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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe Presides at Ribbon-cutting for
The Business Resource Center at Eastern Maine Community College

BANGOR, MAINE - U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe presided today at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally open the new Business Resource Center (BRC) at Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC).

The BRC is a key element in EMCC's Small Business Entrepreneurial Program to support and foster student and community small business and entrepreneurial activities. This support will be provided through on-campus access to accredited entrepreneurial and small business education, counseling, mentoring and technology.

"Here in Maine, where small business is the backbone of our economy, the Business Resource Center at Eastern Maine Community College provides critical education, training, and support," said Senator Snowe, who is chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Formalized entrepreneurial courses at the BRC facility will be supplemented by training provided by the Maine Small Business Development Center (Maine SBDC) staff, hosted at the Eastern Maine Development Corporation. Through a partnership agreement with the College, Maine SBDC will provide its small business development infrastructure to EMCC, including professional development, business development tools, client management systems and straightforward access to specialty business counselors.

A certified Maine SBDC counselor will be available by appointment on campus to support, mentor, and counsel program participants. "The BRC effort builds on a series of Maine SBDC collaborations with the Maine Community College System that we hope continues to expand to better serve Maine's aspiring entrepreneurs and small business community," said Maine SBDC State Director John Massaua.

Field staff from the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) Maine District Office will join Maine SBDC to offer counseling and loan opportunities for clients and EMCC students. Other local economic development agencies and business assistance service providers will also provide resources to the BRC at EMCC. Fleet Bank, now Bank of America, provided significant support to launch the BRC.

"EMCC and its partners recognize that small business development, growth, and accomplishment are crucial for economic development in Maine," said EMCC President Joyce Hedlund. "We also recognize that education is key to long-term small business success," she said, adding, "The BRC, with its strategic partnerships, intends to foster and facilitate that education."

The BRC facility at EMCC will house a combination of resources that include manuals, tutorials, cd roms, books, and vhs videos. These resources will provide information and instruction on small business issues including, but not limited to, business planning, financial management, marketing and market research, as well as human resource best practices. The facility is housed in EMCC's new Technical Resource Center and Library located at The Campus Center. The BRC will be available for use by both students and the general public.

EMCC's future plans include the establishment of a Small Business Incubator where students will be afforded an opportunity to establish and operate a small business on campus. EMCC's Incubator site will provide tenants with low cost office space, phone/fax/internet services, administrative support, and conference room space in a professional business atmosphere. The EMCC Business Resource Center and Certified Maine SBDC Counselors will support the incubator site by providing resources, mentoring and counseling services to the small businesses operating there. ###

About Eastern Maine Community College's Bangor Business and Industry Center: the Center's purpose is to support area businesses and students by providing contracted and specialized training, corporate specific programs, entrepreneurial/small business education, access to funding resources, SBDC counseling, mentoring, and public non-credit class offerings. This is accomplished by responding to the education and training needs of our community, establishing innovative partnerships, and providing access to professional educators and technology.

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), 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.

More information about the Maine SBDC/SBTDC can be found at

www.mainesbdc.org.