Ohio Black Expo (OBE) that will take place in Cleveland June 29, - July 3, at Cleveland State's Wolstein Center. **By JAMES W. WADE III** Staff Reporter Ohio Black Expo (OBE) that will take place in Cleveland June 29, - July 3, at Cleveland State's Wolstein Center.

Fashioned after the Indiana Black Expo, OBE has many goals, including creating opportunities for minority-owned businesses to showcase their products and services, raise educational awareness, initiate networking between minority and majority-owned companies and much more. The expo is expected to draw more than 100,000 participants from across Ohio to Cleveland this summer.

The OBE will feature a business exhibition, entertainment events, and free business, youth and wellness programs.

KeyCorp and Radio One Cleveland, which operates four radio stations in Cleveland including WERE-AM, 1490, and WZAK-FM, 93.1, are among the co-sponsors. The Call & Post Newspaper has signed on as a Media Sponsor.

KeyBank's president of Community Development Banking Bruce Murphy talked how the bank is proud to be a sponsor. "It is important for Key Bank to be very active with this expo. We will provide Financial Literacy classes and other business training," said Murphy.

Key is sponsoring the event to spur economic development and reflect the diversity of the Cleveland community. Key sponsors the Indiana event, which is in its 41st year. Key has used

the Indiana event to expand the number of minority contractors and subcontractors with which it works.

Regional Vice President Jeff Wilson shared the commitment they will have for the expo.

Another participant will be the Urban League of Greater Cleveland. "The Urban League is please to be involved with youth training and Business Development sessions during the expo," said Urban League President Marsha Mockabee.

The Mission of the Black Expo is to create opportunities for minority owned businesses to showcase their products, services, raise educational awareness by creating a unique mentoring program,(1KAAT), initiate networking between minority and majority owned companies, build political alliances throughout the state of Ohio, advocate wellness for adults, children, educate small businesses on available programs (grants, financing etc.), build new partnerships and collaborations, organize high profile entertainment events and create a positive signature event that will bring together Ohioans throughout the state.

The OBE is shooting for 160 companies to have booths at the business show and so far they are 75 percent of the way toward that goal. About 30 percent of the businesses are large and small majority-owned businesses.

The Black Expo's "Black Friday" with Free Giveaways on Friday every hour on the hour starting at 3 pm. The Black Expo and Vendors will be giving away a Plasma TV, Lap Top, Desk Top, Vacations, a Furniture Set and many other prizes. To win just come on down and visit the business exhibition with retail zone sponsored by COSE from 3 - 7 pm. Don't miss the Black Expo's" Black Friday". To view the giveaways go to www.Ohioblackexpo.com and click on the Free Giveaways link.

The Cleveland Clinic will do free health screenings every day at the Black Expo. Dr. Charles Modlin will be taking lead on this initiative. Dr. Modlin and Dr. Srinivas will also speak on the Black Expo stage on June 30th from 2 - 3 pm and July 1st from 1 - 2 pm. Dr. Srinivas was also speak on Friday (time TBA). The health screenings will include; blood pressure, blood sugar, kidney disease, body mass index, stress/depression screenings and provide health information).

Dr. Modlin will give a short 10-15 minute talk on health care disparities on stage followed by 45 minutes of an "Ask the Doctor" session and patient testimonials (prostate cancer, kidney disease, transplantation, diabetes, hypertension, etc-).

This five day event will be an economic boost for Cleveland with revenue coming in for hotels, restaurants to name a few. "We are proud to open up Cleveland for this great event," said Mayor Jackson.

The business exhibition will be promoted at all of their events and programs during Black Expo week. The exhibition portion of the Expo is free to the general public. For more information visit www.ohioexpo.com.