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PRESS RELEASE
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December 22, 2005

**Congressman Michael Michaud Joins Maine SBDC to Honor
Tom Gallant as Maine SBDC State Star**

BANGOR, MAINE – U.S. Congressman Michael Michaud joined the Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC) December 22, 2005, to celebrate the selection of Tom Gallant as Maine SBDC State Star. Gallant, who is center director of the Maine SBDC service center at Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), was chosen as the recipient of this honor earlier this year. Gallant is being recognized for his work assisting Maine's small businesses in the greater Bangor region.

Congressman Michaud, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives who serves on the House Committee on Small Business, the Subcommittee on Tax, Finance and Exports, and the Subcommittee on Rural Enterprise, Agriculture, and Technology, called Gallant "a key member of the team leading the economic growth of the greater Bangor area."

"Since 2003, Tom's leadership of the Maine SBDC service center at Eastern Maine Development Corporation has significantly strengthened the support needed by our small businesses to succeed and thrive," said Michaud. "Because Maine's economy relies on the capacity of small business, the work that Tom and his colleagues do to help launch, grow and expand dozens of small businesses is absolutely critical."

The State Star Awards are presented each year by the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) which honors an outstanding SBDC professional in each state. The State Star Awards this year were presented in September at the ASBDC annual conference held in Baltimore where Gallant received his award. Keeping with the Maine SBDC custom, Maine's State Star is not formally announced in state until a presentation ceremony is held here.

To earn the State Star honor, Gallant underwent a detailed Maine SBDC review process that included both a qualitative and quantitative performance appraisal. According to Maine SBDC State Director John Massaua, "Tom's leadership as a Maine SBDC service center director and the high impact results he has had in counseling his small business clients clearly qualified him this year as Maine's highest achiever."

Congressman Michaud recognized Gallant at a morning reception held at the Whig & Courier Restaurant and Pub in Bangor. The site was chosen because Chris Geaghan, owner of the Whig & Courier, is one of Gallant's clients. This past year, Geaghan, who has owned his restaurant for nine years, worked with Gallant to obtain bank financing and to improve the profitability of his business.

“I have been in business for many years and I didn’t want to be preached to,” said Geaghan. “Tom explained things in such a way that I didn't feel like I was being preached to.”

Geaghan said Gallant’s help was instrumental in securing a bank loan. “He gave me great insight into exactly what the bank would need to see,” said Geaghan. Revising his pricing was one recommendation Gallant made to improve the restaurant’s revenues. “Tom gave me the confidence to do some price adjusting which I had hesitated to make,” said Geaghan.

Tom Gallant has been director of the Maine SBDC service center at EMDC since 2003. He is a senior business executive with over 25 years progressive management experience in sales and marketing. Before joining Maine SBDC, he was chief operating officer for ten years at Bisson Transportation Company, a family of transportation-related businesses doing \$20 million in national sales. Prior to that he held several positions at Bisson, including senior vice president and general manager, sales manager and branch manager. Gallant has a Master in Business Administration from the University of Southern Maine and a Bachelor of Science degree from Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Tom lives with his wife, Nina, in Brewer, Maine.

“I am very honored to be chosen as Maine’s 2005 State Star,” said Gallant, “It has been very rewarding to use my business skills and experience to help strengthen the vitality of Maine’s small business community.”

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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.

About the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC): *The ASBDC represents the collective interest of the national network of small business development centers,*

which deliver business management assistance to and advocacy for America's small business community. As a partnership program, ASBDC works with private enterprise, government, higher education and local nonprofit economic development organizations. Over 500,000 businesses are assisted by ASBDC member programs each year. There are over 22 million small businesses nationwide, representing 99% of all U.S. businesses. Small business employs 53% of the private work force and contributes over half of the nation's private gross domestic product. In Maine, there are 37,000 small businesses, representing almost 98% of all businesses, and 100,000 independent workers. Last year Maine SBDC/SBTDC served 5,443 clients.

About Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC): *Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) is a private, non-profit organization established in 1967. The Corporation is located in Bangor, Maine and serves the six Eastern Counties of Maine: Hancock, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, and Washington Counties. EMDC is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping businesses and communities in Eastern Maine develop and grow. For businesses from micro start-ups to expanding small businesses, EMDC helps with marketing, manufacturing, government contracting, finance, and international trade. EMDC also offer site location assistance and other help to businesses that want to expand or relocate into Eastern Maine. For communities, EMDC helps with project financing in housing, infrastructure, downtown development and numerous other areas. EMDC also help communities with technical advice on ordinances, comprehensive plans and purchasing, as well as community strategy development and leadership.*

The business of the Corporation is managed by a 23 member Board of Directors. The Board consists of at least two members from each of the six counties, one member for each of the four Regional Planning Commissions, one Growth Center representative, two members-at-large, and a representative from the Native American community. EMDC's service area covers 15,532 square miles with a population of 323,784 and is the biggest economic development district in Maine. Its professional staff members are divided into two service areas - business and community.

