

The Post-Standard

# BUSINESS

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## Experts call on cities to aid small businesses

**Free conference provides information on programs to help small-business owners.****By Rick Moriarty**  
Staff writer

Small businesses are the key to revitalizing America's cities, officials told 150 people at the PartnerAmerica Small Business Conference on Tuesday at the Hotel Syracuse.

"Mayors look at small businesses to get their economies going," said Jeffrey Bean, a managing director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and former mayor of Fitchburg, Mass.

"I'd rather have 10 100-employee businesses than one 1,000-employee business. They're more resilient."

The Conference of Mayors and American Management Services Inc. sponsor PartnerAmerica, a program to help small and mid-sized businesses improve profits and sales.

The free, four-hour conference at the Hotel Syracuse featured nine speakers who provided information about local, state and federal programs to assist small businesses.

Louis Mosca, executive vice president of American Management Services, said a major challenge that small-business owners

face is navigating their way through the myriad programs available to them — while trying to run their businesses with limited staff.

"I think cities get it, and I think mayors get it," he said. "But small businesses are often so traumatized, that they don't know what to do. They know the programs are out there, but they don't understand the minutia."

Mosca said conferences such as the one in Syracuse can help, but he advises small-business owners to focus on running their businesses rather than spending a lot of time looking for government assistance.

"The government is not going

to be a bailout," he said.

Syracuse Mayor Matt Driscoll said the city's economic development office is available to help small businesses learn about government assistance programs and how to apply for them.

"We need to pay special attention to the folks here and help them navigate through the maze of opportunities," he said.

The conference was the first one held in Syracuse by PartnerAmerica. Driscoll said he would like to see another one held next year.

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