

SBDC NEWS

*The Penn State Small Business Development Center
...helping small businesses create big futures*

www.sbdc.psu.edu

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PENNSYLVANIA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER NAMES NEW DIRECTOR

Environment, energy are areas of new leadership's expertise

The Penn State Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has named Heather Fennessey as its new director. Fennessey, who

has worked with the center for eight years, is an award-winning environmental specialist who has assisted more than 300 businesses and organizations reduce their energy consumption, obtain grants and loans for energy upgrades, and meet environmental and Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance requirements. Fennessey has served as interim director of

the center since September 2008 and replaces Donna Holmes, who now works in the banking industry.

In its first 10 years, the Penn State SBDC, part of Outreach's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, has consulted with more than 1,200 entrepreneurs in Centre and Mifflin counties to help them start or improve their small businesses. Fennessey plans to build on the center's impact through strategic community and University partnerships. "Through these partnerships, our business and environmental consultants will not only be able to help local businesses survive the current recession, but they will also be able to help them to thrive for years to come," said Fennessey.

Fennessey's many recognitions include national Energy Star awards and, as part of a team, an American Small Business Development Center State Star award. She and SBDC colleague Denise Bechdel were included in *Pennsylvania Business Central's* 2008 Top 100 List that recognizes individuals, in the publication's 16-county region, who fuel economic development. Prior to Fennessey's work with the SBDC, she was a consultant for the National Defense Center for Environmental Excellence, where she provided technical and business management support for pollution prevention, waste management, and remediation projects with the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and NASA.

SUCCESS STORY!

There is an old saying "Good things come to those who wait." In Terri Breindel and Dave Hellyer's case, that adage could apply to their patience in waiting to apply for one of the renowned Goddard School® franchises. Prior to seeking approval for this franchise, they had purchased a Comfort Keepers® elder care franchise which they successfully launched in March 2004. The opportunity to serve "pint-sized" clientele - children from age six weeks to six years - came about several years later.

The Goddard® franchise is one of the more challenging franchises that potential franchisees can pursue. As the franchisor, Goddard School® is very particular about who will be working with children, where the facilities location will be, and how much debt service the owners will be taking on. When



"When we opened our Comfort Keepers franchise, our SBDC consultant was so much help, it never occurred to us not to contact them again for help on our next venture. They're great."
~ Terri Breindel

Terri came to our office in November 2006, she was excited about this opportunity, but wanted an SBDC consultant to review the

business plan and the numbers to make sure they had everything in order before seeking funding. Since Terri was taking the lead on this business venture while Dave continued to lead their elder care franchise, it was Terri who worked closely with the SBDC this time.

Over the course of several months they worked closely together and in the end, thanks to a solid business plan, Terri and Dave succeeded in securing bank funding. The facility began construction in the spring of 2007 and opened for business that December. Since the first day, Terri has been actively involved in her childcare and preschool/day care business. There are now 28 employees, and nearly 150 children enrolled. She proudly shows off her modern facility and points to a waiting list of potential children as evidence that her newest venture is well accepted in the community.

Web Sites to Visit

Pa. Small Business Development Centers: www.pasbdc.org
EMAP: www.askemap.org

Pennsylvania Department of Revenue: www.revenue.state.pa.us
Pennsylvania Open for Business: www.open4business.state.pa.us

NEW FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) opened the Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant in January 2009. The grant makes approximately \$3 million available on a first-come, first-served basis for small business owners to purchase and install equipment or processes that will result in improved energy efficiency. This is a great opportunity for small business owners to experience the economic growth that is possible when environmental considerations become priorities.

Grant funding reimburses up to 25

percent of the project's cost, to a maximum award of \$25,000 for any small business. The annual energy savings for the project must be at least 20 percent for the system being replaced or 20 percent of the entire business's energy consumption. The project must also save the small business at least \$1,000 per year in energy costs.

Eligible projects include equipment or process changes related to the applicant's manufacturing processes, business operations, or building insulation. Some examples of eligible projects are energy-efficient lighting, high-efficiency furnaces, boilers and air conditioners, geothermal heat pumps, windows and insulation, energy efficient refrigeration, and process equipment.

The consultants at the Penn State SBDC's Environmental Management

Assistance Program (EMAP) are available to assist small businesses through the application process, and can provide free energy assessments and other technical assistance. The EMAP consultants statewide have helped many SBDC clients in receiving grants to cut their energy consumption. In the past two years alone, SBDC clients have been approved for over \$736,000 in grant funding to implement 132 different projects.

For information regarding the energy programs that apply to your small business, contact Penn State SBDC EMAP consultants, Heather Fennessey or Denise Bechdel, at 814-863-4293. Additional information about the grant is available on DEP's Website at <http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/energindependent/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=543714>

STRENGTHEN YOUR BUSINESS

IRS e-News for Small Businesses

Keeping up with federal tax requirements is not always easy in today's fast-changing business environment. That's why the Internal Revenue Service is working to provide business people with timely information to help them understand and meet their tax obligations.

IRS e-News for Small Businesses is a bi-weekly newsletter that alerts them to what's new and important for small business owners to know. It's quick to read, easy to subscribe to and it's free.

Specialized content includes:

- tax dates for small businesses
- what's new on IRS.gov
- tax compliance
- IRS products, services, and training opportunities

Subscribe to e-News for Small Businesses on IRS.gov.

ONLINE TRAINING FOR FRANCHISERS

Thinking of opening a franchise? Unsure how to go about it? Entrepreneurs considering franchising can access an online course from the U.S. Small Business Administration and FranNet to help them navigate the competitive franchise industry. The introduction to franchising course, **Franchising Basics**, is a free online seminar that provides three key sections that examine more than 10 essential areas related to franchising. The course also covers franchising options, strategies for growth, and pitfalls to avoid. The Franchising Basics course can be accessed from the SBA Web site at www.sba.gov, under the Free Online Training icon, by selecting Franchising Basics in the Starting a Business section. A certificate of completion will be provided to participants who finish the course.



NEW LOCATION, SAME GREAT SERVICE!

In early May, the Penn State Small Business Development Center is moving to 329 Innovation Boulevard, Suite 417, located in Innovation Park near The Penn State Conference Center Hotel. Our phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail address will remain the same.

Our New Address:

Penn State SBDC
The 329 Building
329 Innovation Blvd., Suite 417
University Park, PA 16801

For directions, call us or visit sbdc.psu.edu

Our Lewistown address will remain the same.

UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS

The First Step of Starting a Small Business

A FREE seminar from 9:00 a.m. to noon in State College
April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, and August 11

The Second Step of Starting a Small Business

Seminar from 9:00 a.m. to noon in State College (\$30)
March 26, April 30, May 28, June 2, July 30, and August 27

Gaining Ground in an Economic Slowdown

A FREE seminar from 9:00 to 11 a.m. in State College
March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, and August 18

Breakfast Business Bites 3 - Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities of Leading a Business Today

featuring WBLF Radio talk show's trio of Coaches Corner: Paul Nichols, Ken Pasch, and Tim Rogers
Tuesday, March 31 (Registration 7:30 a.m.; Program, 7:45 - 9: a.m.)
Celebration Hall, State College (\$15)

OSHA Safety and Health Written Programs

Tuesday, April 14 (9:00 -11:00 a.m.) Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitor Bureau, State College (\$20)

Marketing on a Limited Budget

Thursday, April 16 (9:00 -11:30 a.m.) 502 Keller Building, University Park (\$30)

EPA Toxic Release Inventory Workshop

Tuesday, May 12 (8:30 - noon) Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitor Bureau, State College (\$30)

Government Contracting

Wednesday, May 13, 2009 (9:00 -noon) State College Municipal Building, State College (Free)

Using the Internet to Market Your Business

Thursday, May 21, 2009, The 329 Building, Room 406, University Park (\$35)

For more seminar information, please visit www.sbdc.psu.edu or call Laurie at 814-863-4293.



This publication is available in alternative media on request. Funding support and resources are provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Department of Community and Economic Development; through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, and through support from The Pennsylvania State University. All services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. Special arrangements for persons with disabilities can be made by calling 814-863-4293. All opinions, conclusions, or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. Penn State encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of special accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact the appropriate department or the Office for Disability Services in advance of your participation or visit. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce. 09-1027/09-SBDC-010