

Friday, Apr. 30, 2010

[Comments](#) (0)



[Recommend](#) (1)

Small businesses gather for Pasco symposium

By Annette Cary, Herald staff writer

PASCO -- Succeeding as a small business at Hanford requires doing your homework, Rob Rittenberg, director of Richland operations for [Cavanagh Services Group](#), advised small business representatives Thursday.

"Network, network, network" was his advice to those attending the eighth annual Bridging Partnerships Small Business Symposium at TRAC in Pasco.

About 400 people attended the symposium organized to help small businesses learn how to win Hanford and other government work and to introduce them to Department of Energy contractors and subcontractors looking for goods and services.

It drew not only owners and representatives of small businesses in the Mid-Columbia, but also people from Canada and states across the nation, said Kayla Pratt of the Tri-City Development Council.

The symposium was sponsored by the Hanford nuclear reservation prime contractors, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and TRIDEC in cooperation with the Department of Energy.

Contractors and subcontractors receiving some of the \$1.96 billion in federal economic stimulus dollars for Hanford cleanup still have money to spend to complete their work, Pratt said. That's in addition to annual Hanford cleanup budgets of about \$2 billion.

The symposium also is a way for even small businesses without government experience to connect with other small businesses already doing Hanford work and form partnerships, said TRIDEC representatives.

The keynote speaker for the seminar was [Sunny Kobe-Cook](#), founder of [Sleep Country USA](#). But earlier in the day, a standing-room-only crowd gathered to hear how Cavanagh Services Group had grown its small business at Hanford.

Aligning with a larger business was key to Cavanagh's growth, Rittenberg said. Formed in 2002, it was picked by CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. to provide transportation services even before CH2M Hill won the DOE prime contract to do central Hanford cleanup.

In September 2008, the company had nine full-time employees and now it has 51, Rittenberg said. It would hire more if it could find qualified applicants, he said.

Cavanagh has been careful to stick to its core strengths at Hanford, which may not be exciting but has been profitable, he said.

Among the company's work is providing the metal boxes that CH2M Hill needs to hold radioactive waste headed for disposal.

-- Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com