

Keynote Speaker Calvin G. Butler, Jr., CEO of Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE) Delivered a Rousing Speech at MWMCA Spring Breakfast

Lights, camera, and action was on full display during MWMCA's 16th Annual Spring Breakfast and Business Showcase Expo on Friday, May 10, 2019. The event was another shining example of the DMV coming together for social economic inclusion. The region's top private firms and government agencies convened to demonstrate why the DMV leads the nation for Minority and Women Business Enterprise.

Event day included a sit-down breakfast and awards program which recognized and honored seventeen (17) distinguished firms and individuals for social economic inclusion. Over ninety (90) top prime firms and government agencies participated as exhibitors in the Business Showcase Expo. Small business attendees had an opportunity to sit down with representatives from top prime companies to discuss their companies' capabilities during business to business matchmaking meeting sessions.

The pleasant surprise of the morning came when the Maryland House of Delegates' new Speaker of the House, Adrienne Jones (D) Delegate 10th District, Baltimore County, arrived and entered the ballroom to an ovation of applause. Delegate Jones is the first woman and the first African American to be elected in this role.

Keynote Speaker Calvin G. Butler, Jr., CEO of **Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE)**, delivered a rousing speech on BGE's Supplier Diversity success and the need for greater opportunities for minority and women in C-suites and corporate boards. Mr. Butler became BGE's first African American CEO, in its 203-year history as

America's first natural gas utility producer and distributor. Under Mr. Butler's leadership, BGE spent \$326 million, or 35%, of total spend with diverse supplier vendors in 2018.

Maryland's senior U.S. Senator, Benjamin Cardin (D), delivered greetings and assured us that our nation still cares about small business creation, maintenance, and development. He noted that the Small Business Administration (SBA) is lending at record pace and a record number of small businesses are operating in the United States.

Additional speakers included Kylie Patterson, Director of Economic Inclusion for **Johns Hopkins University & Medicine**, who provided an update on Hopkins Local Empowerment Program since its origin in 2015. MBE/WBE construction spend exceeds \$48.5 million or 23.5% of total spend. New local hire total 1,017 people and \$54 million in goods were purchased through MBE/WBE firms. Finally, 402 ex-felons were hired and 66 MBE/WBE firms completed BLocal Build College.

Travis Lamb, General Manager of **Live! Casino & Hotel**, told the audience how inclusive the casino is when spending with MBE/WBE firms. Live! Casino & Hotel has been hosting bi-annual MBE Vendor Fairs, which allows small businesses to connect with prime businesses, since 2013. To date, over 400 prime firms and government agencies have participated as exhibitors, with over 5,000 small and minority-owned businesses attending.

Kelly Schulz, Secretary of **Maryland Department of Commerce** provided updates on Governor Hogan's campaign to improve Maryland and increase opportunities for MBE/WBEs. She announced the creation of a new staff position as MBE Developer that the department is currently seeking to fill.

Joanna Harmon, Corporate Small/Diversity Business Liaison from **The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company**, provided an overview on their inclusive culture and their 100-year history of delivering world class projects.

R. Earl Lewis, Jr., Deputy Secretary at the **Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)** provided an overview on their many transportation projects that are forthcoming. He reminded the assembled guest to get MDOT certified as a MBE/WBE/ACDBE to take advantage of the many new opportunities.

“The 90+ top prime companies that participated represent over \$50 billion in opportunities within the DMV from a combination of industries including: transportation, healthcare, gaming, K-12 and higher education, energy, multi-family housing, and Maryland’s new medical cannabis industries to name a few. About 1,500 representatives from minority and women-owned businesses from various industry spectrums attended in search of new trading partners and opportunities. We are pleased to serve as a catalyst for business connection and inclusion. The DMV is the best region in America for social economic inclusion via government and private industry. See you next year and thank you all for the tremendous support and belief in minority and women-owned businesses,” said Wayne R. Frazier, Sr, president of Md. Washington Minority Companies Association (MWMCA).