

Female entrepreneurs impact the Berkshires

"Never stop learning."
 "Do something you are passionate about."
 "Take risks and speak up."

PITTSFIELD — I've listed these quotes because they contain advice from Berkshire County's female CEOs, who are being recognized in October, which, in the Berkshires, is known as Women in Business Month.

Nationally, October is known as Women in Small Business Month, a designation that the National Women's Business Council established to reflect on the advancements that women have made in starting and growing their own businesses.

To illustrate the notable effect that women have had on both the local and national labor force, here are some statistics that the Berkshire County

Regional Employment Board has compiled from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Nationally, there are 74.6 million women employed in the civilian labor force, the highest percentage ever. They make up almost 47 percent of the entire workforce, and represent 48 percent of the workforce in Berkshire County.

In the Berkshires, the number of businesses owned by women (3,877) is just over half the number that are owned by men (7,161). Nationally, women own close to 10 million businesses that account for \$1.4 trillion in receipts.

The range of occupations that women hold has expanded. Nationally,

there have been notable gains in professional and managerial occupations: 74 percent of women are human resource managers; 71 percent work as social/community managers; 65 percent serve as education administrators; 46 percent are food service managers; and 45 percent are marketing managers.



Heather Boulger
Inside the Job Market

The top Berkshire occupations for women are teachers, dental assistants, social workers, retail supervisors, nursing positions and those who work in administrative support.

Women are still underrepresented in positions that involve STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), an area where a national

push to find qualified employees is underway. But many initiatives are up and running in the Berkshires to connect young people, especially girls, to STEM-based job opportunities.

Here are some other national women-based employment statistics: 70 percent of mothers with children younger than 18 are participating in the workforce, with 75 percent of them employed full time. Mothers are the primary earners for 40 percent of U.S. households, a big jump from the 11 percent that held that distinction in 1960. The number of women with college degrees has quadrupled since 1970 — more than 40 percent of women in the labor force held undergraduate degrees in 2016, compared to 11 percent 47 years ago. More than 60 percent of

women held graduate degrees, compared with 40 percent of men.

Despite those numbers, women make just 78 cents for every dollar that men earn in the United States. In the Berkshires, women make 75 percent of what men earn — the average salary for female employees is \$45,028 compared with \$60,074 for their male counterparts.

Based on all these numbers, it's pretty obvious that women have an impact on both the local and national workforce. With that in mind, does your organization have a plan for recruiting, hiring and retaining female talent, female customers, or women-owned vendors? Women in Business Month is only celebrated once a year, but think about the

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plays 4,548 local workers.

Berkshire manufacturers currently have more than 100 job openings. The regional employment board is helping to fill this need through collaborations with Berkshire Community College, McCann Technical School and the BerkshireWorks Career Center by providing entry level, job training for skilled machinists in several occupations. For information on upcoming trainings, go to www.BCREB.com.

Heather Boulger is the executive director of the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board.

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advancements women have made in the workforce all year long. It's right there in the numbers.

TRAINING SESSIONS

October is also known in the Berkshires as manufacturing month, a designation designed to raise the profile of that sector in Massachusetts. Manufacturing in the Berkshires is not as strong as it once was, but it hasn't gone away.

The sector makes up only 7.4 percent of the entire workforce, but it still em-

BUSINESS

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