



Chamber Hosts Stimulus Help Meeting

Months after President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – more commonly known as the stimulus package – into law, many local businesses are still trying to find out the different ways the package can benefit them.

In order to help business owners in the borough, the Queens Chamber of Commerce hosted a Small Business Stimulus Made Simple town hall meeting on Tuesday, June 9, with representatives from a number of different agencies giving out free advice.

The panelists included Brenda Stuart-Luke, Senior IRS Stakeholder Liaison; Brian Gurski, Director Small Business Development Center at LaGuardia Community College, Ann Seifried, Deputy Director of NY Industrial Retention Network; Brad Seader, Senior Account Manager for New York City Business Solutions and Man-Li Kuo Lin, Business Development Specialist at the U.S. Small Business Administration. Each of the panelists provided a 10-minute overview of their organization.

“The most important thing I can say is to utilize the resources around you,” said Gurski.

A few months ago, Chamber President Al Pennisi decided that since more than 80 percent of the Chamber membership consisted of small businesses, the organization wanted to increase its efforts during these difficult economic times. The Chamber formed a new committee, which they dubbed the Main Street Committee, which came up with the idea to host the town hall meeting as one of its first orders of business.

During the discussion, panelists spoke about a host of topics, including different loan programs that businesses would be eligible for, write-offs with regard to capital investments and new equipment and free service organizations throughout the city.

“This is the time to take advantage of what they have to offer,” said Neil Levin, who co-chairs the Chamber’s Main Street Committee.

After the panelists presented information on how their organization was helping businesses with the stimulus package, audience members had the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists. In addition, they were able to speak with the experts in a one-on-one setting afterward to address specific questions.

“I’m so happy to see such a great response to our efforts,” said Main Street Committee Co-Chair Mary Vavruska.



Queens Chamber of Commerce President Al Pennisi delivered the welcoming remarks at the Chamber’s Small Business Stimulus Made Simple town hall meeting as the panelists looked on.

Former Chamber Treasurer Russell Camp February 28, 1914 – May 28, 2009

Rosolino Comparetto, later Russell Camp, an active member of the Queens Chamber of Commerce who served as Treasurer of the organization well into his 80s, passed away on May 28, 2009.

Camp was born in Chicago to Italian immigrant parents. He spent his childhood in Florida, where he gained fluency in Spanish. Later, he moved north and attended City College.

Camp graduated planning to teach Spanish, but was detoured first to work in his father’s store and then into the Marines’ 11th Defense Battalion, where he served at Guadalcanal.

Returning from war, Russ delivered mail while selling insurance after hours. He rapidly built his own agency and became very active in the Queens business community where he was a Chamber member for over 25 years. He continued as the Treasurer of the Chamber well into his 80s always being a staple at the Chamber’s golf outing.

Camp married Gloria after the war and had two sons and two grandsons. After she died, he met Elsa and found himself in the heart of a second family. He was a lively, patient mainstay for his four additional children.

Energy Efficiency Programs For Eligible Small Businesses And Homeowners

As New Yorkers prepare for summer’s heat, Con Edison announced that the company is launching new energy efficiency programs for eligible small businesses and homeowners that include free energy surveys and rebates for those who upgrade their heating, cooling and hot-water systems. Customers can make inquiries and sign up for the new programs beginning today.

For small businesses, Con Edison will provide free energy audits and give substantial rebates to companies that make major energy efficiency upgrades. Residential customers can take advantage of rebates for installing the most efficient heating, cooling and hot-water equipment.

Eligible small business customers who use under 100kw in monthly peak demand can receive:

A free energy survey; free efficiency measures installed onsite to reduce lighting and hot water usage such as:

- 1) compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)
- water heater thermostat setbacks
- low-flow aerators (water saving device); and
- 2) Rebates of up to 70 percent when they upgrade cooling, heating, lighting and certain other equipment

3) Eligible residential electric customers who live in one-to-four family homes can receive:

rebates of up to \$400 for the purchase and

installation of high-efficiency electric air conditioning equipment;

rebates for other measures such as electric water heating and duct sealing; and

\$25 rebate on Energy Star rated thermostats which can help customers save up to 10 percent a year on cooling and heating bills according to the U.S. Department of Energy

Energy efficiency is essential to Con Edison’s plan to slow the growing demand for electricity in New York City and Westchester County, while protecting the environment and deferring infrastructure investment costs.

“These new financial incentives will help our customers save money and energy while offering solutions that are good for the environ-

ment,” said Rebecca Craft, director of energy efficiency programs. “Making homes and businesses more energy efficient is an important step toward reducing our carbon footprint.”

The new programs, which are part of the company’s long-term goal of reducing energy demand in its service area by 500 megawatts (MWs) by 2015, support New York State’s energy reduction plan and New York City and Westchester County initiatives. One megawatt can power up to 1,000 homes.

For more information and to begin the application process, small business customers and residential customers can call toll free 1-877-870-6118 or visit www.coned.com/energyefficiency.