

and business opportunities for minority businesses of all sizes. Curry counseled Powell that, as a member of GCMSDC, she could apply for Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification. Receiving her MBE certification was crucial for Powell because it made her eligible to apply for contracts earmarked specifically for minority businesses. GCMSDC also helped her develop a partnership with a multibillion dollar company, Worldwide Technology, which functions as a business mentor.

Rhodes and CAC's SBDC team also helped Powell with financial guidance, gave her QuickBooks training, put her in contact with the city of Phoenix—which is currently one of her clients—and introduced her to the Arizona Small Business Association, which has helped her receive training in how to work with a variety of customers, including the government. The SBDC also advised Powell on how to protect her company from lawsuits and encouraged her to invite her husband—who has outstanding sales skills—to join her business. He did, and together they have grown their company into a nationwide provider of technology solutions including software and hardware, IT solutions, and IT management and training services. Although most of their clients are outside of Arizona, they are building a strong in-state client base.

Range of Services

From implementing solutions that make an organization more productive to helping them save money on IT software, Computer Hardware and Software Unlimited provides a wide range of services. It provides various applications, antivirus protection, information backup and storage, business development tools, licensing, maintenance, and security. It also offers onsite support and installation services, including virtualization assessment and delivery services; deploys multiple personal computers and servers in several locations; designs and implements storage area networks; places portals (SharePoint); provides antivirus protection and spam filtering; offers racking, power, and cabling; incorporates a help desk; provides assessments for asset discovery and documentation; conducts compliance audits; offers data-center, network, and software compliance system infrastructures, and provides wireless sites.

It also provides a range of services from assisting with data storage to purchasing and providing digital cameras and camcorders, keyboards, monitors, motherboards, office equipment, processors, projectors, system cabinets, video cards, and warranties.

Tools for Success

Rhodes is proud as he reflects on the growth of Computer Hardware and Software Unlimited. "Inez's experience and knowledge in reselling IT equipment coupled with her ability to provide quality services in a timely manner has made her a success," he says. "She and her employees focus on quality, which eliminates her having to repeat services. Her stock-in-trade is that when she deals with a client, they receive superior service at a great price. She is successful because this mindset is in her head and in her business plan. You need to be passionate about your business to be wildly successful. That's Inez Powell."



Porter Plaza, location of Computer Hardware and Software Unlimited

Powell enjoys her company's continued growth and is grateful to the SBDC for its help. She offers this advice to those yielding to the entrepreneurial spirit: "Never give up, and never take no for an answer. Seek advice and keep going until you find an answer. Also, get connected to a mentor who is in your industry and who has been where you are. They can help you see where your business is and help you make it to the next level. They are not threatened by you, they are there to help you. Some large organizations are willing to do just that. They have helped me a great deal."

For more information about Computer Hardware and Software Unlimited, LLC, contact Inez Powell at ipowell@chsunlimited.com.

For more information about Central Arizona College's Small Business Development Center, contact Jim Rhodes at (520) 494-6610 or e-mail him at jim.rhodes@centralaz.edu.

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Benedict College Helps continued from page 3

first incubator partner graduation. *IMARA Woman* magazine spent 3 years as an incubator partner before purchasing its own office space and moving out into the community. The magazine's mission is to empower women of color by being a source of inspiration on issues of health, professional development, education, business, and family.

"The business incubators at the Business Development Center are directly contributing to a stronger community, and we have OUP to thank for much of it," said Salley. "Startup businesses, or businesses that may have been struggling to keep their doors open, can move into one of our business incubators and focus on growing their business. While they make their journey to success, they know they have the support of Benedict

College behind them. And once they complete their journey, the community gains a stronger resource and community member, as well as a potential employer."

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HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP) provides grants to institutions of higher education to assist them and their partners with the implementation of a broad range of community development activities, including neighborhood revitalization, housing, and economic development. This newsletter, *Diversity Works*, highlights the efforts of grantees in OUP's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities grant programs and includes a variety of interesting projects, compelling grantee profiles, and other valuable resources for minority-serving institutions.