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**Final City in U.S. Asia Center Symposium Tour Draws Large Diverse Group**

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Asia Center (USAC), in partnership with U.S. Asian Business Council (USABC), sponsored the final symposium in a multi-city tour to address the state of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) businesses in the United States. The symposium was held on Tuesday, February 5 in Kansas City, Missouri and was co-sponsored by the Asian American Chamber of Commerce- Kansas City, Lockton Inc., and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC).

The symposium drew in over 150 participants and incorporated a panel presentation on business trends within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. The presentation expanded on a report to the President entitled, "Enhancing the Economic Potential of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders." The panel included Joe Melookaran, former commissioner on the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and lead author of the report, Rudy Pamintuan, former Chairman of the Commission, and Young Sexton, President of WingGate Travel. Michael Song, from the UMKC Bloch School of Business and Public Administration moderated the event.

Joe Melookaran stated, "Through our Commission's work and our interactions through these symposiums, I found that there is a gap between the pent up demand for necessary tools and resources for entrepreneurs and the resources made available by the federal agencies. The key to building wealth in the community for the benefit of all is by fostering economic development of its members."

Rudy Pamintuan continued by stating, "There is an enormous amount of potential for growth within the Asian American business community and the private and public sectors need to work together to promote this growth. Beyond that, Asian Americans also need to work together to advocate for themselves and their community. Our aim was for these symposiums to serve as a forum to encourage this discussion and partnership."

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