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America's SBDC New Jersey Celebrates Small Business Success at 14th Annual Luncheon

Keynote Speaker Senator Kevin J. O'Toole Passionately Calls for Greater State Funding for this Jobs Producing Program

December 9, 2016 (Newark, NJ) – Sixteen 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 **14th annual Small Business Growth Awards Luncheon** on Friday, December 9, 2016. These SBDC award winners from across the state were recognized for their successful development and growth with the assistance provided by NJSBDC's business experts. The event was held at the Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, NJ from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm and attracted more than 265 attendees including small business owners.

Platinum and Gold financial sponsors include **PSE&G** and **PNC Bank**. **City National Bank** is a Bronze financial sponsor. Other private sector financial supporters include **UPS** and **ADP**. In addition, **Bank of America** is a key partner and financial grantor of the network. **New Jersey Business** magazine is an in-kind media sponsor.

"This event shines light on our clients' great success stories," said NJSBDC network **Chief Executive Officer and State Director Brenda Hopper**. *"These success stories and the quality services we provide for the thousands of business owners we serve each year lead to economic impact, contributing 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.

Senator Kevin J. O'Toole (District 40), a longtime advocate and supporter of the NJSBDC network and a past recipient of the "2007 Small Business Advocate" award, in his keynote speech passionately called upon the small business owners to advocate in Trenton. He emphasized that the Legislature should further increase state funding to \$1 million or more for the Small Business Development Centers program; the program was funded at \$1 million prior to the reduction under Governor Jon Corzine and the Christie administration has held it at \$250,000 despite the Legislature's restored increases this year and last. The program currently receives \$500,000.

Senator Sam Thompson (District 12), **Assemblyman John DiMaio** (District 23), and **Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel** (District 27) received honorary recognition at the event. Thompson serves on the Senate Budget Committee; DiMaio serves on the Assembly Budget Committee and Appropriations Committee. Vainieri Huttel is Chair of the Assembly Human Services committee and Deputy Speaker. While Assemblywomen Pintor Marin and Maher Muoio were to receive such recognition, schedule conflicts precluded their attendance. The event also acknowledged the leadership of Assembly and Senate Budget Committee chairmen, **Senator Paul Sarlo** and **Assemblyman Gary Schaer**, along with ranking Minority Budget Officers, **Senator Anthony Bucco** and **Assemblyman Declan O'Scanlon** in supporting small businesses through SBDC services; they are recognized in the event's Commemorative Program Book.

"This event allows us to recognize SBDC clients, key state legislators and our financial supporters, partners and stakeholders," said **Deborah Smarth, chief operating officer and associate state director** of the

NJSBDC network. *“It’s a great way of closing out a full year of impact in helping small businesses achieve their business success. It’s all about jobs, business creation and business retention/expansion.”*

From July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, the NJSBDC: Counseled more than 4,100 clients delivering 20,553 total counseling hours; more than 6,600 businesses and individuals attended 521 training sessions statewide; 632 SBDC clients started new businesses; \$93.9 million in financing for clients was facilitated. For half of the fiscal year, NJSBDC helped their clients create and save 11,473 jobs. Last calendar year (2015), NJSBDC network helped generate more than 16,000 jobs.

Kellie LeDet, Small Business Administration (SBA) regional administrator in region II, and **Alfred Titone**, SBA NJ District director participated in the program. Professors and professional staff of the **Rutgers Business School** were also in attendance since the SBDC program is hosted there. The SBA is a major funding partner of America’s SBDC New Jersey. The NJ Business Action Center is a state funding partner of America’s SBDC New Jersey.

The New Jersey Business and Industry Association, Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey, the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the New Jersey Technology Council provided gift business memberships for the SBDC success award winners.

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

-- ***Kitchen Connections***, founded by **Earlene Cruz**, a social enterprise which engages chefs around the world to share their cooking recipes and instructions via the Internet through interactive cooking classes. **NJSBDC’s E-Business Program** advised and provided guidance on social media marketing to increase exposure to customers and partners; SBDC Rutgers-Newark helped her with a SWOT analysis. She now has partnerships with 700 chefs in different countries and thousands of followers on social media. (**Union City, NJ**)

--***Tabatchnick Fine Foods, Inc.***, headed by **Rita Tabatchnick**, is a nationally recognized soup company manufacturing a variety of soups and broths as well as a variety of food products for schools and retail as well as therapeutic foods at their factory. **NJSBDC’s Procurement Program** assisted the company in obtaining a large, several million dollar procurement contract with the federal government. These added sales revenues have enabled the business to hire additional employees and make renovations to their manufacturing facility. (**Somerset, NJ**)

--***Copper River Salon and Spa***, a Success Award Winner in 2015, was started and expanded by owner **Barbara Weigand**. The business implemented sustainability practices, bringing down business operational costs while providing sensitivity to environmental friendliness in running its business. That’s why this business owner is **NJSBDC’s Sustainability Program** award winner. In order to reduce day-to-day waste collection, the salon uses cloth towels for restrooms, glass mugs for drinks, marketing materials from recycled paper products. She invested in energy efficient light fixtures and appliances and uses eco-friendly cleaning products. (**Princeton, NJ**)

--***Small Factory Innovations (SFI)***, founded and led by **Chris Dudick**, is developing an interactive, game-based learning product, SiLAS, providing critical social skills training to children with Autism disorders and other disabilities. This SiLAS curriculum places socialization at the center of social skills training. **NJSBDC’s Technology Commercialization Program** assisted with their grant proposal and Chris was just notified of an award approval of \$225,000 from the National Science Foundation. (**Fair Haven, NJ**)

--***Rinn ABA Consulting***, owned and operated by **Ira and Jennifer Rinn**, is a professional consulting practice providing children and families with individualized autism-intervention services in their homes, community settings and schools. **NJSBDC at Bergen Community College** (with an affiliate office at **Ramapo College of NJ**) provided assistance with business planning, budgeting and forecasting; general management; recruiting and staffing and general business management. The company is experiencing increased revenues and hired 3 additional employees. (**Emerson, NJ**)

--Relish Chef Services, founded and operated by Marcy Ragan, focuses on personal chef, catering, and cooking instruction services. Marcy provides meal planning, grocery shopping, prep work, and clean up. Many new customers, who have busy life styles, are being served cooked, ready to go delicious meals. NJSBDC at Brookdale Community College helped with the business plan, social media, financing and accounting, and time management resources. Sales are increasing. (Long Branch, NJ)

--Sancoche Soups, LLC/ Business Boosters, LLC/and ThinkScreen, LLC, founded and operated by Nicole and Tom Mauriello, are family-run businesses. One of the family businesses makes and sells homemade specialty ethnic soups. Another business in the family sells uniquely branded promotional items to corporate clients. A third business is a digital web development and branding agency with very recognizable corporate clients. The NJSBDC at Kean University assisted on how to best organize time and resources, providing guidance on how to manage, develop and grow. (Berkeley Heights, NJ)

--Dusty's Dog House, founded and run by Frank Valentine, is a multi-service dog facility. The services for pets include daycare, boarding, grooming, and training. Frank left his corporate job to start this business and with the help of the NJSBDC at New Jersey City University he obtained a loan and received assistance with marketing and business planning. He is now looking to open additional satellite locations. (Bayonne, NJ)

--Czig Meister Brewing LLC, started by Matt and Frank Czigler, is a craft micro-brewery enterprise. The NJSBDC of Northwest Jersey helped the business owners refine and update their business plan to increase the likelihood of being approved for a loan which they were awarded. They secured several distribution agreements with pubs and restaurants in the state, experiencing growth. (Hackettstown, NJ)

--CertaPro Painters of Central Somerset County, owned and operated by Rebeca Jiminez, employs 12 individuals. The franchise business does commercial and home painting. Jiminez had much experience in manufacturing engineering and had worked for large corporations. The NJSBDC at Raritan Valley Community College helped with human resources issues and business plan aspects. In addition, she attended 13 training seminars to enhance various business skills to run her business effectively. Company sales revenues from 2014 through 2016 have increased. (Hillsborough, NJ)

--Ed Ebert's Automotive is owned and operated by Mike and Suzanne Dunn. They acquired this automotive repair business and re-tooled it. NJSBDC at Rutgers-Camden helped with due diligence and purchase phases of the acquisition transaction. Challenged in the beginning with reduced sales, the business introduced innovative practices like customer referral discounts, etc. The enterprise now has seven full-time employees, all certified automotive professionals, with state of the art equipment and tools. (Moorestown, NJ)

--Truck Tech Parts and Service, owned and operated by Andy Vieira, provides mechanics, fleets, and truckers with quality new and used heavy-duty truck parts and high quality maintenance services for trucks and heavy equipment. The company employs 13 full-time and 3 part-time employees and purchased substantial facility space. The NJSBDC at Rutgers-Newark helped with Small Business & Minority Business Enterprise certifications, business and financial plans, and financing. (Newark, NJ)

--Health and Natural Beauty USA, Inc. was established by Dr. Syed Ibrahim, an immigrant from Sudan. He left a senior chemist position at a Fortune 500 company, motivated to create a premium toothpaste product without chemicals or abrasives and incorporating natural ingredients. After years of vigorous scientific testing, SprinJene toothpaste is now being distributed in major food & drug chains as well as health food stores. The NJSBDC at Rutgers-New Brunswick assisted the business with marketing, sales and pricing strategy as well as capital financing access and procurement resources. (Piscataway, NJ)

--SC Consultant, LLC, led by Shirley Corsey, provides consulting services in medical billing, coding to private medical practices and hospitals and training programs for those seeking to work in the medical billing, coding and emergency services fields. The NJSBDC at Stockton University assisted with updating the business plan, marketing needs, and capital access. Shirley focuses on providing education in this field for the unemployed and underemployed, providing internships and employment at her firm and other medical billing service providers. (Linwood, NJ)

--Saint Joseph Contractor Corp., started by Luis Barboza Bacci, is a construction company. Bacci had lots of experience in the field as a contractor. The NJSBDC at The College of New Jersey helped him with Quickbooks; reducing costs by 10 percent due to new practices for financial records and processes. With procurement assistance, the company has been successful in obtaining large procurement contracts of over \$1 million dollars, enabling him to hire more subcontractors/employees. (Hamilton, NJ)

--RIGO Dental Lab, headed by Rigoberto Lopez, is a 20 year-plus family-owned business which produces innovative products and processes for dental patients and dental laboratories that improve patients' comfort and saves production time and money. Such products include an implant bar, flexible partials, and other devices. The NJSBDC at William Paterson University helped access services and general guidance about protection of intellectual property, agreements, patents and licensing in medical devices and helped obtain financing. Revenue increases from certain products have transpired and an additional full-time employee hired. (Passaic, NJ)

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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