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Maine SBDC Celebrates 30 Years of Helping Maine's Small Businesses Succeed

Portland, ME: This March the Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC) marks thirty years of helping Maine's small businesses succeed. Since its inception in 1977, the Maine SBDC has grown from a small pilot partnership project of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) into a statewide system, comprised of a myriad of collaborations that support a network of small business assistance service centers and outreach offices throughout the State.

"The Maine SBDC's simple but effective concept has proved the test of time," said Maine SBDC State Director, John Massaua, "to assist small business operators and nascent entrepreneurs through business counseling, training services, information transfer, and resource linkages; the objective: create and save jobs throughout Maine."

"Entrepreneurship and small business development are the engines of Maine's economy," said Governor John Baldacci in a proclamation setting aside March 15th as the day for Maine citizens to observe the Maine SBDC's 30th anniversary. "Maine Small Business Development Centers, through its counseling, training and research resources, help ensure that small businesses are well tuned and poised for growth," he said.

Recognizing the Maine SBDC as a partnership that includes not only the State, but also the U.S. SBA, the University of Southern Maine (USM) and regional economic and community development host organizations, the Governor said, "The State of Maine's investment in Maine SBDC services has yielded an impressive return, generating more than four dollars in state tax revenues for every state taxpayer dollar invested (annually)."

Commenting on the Maine SBDC's 30th anniversary, U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, said, "From financial management, marketing, and procurement assistance, the Maine SBDC has helped new business start-ups, sustained struggling firms, and expanded growth for existing firms." She said that since Maine SBDC opened its doors, it has provided unique one-on-one counseling to over 42,000 entrepreneurs, including over 200,000 hours of direct assistance and 3,000 workshops and courses.

The Senator continued, "In addition, the SBDC has an extraordinary record of excellence. Since 1977, the Maine SBDC has helped to create or retain an outstanding 15,000 jobs and assisted 2,650 entrepreneurs take on the rewarding challenge of starting a business. There is no question that small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy and the SBDCs are the lifeline for entrepreneurs."

U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator, Steven Preston, provided remarks about Maine SBDC during a February trip to Maine: "From every aspect of economic development in the state, the Maine SBDC has been a leading force, especially in the areas of job creation and retention, capital formation, business expansion, business acquisition and start-up and technology advancement." Preston said that in 2004, following successful accreditation by the Association of Small Business Development Centers, Maine became the fourth SBDC out of 63 nationwide to be

designated as a Small Business ‘Technology’ Development Center. “Through collaboration mostly with the Maine Technology Institute, the Maine SBDC now works intensively with technology-based businesses, adding another layer to the many exceptional services already provided by the Maine SBDC,” he said.

“The Maine SBDC plays a significant role in the University's mission of public service,” said Richard Pattenaude, President of USM where Maine SBDC has been headquartered since 1977. During the third quarter meeting of the Maine Commission on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, the State of Maine’s legislated oversight board for the Maine SBDC, the Commission formally recognized by unanimous vote, Maine SBDC’s work as “extraordinary” and its economic impact as “outstanding.”

The Maine SBDC will mark its 30 years of helping Maine's small businesses succeed with an Entrepreneurship and Small Business Symposium on March 15 in the Abromson Community Education Center on the Portland campus of USM. This day of learning, celebration and inspiration, sponsored in part by Bangor Savings Bank, will feature:

- A Morning Plenary Session with Steven S. Little, renowned speaker, accomplished author and senior consultant to Inc. Magazine, on 21st Century Strategies for Building One's Company and Tom Stemberg, office superstore pioneer, founder and chair emeritus, Staples Inc., and named by Inc. Magazine as one of America's 25 most fascinating entrepreneurs, on Doing It Right.
- The Maine SBDC 30th Anniversary Commemorative Video featuring Maine small business owners representing the very significant importance of small business to Maine’s economy.
- A motivational Lunch & Learn Program for small business owners and the USM community, and an Invitational Awards Luncheon for Maine SBDC stakeholders and award winners, including an address by Governor John Baldacci.
- The Maine SBDC "30" Awards to thirty Maine small businesses who “tried and succeeded”.
- One Incredible Afternoon – Ready... Set... Grow!: an intensive hands-on workshop on the seven irrefutable rules of business growth, presented by INC. Magazine and the Maine SBDC.

Information on the Maine SBDC’s Entrepreneurship and Small Business Symposium and online registration can be found at www.mainesbdc.org.

“Indeed, it is a proud time for the Maine SBDC and its many stakeholders,” said Massaua, “but beyond all the hoopla and celebration,— yes the SBDC’s work is important – it’s the clients we help that really matter.”

About Maine Small Business Development Centers: *Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC) and its tech-focus group, Maine Small Business & Technology Development Centers (Maine SBTDC) provide comprehensive business management assistance training, resource and information services to Maine’s micro, small and technology-based business communities. Business assistance is provided at no cost to business owners by professional certified business counselors who meet rigorous education and business experience standards.*

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

(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) and other co-hosts, 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 12 service centers and numerous outreach offices located conveniently throughout the state.

More information about the Maine SBDC/SBTDC can be found at www.mainesbdc.org.

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