

**MARIA ELENA RODRIGUEZ,
President,
Mexicantown Community Development Corporation (MCDC)**

Maria Elena Rodriguez combines media savvy honed during her TV-producing days, business acumen garnered from entrepreneurial ventures, and sheer pride in her Motown Mexican roots to realize goals long deferred.

A native Detroiter she understands and takes pride in the history of her birthplace as well as her motherland. As President of Mexicantown Community Development Corporation, her mission has been to bring more business and visitors to Mexicantown and over the last seven years, she has done just that.

Her top priority is to make a longtime Southwest Detroit dream come true: to build the Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado. As a true entrepreneur, she has surrounded herself with a bright, talented and committed staff that has brought the \$17 million project to completion. The Board of Directors understands the vision and has been essential in bringing this dream to fruition.

Ms. Rodriguez serves as a Commissioner for the Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs and Substitute Advisor (2006 – 2009) to the Mexicans Abroad Program (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior: IME*) at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, she served on the Detroit Superbowl XL Host Committee Board of Directors, and is member of the Knight Foundation Community Partners Program in Detroit; Board Member of New Detroit, Inc., and for the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau.

She is a 2005 fellow of the National Hispana Leadership Institute and as a result, an alumnus of the 2005 Harvard Executive Program, and a graduate of the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) program.

Her advice to others is simply to “Remain calm, focused and don’t take things personally. At the end of the day, it’s between you and your Maker, hopefully you’re both smiling.” She credits her strong family bond and her Catholic education for having the fortitude to take a dream and make it into a reality and it’s her belief in teamwork that has brought it to this point.

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