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## Vision 2020 begins push for full female equality

By Denise Perreault  
PBN Staff Writer

The year 2020 will mark the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment that allowed women the right to vote. In that year, the nation's leading advocacy groups for women, such as Vision 2020, plan a record turnout of female voters at the polls to commemorate that watershed event.

And that's not all they are planning.

As will become evident at an Oct. 17 event entitled Candid Conversations from the C Suite, to be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Providence-Warwick, the national Vision 2020 campaign is working on five goals to achieve full female equality in the workplace and in the family.

Taking part in the panel discussion will be Catherine L. Ormerod, director of Vision 2020. She was invited by Vision 2020RI, the local chapter comprising 50 women from 40 businesses and organizations.

"Joining Vision 2020RI was a natural fit for me and our firm because many of the goals directly overlay the goals of our firm and our Women Count initiative," said Renee C. Aloisio, director of internal operations for the local CPA firm LGC&D in Providence.

"Increasing and sustaining the number of women in leadership positions and shaping workplace practices to enable men and women to balance family responsibilities is something we are passionate about," Aloisio said. Women Count, which Aloisio helped organize, is the accounting firm's internal women's support and advocacy group.

Ormerod, in an email interview with Providence Business News, explained that the national group was developed in October by the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership at Drexel University College of Medicine, Philadelphia, "to make equality a national priority through shared leadership among women and men." The group has delegates in every state and the District of Columbia.

The organization has identified these five goals, to be achieved by the year 2020:

- Achieve pay equity, so that equal pay for equal work will be the norm in America.
- Increase the number of women in senior leadership positions in American life to reflect the work force talent pool and demographics.
- Educate employers about the value of policies and practices that enable men and women to share fairly their family responsibilities.
- Educate new generations of girls and boys to respect their differences and to act on the belief that America is at its best when leadership is shared and opportunities are open to all.
- Mobilize women to vote, with particular emphasis on a record-setting turnout in 2020.

The Rhode Island event on Oct. 17, Ormerod said, will be one of the first places to hear about the specific strategies, benchmarks and time frames to accomplish these goals, after they are announced Oct. 11-13 at the Chicago Vision 2020 national convention. The group's success in 2020 will be judged on the basis of the benchmark set at the convention, Ormerod said.

She said she feels as Susan B. Anthony did, quoting the latter's famous remark: "Failure is impossible" because women in positions of influence are working at the grassroots and national levels to effect change. "Since its launch, Vision 2020 has felt the momentum for change," Ormerod said. "Now we need action."

In what Aloisio called "exciting news," the Rhode Island chapter recently learned that two of the state's women leaders - Marcia Coné, executive director of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island, and Susan Colantuono, founder and CEO of Leading Women - will represent the state at the Chicago conference.

The Women's Fund of Rhode Island regularly lobbies the General Assembly, issues grants to organizations that assist low-income women and girls, actively encourages local women to take part in politics and run for office, and has played an integral role in getting more women appointed to state government positions.

Also taking part in the Oct. 17 Vision 2020RI panel discussion are Deborah Thomas, chief financial officer of Hasbro, the international toy and gaming company based in Pawtucket, and Laura Adams, president and CEO of Rhode Island Quality Institute.

Ormerod has more than 25 years of experience in the academic, nonprofit and public-policy arenas. She is founding director of the Nonprofit Executive Leadership Institute at Bryn Mawr College, served in leadership positions at Women's Way and Living Beyond Breast Cancer and lectures on public policy at the University of Pennsylvania. She holds a master's degree in both social services and law and social policy from the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research.