

Forum to feature New York launching-pad role for local products

Starting with state, city government contracts;
CCE pursuing distribution hub

BY ALEX DÍAZ
alex@caribbeanbusiness.pr

The effort to help Puerto Rico companies expand to the States by way of New York will take a new turn next week, when more than 50 of them are expected to attend a unique workshop on how to become certified to do business with the state and city governments of New York.

A similar event was held March 29-31, 2012, when a delegation of companies from the island traveled to Manhattan on a trade mission designed to establish joint ventures with their New York counterparts to bid for state and city contracts.

"This time, not only will the event be held in Puerto Rico, but the purpose is for local companies to become certified themselves," explained Luis Torres Llompert, president of the trade group Enlace and member of the event's organizing committee.

"Establishing a joint venture with a New York company that is already certified is an option they have, and the workshop will go over that as well," he added, "but the emphasis is on explaining the certification process, helping companies go through it and showing how they can use this channel to expand their businesses, not only in New York, but also elsewhere."

The workshop will be held at 10 a.m. on Nov. 8 at the Conrad



While the economic-development highlight will be the Nov. 8 forum, the bigger highlight will be the presence of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Condado Plaza Hotel. The activity is part of a broader conference on social issues that will run from Nov. 6-10, organized by Somos El Futuro (We are the Future), a nonprofit group formed by New York state Latino senators and representatives to promote the interests of Latinos in the Empire State.

While the economic-development highlight will be the Nov. 8 forum, the bigger focal point will be the expected participation of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

At press time Monday, both had confirmed their presence for Nov. 9, according to Somos El Futuro

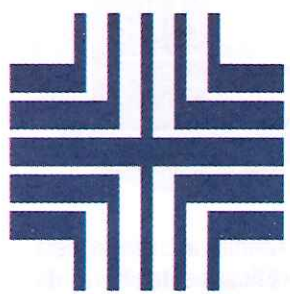
Executive Director Andrés Rivera.

"We are very excited, not only because the [New York] governor and mayor will be joining us, but also with the long list of state and city government officials who will be making the trip," Rivera told CARIBBEAN BUSINESS. "It is a great testament to how important our conferences have become in our shared effort to improve the condition and standard of living of Latinos."

Somos El Futuro began in 1987 and has held events in Puerto Rico in all but one of those years, Rivera added. "You have to remember that in our early years, the only Latino members of the New York [legislature] were Puerto Ricans. Today, there are Dominicans and others, but the majority are still Puerto Ricans, so coming to the island is natural for them."

The economic forum on Nov. 8 will be held jointly with the Puerto Rico Commerce & Export Co. (CCE by its Spanish initials). CCE officials met with Somos El Futuro staff at the annual Fancy Food trade fair held in New York during July and agreed to co-organize the workshop, said CCE Executive Director Francisco Chévere.

The event is part of a broader CCE initiative to use New York as a launch pad for Puerto Rican products on the U.S. mainland, including "the establishment of a distribution center for Puerto Rican products," he added. ■



Pitney Bowes

Pitney Bowes Puerto Rico
Calle Tabonuco #8 Suite 120
San Patricio Guyanabo Office Center
Tel. 787-641-9601 • Fax 787-641-9622
www.pitneybowes.pr

**Making the mail
your best connection.**