INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today highlighted successes and continued progress toward maximizing opportunities and participation of women-, minority-, and veteran-owned business enterprises in City of Indianapolis projects and others throughout Marion County. During remarks at the National Association of Women Business Owners Awards Luncheon, Mayor Ballard said equal opportunities have been afforded for women-, minority-, and veteran-owned businesses through the Department of Minority and Women Business Development (DMWBD) in securing bids on City and other projects.

“We are making great strides in our efforts to create and promote economic growth for minority, women and veteran business enterprises. And we are not done yet,” said Mayor Ballard. “Our Department of Minority and Women Business Development is working diligently to ensure City-County government is responsive to the needs of minorities, women, and veterans who own businesses and are striving to provide a better quality of life for themselves and their families.”

More than $141 million in City contracts were awarded to Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)/Women Business Enterprise (WBE) firms in 2009, compared to just more than $68 million in 2008. From the start of 2008 to July of this year, in fact, the City has increased business with WBE firms ten-fold, from $2.1 million in 2007 to $20.7 million in 2010 through July. In the same time frame, the City has nearly quadrupled spending with MBE firms, from $15.5 million in 2007 to more than $57 million in 2010 through July.

And, under Mayor Ballard’s direction, the City of Indianapolis is creating new opportunities for businesses owned by veterans. This year the City of Indianapolis hired its first Veteran Services Officer, who is tasked primarily with assisting veterans and providing opportunities for veteran business owners. The City of Indianapolis was the first city in the nation to develop and implement a program to help Veteran Business Enterprises (VBEs). Spending with veteran-owned businesses has increased from zero dollars in 2009 to nearly $500,000 through July 2010.
Support of minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses helps primarily small businesses, which in turn provide more jobs and economic growth to our community. For example, half of the contracts to manage City golf facilities went to women- and minority-owned businesses – three are MBEs and three are WBEs. RebuildIndy has already exceeded its goals for minority, women and veteran business enterprises. As of November 2010, WBE contracting for The New Wishard has exceeded the 8 percent goal and now stands at 10.4 percent. The City of Indianapolis also established a “Business Opportunities Brown Bag Series” to help women- and minority-owned businesses better compete and win city contracts.

Through these efforts, many of the City’s local minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses are continuing to see the benefits through involvement in projects including the JW Marriott, The New Wishard, and RebuildIndy.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (DMWBD):
The Department of Minority and Women Business Development is designed to increase vendor access to resources and business development through programs that provide consultation, workshops, tools and connections for sustaining and growing business through public, private, business, community, and global partnerships.

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