



WIPP WORKS IN WASHINGTON

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November 2013

As Thanksgiving appears on our doorstep, we are drawn to the love of family, friends and food. Our policy team thought it would be a good idea to give a list of things to be thankful for as advocates for women-owned businesses. So, in no particular order and some tongue in cheek...

1. **If you are this far down, the only way is up.** That applies to the 9% approval rating for Congress, the 39% approval rating for the President and, we can't help ourselves, the Washington Redskins season (a lousy 3-7 so far).

2. **Even though healthcare.gov doesn't work, there are always brokers.** This is really back to the future. Never mind technology, the folks that really have all the information on health care plans are brokers. Yes, you can reach them the old fashioned way—by phone or email.

3. **The deficit is declining.** Since we are not economists, we aren't sure whether we can thank an improving economy, a full year of sequestration or a stalled Congress, but we can confirm the deficit—the difference between how much the government spends and how much it collects—has fallen sharply. The final numbers for FY2013 show a \$680 billion deficit, which is more than \$400 billion less than the previous year. That's good news—the more money the Treasury consumes in financing debt, the less money for all of us.

4. **The WOSB procurement program is gathering steam.** A recent report from the National Women's Business Council (NWBC) described the growing success of women as federal contractors due to the WOSB Federal Contract Program. The 83 NAICS codes in the program are consistently showing growth in contract awarded to WOSBs, while awards in other industries remain stagnant. As the program improves (like removing the dollar caps on contracts) the momentum will only continue to build. Since we spent 11 years trying to get this program put into place, we are beyond thankful that it is starting to work.

5. **Wall Street is getting used to Washington.** Our retirement savings are thankful that the stock market shrugged its shoulders at the government shutdown instead of freaking out. Although the government shutdown cost approximately \$2 billion, it could have been much worse (refer to #1—same principle).

6. **SBA Loans are cheaper in 2014.** For businesses seeking loans of \$150,000 or less (or for veterans seeking loans of up to \$350,000), the Small Business Administration has waived fees on all 7(a) loans through the end of the fiscal 2014 year (which runs from October to

October). Since banks turn down about 8,000 business loans every day, we will hang onto any piece of positive news about small business capital.

7. The government will stay open through the holidays. Relax. Congress has funded the government through January 15, 2014. While no compromise on the budget has been reached and the “govern-by-crisis” mentality continues, at least there won’t be a shutdown interrupting holiday dinners, receptions, gift giving and other merriment. Congress is saving that for the New Year.