

CRAIN'S LIST LARGEST WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS

	Company/address/phone/Web address	Top executive	Revenues (in millions) 2005	Revenues (in millions) 2004	% change from 2004	No. of full-time employees in Chicago area ¹	Year founded	No. of years of majority woman ownership	% of woman ownership	Type of business
23	NEW AGE TRANSPORTATION DISTRIBUTION & WAREHOUSING INC.; 1881 Rose Road, Lake Zurich 60047; (847) 545-9200; www.newagetransportation.com	Carolyn Gable President, CEO	\$23.0	\$17.0	35.3%	45	1989	16	100%	Third-party logistics for trucking and shipping; warehousing
23	PAIGE PERSONNEL SERVICES³ 5215 Old Orchard Road, Skokie 60077 (847) 966-0111; www.paigepersonnel.com	Karen Rae Horwitz President, CEO	\$23.0	\$22.5	2.2%	45	1964	11	100%	Temporary and permanent office staffing
26	FOOD FOR THOUGHT ENTERPRISES 7001 N. Ridgeway Ave., Lincolnwood 60712 (847) 982-2608; www.foodforthought-chicago.com	Nancy Garcia Sharp CEO	\$22.1	\$16.2	36.6%	215	1983	23	100%	Catering, food service management, contract dining services
27	MATREX EXHIBITS INC. 301 Church St., Addison 60101 (630) 628-2233; www.matrexhibits.com	Jill D. Hebert Founder, CEO	\$20.9	\$14.4	45.2%	58	1987	19	100%	Design, build and assemble custom trade show exhibits
28	KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL LTD. 1475 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 104, Schaumburg 60173 (847) 843-5060; www.kayhan.furnishgroup.com	Kayhan Hellriegel President	\$19.0	\$10.0	90.0%	20	1982	24	61%	Contract office furniture, installation and design
29	CENTRAL EQUIMPEX INC. 1119 Lyon Road, Batavia 60510 (630) 761-9816; www.equimpex.com	Linda Bi President	\$17.0	\$15.0	13.3%	10	1989	6	100%	Manufacturer of axle components and casting products
30	WEST FUELS INC. 7340 W. Harrison St., Forest Park 60130 (708) 488-8880; www.westfuels.com	Deborah L. Stange President	\$15.4	\$9.9	55.1%	6	1991	15	100%	Fuel distributor

Largest increase in revenue

Crain's estimates shown in gray. 1. As of Dec. 31, 2005. 2. Spun off Premier Security in 2004. 3. Paige Temporary Inc. was dissolved in December 2003 into Miss Paige Ltd., which operates as Paige Personnel Services.

| Research by Michelle Evans



On display

Nineteen years ago, Jill Hebert transferred her carpentry skills from the wood shop to the convention center.

That's when she founded **Matrex Exhibits Inc.**, which designs, builds and breaks down hundreds of display booths a year.

"I know my way around a table saw," says Ms. Hebert, a former

custom furniture maker.

She got the idea in 1981 while attending her first trade show for vending machine manufacturers at McCormick Place, where she was struck by the complexity of the exhibits. With a \$200,000 home-equity loan, she started the company at her kitchen table six years later.

Today, she has 58 employees and 60 clients, including Sara Lee Corp., ExxonMobil Corp. and Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. Last year,

Matrex's revenues were up 45%, a jump that Ms. Hebert attributes to landing three new accounts.

**JILL
HEBERT, 50**
\$20.9 million in
revenue in '05

These days, Ms. Hebert doesn't have much use for her proficiency with a miter saw. When bidding on a project, she and her staff present clients with computerized models rather than traditional handmade renderings. Once their

design is selected, it takes Matrex's crew of carpenters, graphic designers and engineers up to six months to build a "preview" exhibit for a client, get approval and ship it to the trade show location.

The company's largest project so far? A 14,400-square-foot exhibit for medical device maker Stryker Corp. at a trade show at McCormick Place in March.

"It took 15 full-size vans to move it," she says.