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SERVING SOUTHWEST MISSOURI

Area entrepreneur to speak as sales diva

Ellen Rohr joins Barbara Walters, Maya Angelou in Florida

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An Ozarks entrepreneur is scheduled to share the stage with some very well-known figures at Office Depot's fifth annual Success Strategies for Businesswomen conference Feb. 27-March 1 at Florida's Boca Raton Resort and Spa.

Rogersville resident Ellen Rohr, president and founder of Bare Bones Biz, a business training and consulting company, will join keynote presenters and panelists including journalist Barbara Walters, poet Maya Angelou, Mrs. Fields Cookies founder Debbi Fields and supermodel-turned-CEO Kathy Ireland. Last year's conference featured Hillary Clinton, Katie Couric and Mary Matelin.

Rohr will be a featured panelist during the Growth Secrets from Sales Divas session in Boca Raton.

"I'm pinching myself that I got on an esteemed board of women like this," Rohr said from a conference in Orlando, Fla., where she is speaking to 250 roofing contractors.

Rohr's enthusiasm for her work spills into her fast-paced conversations, sprinkled with phrases like "win-win," "no whining" and "totally delighted." She will share that enthusiasm with other women entrepreneurs at the Office Depot conference.

"It's not one of those typical conferences, like how do you balance work and life," said Lauren Garvey of JKG Communications, the public relations firm handling the event. "The business sessions, which Ellen is part of, are developed to help women business owners. It's almost like the panelists, like Ellen, are sharing what they've learned."

The event is limited to the first 1,000 people to register at \$554. Typically, 30 percent of attendees are from Florida, and the rest are from across the United States and around the world, Garvey said.

Rohr said that her invitation to speak at the Office Depot conference came via friend of a friend, "and that's how a lot of business is done." One of Rohr's employees had met Nancy Michaels, president of Impression Impact, at a small-business conference and then introduced the two. "Nancy Michaels is putting together the Office Depot program as their publicity and marketing consultant and doing a fine job," Rohr said.

Rohr founded Bare Bones Biz in 1995, after she and her husband moved to the area from Utah. She wanted to make use of the knowledge she had gained helping her husband run his plumbing company following the death of his partner. Under her leadership, Benjamin Franklin Plumbing topped \$40 million in sales en route to becoming the 18th-fastest growing franchise in 2003, Rohr said.

Bare Bones Biz sells Rohr's books, with titles such as "How Much Should I Charge? Pricing Basics For Making Money



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Doing What You Love," "The Bare Bones Biz Fitness Plan" and "Where Did the Money Go? Easy Accounting Basics for the Business Owner Who Hates Numbers."

The company also sells spreadsheet packages that Rohr developed, with specific themes

worldwide business literacy. "I'm all about teaching the basics, and I've learned enough in my old age to know that the basics work from Main Street to Wall Street," she said. "Basics, consistently applied, will take you as far as you want to go."

And Rohr has definite ideas about where she wants to go. One goal is to sell 100,000 copies of her books from her company's Web site, www.barebonesbiz.com, in 2005.

Another goal may not happen in 2005, but Rohr said she is "putting it out there in the universe. ... (I) think that a really fun idea for an 'Oprah' show

would be to have an audience full of women or kids or people of all shapes and sizes with their binders, with their business plans, and then have 30 seconds to pitch a group of venture capitalists ... on their great ideas," Rohr said. "I think that's just an Oprah-worthy project."

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Ellen Rohr
Bare Bones Biz

to help small business owners with topics like goals, getting things done and budgeting. Rohr also provides consulting services, whether via teleconference or speaking in front of groups.

The mission of Bare Bones Biz, she said, is to promote