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## **North Jersey Small Business Owners Speak Up in Morristown**

For Immediate Release

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**MORRISTOWN, N.J., April 5, 2006** – New Jersey small businesses are the lifeblood of the state’s economy, adding new jobs and creating economic growth. This vital group expressed their concerns and fears during the “Listening to Small Business” forum at County College of Morris in Morristown on Tuesday. Representatives from the New Jersey Small Business Development Centers (NJSBDC) network listened as small business owners discussed the challenges and obstacles they face in running an effective business.

Local business owners were encouraged to see that NJSBDC was there to listen and act on their behalf. The NJSBDC representatives and attendees heard from several business owners about problems stemming from inadequate parking, local parking lot construction, and employee and customer safety. NJSBDC State Director Brenda Hopper, Associate State Director Deborah Smarth, Skylands Small Business Development Center Regional Director Jim Smith, and Special Projects Director Charles Jackson were on hand to listen to the concerns and recommendations of the small business owners.

“The Skylands Small Business Development Center serves businesses in Morris, Warren and Sussex counties,” said Jim Smith of the Skylands SBDC. “With the feedback we received from the forum attendees we are able to go to the local advocacy groups and express the concerns of the small business owners.”

Ms. Smarth told the gathering, “In a day and age when people are being downsized out of jobs due to corporate restructuring and outsourcing practices, it is so important to make it easier, not more difficult, for small business owners to start and grow their operations. State and local governments have to be super-friendly since entrepreneurs and small business owners have limited resources in the earlier and mid-stages of growth.”

Ms. Hopper explained the business support services that NJSBDC provides to small businesses through its 11 regional offices, including the Skylands SBDC regional center.

In 2005, the NJSBDC provided assistance to more than 23,000 small business owners with more than 7,000 receiving one-to-one personalized management consulting; facilitated \$105.5 million in financing through loans, procurement contracts and grants; and helped create or retain 10,000 jobs. The network is a federal-state-educational partnership funded by the US Small Business Administration, the NJ Commerce, Economic Growth and Tourism Commission, the Rutgers Business School and other educational institutions which host SBDC regional centers throughout

Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.  
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the State.

NJSBDC has previously held “Listening to Small Business” forums and walking tours in South Orange, Long Branch, Perth Amboy, Atlantic City, Sayreville, Cape May and Camden. The findings and recommendations from the forums will be compiled in an official report to the State Legislature and presented to its legislative leadership, Governor Corzine, and key members of his staff, for future action in the Spring.

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*The New Jersey Small Business Development Centers (NJSBDC) network is the premier provider of comprehensive services and programs for small business in New Jersey, helping businesses expand their operations, manage their growth or start new ventures. The NJSBDC network consists of 11 service centers with a presence in every county. Expert staff and practicing business consultants help established small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to develop business plans, find financing, identify new markets and expand their operations.*

*The NJSBDC is a federal-state-educational partnership program. It is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. Additional funding is provided through the NJ Commerce, Economic Growth and Tourism Commission, and Rutgers Business School Graduate Programs - Newark and New Brunswick. SBA’s funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.*