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### **Top women leaders throughout the country chosen for the Leadership America class convene at the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago on April 20, 2009, to address the new economic paradigm shift that affects the nation.**

DALLAS, April 13, 2009 – Top women leaders from across the country will convene in Chicago, IL, for a two-day leadership program, **Leadership America**, discussing new trends in leadership development and agile leadership skills. The **Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago** will be used as a learning laboratory for participants to discuss specific issues and explore unique solutions to the unusual challenges facing our organizations as well as our personal finances. The remainder of the program lasting until Tuesday, April 21, will be held at the Omni Chicago.

Featured topics and speakers for the Chicago session include:

- *Connective Leadership*: Jean Lipman-Blumen, PhD, Professor of Public Policy and Co-Founding Director Institute for Advanced Studies in Leadership, Claremont Graduate School, California.
- *The Economic Landscape*: Randall S. Kroszner, PhD - Professor of Economics, University of Chicago, Booth School of Business, William Strauss, Senior Economist and Economic Advisor, Economic Research Department, The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago; and Charles Evans, President, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
- *How The Current Economic Crisis Is Changing The Workforce*: Marilyn Gerdes (Retired) Senior Vice President, Tax Sara Lee Corporation
- *Managing Dollars In Tough Times*: Stephanie Neeley, Treasurer, City of Chicago
- *Global Economics – Personal Impact*: Gwen Cohen, First Vice President, Morgan Stanley
- *A Challenge to Leaders: The Tyranny of Dead Ideas – Letting Go of Old Ways To Unleash a New Prosperity*, Matt Miller, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, Contributing Editor, Fortune Magazine

**Leadership America**, one of the longest running national women's leadership programs in the world, was established in 1988 to recognize and bring together accomplished women who have achieved success in their professions, their communities and beyond.

Culminating a year-long study in 2008, Leadership America announced new programming earlier this year focused on *Agile Leadership in an Ever-Changing World*. Applications remain open for all remaining 2009 sessions, including San Francisco/Silicon Valley, CA; Washington, D.C.; and, the international trip to Beijing, China.

Leadership America adapted the new programming to provide women shorter sessions that equip women leaders with the latest information and innovation for professional and personal growth.

Results from the 2008 study concerning topics from length of sessions to the major hindrance in women's advancement in leadership roles, shaped to build a 2009 program that is more effective and attainable by today's woman leader. Coupling these results with a human resources survey, Leadership America discovered the following:

- Technology utilization is an important leadership skill when it comes to advancing their career according to 89% of women polled.
- Technology competence was cited by 73% of the women polled as is important to advancement of women in their organization.
- There is a clear link between leadership training and career advancement according to 66% of human resources polled.

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**LEADERSHIP AMERICA: NATIONAL PROGRAM SPONSOR**

This important initiative is made possible by the generous support of **State Farm Insurance Companies**. Recognized as one of America's top corporate supporters of women's leadership and diversity, State Farm's senior executive team includes many highly accomplished women, including Executive Vice Presidents Barbara Cowden and Deborah Traskell, State Farm Life Chief Administrative Officer Susan Waring, and Vice President – Marketing Pamela K. El, who help lead and serve the company's 77 million auto, fire, life and health policies in the United States and Canada.