

“Trailblazers Paving the Way to Greatness,” was the theme for Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission’s (WSSC) 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women Business Owners’ Expo held on Friday, March 31, 2017 at the Holiday Inn in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The water utility, serving Montgomery and Prince Georges’ Counties is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest such utility in America and perhaps the most diverse inclusive in terms of governance, management, staff and supplier diversity. General Manager/CEO, Carla A. Reid, is a shining example of the diverse leadership of WSSC. Becoming the first woman to lead WSSC in its 98-year history, she is extremely proud of the scores of women who attended the event on such a stormy and hazardous day. She is also proud of WSSC’s commitment to women owned business and is working to change the many obstacles women must endure in winning work with the utility. Hosting this expo can improve one’s ability to win by educating attendees on business practices, certification, and finance among other topics.

WSSC’s motto, “Diversity...just the way we do business!”, is exemplified by none other than Towanda R. Livingston, Director, SLMBE Office, who was there with her staff that included Tracey Edwards and Brittany Gonzalez.

The event was opened by Bershan Shaw, an International Motivational Speaker/Warrior Life Coach/Author whose theme song, “I’m Every Woman,” had the room dancing. A very special moment came when Thomasina V. Rogers, WSSC Commissioner from Prince Georges County provided perspective on women’s will to succeed despite the odds.

Workshops included, Superwoman Syndrome: Overcoming Stress & Finding Balance; Boss Up: Playing it Big and Owning Your Space; Defining & Leveraging Your Brand Authenticity; From Start Up to Scale Up: How to Access Capital For Your Business and The Business of Owning a Business.

Exhibitors were present to add further value in providing new direction and education for the attendees. “WSSC earned an A+ for always keeping America’s women in thought and action,” said Wayne R. Frazier, Sr., President of Md. Washington Minority Companies Association (MWMCA), who exhibited and met many positive women-owned businesses along with senior and middle level women in management. “This event luminates because of its unique respect and approach to women.”

March 2018 will usher in their 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Women Business Owners’ Expo and you don’t want to miss it.