

For more information  
Henan Li, Director MBDA Export Center  
916-446-7883 | hli@calasiancc.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **CalAsian Chamber receives additional grant for \$750,000 to expand operation of Sacramento MBDA Export Center**

As a testament for ongoing work assisting minority business enterprises (MBE), the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce (CalAsian Chamber) has received an additional grant for \$750,000 from the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) to continue operating the Sacramento MBDA Export Center.

The award is in addition to the \$250,000 the CalAsian Chamber previously received for the MBDA Export Center, which provides technical assistance and business development services to MBEs.

“We believe now more than ever there needs to be entities like ours engaged in helping our MBEs succeed in trade to the Pacific Rim,” said Pat Fong Kushida, President & CEO of the CalAsian Chamber. “Consumers there are becoming the economic drivers globally, and with the MDDBA’s assistance, API and other minority California businesses are better able to participate in this economic opportunity.”

The Sacramento MBDA Export Center provides expertise in increased financing, contract opportunities, marketing research and greater access to new and global markets. Specializing in the Asia market, the Sacramento MDDBA Export Center offers networking events, export workshops and webinars and hosts inbound and outbound trade missions to the Pacific Rim. “Our upcoming trade mission to Korea will showcase the competitiveness and quality of our California wineries, providing a unique platform to export with Korea’s top wine importers and distributors.

Since 2017, the Sacramento MDDBA Export Center has assisted in developing \$50 million in export or financial transactions, while helping create or retain more than 228 jobs, according to Henan Li, Director of MBDA Export Center. More than 870 clients or customers have been served directly or via 95 training or networking events.

One company assisted is the San Mateo-based company, La Canada Ventures, Inc., founded in 2006. It manufactures the MD line of science-based personal care products for hair, skin, lash and wellness. The founder is Dr. Susan Lin, a practicing physician, who through 28 years of practice, realized there was a consumer need for creating safe and effective solution-based personal care products. Two years ago, when sales plateaued as consumers shifted from retail to digital, Dr. Lin decided to change the company’s focus and find a way to distinguish itself from competitors. That’s when she sought out the Sacramento-based MBDA Export Center.

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With the assistance of the Sacramento MDBA Export Center La Canada Ventures was able to improve sales in the U.S. and overseas and facilitate introductions such as Amazon.com pilot project for minority and certified women businesses. As a result Dr. Lin's, MD Lash Conditioner, the first lash conditioner to register and sell in Russia and China, has completed or is completing transactions of more than a half million dollars and sales are continuing to increase.

“Assistance from the Sacramento MDBA Center has taken our sales to a new level domestically and internationally,” Dr. Lin said. “Development of the products was the fun part—the challenge was getting the product into the hands of consumers. Through recent guidance from the Sacramento MBDA Export Center we were able to partner with Amazon.com. This will help MD products reach more people at an affordable price. I am deeply grateful that the MBDA Center exists to help small, minority and women owned U.S. businesses to create more jobs and grow revenue.”

The Sacramento MBDA Center is one of four MBDA Export Centers in the United States. Others are located in Chicago, Miami and San Antonio. Eligible client businesses are those that have 51 percent minority ownership and control, are based in the United States, and have revenue about \$1 million annually or are a minority business with rapid growth potential.

The CalAsian Chamber was founded in 2010 to give a voice to the more than 600,000 Asian Pacific Islander owned businesses in California.

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