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New association unifies voice for Florida's cosmetology and barbering industry

Tallahassee, FL – Lacking representation and political clout, Florida's cosmetology and barbering industry has formed Florida's first statewide association designed to unite cosmetologists and barbers in the state by providing a unified voice for legislative representation and creating quality programs to boost the industry.

The Florida Association of Beauty Professionals (FAB Professionals) is poised to lobby Florida lawmakers and promote the state's cosmetology and barbering industry as a more respected and organized profession.

The state's cosmetology industry is comprised of more than 180,000 cosmetologists, 12,000 barbers and 24,000 licensed salons and barber shops. The state has over 150 cosmetology and barbering schools which produce more than 10,000 graduates each year.

"This industry represents over \$2 billion in annual sales and has more that 150,000 employees in the state," said Rick Wallace, co-owner of the Florida Association Management Operations Services (FAMOS), the managing company for FAB Professionals. "This industry not only has a major impact on Florida's economy, but also touches the public every single day, yet has had no representation or voice in what is happening in Tallahassee. FAB Professionals was formed to become the advocate and information source in Florida."

The non-profit association's legislative objectives include administering the cosmetology licensing exam, implementing a review class, creating a booth rental registration system and improving the out-of-state licensing process.

The cosmetology trade group also wants to boost passing rates on state-administered cosmetology licensing examinations by removing the administration process from state officials and putting it in the hands of association leaders.

By expediting the process of exam date assignments and implementing four-hour review courses prior to licensing examinations, FAB Professionals believes it can substantially raise the passing rate among aspiring cosmetologists from 50 to 75 percent.

Association member benefit objectives include expedited licensing application and examination processes for graduating students, insurance programs, supplier discounts, business, legal and accounting advice and providing a one-stop resource for industry members.

Moriah Murphy and Wallace, co-owners of the Florida Association Management Operations Services (FAMOS), the managing company for FAB Professionals, launched the association at the urging of industry professionals.

Both have extensive experience in association management working with two of Florida's most powerful trade organizations – the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) and the Florida Home Builders Association.

Working with mentor and FRLA CEO Carol Dover, Wallace was instrumental in developing FRLA's SafeStaff® Food Safety Training product line which he successfully implemented into Florida's foodservice industry.

FAB Professionals was recently invited to meet with Holly Benson, the new secretary for the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, the state agency responsible for regulating the cosmetology and barbering industry.

“I was pleased to receive a call from the Secretary's office inviting us to discuss the important issues that affect this industry,” Wallace said. “Her concern and willingness to work together with our new association demonstrates to me the very need for FAB Professionals.”

FAB Professionals lobbying team includes Cynthia Henderson, a former secretary of DBPR.

“It is important for FAB Professionals to start out the new 2007 legislative session with lobbyists familiar with this industry's issues,” Murphy said

The association's founding allied member partners include: Scruples Professional Salon Products, Inc., a family-owned, independent manufacturer of upscale hair care products, and Heartland Payment Systems, a national credit card processing and payroll provider.

“It is a great honor for Scruples to be able to support the founding of FAB Professionals,” said Jack Storey, founding allied member with Scruples. “It is most important today to have the support of a professional organization to assist you with the constant changes of the industry.”

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