



Your Small Business Resource

South Florida

District Update

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September 30, 2004

Your Small Business Resource



Disaster Relief comes quickly

Florida Governor, the Honorable Jeb Bush (Left of Check) and Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Hector V. Barreto (Right of Check) present the first disaster relief check following Hurricane Charley to Scott and Pamela Sankey (Center with Check), of Port Charlotte, Fla. as community home and business owners observe.

SBA aides storm ravaged South Florida

By Thaddeus Hosley
Public Information Officer

A hurricane season for the record books has left physical, emotional, and economic scars on South Florida's people, homes, and businesses.

The 24-county area comprising the U.S. Small Business Administration's South Florida District (primarily south of Orlando and the Space Coast) all are feeling the impact of Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne.

Hurricane Charley, initially a Category 4 hurricane, was diminished to a Category 2 storm when it reached South Florida's Gulf Coast near Port Charlotte, Fla. The slow-moving storm tore thorough the Florida peninsula for about 37 hours, from landfall on Aug. 13, to its departure over the panhandle on Aug. 16.

Hurricane Frances was also a Category 4 hurricane, but, lofty wind-shear reduced it to Category 2 by the time it reached South Florida's Atlantic Coast on Saturday, Sept. 4. The storm's 105 miles-per-hour winds battered renters, home and business owners, who are now attempting to

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Best assistance year ever in 2004, again

By Francisco "Pancho" A. Marrero
District Director



It is not surprising to me that we have had another incredible year of accomplishments here in the South Florida District; we have great people and excellent partners.

In perspective, we join the Agency in surpassing financial assistance benchmarks in nearly

every area. In short, there has never been a time in the history of the District when we have helped as many people start and grow small businesses. We just keep getting better.

You already know that a lack of adequate financing is the most noted reason entrepreneurs express for not starting their business. I'm sure you will agree there are times when money alone without business guidance or counseling is a recipe for failure.

The loan guaranties we approve with our lending partners, \$505 million, are reviewed with these precepts in mind. Where necessary, the loan is underwritten with a technical assistance component, through SCORE-Counselors to America's Small Businesses and the Florida Small Business Development Center network.

At SBA, our job is very simple; to keep that U.S. economy the strongest in the World by doing everything possible to support small businesses. The people who are opening businesses and creating jobs are the risk-takers; our edict is to facilitate their success.

Included in our portfolio of programs is a procurement and executive training program for socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses, the 8(a) Business Development Program. The program generated \$244.7 million dollars for the South Florida economy and help to establish stronger

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Best ever again ...

Continued from Page 1

The South Florida District Office had an incredible year of accomplishments during FY 2004. We join the Agency in surpassing financial assistance benchmarks.

There has never been a time in the history of the District when we have helped as many people start and grow small businesses.

We just keep getting better. In FY 2004 the District backed 4,219 7(a) and 504 loans totaling \$675.5 million and created 8,895 jobs.

businesses using the Federal procurement system. We have one of the most successful programs in the country because we take our commitment seriously.



I would be remiss if I did not talk about the destruction we've experienced from Hurricanes Charley and Frances and Jeanne. Every corner of the district has been affected in some way. I realize that the road to recovery is just beginning and will take years. Every program and resource we have at our disposal is being put into action to help South Florida families and

business owners get back on their feet.

Our track-record over the past four years is remarkable; when it comes to helping the regions entrepreneurs, we are unmatched by any other organization. We are continuing to streamline our processes and broadening our outreach even further.

The damage to and subsequent interruption of so many businesses has defined our goal for the coming year; the District staff and our partners are outstanding at what we do. However, destruction caused by the hurricanes dictate that we step it (our outreach efforts) up a notch. We are up to the challenge; our economy is depending on it.

Making SBA strong for future generations

*By Nuby J. Fowler
SBA Southeastern
Regional Administrator*

One of SBA's greatest strengths is its capacity to change with the times. Since President Eisenhower signed the 1952 Small Business Act into law, thereby creating SBA, the agency has invested considerable time and resources to keeping its programs current with the changing needs of small business. We have only to look at how the flagship 7(a) loan guarantee program has developed over the past decade to prove the point.

From the days when direct lending gave way to federally guaranteed loans as the major source of SBA backed capital, the program has been in evolution. Guarantee percentages, loan sizes maximums, and fees have all been adjusted and readjusted over



Nuby J. Fowler

time as the President and Congress work to refine and strengthen the program. It has been an unfortunate truth, however, that because 7(a) is subject to the annual appropriations process, its stability and reliability have been adversely impacted by changing policy and budget priorities. The resulting program shifts have far too often created problems for both our lending partners and the small businesses we serve.

The unprecedented growth in SBA guaranteed lending since 2001 points to the program's increasing popularity among small businesses and confirms the Agency's role in job creation and growing the national economy. Year to year uncertainties about funding levels, however, are not healthy for either SBA's strategic partnerships or

for the public that looks to SBA as a central resource for small business services.

The President's 2005 budget proposal includes a simple and practical solution that will give 7(a) the stability it needs to provide small businesses with a reliable source of capital for years to come, while protecting the current 75 percent guarantee rate and without raising fees above the level they were from 1995 until 2001. For most borrowers, this means a change of less than \$10 in their monthly payment.

Further, the plan will give the 7(a) loan program \$12.5 billion in lending authority. As the single largest source of small business financing in America, the 7(a) program is too important to be subjected to loan size caps and program shutdowns year after year. The President's proposal will help to create a stable, strong 7(a) – something I think all of America's 25 million small business owners, as well as SBA's many lending and technical assistance partners, will applaud.

Loan guaranty approvals are unprecedented

Miami – The federally-backed capital that is fuel for the small business economy South Florida jumped by over 33 percent during fiscal year 2004, Oct. 1, 2003, through Sept. 30, 2004.

Loan guaranties approved by the U.S. Small Business Administration's South Florida District Office totaled 4,219 in FY 2004, up from 3,167 in FY 2003, that is a dramatic 33.2 percent increase in financial backing from the Agency.

The agency's financial assistance programs leveraged \$505.4 million in small business loans through commercial lenders. Intermediary microlenders disbursed an additional 109 loans in the district.

The Miami-based SFDO oversees SBA programs and services delivery to more than one million small businesses operating in the 24-county area south of Orlando. SBA's financial assistance in the region includes 3,797 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program approvals totaling \$505.4 million and 422 loans in the Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program for fixed assets valued at \$170.1 million. The increased activity equate, respectively, to 34.5 and 22.7 percent.

The 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program is the Agency's primary financial assistance program. A maximum loan

amount of \$2 million is established for 7(a) loans. However, the maximum dollar amount the SBA can guaranty is \$1.5 million. Loans of \$150,000 or less have a maximum guaranty of 85 percent. For loans greater than \$150,000, the maximum guaranty is 75 percent. The loan guaranty program enables lenders to provide start-up and expansion financing on reasonable terms to small business owners when funding is otherwise unavailable.

Lenders used the *SBAExpress* program increasingly more frequently this year. More than 1,566 loans were approved under the \$35,000 mark. Minorities, (including African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native Americans) and Women collectively received 2,870 loans for startup and growth capital financing backed by the SBA.

Loans under the CDC (504) Loan Program, the SBA's economic development instrument, have a job creation component and provide long-term, fixed rate, subordinate mortgage financing for acquisition and renovation of capital assets such as land, buildings and equipment.

For more details on SBA financial assistance programs visit the agency's Website at www.sba.gov.

SBA, congressman talk procurement to Cape Canaveral businesses

By Dawn Hill

Marketing Executive, Area 2

Federal contract opportunities was the subject of a luncheon and seminar for small business owners on Aug. 23, in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

U.S. Congressmen Dave Weldon helped bring key players in the Federal procurement arena to meet with Port Canaveral business owners.

The workshop came after a local businesses survey by the Congressman's office determined there was great interest in learning how the federal government buys goods and services.

The workshop included government representatives from U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security and General Services Administration.

SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto gave the keynote address. He has operated his own business and served as the vice chairman of the board for the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce prior to his appointment to head the SBA.

"I am happy to attend this roundtable discussion in Port Canaveral. I want to thank Congressman Dave Weldon for his involvement in arranging this and for his continued support of small business," Barreto said. "Our mission is to create an environment that allows small businesses to compete and succeed. Direct input from small business people is invaluable as I seek to learn from those who live the American Dream day to day."

Barreto was in Florida as a result of hurricane activity in the State. He said, "Unfortunately, I am also in Florida under some unfortunate circumstances. Hurricane Charley did extensive damage to homes and businesses across the state. I am here to educate people on how the SBA can help.

"Business owners, homeowners, and renters can apply for low interest loans from the SBA to help them rebuild their lives," he added.

FY 2004 Top SBA Lenders

Loan Activity as of September 30, 2004

3,797 7(a) Loan Guaranties Approved, \$505.4 Million

1	Bank of America N.A.	2378	\$81.1
2	Capital One Federal Savings Bank	265	\$12.0
3	Wachovia SBA Lending Inc.	137	\$72.1
4	California Bank and Trust (Zions)	103	\$16.1
5	CIT Small Business Lending Corp.	103	\$53.3
6	Union Planters Bank N.A.	76	\$23.4
7	Comerica Bank	54	\$27.4
8	Business Loan Center, LLC.	52	\$31.5
9	Banco Popular	47	\$029
10	CitiBank, Federal Savings Bank	47	\$2.9

422 504-CDC Loan Guaranties Approved, \$170.1 Million

1	Florida Business Development Corp.	197	\$77.3
2	Florida 1 st Finance Capital Corp.	143	\$60.4
3	Gulf Coast BUzness Finance Inc.	47	\$19.3

Barreto visits Miami, offers advice to business owners

Ilene P. Rubio

Marketing Manager, Area 1

SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto was the keynote speaker at the CAMACOL – Latin Chamber of Commerce of USA's 3rd annual business luncheon July 22, at the Renaissance in the Gables Ballroom, Coral Gables, Fla.

Approximately 200 guests attended this event, where the various Hispanic Chambers of Commerce from throughout South Florida gathered together to explore partnership opportunities.

During his address, Barreto talked about the importance of small business in America and how more than 25 years ago his father established the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. At that time, according to Barreto's father, a Hispanic business was almost a novelty. Today, Hispanics are the largest minority in the country, almost 40 million strong, with 2 million Hispanic businesses nationwide.

Administrator Barreto commended District Director Francisco "Pancho" A. Marrero and the South Florida District Office staff for leading the way in the Agency transformation initiative and creating a customer-centric marketing and outreach program.

Barreto said, "I do not believe in charity. I have always firmly believed in hard work, because the government cannot do anything to help you succeed if you don't work hard, if you do not put into motion all of the things that make small business owners such exceptional people.

"Here at the SBA we are expanding our efforts to reach more businesses, to help more businesses, and in particular, to reach the fastest growing business segment in the world – the Hispanic market!"

He touted the SBA's Website in Spanish at www.negocios.gov. Since the Website was established, millions of people have visited to learn about the SBA and about how to start or develop a small business. They are also learning how to expand their businesses into new markets.

SBA can help small businesses with marketing and outreach efforts, access to capital, and technical assistance through our resource partners. Barreto emphasized, "Government does not create jobs and it does not create richness – you create this."

President of CAMACOL, Captain William Alexander, thanked Barreto and further encouraged attendees to make use of SBA programs and services. CAMACOL, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, is the primary Hispanic chamber in the State of Florida and one of the largest chambers of commerce within the nation, with over 1,800 members. One of its most noteworthy accomplishments has been its annual Hemispheric Congress in Miami which seeks to establish commercial relationships throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Earlier in the day, Barreto was a speaker on the Telemundo morning program and stressed the importance of health care programs for small businesses. He also participated in interviews with Radio Mambí and El Nuevo Herald.



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SBA launches web-based loan application

By Miguel E. Gonzalez

Chief Capital Access and Lenders Services

The new electronic gateway to SBA's web-based loan guaranty application will save lenders, with little or no additional effort, valuable time and resources when submitting a loan guaranty request to the SBA.

E-Tran is an SBA loan guaranty origination solution that leverages best-practices in internet technology to reduce the turnaround time on guaranty requests. The system is one component of SBA's strategy to provide increased efficiency and decreased costs in the guaranty origination process.

Under this program lenders can submit single or multiple loan transactions electronically directly to SBA and get an immediate response from SBA, reducing the normal 24-hour response.

SBA Express lenders with delegated authority will be given first preference, but all express lenders are eligible. PLP and 504 lenders will come on line in the near future.

Contact the Capital Access Division at (305) 536-5521 or go to www.sba.gov/banking/modernization.html for details. Contact Stephen.kucharski@sba.gov at (202) 205-7551 or Glenn.hannon@sba.gov at (202) 205-7122 for immediate participation.

Fla. SBDC Network organizes to further mission

Pensacola, Fla. -- When most folks think about the economy and economic growth and development, the captains of industry most often come to mind.

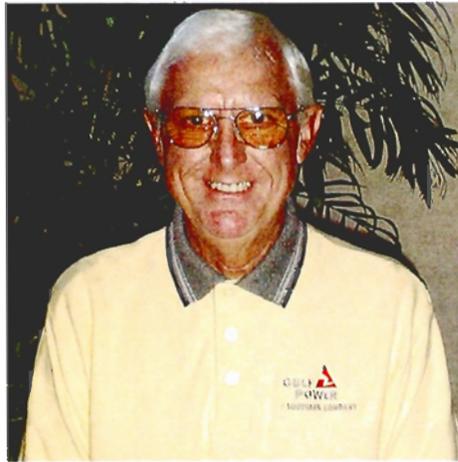
Sure, the economy is very dependent on the Fortune 500 and most publicly held companies, but the real backbone of the American economy is small business—the businesses that start small and grow to offer employment to many, pay taxes and become good corporate citizens.

Support for small businesses, like the small family-owned and service-oriented pharmacy, along with the 150 manned defense contractors in Fort Walton Beach, is the business of the Florida Small Business Development Center Network and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The SBA and FSBDC Network have long partnered with Florida colleges and universities to educate, inform and counsel those opening a small business and those wanting their small business to grow and prosper.

The partnership's success rate in Florida is matched only by North Carolina and their progressive approach to supporting small business.

At the June state professional development meeting, where all of Florida's 31 SBDC center staffers and management came together, the FSBDC network launched a network foundation to further its aims, raise awareness, and garner support at both the state and federal level.

Bobby Branning, Gulf Power's Manager of Community Development



Bobby Branning, Foundation Chair

and economic development champion, was elected to serve as the first Chairman of the newly formed Florida Small Business Development Center Network Foundation, Inc.'s Board of Directors. Branning said that "small business is the economic backbone of our nation, and this opportunity to contribute in even a modest way is an honor."

The mission of the Florida Small Business Development Center Network Foundation, Inc. is to raise public awareness about the contributions of small business toward the success of the Florida and U.S. economies, and to support activities that expand small business opportunities.

Jerry Cartwright is the State Director of the FSBDC Network. His office is located at 401 E. Chase Street, Suite 100, Pensacola, Fla. He can be reached at (850) 473-7809 or dbartar@uwf.edu.

Annual Lenders Awards Luncheon is set for Nov. 19

The South Florida District Lenders Award Luncheon is sponsored and hosted this year by the South Florida SBA Lenders Group. The achievement awards ceremony will be Nov. 19, at the DoubleTree Grand Hotel, in Miami, Fla.

The annual event recognizes lenders who underwrite loans to small businesses in the South Florida community.

The Lenders Group is scheduling a training room for the annual Certified Development Company/ Preferred Lender Program meeting and training. Training is from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and will be conducted by the District's Capital Access Division.

Lunch and awards presentations will start at 12:30. The menu will consist of either a fish, chicken or steak entrée. SFSBA Lenders Group is presently soliciting donations from the participating banks. Beth Herdegen is the groups Chairperson and is leading the effort. For more information call her at (305) 933-3434, or bherdegen@zionsbank.com.

SCORE counselor wins best BDW workshop award from West Pasco Chamber of Commerce

West Pasco Chamber of Commerce won the "2004 Best Event Award" for Business Development Week 2004.

They in turn awarded the 2004 Best BDW Workshop Award to Eleanor Hollis for presenting her seminar "How to Successfully Start a Small Florida Business." Hollis association with Chapter 439 of SCORE -- Counselors to America's Small Businesses began in 1994, as treasurer

and a small business counselor. She has been conducting her startup seminar for many years, teaching hundreds of men and women how best to launch a small business.

Hollis has practiced accounting for more than 45 years, earning promotions to controller and treasurer of numerous small companies. She has the past distinction of being one of the few female general managers of a U.S. radio station. For the last few years, Hollis has been in private practice as owner and operator of a local accounting and tax service.

SBA Management Team Profile

Carol A. Doubleday

Administrative Officer, South Florida District

Carol A. Doubleday is a Business Information Specialist/Administrative Officer in the South Florida District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Her responsibilities include budget, payroll, training, procurement, space allocation, management of human resources and the travel program. It also involves promoting and marketing SBA programs and services to new and expanding small business owners. She directs a staff of four and works closely with over 100 SCORE -- Counselors to America's Small Businesses volunteers who are co-located in the South Florida District.

Doubleday was a stay at home mom until her two children were grown. She then went to work as a dental assistant for several years. She began working with the SBA in January of 1985 as a receptionist. Through hard work and determination, she was selected for the position of Administrative Officer in July of 1991. The agency adopted a budget



tracking system developed by Doubleday, a member of her staff and the office computer technician in 1999. They were presented a cash award for developing the system. Doubleday especially enjoys the challenges that this position brings along with its varied duties.

Along with her son and daughter, her pride and joy are her four grandsons and two granddaughters. Her first love after her family is traveling.

In addition to U.S. trips, she has made four trips to Europe, including Finland, Russia, and many regions in Italy and Sicily.

When at home, she enjoys entertaining, relaxing in her swimming pool, gardening and reading books authored by Stephen King. She plans on retiring in a few years, moving to

North Carolina, and traveling as much as possible.

Partnership on Fla.'s west coast enhances small businesses assistance

The effort to assist small businesses is substantially enhanced by partnering with a variety of public, private, and non-profit organizations in the South Florida District's, Service Area 3, Marketing and Outreach Division.

The Hillsborough County Small Business Information Center, located in Tampa, Fla., is one of the Area 3 partners.

"Marketing activity with the Hillsborough County Small Business Information Center is important to our efforts to assist small business clients in the Tampa-Bay area, and serves as a model of how to partner with key resource centers to assist small businesses," says Robert Chavarria, Area 3 Marketing Manager.

Since January 2004, efforts with this one SBA partner have resulted in training 285 clients at 18 business seminars, and counseling assistance to numerous small businesses. The relationship enhances the outreach efforts to minorities, women, veterans, and inner-city and rural entrepreneurs, as the majority of business seminars are held in Tampa communities.

The majority of training and counseling activity is to assess small business clients' needs and to assist them in developing sound financial and business plans. Clients also are advised about which SBA loan programs which may be appropriate for their needs and are then referred to SBA participating lenders.

"This transition from technical assistance to financing sources can be a puzzling process through which we actively guide small business clients," said Chavarria.

Training and counseling topics also include other SBA financing programs, starting and managing a small business, SBA certification programs and government contracting, business development, and helpful SBA web-based resources.

In addition, SBA staff in Area 3 refer a number of small business owners to the information center and other SBA's partners located there. These include the Hillsborough County Chapter of SCORE Counselor to American Small Businesses; a Counselor from University of South Florida, Small Business Development Center and the Tampa Bay Economic Development Corporation, one of SBA's Certified Development Corporations for the 504 Loan Program.

The collaboration with the Hillsborough County Small Business Information Center serves as an example of the cooperation SBA strives to duplicate throughout the nine counties in Area 3.

This district's marketing and outreach division manages delivery of agency programs and services in Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota Counties.

Procurement dollars create growth for S. Fla. companies

Federal procurement activity in the South Florida District reached record levels during Fiscal Year 2004.

The number of Federal contracts and contract modifications awarded to small businesses in FY 2004 was 422 as compared to 365 in FY 2003. The numbers do not capture the increased dollars allocated to growing businesses working with the Federal Government; more than \$50 million additional dollars sustained the States economy and created new and or maintained jobs. Contracts awarded in FY 2004 to South Florida firms totaled \$332.4 million compared to \$271.5 million in FY 2003. The increase represents a 22 percent growth in dollars to the South Florida economy. South Florida has the second largest portfolio of 8(a) Business Development Program certified firms in the country after Washington, D.C.

The 8(a) Program is specifically for socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses. It is a nine year business development program that assists those businesses that qualify to obtain federal government

contracts which help them grow their small businesses. The goal for these businesses is to grow so successful that they no longer need the assistance. For details and criteria, call SBA at (305) 536-5521, or go to the Agency's Website at www.sba.gov.

The HUBZone (Historically Under-utilized Business Zone) Empowerment Contracting Program stimulates economic development and creates jobs in specific urban and rural communities by providing federal contracting preferences to small businesses operating in and employing residents who live in these specified areas. These preferences go to small businesses that obtain HUBZone certification. The number of South Florida small businesses certified in the HUBZone program increased 3.6 percent from from FY 2003 to FY 2004t. HUBZone companies must also maintain a "principal office" in one of these specifically designated areas.

Under new federal procurement regulations, the SBA certifies Small Disadvantaged Businesses for participation in federal procurements aimed at overcoming the effects of discrimination. SBA certified small businesses that meet specific social, economic, ownership, and control

eligibility criteria. The number of SDBs certified in the South Florida District increased 1.4 percent in FY 2004, 351 firms, up from 346 in FY 2003. Clearly that is much room for growth in this program, said Jack Geis, Assistant District Director, 8(a) Business Development.

Once certified, firm are added to an on-line registry of SDB-certified firms maintained in PRO-Net, an electronic gateway of procurement

**2004 A Record
Year for the SBA;
Loans to Small
Businesses
Doubled Since
2001!**

information for and about small business.

Certified firms remain on the list for three years. Contracting officers and large business prime contractors may search this on-line registry for potential suppliers.

For more information about the benefits of the program and application procedures call (305) 536 5521, or go the Agency's Website at www.sba.gov.business_development.

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restore their lives and businesses to normal again. The Small Business Administration's Disaster Loan Program is here to help them accomplish that goal. The program is comprised of two direct loan products:

Physical direct loans for physical damage in a declared disaster area is the primary form of Federal assistance for non-farm, private sector disaster losses. For this reason, the physical disaster loan program is the only form of SBA assistance not limited to small businesses. Disaster program direct loans from SBA help homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and nonprofit organizations fund

rebuilding.

When disaster victims need to borrow to repair uninsured damages, the low interest rates and long terms available from SBA make recovery affordable. Because SBA tailors the repayment of each disaster loan to each borrower's financial capability, unnecessary interest subsidies paid by the taxpayers are avoided.

Economic injury disaster loans provide necessary working capital until normal operations resume after a physical disaster. The law restricts economic injury disaster loans to small businesses only.

SBA can only approve loans to

applicants with a reasonable ability to repay the loan and other obligations from earnings. The law gives SBA several tools to make disaster loans affordable: low interest rates, long terms (up to 30 years), and, in some cases, refinancing of prior debts.

To begin the application process for a low interest loan from the SBA, applicants must call the Federal Emergency Management Agency at (800) 621-FEMA (3362). For more information about SBA's Disaster Program, visit our Website at www.sba.gov/disaster or call the SBA Help Line at (800) 359-2227 for program information.

SBA targets Credit Unions for financial services expansion

By **Jonel F. Hein**

Marketing Executive, Capital Access

SBA has been committed to signing up credit unions as participant lenders for the 7(a) Loan Guaranty program from as early as the year 2000.

The Agency saw it as a chance to expand the availability of financing options to small business owners.

This summer, at the direction of John N. Dunn, Jr., Assistant District Director for Economic Development, the South Florida District Office Capital Access Division began a drive to familiarize credit unions with the SBA programs and services. The focus of the orientation is to illustrate the inherent value of the commercial loan guaranty.

A listing of credit unions was compiled and separated into the three marketing areas: Area 1 – Broward, Collier, Hendry, Lee, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties; Area 2 – Brevard, Glades, Highlands, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Osceola, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties; and Area 3 – Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota counties.

Marketing and Outreach Specialists in Capital Access contacted the credit unions to begin a dialog about how a relationship with SBA could benefit their members. Some credit unions had never heard

of the SBA, while others were familiar with the Agency, but were not very knowledgeable regarding our programs. It is apparent that SBA still has work to do to get non-traditional lending partners acclimated to the SBA environment.

To participate in the SBA's loan guaranty program, a credit union representative should contact the district office and provide the following items:

- Copies of the credit union's charter, by-laws and approved amendments to the charter;
- A listing of credit union officers and current directors;
- A copy of the credit union board resolution authorizing the identified credit union officer(s) to file an application for SBA lender participation in the 7(a) program;
- A copy of the NCUA insurance certificate evidencing share deposit insurance coverage;
- The most recent quarterly and year-end call report filing provided to the NCUA;
- A certification statement from the applicant acknowledging

the absence of any affiliates (as currently outlined in SBA size standards regulations currently found in §121 of 13 CFR), or that the applicant is not primarily engaged in the financing of such affiliates; and

- Copies of loan processing, servicing and liquidation procedures employed by the



applicant in its delivery of loans to small businesses. (Credit unions with no reported member business loans outstanding, as of the most recent call report available on the NCUA Website (www.ncua.gov), may be required to supplement their application with submission of an agreement with a Lender Service Provider (as defined in § 103.1(d) of the 13 CFR.)

If your institution is interested learning more about the 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program, contact Miguel Gonzalez, Chief of the Capital Access/Lender Services Division at (305) 536-5521, Ext. 141 or by email at miguel.gonzalez@sba.gov.



Bahamian delegation taps SBA

Francisco "Pancho" A. Marrero (below), District Director, South Florida District, U.S. Small Business Administration talks strategies for creating access to capital for small business development in the Bahamas. The group came to Miami to gather best practices for use in developing a model for implementing a national entrepreneurial development program in their country of approximately 300,000.



The delegation of eight consisted of a Bahamas Chamber of Commerce Director, President of the Small Business Association, Account Managers from the Royal Bank of Canada, Managers from the Bahamas Development Bank and other members of the public and private sector business community.

Brevard Vet opens hospital with SBA-back financing

By Dawn Hill

Marketing Executive, Area 2

When you pull up in front of the Space Coast Veterinary Hospital owned and operated by Dr. Sonia Pearson, you can't help but be impressed.

The impressive building is 5,040 square-feet, featuring state-of-the-art veterinary equipment created with consideration for every detail of pet care.

The business is located on Merritt Island, Fla. with veterinarian Dr. Pearson, the founder, who is responsible for day-to-day operations. She specializes in treatment of exotic animals, birds, reptiles, dogs, cats and "pocket pets", such as hamsters, mice, rats, gerbils, and guinea pigs.

"Business has rapidly grown," said the doctor who boasts a list of well over 1,000 clients and 10 new pets added each week. "There is much room for more growth as well."

After graduating from the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Pearson began working for a veterinarian in her hometown. After eight years of working for someone else, she decided to branch out and start her own practice. She attributes her success to the U.S. Small Business Administration-backed loan which



Dr. Sonia Pearson

helped her acquire the building and the equipment with a smaller investment.

Dr. Pearson said, "I couldn't have accomplished all of this without the SBA, I am so grateful for the assistance." To help create the busy veterinary practice, Dr. Pearson secured her small business loan through Wachovia SBA Lending Inc., with a guaranty from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The \$918,200 loan was used to purchase land to build the veterinary hospital and fully equip the facility.

Dr. Pearson explains, "The size of the building has had a significant impact on our success, since we can provide our clients with more amenities than other facilities. We provide lodging for our patients only, which has helped to increase our client base. We also provide emergency service, a service requested by pet owners."

The hospital also offers an indoor climate controlled resort with outdoor exercise yard for canines. In addition, there are cat condos with scenic views and an indoor play area. The hospital is equipped with an isolation ward to keep the healthy and contagious animals separated. Preventative medicine, dentistry, radiology, and grooming are the most common health services provided. Additionally, comprehensive services, including laboratory testing is available.

Dr. Pearson said, "Pet owners in this area generally consider their pets as members of their families. We feel the same way."

It is debatable as to whether or not pets can appreciate the level of care they receive at Space Coast Veterinary Hospital. What is not debatable is the praise the hospital's doctor and staff receive from pet owners.

For information on the Space Coast Veterinary Hospital, visit their site Website at www.spacecoastvet.com. For more information on SBA programs and services go to the SBA's Website, www.sba.gov.

Nominations highlight communities' best; nominate '05 winner

The eagerness to begin the nomination process for the U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Awards Program, slated for presentation during SBA Expo '05 is churning to a fever pitch.

If you have not yet heard, SBA Expo '05 is in May 26 through 29, 2005. Your contribution can make all the difference in the world. Nominate, nominate, nominate . . .

The SBA has just closed out its best year ever in the history of the Agency and I'm certain there are many deserving award winners among those who have helped keep the U.S. economy on the upswing. The Agency and the South Florida District

particularly have had a spectacular year. Now to the good part, who and how can you nominate yourself or a deserving person or company to compete for one of these prestigious awards.

Take a little time to familiarize yourself with the rules (see the guidelines at www.sba.gov/fl/south) and make preliminary notification of your intent by Nov. 30. However, the completed package, according to the guidelines, must be in by Dec. 12. Please contact Thaddeus Hosley at 305-56-5521, Ext. 167 or thaddeus.hosley@sba.gov for instructions and forms. If you are unable to reach him, call the operator at (305) 336-5521, Ext. 0

The following are the eligible categories. Good luck!

Small Business Person of the Year; Small Business Exporter of the Year; SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Entrepreneurial Success Award; Minority Small Business Person of the Year; Emerging Small Business Person; Family-owned Small Business Person of the Year. (**New category**)

Small Business Champions of the Year award categories honor those who promote small business including volunteering time and services to entrepreneurial interests and groups or advocating the cause of small businesses. Champions may or may not be small business owners.

SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program application is now on-line

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration has unveiled a new electronic online application that will make it easier, faster and less expensive for small companies to apply for 8(a) Business Development and Small Disadvantaged Business Program certification directly from SBA's Website.

Announced during a luncheon at Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week by SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto, the new automated application will substantially reduce the time and cost burdens imposed on small businesses applying for certification.

"The newly launched 8(a) on-line application will allow small businesses to apply for 8(a) and SDB certification directly from the SBA's Web site, and ensure more small businesses are able to successfully compete for federal contracting opportunities,"

Barreto said. "This user-friendly application represents another accomplishment of this Administration in developing e-Gov tools that make access to information less cumbersome for small business."

The SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program helps small businesses owned, controlled, and operated by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals by providing management, technical, financial and federal contracting assistance with the aim of helping these entrepreneurs create viable businesses. About 8,300 companies are presently certified in the 8(a) program. During FY 2003, \$9.56 billion in federal contracts were awarded to companies participating in the program.

The new automated application was developed by an 8(a) firm, Simplicity, Inc. in conjunction with the SBA's Office of Government

Contracting and Business Development. It employs decision logic to screen applications allowing the SBA to review and process applications more efficiently and provide improved customer service. A demonstration of the application was given during the MEDWeek conference.

The application is 100 percent Web-based, allowing applicants to apply without downloading any software or plug-ins, replacing a four-page written application that required substantial supporting documentation. The online application incorporates features including context sensitive help, real-time validation, printer-ready versions and integrates with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

For more information, visit the SBA Web site at www.sba.gov

Guaranty pre-approval attractive to lenders, borrowers

By José Negróni
Marketing Executive, Capital Access

The Pre-Qualification Loan Program was created by SBA to help those segments of the small business community that traditionally have been underserved by the lending community. It is a 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program support and assistance program developed to provide guidance in the loan application process. The program requires the coordinated efforts of three entities: loan intermediary, SBA and participating lenders.

The targeted segments of the business community include women, ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, armed forces veterans, business owners located in rural communities, and exporters. A prospective business must be at least 51 percent unconditionally owned by a person from one of these segments.

The pre-qualification is limited to business proposals that meet routine eligibility and credit considerations. Applications with unique, unusual or complex issues (such as criminal convictions or bankruptcies) are not eligible under this program. These however, may be considered under conventional 7(a) loan program procedures.

A decision on the application is normally made within three days. If the application is approved, the SBA issues a letter of prequalification that states the agency's intent to guarantee the loan on the stated terms and conditions. The maximum loan amount is \$250,000. SBA will guarantee up to 75 percent of loan amounts above \$150,000 and 85 percent on loans of \$150,000 or less. The loan applicant then approaches the lender already pre-approved for an SBA loan guaranty.

The South Florida District Office identifies the markets for the program, and selects, trains and monitors intermediaries who facilitate the prequalification. The intermediaries also assist prospective borrowers with developing a viable loan application package. Once the package is complete, it is submitted to the SBA for consideration.

SBA Disaster assistance for physical or economic damages resulting from Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne.

For program details:
www.sba.gov/disaster

For assistance call the Federal Emergency Management Agency at (800) 621-3362