



business philosophy

NANCY ZURBUCHEN | President of Motional Multimedia and co-founder, director of the Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners
ILLUSTRATION BY NOLI NOVAK

Regulatory Fairness Board Cuts Through Red Tape

It was Friday afternoon just outside the northeast Missouri state line. A small trucking company had a caravan of semi trucks, each hauling one huge wind turbine blade, moving towards the Missouri border. Their destination was no more than 20 miles inside the state, but as required by the **Missouri Department of Transportation** (MoDOT), the caravan had to stop at the border and wait on a pre-arranged highway patrol escort. After repeated and increasingly desperate phone calls, the owner of the company was told that the officers were busy and would not be able to provide the escort after all; and no, there were no other alternatives or backup plans that met MoDOT regulations. Furthermore, since it was Friday, the escort could not be provided until Monday morning. In the end, hands tied with red tape, the trucking company's owners had no choice but to endure the financial loss of having the caravan of trucks sit on the side of the highway all weekend. If you were the company owner, what would you do?

The incident is just one example of how the new **Missouri Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board** (SBRFB) can be an invaluable resource for small businesses. The owner of the trucking company notified the SBRFB, noting not only the distress of her experience, but also pointing out the potential adverse effect such regulation could have on the development of wind energy in the state. The SBRFB began making inquiries into the incident.

The Missouri SBRFB was established in 2005 for the purpose of giving small businesses a voice in the development and enforcement of regulations that affect them. Its goal is to make Missouri friendly to small business, thereby boosting its economic strength. In this regard, the SBRFB is the nexus of communication between small businesses and state agencies.

As a new appointee to the board, what I find most exciting is the legislation that includes the tools necessary for the board to carry out its designated responsibilities, in both proactive and reactive ways. Through the board, agencies are directed to do several things

in the interest of small business. They must obtain input from small businesses when crafting rules and document the efforts. They must write a small business impact statement and submit it to the SBRFB for each proposed rule that affects small businesses ... prior to the rule being enacted. Further, the board is reactive to existing problems with current rules. Agencies must consider alternative methods of compliance for small businesses, take into account the size of the business when imposing fines and provide timely responses to written investigative requests from the SBRFB. In addition, an annual evaluation report produced by the SBRFB helps to ensure that all participants are clear on expectations and performance. Lastly, the legislation must provide budgetary resources and staffing to support the work of the board.

Interestingly, Missouri is at the leading edge of all states in terms of this type of legislation and board function. Other states have similar legislation, but frequently it is Missouri that is cited as an example for best practices. Nationally, credit goes to the **Small Business Administration's** Office of Advocacy for writing the sample legislation. In Missouri, credit goes to Governor Matt Blunt, for his significant interest in supporting small business; State Representative Brian Baker, for sponsoring the bill; and State Senator LuAnn Ridgeway, for her support as chairwoman of the Small Business Committee.

The SBRFB provides an ear and an ally to small businesses experiencing problems related to state agencies. The board has helped a campground owner, an optometrist and an IT company—all with issues far less-dramatic than that of the trucking company but still vexing for the business owners.

To receive the new regulatory alerts and further information, contact the boards and commissions coordinator at 573-526-3606. I encourage the legislators in Topeka to consider creating an SBRFB. Doing so would help attract and retain small business owners in the entire two-state region—especially in the Kansas City metropolitan area. **KCB**



Nancy Zurbuchen, president of Motional Multimedia and co-founder, director of the Kansas City Council of Women Business Owners; Cheryl Womack, president and CEO of the Star Group and VCW Holdings; Carl D. Peterson, president and general manager of the Kansas City Chiefs; and Bob Marcusse, president and CEO of the Kansas City Area Development Council rotate in writing this column. To respond to this column, email rsmacintosh@kcbmagazine.com.