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## State hosting Ohio Business Expo on Sept. 19

Columbus – A priority for the State of Ohio is to expand access to state contracts for minority, women-owned and small businesses. Toward this end, the state is hosting the 2012 Ohio Business Expo on Wednesday, Sept. 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Rhodes Center at the Ohio Expo Center in Columbus.

This free expo will allow Ohio business owners to network with purchasing professionals from state agencies regarding upcoming contracting and procurement opportunities.

“The goal of the expo is for businesses to meet one-on-one with procurement officers and buyers from state agencies to discuss how to work together to provide the goods and services the State of Ohio requires,” said Director Robert Blair of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, which is sponsoring the expo in partnership with the Ohio Department of Development.

The state spent more than \$250 million with certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) firms during fiscal year 2011. The MBE program is the state’s minority business set-aside program. EDGE is a business and economic development program for economically and socially disadvantaged businesses.

The expo will include workshops about resources available to certified MBE and EDGE firms.

“The Ohio Business Expo is a great networking opportunity, which connects Ohio businesses to state agencies,” said Christiane Schmenk, director of the Ohio Department of Development. “The state needs reliable services and dependable products, and this expo provides the perfect platform to make valuable business connections.”

Admission is free. Parking is \$5.

Registration for the expo is preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. To register or learn more about the expo or the state’s MBE and EDGE programs, visit the Ohio Department of Administrative Services’ website at [das.ohio.gov/eod](http://das.ohio.gov/eod) or call 614.466.8380.