Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers Ready to Help Small Businesses Recover from Flooding

PHILADELPHIA, Pa - As flood waters recede and cleanup efforts continue, the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) are helping small businesses recover from the recent devastation throughout Pennsylvania.

Flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee closed hundreds of roads, forced evacuation for thousands of people and left many business owners with varying degrees of damage. Central and Northeast Pennsylvania were hit particularly hard, especially the Wilkes-Barre area.

“We’ve had flooding in our area before, and those in a floodplain generally know what to expect,” explained Ruth Hughes, Director of the Wilkes University SBDC. “This time people who don’t even live near a river were devastated. They were completely unprepared and are coming to us in a total state of shock.”

The Wilkes University SBDC, one of 18 Pennsylvania SBDC locations across the state, is working with small business owners, local Chambers of Congress, and government officials to let affected business owners know about the types of aid that is available.

“I know from experience how important it is to offer assistance early,” said Hughes. “These disaster situations are very difficult but can they can be especially hard on small and new businesses. I think people need to know that help is available, while also providing some hope for rebuilding,” said Hughes.

Small business owners can turn to the Pennsylvania SBDC for guidance. Confidential, no-fee consulting services are available to help affected business owners with loss documentation, information on claim filing, locating and setting up short-term and permanent replacement facilities and assessing environmental clean-up options that can help get their business back up and running.

Several Pennsylvania SBDC consultants are also specially trained in the application process for disaster recovery financing, including the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans. Through its Office of Disaster Assistance, the
SBA provides low-interest, long-term loans for physical and economic damage caused by a declared disaster. President Obama issued a disaster declaration in multiple Pennsylvania counties earlier this week.

As Pennsylvania SBDC State Director Christian Conroy notes, SBDC business consultants are all too familiar with these flood situations as similar conditions existed in the past with Hurricane Isabel in 2003, Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and even the torrential rains in June 2006.

“We are saddened to hear the stories of damage and loss to individuals and small businesses across Pennsylvania,” said Conroy. “But we are doing our part to help those we can get back on their feet as quickly as possible. The Pennsylvania SBDC helps small businesses succeed in every environment -- and that includes responding to disasters,” said Conroy.

Additional resources for small companies affected by the flooding are available on the Pennsylvania SBDC website at:


About the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)

For 30 years, the network of 18 university- and college-based Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) has helped grow the Pennsylvania economy by assisting entrepreneurs and small businesses. Operating out of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, the SBDC is funded in part by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, and with the support of the institutions of higher education hosting SBDCs. This support enables confidential consulting services to be provided at no charge to the client.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers’ services and impact, please visit www.pasbdc.org.

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