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State's First "Master Certified Business Counselor" Is Recognized

Portland – Brad Swanson, a certified senior business counselor at the Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC), has met rigorous standards to become Maine's first Master Certified Business Counselor. The Master Certified Business Counselor designation requires a minimum of five years of contiguous exemplary service and over 12 years of SBDC service. It also requires that the candidate has an MBA or similarly recognized degree, has garnered relevant professional development, and has demonstrated a record of "the highest excellence to economic impact", as well as a demonstrated commitment to assistance in developing the Maine SBDC network quality.

The Master Certified Business Counselor designation is granted upon the recommendation of the Maine SBDC State Director and approval of the State of Maine Commission on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, which provides oversight to the Maine SBDC program.

"Brad's commitment to the Maine SBDC mission to help small businesses succeed is extraordinary," said Maine SBDC State Director, John Massaua, "He has exceptional technical business skills as well as counseling skills and his work consistently has significant economic impact and real value here in Maine." "Brad is a counselor's counselor among his peers and a tremendous asset to the small businesses with whom he works.

Swanson, who has been with Maine SBDC for almost 16 years, has an office in Augusta and an office in Bath, and is part of the Maine SBDC service center at Coastal Enterprises, Inc., headquartered in Wiscasset. He has an MBA from the Whittemore School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire and a BA in Psychology from the University of Maine. He is currently near completion of an MS in Human Development and Education at the University of Southern Maine. He is also a corporate trainer with expertise in mediation and facilitation. Brad lives with his wife Jenna on Great Island in Harpswell. Earlier this year, Swanson was awarded the Maine SBDC's 30th Anniversary Award for Excellence.

Swanson says his respect for small business owners is one reason he is dedicated to his job.

"We are working with people who are committed to Maine and creating jobs here." said Swanson, "They want to be successful and they come to us for our expertise in small business development and our skills in working with people. After nearly 20 years in this

field I am still driven by the immense satisfaction of developing a level of rapport with local business men and women that allows them to trust the advice and counsel I give, and to use my support to succeed in living their dream of small business ownership."

About Maine Small Business Development Centers/Maine Small Business & Technology Development Centers (Maine SBDC/SBTDC): *Maine SBDC/SBTDC is a partnership program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in association with the SBA/OSBDC, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, the University of Southern Maine, and leading economic and/or community development hosting organizations, including the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and the Northern Maine Development Commission and with support from the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) and other contractors, allies and stakeholders. Accredited by the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) and administered by USM's School of Business, Maine SBDC/SBTDC operates a network of service centers and outreach offices located conveniently throughout the state.*