

Arkansas Business Navigator Podcast

Episode 15: Faster Disaster Declarations, First-ever Latino Business Awards, ABN HR Resource Guide



Hello and welcome to the Arkansas Business Navigator Podcast, the show that reviews U.S. Small Business Administration and Arkansas Business Navigator resources available to support small business owners and entrepreneurs in the Natural state. I'm your host Brandon Mathews, and in today's episode we explore a new law that will change disaster declarations for rural businesses, ASBTDC and ABN are hosting the inaugural Arkansas Latino Business Awards, and the ABN Human Resource Guide.

Intro Music

When disaster strikes, it is everyone's hope that the response will be swift and meaningful. Legislators on capitol hill have been listening to rural communities around the country and have made headway towards real change. Senators James Risch of Indiana and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire authored the Disaster Assistance for Rural Communities Act ("Act") which has simplified the process for SBA disaster declarations to be made more quickly to provide affordable disaster loans and assistance to rural entrepreneurs, homeowners, renters and nonprofits. Governors or tribal government chief executives can request an agency disaster declaration in counties with rural communities that have experienced significant damage without as much red tape. Before the Act, a declaration required damage to at least 25 homes, businesses or other eligible institutions, but now a declaration can be made with only one damaged property in a rural area when the county has received a major disaster declaration from the President of the United States for Public Assistance. So, when disaster strikes rural communities, no one has to say, "I'm sorry, you don't have enough destruction in your community to receive assistance. Once more businesses are affected, we can assist you." While no one wants a flood, hurricane, earthquake, wildfire, or any other disaster to strike, rural business communities across Arkansas can rest assured that relief and assistance can arrive more swiftly. A full writeup of the SBA press release can be found in the show notes.

Transition Music

One of the goals of Arkansas Business Navigator is to expand outreach and services to the Latino small business and entrepreneur ecosystem around the state. I'm not just talking about translating documents and flyers, but impactful small business consulting meeting people where they are. From tailored workshops to seeking the best and brightest business minds in the Latino community, ABN's leadership is transforming the Latino business community in positive ways. To celebrate successes, ABN is hosting the inaugural Arkansas Latino Business

Awards (ALBA) which will take place on September 28, 2023 at the Clinton Presenter Center in Little Rock. The awards ceremony, organized by Arkansas Small Business Technology and Development Center and ABN, will recognize and celebrate the achievements of Latino-owned small businesses and entrepreneurs across the state of Arkansas. There are seven award categories including a people's choice for best food truck! Any 51% Latino owned or operated business is eligible to apply for these awards. July 10th is the deadline for nominations, so you better get to started! There are some incredible sponsorship opportunities to make this awards ceremony a success, so if your business or someone you know is looking for high visibility and return in one of the most dynamic and energetic business communities, I couldn't think of a better opportunity. All the details about the event, sponsorship and nominations can be found arlatinoawards.org. Like always, check the show notes for the link and details.

Transition Music

To round out this episode, I wanted to talk about employees. I get the questions often about managing employees, handbooks, and what people need to do when they look to hire their first employee. I'm not talking about handing your nephew cash under the table for work on the weekends (which ABN does condone). I'm talking about small business owners that are ready to take that next big leap. Well the good ole folks at ABN have developed a human resource guide called, "Hiring Your First Employee: Human Resource Information for Small Businesses." Okay, okay. Long title. Long guide. But worth the read. The guide covers things like legal requirements for hiring employees and contractors, how to create a job description, how to screen and interview candidates, payroll taxes and benefits, employment law, and more! There are even templates and examples in the appendix so you don't have to start from scratch. If you seriously need help, there is no better place to start in my opinion. To be clear, this guide is for general guidance and does not offer legal advice. You should definitely consult an attorney or HR professional to make sure your specific situation and needs are legally sound. You can get a free copy of this guide by going to arbusinessnavigator.com and clicking on, "How We Help" to download the guide or go to the show notes. This is definitely a topic we might have in more detail on the show. If you want a more in-depth conversation about HR planning and real-life examples, let me know by emailing bmathews@uada.edu.

Transition Music

In addition to the Latino Business Awards, I'm going to co-lead a workshop with ASBTDC called "Getting Started with Podcasting." This is a virtual workshop on July 20, and it will cover what podcasting is, why it matters to small business owners, and how to get started. Check the show notes for the link to register.

Always remember to check the ABN or ASBTDC websites for events happening online and around the state.

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