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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Wilkes University SBDC Secures Grant to Assist Business Owners Affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in Northeast Pennsylvania**

**SBDC Locations**

Bucknell University  
Clarion University  
Duquesne University  
Gannon University  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
Lehigh University  
Lock Haven University  
Penn State University  
Saint Francis University  
Saint Vincent College  
Shippensburg University  
Temple University  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Scranton  
The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania  
Widener University  
Wilkes University



*From left: Wilkes University SBDC Director, Ruth Hughes; Pennsylvania SBDC State Director, Christian Conroy; Dean, Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, Wilkes University, Dr. Jeffrey Alves.*

**WILKES-BARRE, PA** - As the one year anniversary of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee approaches, the Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) announced it has successfully applied for and received funds under the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Small Business Development Centers Portable Assistance Program for FY 2012. The program, *Business Assistance to Small Firms Impacted by Flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee*, will allow SBDC staff to further assist small business owners in rebuilding and strengthening their businesses after sustaining flood and wind damage. The grant will serve communities in Columbia and Luzerne Counties, which were most severely impacted by this past summer's storms and flooding.

(MORE)

“After the 2011 storms, the Wilkes University SBDC was on the ground meeting with clients in the hardest-hit areas to help them rebuild,” says Wilkes University SBDC Director Ruth Hughes. “The SBDC continues to work with businesses on applying for disaster loans and rebuilding their financial records” she added.

In late August and early September of 2011, the Northeastern part of Pennsylvania was battered by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Combined, the two storms dumped more than 15 inches of rain on the area leading to the closing of hundreds of roads, forcing evacuation for thousands of people, and leaving many business owners with varying degrees of damage.

One year later, the Wilkes University SBDC will utilize funding through this grant to help companies re-establish their operations, obtain the funding required to do so, market their re-opened businesses to old and new customers and position them for sustainability. The products and services that will be developed through this program, including emergency plan training and post-disaster grand re-opening kits, will be shared throughout the Pennsylvania and national SBDC networks and to other SBA resource partners in dealing with economic hardship caused by the impact of a major disaster in their service area.

Over the past three years, the Wilkes University has worked with over 700 clients and provided over 14,000 hours of consulting assistance. This SBDC assistance has resulted in 130 businesses started or purchased and 648 jobs created and retained. The Wilkes University SBDC has also assisted clients raise over \$8 million in capital for their businesses since 2009.

Small business owners in Columbia or Luzerne Counties who sustained flood and wind damage and need assistance with business continuation and rebuilding strategies should contact the Wilkes University SBDC at (570) 408-4340 or [sbdc@wilkes.edu](mailto:sbdc@wilkes.edu). For more information on the Wilkes University SBDC services and programs, please visit [www.wilkes.edu/sbdc](http://www.wilkes.edu/sbdc).

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### **About Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)**

*The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) supports the economic development of Pennsylvania by providing entrepreneurs and small businesses with individual consultation, comprehensive education and information necessary to help their businesses start, grow, and prosper. SBDCs deliver consulting services and educational programs through a network of [18 locations](#) across Pennsylvania. SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs in confidential, one-to-one sessions to help them with issues including new business development, shaping a business plan, investigating funding opportunities, and much more. For more information on the Pennsylvania SBDC services and impact, please visit [www.pasbdc.org](http://www.pasbdc.org).*