

Woman touts Hispanic firms

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Albuquerque businesswoman Tina Cordova in the June-July issue of *Hispanic Trends* talks about how large U.S. corporations need to do a better job of recognizing the many goods and services Hispanic-owned businesses have to offer.

Cordova is owner of Question Construction Inc. and chairwoman of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's board of directors. She took over the position from acting president J.R. Gonzales, also on the cover of the magazine, in April.

She is the first New Mexican to be elected to the position and the second woman to hold it in its 25-year history, Cordova told the *Journal* last week.

Founded in 1979, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber now represents 155 local Hispanic chambers that make up about 2 million Hispanic-owned businesses nationwide, Cordova said.

Cordova and Gonzales agree in the magazine article that large U.S. companies can improve their use of goods and services from Hispanic-owned businesses.



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Albuquerque businesswoman Tina Cordova, current chairwoman of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and acting chamber president and CEO J.R. Gonzales are on the cover of *Hispanic Trends* this month.

Cordova related her experience trying to win government contracts.

"They seemed to think we didn't have computers or know how to run a company, that we operate our businesses out of the back of our trucks," Cordova said in the article.

The chamber has worked to change discriminatory perceptions about Latino

businesses "but we're not there yet," the article quotes Cordova saying.

Gonzales is head of Austin, Texas-based JRG Communications Inc., a public relations firm, and former chairman of the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce.

His stated goals as leader of the national Hispanic chamber are "to make the organization more politically involved and to create new wealth in the community."

Earlier this year, the chamber worked to persuade President Bush not to reduce funding for Small Business Association loans. The article said Hispanic small businesses received \$940 million in SBA financing last year.

"We're a nonpartisan organization but we will weigh in on issues if they affect our constituency," Cordova said.

Cordova said she is busy organizing the chamber's 25th annual convention, which will be held in Austin in September. Cordova expects between 5,000 and 7,000 Hispanic business people and local and state government representatives to attend.