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### From Rags to Riches, Sault Tribe Member Became the Owner of a Multi-Million Dollar Company

Filed under: [Business News Alerts](#) — Tags: [Business Conferences](#), [Economic Development](#), [Linda Grow](#), [Minority Business](#), [Native American Business](#), [News](#), [Sault Ste. Marie](#) — Brenda Austin @ 5:22 pm

*This story first appeared in Win Awenen Nisitotung.*

Linda Grow was born in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and grew up in the west end of the city, graduating from Sault Area High School in 1962. She is a member of the [Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians](#) and remembers as a young adult how poverty-stricken other Native families were during the '70s and on into the '80s.

Now a successful business woman, she is interested in helping other businesses owned by American Indians become more visible and have greater access to forming relationships and business partnerships with government contractors and buyers.

Grow was recently asked by the [URS Corporation](#), a publicly owned industry giant with more than 48,000 employees in over 40 countries, to sit on their Native American URS Corporation PTAC Conference Panel. She said the panel will have question and answer sessions with contractors, buyers and URS Corporation themselves, to try and figure out why Native companies are not being sought out and offered an opportunity to bid on larger contracts.

Deciding it was time for her to diversify and take advantage of the contracts being offered, she became the proud owner and chief executive officer of [JETA Corporation](#) in 2005, with their corporate office located in Neenah, Wisconsin. Her company is a distributor for the energy, construction and industrial markets, including nuclear and fossil fuel energy channels, solar and wind power. Distributing through vendors, JETA does a lot of drop shipping throughout the United States.

From an initial investment of \$65,000, her company today generates over \$15 million a year.

She said when they started their company only 5 percent of available government contracts were being offered to women-owned minority businesses. "That was really feeble," she said. "There weren't many minority-owned companies out there that qualified, especially Native American-owned companies in our line of work."

She said she hopes to present a solid picture at the conference that there are Native-owned companies in manufacturing or distribution that can qualify for large contracts through companies such as URS Corporation. "URS is trying to educate their buyers to stop bypassing minority companies. I think this is a good platform to sidestep the rhetoric and politics that are going on within the government. One third of the audience is going to be representatives from large public-owned corporations such as URS Corporation and another third will be government agencies that go from state to state holding meetings but not accomplishing anything," she said.

It is hoped the last third will be interested minority business owners who will bring their questions and qualifications to the table.



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Grow said she is asking Native American owned corporations and businesses to step forward and contact her. She would like to hear from them about their services and qualifications and make a list of companies to take to the conference to show there are qualified minority companies who are capable of taking on large contracts and doing a good job. "I think that would have a big impact, we are really serious about this—we are just asking for a chance to bid," she said. "Everybody has the unique ability to fill some kind of niche."

Grow said this is a platform for [Native American-owned businesses](#) to use to go forward for recognition. "The names of companies who contact me will be part of a list for large companies to recognize that there are minority-owned companies out there in manufacturing and distribution that can qualify. I want to bring these companies extra dollars because they are seeking us out, but they just don't know we are out there. This is going to be important for not just our tribe, but for all tribes."

Native American Small Business Advocate for the URS Corporation, Deaun Lone Bear, told Grow, "We were very excited to find out about our prior working connection with your company. Your business is the type of success story that our Small Business Diversity program is looking for. We are happy to invite you to participate on our Native American Business Panel."

The conference will be held November 8, 2011, at the URS Corporate facility in Boise, Idaho, where government contractors will have the chance to meet with potential vendors. The theme of the conference is, "Creating Business Diversity: a Blueprint for the Future in Native American Economic Development." For more information about the conference, email [ec-sblo.info@urs.com](mailto:ec-sblo.info@urs.com). Attendance at the conference is by invitation only.

To contact JETA Corporation CEO Linda Grow and be added to her list of [Native American](#) vendors, call (888) 380-0805 or email her at [lgrow@jetacorp.com](mailto:lgrow@jetacorp.com).

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