

## Minority Green Business Conference And Expo Growing And Thriving

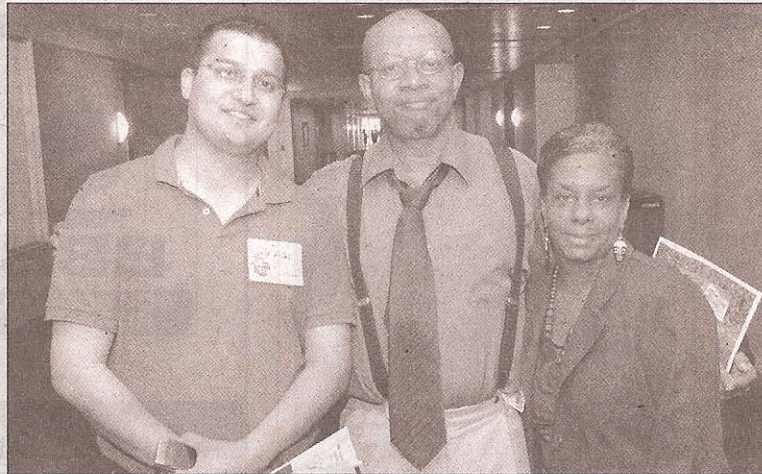
Story and photos

By Floyd Alvin Galloway

When we think of the color green two things come to mind - money and environmentally friendly. Those two items are what is the foundation of the Arizona Minority Green Business Conference and Expo held at Arizona State University Tempe campus' Memorial Union in June.

"Green solutions that can help you save money, make money, and grow money today - at home, at work, in the market and anywhere you choose," is what the conference booklet states. In its second year, the green conference and expo was the first of its kind in the country last year focusing on getting people of color into the game. Minority Business Enterprise Center (MBEC), Arizona State University Online and *Southwest Green Magazine* sponsor it.

Entrepreneurial minded individuals and leading experts in the Arizona "Green" movement convened to share knowledge, discuss future trends and network in burgeoning market.



Conference attendee Jose Rivas (left) with Dr. George Brooks Jr. and wife Angela, publishers of *Southwest Green Magazine*.

Green, synonymous with environmentally friendly, eco-system compatible has taken on new importance with governments, businesses and citizens as our earth is going through a change that will have a dramatic effect on our civilization, because of our negligent stewardship.

According to statistics given by Darice Ellis of the city of Phoenix Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program, colleges and universities spend \$240 billion on products; state and local governments spend \$400 billion. With most of these and other entities focusing on

obtaining green products and services now, the new gold mine is open for business and readily searching for prospectors to bring it.

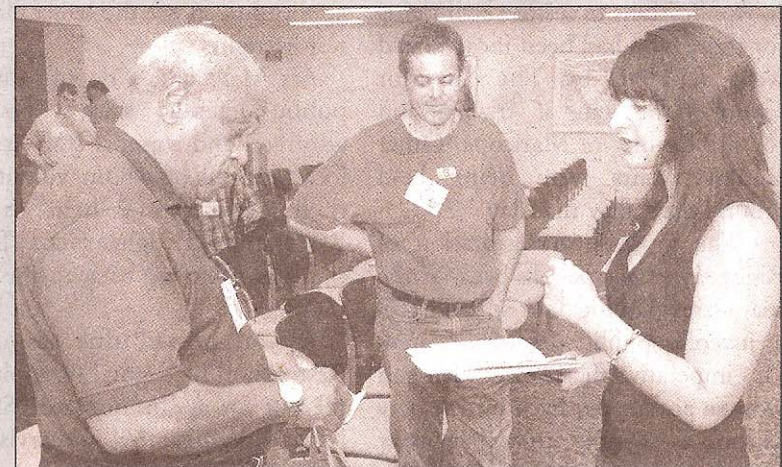
Also with a president in the White House who is pushing for greener technology and energy, this conference is a mechanism to make things happen and get paid. In the president's stimulus plan is the development of more and more eco-friendly companies that are sustainable in its products and services. Our environmental survival has now bridged the gap by linking going green with economic survival.

Several workshops from recycling, reducing carbon footprint, stimulus funds for green projects, developing green customers, healthy green home living, green gardening, financing green projects and others provided attendees with a wealth of knowledge and incentive.

Dr. George Brooks Jr., a scientist and publisher of *Southwest Green Magazine*, an on-line magazine, noted, "Green is leveling the business playing field. As more municipalities and state entities have 'Green' requirements for their vendors, this is an opportunity for people of

color to get a jump on big businesses," expressed Brooks. He noted that if you are not green compliant you will be losing out on a multi-billion dollar market. "It is important that minority vendors build capacity to meet the needs to respond to this new market."

The conference provided information on how to identify and address gaps and needs, how to finance a Green product line, Green construction opportunities, how making your home Green can save you money and developing relationships with Green businesses.



David Sharpe of Sharpe Automotive talks with Wells Fargo VP of Diverse Segments Lydia Aranda regarding financing his green business.