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owners looking for potential contracting opportunities.

Jan. 18, 2013

The Ohio Business Matchmaker Conference is like “speed dating” for small business owners looking for potential contracting opportunities.

The eighth annual event, to be held March 27-28 at the Dayton Convention Center, pairs small businesses with government agencies and prime contractors for one-on-one meetings and training. The 10-minute meetings are scheduled and timed, and allow suppliers and buyers to discuss one another's specific projects and capabilities.

“This provides a convenient opportunity for small businesses to network with new customers and suppliers,” said Stephanie Gostomski, a spokeswoman for the Ohio Development Services Agency. “These matches are an essential tool for small businesses in the state to grow. Every time we see growth, we see expansion and then new jobs in the state,” she said.

Small business owners will have the opportunity to meet buyers from city, state, county and federal agencies, as well as prime contractors and other organizations with combined purchasing budgets representing hundreds of millions of dollars, officials said. The conference also helps the agencies to achieve their mandated contracting and subcontracting goals.

Business' products and services are matched with buyers by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

The conference is held annually at different locations around the state, Gostomski said. Last year's event featured more than 1,140 participants, including more than 1,000 small businesses, who took part in meetings with more than 250 buyers.

Online registration is \$85 through Jan. 31, and \$125 through Feb. 28. On-site

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