

## **NEW CHAMBER ACTION PLAN MORE GLOBAL WESTON GROUP OFFERS UP WORLD MARKETING TIPS**

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

With all of south Florida's global connections, one could be excused from assuming that international business from here would be easy.

No so, according to Keil Hackley who serves on the International Business Committee of the emerging Weston Business Chamber of Commerce, Broward County's newest chamber. "It is easier said than done," she said, referring to both immigrants who wrongly assume that they can do business here as they did back home and local companies that want to market their products and services to other countries.

"Any business person needs to look at business from a global perspective," she advised. "We need to ask how we can help each other communicate in international commerce."

To assist local businesses to think globally, the fledgling chamber will sponsor an Immigration Seminar at 7 p.m. on August 8, at the Sagemont Upper School Media Center, 2585 Glades Circle in Weston. The speaker will be Daniel N. Vara, Jr., District Counsel for the Miami District office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The seminar is free and open to the public.

"We are going to be looking at a number of issues," explained Gastón Reboredo of Weston who also serves on the chamber's International Business Committee. "We will be hearing about the new changes in immigration visas and how they will impact Hispanics, local businesses and tourism," he said.

Mr. Vara will also speak about law enforcement, security measures, hiring practices and other changes in immigration policies. A translator will be available to help with questions and answers.

"In the future, we want to help people learn how to relocate here, how to do business, the philosophy of working here and how to start a business," Reboredo said.

In addition to addressing issues related to Spanish-speaking businesses and relations with Latin American companies, the Chamber plans to widen the perspective of local business leaders to other parts of the world.

"Our role as a chamber will be more than just providing an opportunity for networking," explained Hackley who is an attorney specializing in immigration issues in Weston. "We have a large Latin population in Weston, but we don't want to serve just Hispanics," she said.

"The city of Weston is about 40% Hispanic, with the majority being Venezuelan and Colombian, but it's also a multicultural community," said Reboredo. "Our goal is to serve

not only Latins, but also those from South Africa, France--whoever is in the area. We want to target the needs of the community."

The chamber's goal is to bring all of the international issues in the community together under one umbrella so that they can be addressed. "There are many splinter groups in Weston," said Hackley. "If we can come together as the Weston community we can speak as one voice and help each other."

The Weston Business Chamber of Commerce has been in the process of organization for the past few months and plans an official kick-off at a "Taste of Weston" celebration on September 24. The organization also plans a "Sneak Preview" mixer at 5:30 p.m., on August 16 at the Marriott Courtyard, 2000 North Commerce Parkway, Weston.

"We organized to fill a void in the community and to offer new services," explained Dick Trimarche of Weston who serves as the chamber's Chairman of the Board. "We have had an excellent response so far and have about 40 members." Trimarche said that the new chamber plans to offer referral services, information forums, member-to-member discounts, a women's council, government affairs weeks and other opportunities.

"We will try to have programs that will help local businesses," said Fred Sadoff of Weston who is the organization's treasurer.

The chamber's priorities include developing a trade show, small business development, government affairs, international marketing, web site development, hospitality and corporate business committees.

For now, the leaders are excited about their first community offering. "I work with immigrants in my law practice and I see a most diverse group every day," said Hackley. "I see first hand how the communicating together can help the community. I'm really excited about it."

For information on the Immigration Seminar or the Weston Business Chamber of Commerce, call 954-349-4994

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