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America's SBDC New Jersey Celebrates 35 Years of Achievement at Annual Success Awards Luncheon
Small Business Clients and Legislators Participate at Annual Gathering

December 12, 2015 (Newark, NJ) – Fourteen small business owners and entrepreneurs from diverse industry sectors with various ranges of employment and revenue were 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 was held at the Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, NJ with more than 300 attendees.

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

"This event brought 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.

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, was keynote speaker. He highlighted some important issues the Legislature is grappling with during the legislative lame duck session like investment in transportation infrastructure, and solving the fiscal burdens relating to state pensions. He also spoke about the importance of growing the small business sector, congratulating NJSBDC's clients for their success stories. **Assemblyman Ronald S. Dancer** (District 12) and **Assembly Deputy Speaker Gordon M. Johnson** (District 37) - past recipients of NJSBDC's legislative Small Business Advocate awards – were present 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, was presented with the "2015 Business Advocate Award" by the network.

"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, especially on the 35th anniversary of America's SBDC national program."*

From January through June 30, 2015, the NJSBDC helped their clients create and save 6,074 jobs. Last year, 534 SBDC clients started a new business. Clients statewide created and saved 15,089 jobs in 2014.

Kellie LeDet, SBA Regional Administrator in Region II, and **Alfred Titone**, SBA NJ District Director participated at the event. The SBA is a major funding partner of America's SBDC New Jersey. The NJ Business Action Center, a state funding partner, also had representation and the Governor sent a congratulatory letter to the network for its assistance to small business owners statewide.

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

--A client of *NJSBDC's Technology Commercialization Program*, **Grigore "Greg" Burdea, Ph.D.**, who founded **Bright Cloud International Corp** located in Highland Park NJ. The company is a pioneer in the field of virtual rehabilitation to benefit victims of stroke, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy.

--**Stacey Schlosser**, owner of **Glassworks Studio** in Morristown NJ, received recognition from *NJSBDC's Sustainability Specialty Program* for her use of "green" practices promoting energy conservation, waste reduction, and using proper recyclable 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 for supermarket chains, restaurants, gourmet shops, wholesalers and marine exhibitors throughout North America. They've increased their sales and national market share with SBDC's assistance.

--**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. With the assistance of the *NJSBDC at Brookdale Community College*, she established a full service salon.

--**Dr. Laura Rokosz, Ph.D.** founded **EGGLROCK Nutrition LLC**, an integrative healthcare practice located in Union NJ, provides dietary and lifestyle strategy recommendations for disease prevention and health wellness and maintenance. With the assistance of *NJSBDC at Kean University*, Dr. Rokosz has attracted new clients and increased 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. With assistance from the *NJSBDC at New Jersey City University*, the business has grown.

--**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*, this small company has grown and received much acclaim in the travel community.

--**Sandra White** and her husband after researching franchises, decided to establish **PuroClean Disaster Response** located in Middlesex NJ. The *NJSBDC at Raritan Valley Community College* provided assistance and 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*. Sales went up more than 50 percent (2012-2014). And overall company growth, more than 300 percent.

--**Jayesh and Manisha Mehta** own and operate **AUM Group of Companies LLC** focusing on planning and managing events, childcare, media communications and artist management. With the assistance of the *NJSBDC at Rutgers-New Brunswick* they acquired four new franchises and now have 45 employees and expanded revenues.

--**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 with the help of *NJSBDC at Rutgers-Newark*.

--**Katarina Elder** and her husband Rob opened **The Cape May Day Spa** in Cape May, NJ with the assistance of the *NJSBDC at Stockton University*. They received a several hundred thousand dollar loan and have made their dream come true.

--**Barbara Weigand**, with the help of *NJSBDC at The College of New Jersey* has successfully started and grown her 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 started their own manufacturing company producing a wide variety of sensors for all industries. They pride themselves on using American-based components. 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.

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 throughout the nation. Visit www.njsbdc.com.

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