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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Black Chamber Launches Effort to Help Develop Black Chambers *Organization Says Black Chambers are Key to Building Strong Black Businesses*

Washington, DC—July 15, 2011—The U.S. Black Chamber announced today the launch of a national effort to enhance the effectiveness and influence of local Black chambers of commerce. On Monday, July 18, the organization will launch its first session of the USBC School of Chamber Management (The USBC School), a 5-day professional development conference designed to provide chamber executives with the training needed to better serve Black business communities.

The USBC School cuts to the core of what executives need to know to successfully operate a chamber. During the conference, chamber executives, board members, staff and volunteers will focus on gaining proficiency in what the USBC has identified as core competencies:

- Small business and economic development;
- Governance and leadership;
- Organizational growth and development;
- Financial management and technology;
- Human resource management;
- Public policy and advocacy;
- Membership marketing and sales, and;
- Communications and media relations.

“Business growth doesn’t just happen,” said Ron Busby, president of the U.S. Black Chamber. “Business owners particularly Black business owners need support, training, and nurturing to become profitable. Since chambers are on the frontlines in these communities, they can make a measurable difference in the growth of these businesses.”

Over the past two years, Busby has toured the nation meeting with leaders of Black chambers and discovered that many of these organizations lack the resources, capacity, and management skills to be effective. The concept of the USBC School was born out of Busby’s findings and requests for developmental support from chamber executives.

The USBC’s focus on developing local Black chambers is also fueled by recent statistics on the growth of Black-owned businesses in America. Despite the fact that there has been an increase in the number of Black-owned businesses, national data shows that the majority of these businesses are one-person entities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO), of the 1.9 million Black-owned businesses in the United States, 94.4 percent of these firms had no paid employees. Only 106,824 were employer firms, employing 921,032 persons.

“These figures tell us that there is a crucial need to develop local Black businesses,” said Kerwin Brown, chairman, USBC Professional Development Committee and chairman, Greater Phoenix Black Chamber of Commerce. “Right now, most Black-owned businesses are mom and pop shops and individual consultants. Although these are notable endeavors, they do not generate jobs or spark large scale economic growth.”

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Busby and Brown believe that business development issues can be effectively addressed by chambers of commerce. Because they work directly with small businesses, these organizations can help business owners build capacity by connecting them to local, state and federal business programs, helping them find capital to grow, facilitating business partnering, and providing the training entrepreneurs need to operate viable companies.

Focus on Public Policy & Small Business Advocacy

In addition to addressing chamber management issues, the USBC School will educate chamber executives on how to impact local, state and federal policy that affect small business development. On Thursday, July 21, the USBC will conduct sessions on Capitol Hill for advocacy training and legislative briefings.

The following legislators will brief attendees on priority legislative issues:

U.S. Representative Donna Edwards (D-MD)
Housing, Transportation & Infrastructure
Committee

U.S. Representative Sam Graves (R-MO)
House Small Business Committee

U.S. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)
House Economic Development Committee

U.S. Senator, Robert Casey, Jr. (R-PA)
Chair, Senate Joint Economic Development
Committee

U.S. Senator, Ben Cardin (D-MD)
Senate Committee on Small Business &
Entrepreneurship

Conference Location

The USBC School will be held, July 18-22 at Georgetown University Conference Center located at 3800 Reservoir Road, NW, Washington, DC 20057.

Press Credentials are Required

See attached schedule for the full conference agenda. To obtain a press pass, email media@usbcschool.org or call 301-437-9624.

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About the U.S. Black Chamber

The United States Black Chamber, Inc. (USBC) provides committed and visionary leadership and advocacy in the realization of Black economic empowerment. Through the creation of resources, education, and initiatives, we support Black chambers of commerce and business leagues in their work to develop and grow Black enterprises. We are an economic force and represent a powerful constituency. There are 1.9 million privately held Black-owned businesses across every industry sector in the United States. We employ over 921,032 persons, and generate \$137.5 billion in annual revenue.

To learn more about the USBC, our advocacy agenda, and our national network of Black chambers, visit www.usbci.org.

To learn more about the USBC School of Chamber Management, visit www.usbcschool.org.