

**PRESS RELEASE** for use October 17, 2005

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**Unusual Training Opportunity Aims at  
Increasing Business for Maine's Food Industry**

**PORTLAND, MAINE:** The first intensive, 12-week business skills course custom designed to increase profits and opportunities for businesses in Maine's food industry begins next month in three locations. The 36 hour training, called *Calculated Risk*, includes modules in marketing, finance, funding sources, and other key topics intended to help business owners find and leverage a competitive edge and capture new opportunities. Scheduled for Portland, Bangor and Augusta, *Calculated Risk* targets food growers, value-added food producers, and community grocers with a series of weekly, three-hour training sessions, from November through March, with holiday breaks.

Developed for the Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC), the training is part of a larger effort targeting Maine's food industry called *From the Ground Up*. With support from a University of Maine USDA Fund for Rural America grant, the \$500 *Calculated Risk* series is being offered to participating businesses for only \$100.

"We are hopeful that between our three locations and discount pricing, we have made this training as accessible as possible to Maine's food industry businesses," says John R. Massaua, Maine SBDC State Director, "This customized training, similar in content to the NxLevel and FastTrac offerings, has been especially customized for the all important segment of Maine's economy – its food industry."

The three-part *From the Ground Up* project, of which *Calculated Risk* is part, was developed in response to a University of Maine survey of Maine's food industry who said they wanted training to enhance their business skills. In September, a one-day intensive seminar called *Marketing and Other Strategic Pieces* comprised the project's first component. No-cost access to expert business counseling from Maine SBDC certified business counselors, available to *Calculated Risk* participants, is the project's third component.

"Maine's farmers, producers and grocers are facing growing competition and are looking for tools to find or improve a profitable niche by honing business skills," says Massaua, "This targeted training could make a significant difference in the viability of some of these businesses."

For more information or to register for *Calculated Risk*, contact Sarah Hutchins at Maine SBDC at 207-780-4420 or visit [www.mainesbdc.org](http://www.mainesbdc.org) to register on-line.

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***Calculated Risk Courses Begin:***

BANGOR: Tuesday, November 1, 6-9 p.m. at the Family Business Center at Husson College

AUGUSTA: Wednesday, November 2, 6-9 p.m. at the Campus Center Conference Room at University of Maine at Augusta (Women, Work & Community Offices)

PORTLAND: Thursday, November 3, 6-9 p.m. at 202 Payson Smith on the University of Southern Maine's Portland Campus

**About Maine SBDC/SBTDC:** *Maine SBDC/SBTDC is a partnership program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in association with the SBA/OSBDC, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, the University of Southern Maine, and leading economic and/or community development hosting organizations, including the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and the Northern Maine Development Commission and with support from the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) 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 service centers and outreach offices located conveniently throughout the state. For more information, visit [www.mainesbdc.org](http://www.mainesbdc.org).*

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