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**Small Business Growth Recognized at Annual Luncheon Event Sponsored by
America's SBDC New Jersey**

***Business Clients and Legislators Will Participate at the Annual Tradition which Falls on the 35th
Anniversary of the National SBDC Program***

December 3, 2015 (Newark, NJ) – Fourteen small business owners and entrepreneurs from diverse industry sectors with various ranges of employment and revenue are being recognized at America's SBDC New Jersey's **13th annual Small Business Growth Awards Luncheon** on Friday, December 11, 2015. The national America's SBDC program is celebrating its 35th anniversary. These award winners are clients of the New Jersey Small Business Development Centers network and are being recognized for their development and growth with the assistance provided by NJSBDC's business practitioners and experts. The event is being held at the Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, NJ. Registration and networking occurs between 11:30 am and 12 pm. The program starts at 12:00 pm and concludes by 2:30 pm.

Platinum and Gold financial sponsors include **PSE&G** and **PNC Bank**. Other private sector financial supporters include UPS and City National Bank. Additional supporters include ADP, Health Republic, Morgan Stanley, and Quarterspot. In addition, Bank of America is a key partner and financial grantor of the network. New Jersey Business magazine is an in-kind sponsor, providing a free subscription of its monthly issues to NJSBDC business award winners.

"This event brings our partners, clients, and stakeholders and all of our statewide experts together for a special commemoration of our clients' success stories," said NJSBDC network **Chief Executive Officer and State Director Brenda Hopper**. *"These success stories show our economic impact and contribution to the state economy."* The network counsels up to 5,000 small business clients annually in addition to thousands of trainees that attend SBDC seminars.

The keynote speaker is **Assembly Majority Leader Louis D. Greenwald** (District 6), a longtime advocate and supporter of the NJSBDC network and a past recipient of the "Small Business Legislator of the Year" award. **Assembly Deputy Speaker Gordon M. Johnson** (District 37) and **Minority Budget Officer Senator Anthony R. Bucco** (District 25) - all past recipients of NJSBDC's legislative Small Business Advocate awards - will be on hand to celebrate the clients' success as well as celebrate the restored, increase in state funding provided to the program in this year's enacted state budget. **Assemblyman Benjie E. Wimberly**, a member of the Assembly Budget Committee, will also be presented with the "2015 Business Advocate Award" for his continued support of NJSBDC network's mission.

"Our engagement with SBDC clients, key state legislative leaders and our financial supporters, partners and stakeholders means a great deal to all of us. We have this opportunity to share our successes with them every year at this particular gathering," said **Deborah Smarth, chief operating officer and associate state director** of the NJSBDC network. *"It's a perfect way of ending a full year of impact in helping small businesses get to where they want to go."*

Kellie LeDet, SBA regional administrator in region II, and **Alfred Titone**, SBA NJ District director will also participate in the program. The SBA is a major funding partner of America's SBDC New Jersey.

The **Small Business Success Award Winners** include:

--A client of *NJSBDC's Technology Commercialization Program*, **Grigore "Greg" Burdea, Ph.D.** founded **Bright Cloud International Corp** located in Highland Park NJ. This Rutgers Professor is a pioneer in the field of virtual rehabilitation combining custom hardware with therapeutic video games to supplement treatment beyond traditional care, benefiting victims of stroke, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy, etc. With SBDC's assistance, the business received a \$1.3 million Phase II Small Business Innovation Research Grant (SBIR) and then another \$224,500 Phase I SBIR grant for a new device; this will further attract more investment for the company's technology innovations.

--**Stacey Schlosser**, owner of **Glassworks Studio** in Morristown NJ, is receiving recognition from *NJSBDC's Sustainability specialty program* for her use of "green" practices allowing her to not only save money in running her business, but, also promoting energy conservation, waste reduction, and using proper materials for her glass fusing studio.

--**Tom Olsen** and **Kristine LaGuardia** own and operate **LoBster Life Systems, Inc.**, located in Lodi NJ. A client of the *NJSBDC at Bergen Community College*, the company provides state-of-the-art equipment and supplies necessary to operating a healthy aquatic system; its customers include major supermarket chains, restaurants, gourmet shops, wholesalers and marine exhibitors throughout North America. With the Center's help, the business has experienced a 25 percent sales increase and enhanced one percent nationwide share in the market.

--**Altagracia "Jessie" Sanchez**, owner of **Jessie Beauty Salon, LLC** in Perth Amboy NJ, came to the United States from the Dominican Republic with a dream of starting a business. She initially shared space with a nail salon. Due to clientele growth, it was necessary to move to a larger location. With the assistance of the *NJSBDC at Brookdale Community College*, she established a full service salon doubling her staff in order to provide a full complement of expanded services.

--**Dr. Laura Rokosz, Ph.D.** founded **EGGLROCK Nutrition LLC**, an integrative healthcare practice located in Union NJ. The business provides dietary and lifestyle strategy recommendations for disease prevention and health wellness and maintenance. Rokosz has more than two decades of pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry experience. With the assistance of *NJSBDC at Kean University*, Dr. Rokosz enhanced financial and general business management skills and value-added service delivery to attract new clients and increase revenues.

--**Milton Herrera** is owner and operator of **Milherton Commercial Flooring** in Fairview, NJ. When he was 23 years old, he came to the United States from El Salvador and worked in the flooring trade while trying to start his own business. He came to the *NJSBDC at New Jersey City University* for advice on business structure, time management and overall financial bottom-line. Within two years, the business added staff from 2 to 5 employees and additional independent contractors, too. He also received a construction financing loan.

--**Zulya Rajabova**, founder of **Silk Road Treasure Tours** in Chester NJ, opened up a boutique travel and tour business focused on her beloved Central Asia. With the assistance of the *NJSBDC of Northwest Jersey* on subjects like business planning, marketing, QuickBooks, and website development, this small company has grown and received much acclaim in the travel community.

--**Sandra White** and her husband decided to make a career change. **White** was a geophysicist and acquainted with water damage and damage remediation. After researching franchises, they decided to establish **PuroClean Disaster Response** located in Middlesex NJ. The **NJSBDC at Raritan Valley Community College** provided assistance with marketing, sales, and cost control as well as cost analysis, QuickBooks, and human resources issues. The business grew from a 5 member staff to 9 employees and sales have grown to almost \$1 million.

--**Patricia Ott, P.E.** established **MBO Engineering LLC** six years ago. The company is located in Bordentown NJ. She received assistance from the **NJSBDC at Rutgers-Camden** on business planning, financial work plans, and general business practices as well as marketing. Pat has brought in new business and has grown since 2012. Gross receipts and sales went up more than 50 percent (2012-2014). And overall company growth, more than 300 percent.

--**Jayesh and Manisha Mehta**, who own and operate **AUM Group of Companies LLC**, focus on diversified areas like planning and managing events, childcare, media communications and artist management. They acquired four new franchises in the children educational arena, online news services, and a performing arts studio for children and adults. All together there are 45 employees and they expanded revenues by 25 percent. The **NJSBDC at Rutgers-New Brunswick** assisted the company in identifying new customer bases and other strategic alignments.

--**Adenah Bayoh** established **Foya Hospitality Group**, owning IHOP franchises in Paterson and Irvington NJ. As CEO and Founder, she has built a successful business model and focuses on investing in economically challenged neighborhoods. The **NJSBDC at Rutgers-Newark** helped her with her business planning strategy including a social media plan. Adenah won the NJ Immigrant Entrepreneur Award recognizing current first-generation immigration business leaders who help local communities thrive.

--**Katarina Elder** and her husband Rob opened **The Cape May Day Spa** in Cape May, NJ. She was employed at the Cape May Day Spa after graduating with an MBA. After leaving that job, she and her husband visited with the **NJSBDC at Stockton University** to explore how to go about acquiring a business. With assistance on business planning, financial projections, and financing the couple applied for an SBA loan for several hundred thousand dollars from Sturdy Savings Bank.

--**Barbara Weigand** left her successful position at a high-end salon in Princeton and decided to start her own venture. The **NJSBDC at The College of New Jersey** provided her with counseling and training on an array of topics suitable for such an endeavor. Her husband contributed cash infusion and then she secured a micro-loan. In September 2011 she opened her own salon in Princeton, **Copper River Salon and Spa**. The salon is now thriving with 13 employees and a half million dollars in annual revenues.

--**Jose Alberto, Julio Morales** and **Louis Saia** started **PyroSense Technologies LLC** in Fairfield NJ with the assistance of **NJSBDC at William Paterson University**. Their previous employer closed leaving them and 30 other employees without jobs. The trio decided to start their own manufacturing company to produce a wide variety of sensors for all industries with emphasis on power, oil and gas, chemical and transportation markets. They pride themselves on using American-based components. SBDC helped them with their business plan, marketing, operations, financial management and access to financing. Formed in March 2014, **PyroSense** now employs 22 people, offering many jobs to those who lost their jobs when their prior employer closed its NJ facility.

Several regional and statewide business and trade groups are providing several of the award winners with free business gift memberships including the **Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey**, the **Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce**, the **New Jersey Business and Industry Association**, the **Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce**, and the **New Jersey Technology Council**. The firm of **Eisner Amper** is also providing the Technology Commercialization award winner with pro bono services regarding certain specialized issues/areas that can benefit the business owner.

About America's SBDC New Jersey (NJSBDC)

The New Jersey Small Business Development Centers network, one of the first pilot projects in the nation, has provided comprehensive services and programs for small business in New Jersey for 37 years; SBDC experts help businesses expand their operations, manage their growth, or start new ventures. Expert staff and practicing business consultants help small business owners and entrepreneurs to develop business plans, find financing, accounting and financial analysis, identify new markets, initiate marketing strategies, find procurement and international trade opportunities, learn green sustainability practices, commercialize technology and develop an E-commerce presence. This non-profit network, a federal-state-educational partnership, leverages funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the N.J. Business Action Center, the educational institutions that host the 12 centers as well as other private sponsorships and additional private/public grants. The NJSBDC Headquarters, located at the Rutgers Business School in Newark, NJ, oversees the network which is an accredited member of America's SBDC. Approximately 1,000 centers and satellite offices serve small businesses across the country, generating jobs and economic development. Visit www.njsbdc.com.

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