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**Maine Biotechnology Businesses to Benefit from  
Maine SBTDC Director's Prestigious Scholarship**

**PORTLAND, MAINE** - Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC), headquartered at the University of Southern Maine, announced today that Meriby Sweet, Center Director of its Maine Small Business & Technology Development Center (Maine SBTDC), has received the sole scholarship to be awarded by Duke University for its Biotechnology for Business seminars in May. The coursework undertaken will build on the Maine SBTDC's capacity to provide focused business assistance to Maine's biotechnology industry.

Biotechnology for Business is a residential program, primarily intended to serve the business community, and has limited enrollment and a competitive admissions process. The intensive, weeklong course begins May 2 at Duke University's Durham, North Carolina campus. Duke University and Duke University Medical staff will be joined by scientists from Brown University and the University of Texas at Austin to teach the course. The course trains nonscientists in the fundamental biology underlying the biotechnology industry. Participants include business professionals in occupations influenced by biotechnology (agriculture, scientific instrumentation, investment banking, pharmaceutical/veterinary, venture capital, patent law and government).

"Meriby's significant expertise in technology commercialization has earned this recognition by Duke University," said Maine SBDC state director John Massaua, adding, "The Duke University training will enhance the already excellent caliber of technology and business counseling provided to small businesses in Maine."

Maine SBDC recently met a rigorous national accreditation, which formally certifies it to deliver technology support to Maine's small businesses including strategic planning, technology marketing, funding and capitalization, technology licensing and partnership development. As a result of that certification, Sweet was named director of the Maine Small Business & Technology Center (Maine SBTDC), hosted at the Maine Technology Institute, one of the 11 Maine SBDC offices around Maine.

Sweet commented, "I am honored, excited and enthusiastic about this challenge," adding "This is a great opportunity for me to bring back to Maine what I learn in North Carolina!" Sweet already brings extensive experience in technology commercialization, marketing, and management to her business counseling with Maine's technology companies. In twenty years with high-tech firms in California's Silicon Valley, she worked with many startups and high-growth technology businesses.

A Maine native and a graduate of the University of Maine, Ms Sweet has written extensively for leadership and technology conferences and has been published in the Journal of the National Technical Association.

Maine SBDC celebrated 25 years of service to Maine's small business community in 2002, the same year it was honored with the Margaret Chase Smith State Quality Award. In 2003, Maine SBDC assisted over 2600 existing or emerging small business owner/operators through one-on-one business counseling and an additional 2800 clients through workshops and training activities. Maine SBDC also provided information to over 3000 non-registered clients, and recorded 530 jobs created and/or retained, helped secure 23 million dollars in capital for Maine businesses, and achieved a 96% client satisfaction rating.

**About Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC)/Small Business & Technology Centers (Maine SBTDC):** *Maine SBDC/SBTDC is a partnership program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in association with the SBA/SBDC, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (Maine DECD), the University of Southern Maine (USM), and leading economic and/or community development hosting organizations, including the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), and the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC); with support from the Maine Technology Institute (MTI), the University of Maine (UMaine), and other contractors, allies and stakeholders.*

*Accredited by the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) and administered by USM's School of Business, Maine SBDC/SBTDC operates a network of 11 service centers and 25 outreach offices located conveniently throughout the state. Maine SBDC/SBTDC provides comprehensive business management assistance, training, resource and information services to Maine's micro, small, and technology-based business communities.*

*Maine SBDC/SBTDC's mission is to engage itself and others in development activities that contribute to the improvement of the economic climate for and the success of micro, small, and technology-based businesses in the State of Maine. Its focus is to assist in the creation, growth and maintenance of viable small businesses and the jobs these businesses provide. Maine SBDC/SBTDC serves those seeking assistance who are willing and able to build, sustain, and/or expand their business.*

*More information about the Maine SBDC/SBTDC can be found at [www.mainesbdc.org](http://www.mainesbdc.org). ###*