

As a minority business owner in the quaint city of Escondido, I take great pride in everything our community has to offer. Escondido is home to a variety of small businesses and the business owners reflect the diversity of its constituents. There are many minority-owned businesses whose owners come from all walks of life and this is something the community takes great pride in. We are determined to make Escondido home for all ethnic groups.

I get excited about celebrating Black History Month and about sharing this information with all San Diegans. It is only fitting as a Black business owner that I address the history and importance of Black Businesses. Many of you may have heard about “Black Wall Street” but may not know much about it. Greenwood in Tulsa, Oklahoma is the most well-known town that was called “Black Wall Street”. The success and wealth that was accumulated in Greenwood was born out of necessity due to not being able to shop or spend money in certain neighborhoods.

At Greenwood’s peak, it was home to about 600 businesses that operated over 36 blocks. All but a couple of those businesses were owned by Black entrepreneurs. Greenwood was known as the most prosperous Black community in the United States. If Greenwood hadn’t been destroyed, it is estimated that it would have been worth somewhere in the billions. There were also several other towns in Illinois, North Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi and Virginia that were also considered “Black Wall Street’s”.

To this day, Black and other minority business owners are often marginalized and hindered from accessing financing or government aid. At the beginning of the pandemic, many Black and minority businesses suffered and had to close. Many minority business owners were last in line to receive PPP loans and other financial help during the pandemic. Despite many obstacles, Black business owners persisted and the surge of black business openings began. Black business ownership is now up by almost 30% since the height of the pandemic.

I encourage you to support all of the local small businesses in Escondido!

Sincerely,

Kay Bates