

Release Date: 12/31/07

Maine SBDC Leadership Transitions

Portland, ME: John Massaua, State Director for the Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC), stepped down from his position today. Massaua's departure concludes the most productive period in the organization's 30 year history. Massaua, State Director since June, 2001, and with the Maine SBDC since November, 1998, is leaving his post to independently work on ideas, innovation and opportunities for small business within and outside the State of Maine.

According to U.S. Small Business Administration records, during Massaua's six and a half years of leadership, the Maine SBDC assisted 14,000 clients with one-on-one business counseling and educated 16,500 attendees during nearly 1,000 business training events. This activity supported the creation or retention of over 5,000 jobs, nearly 700 new business starts and over \$200 million in business capital formation for the State of Maine.

Independent analysis of the Maine SBDC one-on-one business assistance, conducted by Mississippi State University researcher Doctor James Chrisman, concludes that during the five most recent years of study (2001-2005), the Maine SBDC returned to the state treasury three dollars for every base state one dollar invested in it, equating to a one year net return on investment (NROI) of 200%. Similar high returns were demonstrated in Chrisman's studies for federal dollars invested.

U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe (R), ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, said in a December 12, 2007, Senate Floor Statement honoring Massaua, "The State of Maine and small businesses across the country owe a debt of gratitude to John Massaua for his work to protect and improve something as crucial as the Small Business Development Center program. Although he will be missed, I applaud John's years of commitment and hard work in providing entrepreneurs with the management and professional expertise required to achieve success."

Maine State Senator Lynn Bromley (D-South Portland), Chair of Maine's Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development (BRED), said "While John's departure is an incredible loss to the State of Maine, the organization he has helped to create Maine SBDC has become the hub of Maine's economic development efforts for small business."

"The best way for us to thank John is to make sure we continue our support of Maine's small business community," she said, noting that a Maine legislative sentiment regarding his service to Maine will be presented to Massaua when the legislature reconvenes in January.

Massaua first served the Maine SBDC as a Business Management Assistance Counselor after spending 30 years in the retail/wholesale industry, where he held a broad range of executive positions within small and medium size companies. During this time, he was also a founding officer for Staples Inc. In 2004, the Maine Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) presented Massaua with its Thomas A. McGillicuddy Award for Excellence for his "unflinching commitment" to Maine's small businesses. In 2005, he was awarded the Extra-Miler Award by the Association of Small Business Development Centers and in 2006, Massaua was awarded the Founder's Award by Coastal Enterprises Inc. for his leadership in development of unique strategic partnerships to benefit small business development. Massaua, who lives in China Village, Maine, also served on the Board and as Chair of the Board for the Association of Small Business Development Centers.

"I am proud of what has been accomplished the last six years by the Maine SBDC," said Massaua, "but that for which I am most proud is the everyday untiring dedication of the Maine SBDC counselors and staff as to helping Maine's small businesses succeed and the success we have collectively achieved."

Meriby Sweet, Center Director for the Maine Small Business and Technology Development Centers (Maine SBTDC), the technology focused group of the Maine SBDC, will assume the additional responsibilities of Interim State Director, until a search for a permanent replacement for Massaua is completed.

About Maine Small Business Development Centers: Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC) and its tech-focus group, Maine Small Business & Technology Development Centers (Maine SBTDC), provide comprehensive business management assistance, training, resource and information services to Maine's micro, small and technology-based business communities. Professional certified business counselors who meet rigorous education and business experience standards provide business assistance at no cost to business owners.

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 (Maine DECD), the University of Southern Maine (USM), and leading economic and/or community development hosting organizations, including the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), and the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC); 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, MaineSBDC/SBTDC operates a network of service centers and outreach offices located conveniently throughout the state.

More information about the Maine SBDC/SBTDC can be found at www.mainesbdc.org.

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