of OWBO staff persons to nine.

BECAUSE WOMEN business owners are concentrated in retail and services firms, they often lack the

hard assets that banks traditionally require for collateral for loans, Ross said.

The program will help to reduce these difficulties by offering finan-

cial advice and counseling services to help package loan requests for public or private sources.

Gov. James Blanchard created OWBO in 1983, making the Com-

merce Department office one of only two state-run programs in the country devoted exclusively to women entrepreneurs.

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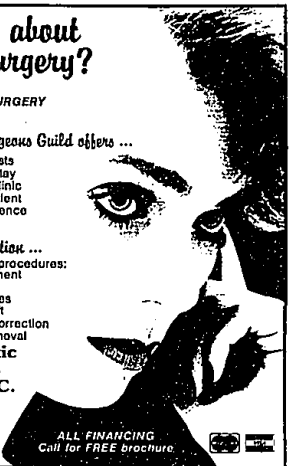
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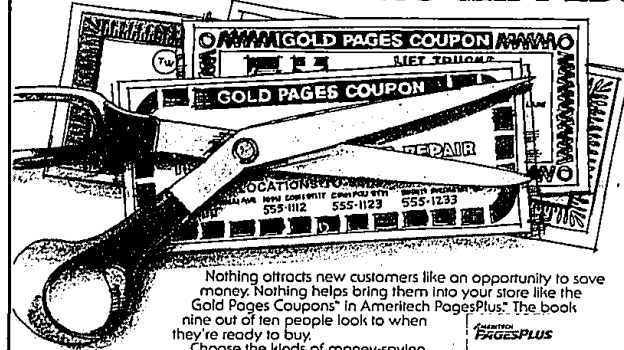
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| HUMANITIES        |                           |      |            |              |
| HUM 101           | INTRO: WEST ART & CULTURE | M,W  | 6:00-10:00 | 9/29-11/12   |
| HUM 103           | EXPLORING ARTS IN DET     | M,W  | 6:00-10:00 | 10/27-12/10  |
| POLITICAL SCIENCE |                           |      |            |              |
| P S 101           | AMERICAN GOVERNMENT       | T,TH | 6:00-10:00 | 9/30-11/13   |
| P S 224           | INTRO: URBAN PLTIC&PLC    | M,W  | 6:00-10:00 | 10/27-12/10  |
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| PSY 260           | PSY: SOCIAL BHV           | T,TH | 6:00-10:00 | 10/23-12/10  |
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