

Opportunity Knocks

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CINCINNATI (Nov. 9, 2015) – A diverse supplier chain often means innovation and cost savings – a combination that is good for business and the economy. Toyota has hosted its annual Opportunity Exchange for 26 years running – inviting Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBES) to cultivate and strengthen

relationships with Tier I (direct) suppliers at the free two-day event, happening Nov. 9 -10 at the Duke Energy Convention Center in downtown Cincinnati.

“The Opportunity Exchange is a demonstration of Toyota’s genuine commitment to connect MWBEs with opportunities,” said Eric Ellis, president and chief executive officer of Integrity Development. “Toyota is advocating for MWBEs and suppliers focused on building long-term relationships.”

The event began in 1989 with 300 attendees and has grown to nearly 2,000 people each year and has generated more than \$250 million in contracts for MWBEs. The event includes seminars and panel discussions that focus on topics including how MWBEs and Tier I suppliers (both direct and indirect) can turn relationships into opportunities. Although OE is hosted by Toyota, MWBEs and Tier Is often work on deals related to other automakers.

“It’s a great chance to connect,” said Melvin Gravely, president and CEO of Triversity Construction. “Businesses get a chance to talk about your value proposition, and you meet with the right people who buy what you sell and start that conversation.”

Initial introductions often lead to talks that strengthen relationship and can lead to contracts. “One thing about being an MBE, about being small, we’re quick; we have a lot of innovation,” said Greg Battle, former president and chief executive officer of Coolant Control. “We have to show that the products we are offering have an intrinsic built-in value. They get a good price. They get a better-performing product. That’s our niche.”

Carl Satterwhite, president and CEO of RCF Group, agrees. “MWBEs bring value to Tier I suppliers by way of innovation savings and cost avoidance that can bring new twists and opportunities for both companies to bring to the market,” Satterwhite said. “Minority firms may see things from a different angle than larger companies, and that may lead to strategic business opportunities.”

For more information, visit ToyotaOpportunityExchange.com.