

**2008 Emerging Women in Business Conference
online registration begins April 1**

**Conference scheduled for June 12 at RIC
Sandra Ruiz-Desai, founder of Desai Communications to
keynote**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (March 15, 2008) – Online registration for Rhode Island’s annual *Emerging Women in Business* conference begins April 1, and will run through May 15. Those registering between these dates will be charged a reduced rate of \$15. After May 15, the cost to register is \$30. The registration fee will be used towards scholarships for qualified candidates, as well as give access to attendees to conference materials and workshops; refreshments and a resource guide to starting a business in Rhode Island. People are encouraged to take advantage of early registration by logging onto www.emergingwomen.biz or by calling (401)351-2999 ext.24 beginning April 1.

The conference is scheduled for June 12, from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Rhode Island College’s Gaige Hall Auditorium. This year’s theme is *Seeds for Success*, chosen to bring attention to the core functions necessary to own and operate a business. Each of the eight seminars offered during the event will reflect the theme, including workshops on financing, marketing, staffing, and administrating a company. (Editors: Details of each workshop will be released closer to the conference date.)

In its third year, *Emerging Women in Business* is presented by the Rhode Island Coalition for Minority Investment (RICMI) and the Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE). Although the conference is targeted to low and moderate income women entrepreneurs, the public is invited to attend. The keynote speaker is Sandra Ruiz-Desai, founder of Desai Communications in Connecticut. The company is a division of Slideeffects and was named one of the top 50 diversity-owned businesses in Connecticut in 2004.

Emerging Women in Business Conference Online Registration, April 1-May

Conference co-chairs are Denise Barge, executive director of RICMI and Carol Malysz, director of CWE. “This conference seeks to support women in our state who have the fortitude to consider business ownership and the stamina to overcome challenges,” according to Barge. “Our goal is to support their hard work and effort by giving them the tools to succeed.”

Over nine million women own businesses across America. In Rhode Island, over 50 percent of start ups are owned and operated by women. Yet, nearly one-half of all small businesses opened in any year – by men and women – end up closing within the first two years of operation simply because the owners lacked fundamental business skills. *Emerging Women in Business* aims to deliver the facts about owning a business and will provide expert advice, information and networking opportunities to conference-goers in order to help local women – particular low-income and minority – avoid some of the pitfalls of business ownership. Over 200 women attended last year’s conference.

“When a local business succeeds, we all succeed,” said Malysz. “The *2008 Emerging Women in Business: Seeds for Success* conference will deliver critical information to entrepreneurs to fulfill their goals of self-employment and gain personal and economic stability, while contributing to the betterment of our state and society.”

For more information about the conference, call (401) 351-2999 ext. 24.

ABOUT

The Rhode Island Coalition for Minority Investment (RICMI), established in 1994, is a community-based non-profit organization that increases access to business credit, makes micro loans, and provides training which enable emerging women, minority and low-income entrepreneurs to realize their dreams and be catalysts for positive economic and social change. The RICMI mission is to promote economic development by nurturing and building entrepreneurial success among constituencies that represent all Rhode Island small businesses with a focus on ethnic minorities, women owned businesses, as well as businesses in low/moderate income areas.

The **Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping women start and grow their own businesses. CWE is a national leader among women's business development agencies. CWE offers education, training, technical assistance, women's business enterprise certification and access to both debt and equity capital to entrepreneurs at every stage of business development. CWE clients are drawn from a wide variety of racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, spanning the range from women living in public housing who may want to start home-based or small retail businesses to women running fast growth, multi-million dollar technology businesses. As a non-profit, charitable organization, CWE provides scholarships for its services in order to serve all women, regardless of their ability to pay.