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**MBDA CELEBRATES ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH**

*Agency Hosts 2018 National AAPI Business Summit with White House and Commerce
Officials, Panels and More*

WASHINGTON (May 22, 2018) — The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) celebrated Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) with a day-long celebration Tuesday, May 15 featuring remarks from White House officials, panels focused on supplier partnerships and procurement, as well as discussions on the successes and challenges for millennial Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI).

Karen Dunn Kelley, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, performing the nonexclusive duties and functions of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce, delivered a keynote address at the 2018 National AAPI Business Summit that discussed the many contributions AAPI-owned businesses have made to the U.S. economy. Kelley noted that from 2007 to 2012, Asian-owned businesses in the U.S. increased 24 percent, while the number of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander-owned businesses expanded 45 percent.

“Secretary Ross and this administration believe minority-owned businesses play an important role in communities and in creating jobs and growth in the American economy,” Under Secretary Kelley said.

Under Secretary Kelley also highlighted two standout Asian-owned businesses supported by local MBDA business centers: Leasa Industries, a Miami-based bean sprout and tofu company, and Mellish Island, a sea cucumber processor and exporter to China with a U.S. headquarters in San Dimas, California.

After remarks from Holly Ham, Executive Director for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Mercedes Schlapp, Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor for Strategic Communication, MBDA National Acting Director Edith McCloud joined Ham on stage to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support and advocate for AAPI-owned businesses.

Two of the most notable Asian Americans serving in U.S. government also gave remarks at the National AAPI Business Summit: Elaine L. Chao, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and the

highest-ranking Asian American cabinet member, and Congresswoman Judy Chu (CA-27), Chair for the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

MBDA closed out the National AAPI Business Summit with a celebration by celebrity Asian chefs. The aroma of Chinese, Filipino and Indonesian cuisine filled the air, as the Department of Commerce lobby transformed into a bustling food court. Chef Widjiono (Yono) Purnomo of Yono's Restaurant in Albany, New York, Chefs Michael Chen and Rusong Dai of New China Taste in Alexandria, Virginia, and Chef Patrice Cleary of Purple Patch in Washington D.C., prepared sample dishes for attendees, showcasing a variety of Asian dishes.



From left to right: George Mui, MBDA, Chef Widjiono (Yono) Purnomo, Chef Patrice Cleary of Purple Patch, Jan-Ie Low, Golden Catalyst, LLC and Celebrity Chef event organizer, Chef Michael Chen and Chef Rusong Dai of New China Taste.

About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 45 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that build size, scale and capacity through access to capital, contracts and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda).

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