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## California Bank & Trust Debuts Initiative Focused On Minority And Women-Owned Businesses

California Bank & Trust (CB&T) will announce a new business financing initiative focused on minority and women-owned businesses in California at the LATINA Style Business Series on April 12, 2012 at the Hilton Los Angeles-Universal City (555 Universal Hollywood Drive, Universal City, CA 91608). The bank's new TEAM initiative

launches with a focus on Latina-owned businesses, although it also encompasses all minority-owned businesses in California. California Bank & Trust will debut TEAM, which represents "Tools, Education, Access and Mentoring," in affiliation with Latina Style, Inc. and the Anna Maria Arias Foundation, whose work ensures the growth, reach and impact of Latina entrepreneurs nationwide by providing programs, services and resources that help Latinas establish successful businesses. The TEAM initiative strengthens California Bank & Trust's longstanding commitment to identify the unique economic needs of the communities served by the bank and to focus on meeting the needs of businesses through community-specific lending initiatives. In 2012, California Bank & Trust earned the highest rating from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Community Reinvestment Act, the fourth consecutive time California Bank & Trust has earned FDIC's "Outstanding" designation.



"TEAM is a comprehensive approach designed to address the issues faced by many minority and women business owners, especially access to financing," says Betty Rengifo Uribe, California Bank & Trust Executive Vice President. "Access to capital is the number one impediment to the growth of small business owners. California Bank & Trust and Latina Style are working together toward a goal of helping Latina entrepreneurs gain access to the financing they need for their businesses to succeed. Our goal is to show them what they need to qualify and obtain the financing required to help their businesses succeed. At California Bank & Trust, we take great pride in our connections to community. Through our network of highly experienced, professional bankers, we can provide expert guidance to minority and women-owned businesses, giving them the help they need to grow, thrive and become a valuable part of their communities."

California Bank & Trust, as part of Zions Bancorporation, the recipient of 13 Greenwich Associates 2011 Excellence Awards in banking, will address the needs of the state's Latina business population under the TEAM program. According to the latest U.S. Census data, Latina-owned businesses are the fastest growing segment of small businesses in the country and Latinas control 30 percent of the 1.4 million companies owned by minority women in the United States. Additionally, Hispanic-owned businesses in the U.S. increased by 43.7 percent to 2.3 million from 2002 to 2007, more than twice the overall national rate. In California, nearly 30 percent of all small businesses are women-owned, while nearly 15 percent are Latino-owned, according to the Small Business Administration. Latina-owned businesses and their specific issues and challenges will be highlighted and discussed at the April 12 Latina Style Business Series event in Los Angeles, chaired by Ms. Uribe.

Ms. Uribe herself has owned and managed three businesses in Southern California and one in South America, and has employed an entrepreneurial vision in her work-life. Co-chairing the Business Series with Uribe is Norma Vega, Senior Advocacy and Consultant of Ibarra Strategy Group (ISG). Prior to her work with ISG, Norma served as Executive Director of the Office of the Census 2010 in the Office of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Norma developed a citywide educational and community outreach campaign that resulted in the highest Census mail participation of any comparable city. The event will be emceed by Jessica Carrillo, co-host of "Acceso Total" on the Telemundo network. Also scheduled to appear is Maria de Lourdes Sobrino, who will be on hand signing copies of her book, "Thriving Latina Entrepreneurs in America," from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa is tentatively scheduled as the event's keynote speaker.

Through the TEAM initiative, California Bank & Trust provides tools, resources, access to financing, knowledge and expertise to help minority and women-owned businesses make informed decisions and to overcome challenges in getting access to financing. The bank provides business owners with access to trained and experienced business bankers who understand the needs of businesses. California Bank & Trust also provides local decision-making, closer to the customer, which means that the bank understands the customer better and can respond faster. The TEAM initiative launches April 12 with a new website featuring videos, information and helpful tools to help small business owners.

"The most significant obstacle for growth for Latina entrepreneurs is the lack of adequate capitalization. For 14 years the Latina Style Business Series has been serving the Latina entrepreneur by providing the most successful business development program in the nation. Access to capital though has continued to be a challenge," says Robert E. Bard, president & CEO of Latina Style, Inc. "We are ecstatic the California Bank & Trust has decided to make access to capital to minority owned businesses a priority and this will surely benefit the Latina entrepreneur, California and our country. We look forward to our association with CB&T to produce incredible results."

<http://www.diversityplus.com/tops.aspx?id=California-Bank-Trust-Debuts-Initiative-1536>