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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers Names Diane Sandstrom as Liaison for New Economic Development Initiative

Selection Helps to Streamline Efforts among Pennsylvania Programs that Assist State's Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

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

PHILADELPHIA, Pa - The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) announced today that it has named Ms. Diane Sandstrom to serve as its network-wide liaison for the newly created Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) program. In addition to her current duties as the Associate State Director for Program Management for the Pennsylvania SBDC network, Ms. Sandstrom will be in charge of coordinating the Pennsylvania SBDC's PREP activities with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

The DCED created the PREP program guidelines this past July to "encourage cooperation in the administration of Pennsylvania economic development initiatives." The PREP program significantly changes the funding and operating structure for several state economic development agencies – including the Pennsylvania SBDCs.

According to the DCED, the purpose of PREP is to "provide grants to consortia of economic development service providers that may co-locate, develop formal partnership agreements, or otherwise create a coordinated and performance-based service delivery system that ensures each inquiry or lead from a business or potential entrepreneur is referred to, and acted upon by, the appropriate service provider(s) in the region."

While the operational structure for the PREP program continues to be worked out, the DCED has set aside \$11.88 million in grants to fund the regional economic development activities of four major service providers across the Commonwealth: these include the network of 18 Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers, the Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs), Industrial Development Organizations and Local Development Districts (LDDs). All groups mentioned will work together to submit a joint PREP proposal for funding to the DCED.

Pennsylvania SBDC State Director, Christian Conroy, believes that the selection of Ms. Sandstrom as PREP liaison will help coordinate efforts between economic

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development agencies, minimizing the impact the change will have on the thousands of entrepreneurs and small businesses the Pennsylvania SBDCs serve every year.

“Diane combines years of experience working directly with small business owners in western Pennsylvania with a solid track record of building relationships across Pennsylvania’s economic development community,” said Conroy. “We are pleased that she will be serving the SBDC network in this new capacity as we continue to provide Pennsylvania entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and tools to start, grow and prosper.”

Diane joined the staff of the Pennsylvania SBDC’s State Director’s Office in June of 2010 after serving for 15 years as the Consulting Manager at the Duquesne University SBDC in Pittsburgh. In her role as the Associate State Director for Program Management, Diane is responsible for overseeing the administrative, programmatic, and communications components of the Pennsylvania SBDC network. Diane completed her undergraduate and graduate studies at West Virginia University and California University of Pennsylvania.

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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