Mayor Ballard applauds J.W. Marriott hiring goals

Company commits to women and minority businesses

INDIANAPOLIS – Through the development of the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program, the city has taken strides to ensure contracts are awarded in a way that reflects the diversity of the city’s local businesses. Mayor Greg Ballard has made it a top priority to boost economic development through support of local businesses, and one major step toward this goal has come with the J.W. Marriott hotel project now underway on West St. across from the Indiana Convention Center.

The city requires that any projects with investment of public funds allocate at least 15% of the project to minority-owned businesses and 8% to women-owned business. Public bidding is required for parts of the J.W. Marriott project because taxpayer dollars are involved. Project developer, White Lodging, has taken their commitment a step further by opening up the entire project to the city’s hiring goals.

“We’re here today to make sure businesses that comprise our city’s talent pool, especially those businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, or individuals with disabilities, are aware of the opportunities that exist,” said Mayor Greg Ballard.

“When the Marriott tower is complete, it will be an impressive structure, and it will serve as a visual reminder of the diverse talent that lies in our city’s home-grown businesses,” he continued.

Some portions of the project make it difficult for minority and women-owned business bidders due to the size and the aggressive schedule of the project. As of October, figures available show eight minority and five women-owned businesses have participated in the J.W. Marriott project, with the
city having paid out more than $1.8 million to minority-owned businesses and more than $256,000 to women-owned businesses.

The 34 story tower is expected to be complete by 2011. But three other hotels on site, The Fairfield Inn, Courtyard by Marriott and the Springhill Suites are anticipated to be open by March of 2010 in time for the NCAA Men’s Final Four.

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