

THE SMALL BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

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District Director: Judy McCauley	



Losing Sleep at Night Over the Credit Crunch? What to Do Now!

Recession can be a terrifying word for a small business owner to hear on the nightly news broadcasts. And while there is certainly cause for concern in this financial downturn, there are steps you can take right now to help steer your business through the storm.

First, it is essential to evaluate the financial underpinnings of your small business. Are you currently able to meet your loan, payroll and other operating obligations? Do you anticipate that ability will change? Are you able to continue normal operations if incoming cash flow decreased in the near future?

Talk with your small business banker about your company's unique needs for capital. While some lenders may have tightened their lending policies, most lenders in West Virginia are willing to listen and offer suggestions and alternatives.

Second, reconnect with your customers. Remind them that your product or service saves them time, energy, money or effort and therefore is of value to them, regardless of the economic climate. Have you gained new customers recently? Have you not seen several of your favorite customers in a while?

Reward loyal customers for their continued support with some form of a customer appreciation program, whether it is a club card stamped for each purchase made or an emailed coupon for savings on purchases made within a certain timeframe. Most importantly, talk with your customers. They can tell you what they want from your business in terms of products, selection and service—and what they don't.

Third, evaluate the quality and value your business receives from your suppliers. If a supplier has raised prices on a widely available item or passed on a fuel surcharge for deliveries, consider shopping around to other suppliers for more competitive prices.

Are you renting equipment on a permanent basis that would be less expensive to purchase outright? If your small business has a copy machine, check if you are copying as many documents as you are being charged for on a monthly lease. Ask your sales representative if your small business can save money by purchasing in bulk or if they are aware of upcoming discounts on items you regularly purchase. Have you requested proposals from several different health insurance brokers to find the best plan for your employees and your bottom line?

Finally, there are expert business advisors who can provide your small business with free and confidential counseling that can help you weather this downturn. The SBA funds resource partners such as SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, and the Women's Business Center. Call our office at (304) 623-5631 or visit our website (www.sba.gov/wv) today to find an SBA resource partner near you.

WEST VIRGINIA DIRECTOR MEMBER OF SBA'S NATIONAL FIELD ADVISORY COUNCIL

Judy McCauley, director of SBA's West Virginia District Office, has been appointed by SBA's acting Administrator Sandy Baruah to represent Region III on his Field Advisory Council. The council was created to provide feedback to Baruah and SBA's operation managers on the implementation and impact of SBA's lending policies and small business programs.

Her participation provides West Virginia's small business entrepreneurs, lenders, resource partners and general public an excellent opportunity to make their voices heard and provide input on how America's singular small business agency can better deliver its programs and services. It is also a vehicle to eliminate roadblocks encountered by West Virginia's small business community as they pursue their American Dream of entrepreneurship.

Individuals and organizations can contact Judy directly at (304) 623-5631 ext. 223 or via email at judy.mccauley@sba.gov with suggestions and recommendations.

Entrepreneurship Law Clinic

A WVU College of Law cooperative, the Entrepreneurship Law Clinic provides supervised legal counsel to small businesses and start-ups in a clinical setting by offering no cost or low cost assistance with pre-formation counseling.

- Choosing and forming a business entity
- Financing and investing
- Drafting articles of incorporation and bylaws, LLC articles and operating agreements, etc.
- Filing for tax-exempt recognition
 - Drafting and negotiating contracts
 - Protecting and licensing intellectual property
- Forming employment policies

To contact the WVU ELC, call (304) 293-0955, email: elc@mail.wvu.edu, or visit <http://elc.wvu.edu>.

ONLINE TRAINING FOR EXPORTERS

The SBA has developed a new online course to help small businesses explore exporting opportunities in international markets. **Global Enterprise: A Primer on Exporting** is a free, self-paced course that provides practical guidance on exploring international markets.

The new course is available on SBA's training site at www.sba.gov/training and can be accessed by clicking on "Free Online Courses," then selecting the first course listed under International Trade.

The course is a comprehensive training module using script and audio to provide fundamental information about selling in global markets. It illustrates how to identify international markets, develop an export strategy, make and receive international payments, and finance trade operations, plus guidance on determining a firm's readiness and suitability for exporting. The Exporting Primer includes more than 45 direct links to many key international resources.



The Export Primer course is one of nearly 30 online tutorials offered by the SBA on its virtual campus, the Small Business Training Network which covers a wide range of business related topics.

GETTING VETERANS BACK TO BUSINESS

With November being the month we recognize and honor our veterans for the sacrifices they have made for our country, we would like to remind all veterans and their families the SBA is focused on providing assistance to veteran small business owners. The SBA has tools, planning resources and information to help veterans start or re-establish a small business.



We offer several programs which veterans can take advantage of. These programs include the 7(a) Loan Guaranty, the Patriot Express loan, the 504 loan, and the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster (MREIDL) loan program. The purpose of the MREIDL is to provide funds to eligible small businesses to meet its ordinary and necessary operating expenses that it could have met, but is unable to meet, because an essential employee was "called-up" to active duty in their role as a military reservist.

These loans are intended only to provide the amount of working capital needed by a small business to pay its necessary obligations as they mature until operations return to normal after the essential employee is released from active military duty.

For more information on how the SBA can help veterans, visit: www.sba.gov/vets or contact Tom White at (304) 623-5631 ext. 233 (thomas.white@sba.gov).

RURAL AND READY INITIATIVE—PART II

The West Virginia District Office is providing extensive small business training on the several aspects of how to prepare to do business with the federal government. The events include workshops on government contracting certification programs, matchmaking events, and how to get on the GSA schedule. If you are looking for ways to expand your small business, which is especially important during the recent economic downturn, this is an excellent opportunity to learn about the process. Locations include: Clarksburg, Fairmont, and Charleston (future locations to be determined). Additional details can be obtained by contacting Naomi Bassel at (304) 623-5631 ext. 225 (naomi.bassel@sba.gov) or by visiting our web site at www.sba.gov/wv (all events are listed in the Rural & Ready Initiative link under our Spotlight section).



FAIRMONT ENTREPRENEUR NAMED 2008 MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Chirag Patel, president and CEO of Innovative Management & Technology Services, LLC, (IMTS) located in Fairmont, W. Va., was honored as West Virginia's 2008 Minority Small Business Person of the Year. Patel received his award at the WVHTC Foundation's Roundtable Luncheon on Wednesday, November 5 by SBA West Virginia District Director Judy McCauley.

Patel received the award in conjunction with the SBA's 26th annual Minority Small Business Development Week (MEDWeek). The event has been proclaimed by the President of the United States and recognizes the best and brightest successful minority small business owners for their personal achievements and contributions to the national economy.

"The presentation of this prestigious award provides the SBA the opportunity to recognize the hard work and dedication of not only an outstanding small business, but the West Virginia minority small business community as well," stated McCauley. "IMTS, which is an SBA 8(a) certified, small disadvantaged business, has proven again and again they are deserving of this recognition."

Patel began operation of IMTS, a technology systems integrator company, in 2001 and continues to provide expert scientific, information technology, and engineering solutions to numerous federal agencies. Under his leadership, IMTS has experienced a 100 fold increase in sales and have expanded operations into Ohio, Alabama and Washington, DC.



CALL FOR 2009 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK NOMINATIONS

The SBA's West Virginia District Office is seeking nominations for **2009 Small Business Week**. In recognition of the small business community's contributions to the American economy and society, the President of the United States designates one week each year as National Small Business Week. 2009 National Small Business Week is scheduled for May 17 through May 23, 2009 in Washington, DC. This is the time we recognize and honor the vital role America's small business community plays in maintaining and strengthening the Nation's economy.

The WVDO encourages you to be a part of the 2009 Small Business Week celebration by nominating an outstanding small business owner and/or small business champion from your community for recognition as Small Business Person or Champions of the Year (select from one of our eleven award categories).

The nomination guidelines include a step-by-step guide to the preparation and submission of a nomination package and detailed criteria of each award category. Specific instructions can be found on the WVDO web site at www.sba.gov/wv (under the Spotlight section). **All nomination packages must be received in the WVDO by Friday, November 28, 2008.** Nominations can be sent to the attention of Rick Haney, Public Information Officer, West Virginia District Office, 320 West Pike Street, Suite 330, Clarksburg, WV 26301.

Questions can be directed to Rick Haney at (304) 623-5631 ext. 230 (email: richard.haney@sba.gov).

ECONOMIC STIMULUS BENEFITS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

As 2008 is nearing the end, there is only a limited amount of time left for your business to take advantage of the Economic Stimulus benefits for businesses.

The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 contains two provisions that provide tax benefits for businesses, but unlike the economic stimulus payments that millions of individuals have already received, the tax benefits for businesses are not automatic; businesses must act to take advantage of the new provisions by purchasing qualifying property.

To find out more about economic stimulus benefits for your business, visit SBA's online tax savings resource center at: www.sba.gov/stimulus/index.html.

Help SBA Assist You

SBA is looking to collect ideas on how to improve access to our programs and other ideas that will help us do a better job in assisting small businesses. Please share your ideas and experiences with us as small business owners during the current economic condition. You can do so at: economyideas@sba.gov.

Small Business Award Categories:

Small Business Person

Small Business Exporter

Young Entrepreneur

Family-Owned Business

Champion Award Categories

Financial Services

Small Business Journalist

Home-Based Business

Minority Small Business

Veteran Small Business

Women in Business

SMALL DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS CERTIFICATION (SDB) UPDATE

The SBA recently suspended receipt of applications for the SDB program and are allowing small businesses to self-certify. The SBA has processed the certification of SDBs since 1999 as the SDBs were entitled to receive price evaluation adjustments of up to 10 percent for federal procurement. In December of 2004, the statutory authority to use the SDB price evaluation method ended for a majority of the agencies. As a consequence, other agencies have become less inclined to enter into Economy Act Agreements to pay for the SBA SDB certification process.

Without the SDB price evaluation adjustment for prime contracts, there is no direct benefit to the SDB firm, and the SDB designation is only used for statistical purposes to determine government-wide SDB goal achievement.

During the past eight fiscal years, contract dollars going to SDBs increased to more than \$25 billion. The percent of federal procurement dollars going to SDBs doubled during the same period to 6.6 percent. These accomplishments were achieved with limited-to-no use of the price evaluation adjustments.

This suspension will have no effect on SBA's 8(a) Business Development program as small businesses that participate in the 8(a) program are also SDBs.

For information on SBA's certification programs, contact Melissa Loder (email: melissa.loder@sba.gov) at (304) 623-5631 ext. 224.

IRS E-UPDATES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Two new IRS products make it easier for small businesses and the self-employed to locate the information they need on the IRS's official web site, [IRS.gov](http://irs.gov). These new products are part of a campaign to help educate new self-employed small business owners about federal tax responsibilities and about filing Schedule C, Profit or Loss from Business.

Publication 4667, a laminated bookmark that provides Key Search Words to help business owners locate important tax information on the IRS web site, is available for ordering at: www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=101169.00.html.

Another product is the "Self-Employed Individuals Tax Center," a one-stop, starting point for taxpayers who file Schedule C with Form 1040. It also provides links to information on the most common issues new business owners face. It can be found at www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=115045.00.html.

To get the latest information about events and learn about new products and services as they become available, start a FREE subscription to e-NEWS for Small Business; just go to www.irs.gov/businesses/small/content/0,,id=154826.00.html and type in your email address and submit.



ONLINE RESOURCE FOR BABY BOOMERS

The SBA has unveiled a new web site geared to the 50-plus entrepreneur featuring interactive information and links to help 50-plus entrepreneurs consider the benefits and rewards of business ownership, and to help them make informed choices about business ownership.

Components of the new web site include a self-assessment feature to help the aspiring entrepreneur determine his or her business readiness, information on borrowing and credit, and inspirational success stories from baby boomer entrepreneurs. The web site will help users evaluate the reasons for business ownership after age 50, the risks involved, and how to devise a plan of action at every phase of business development.

As baby boomers consider career and lifestyle shifts that extend beyond their work careers, tapping into the world of business ownership can allow them to leverage their flexibility, know-how and business acumen to go into business for themselves. Many have already joined the ranks of the nation's self-employed and small business owners.



IRS's Latest Product, '09 Small Biz Tax Calendar

The IRS 2009 Small Business/Self-Employed Tax Calendar is stocked and ready to go. This FREE calendar features professional illustrations, in-depth business tax information, and day-to-day reminders for which business taxes are due.

New 2009 topics include:

- The 2008 Economic Stimulus Act
- Section 179 Expensing
- Minimizing Identity Theft
- Disaster Recovery for Small Businesses

To order, visit the tax calendar ordering page at www.irs.gov/businesses/small/page/0,,id=82780.00.html or call the National Distribution Center at (800) 829-3676.