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**New Jersey Small Business Centers Expands Services to Established Businesses through “Next Stage Growth” Workshops**

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Series Begins on March 27 at the SBDC at Raritan Valley Community College

North Branch, N.J. (March 14, 2007) - The New Jersey Small Business Development Centers is expanding its services to established businesses by offering “Next Stage Growth” workshops to help business owners expand critical management, financial analysis, marketing and workforce development skills required to optimize financial performance and productivity.

In September, Governor Jon Corzine pointed to the development of small business among the priorities of his Economic Growth Strategy. This strategy includes utilizing the state’s existing resources in encouraging entrepreneurship and the growth of small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses; developing a world-class workforce and enhancing the global competitiveness of New Jersey's businesses.

As a primary resource for businesses in New Jersey and strategic partner of the state in providing free counseling and affordable workshops to businesses, NJSBDC has been increasing its share of established and growth-oriented small businesses as clients over the past few years, with nearly 40 percent of clients served established companies.

“The best investment you can make in your business is to equip yourself and your company with the knowledge and skills to assess performance, overcome obstacles and position your company for growth,” said Brenda Hopper, state director, NJSBDC.

In an effort to provide support to businesses across the state near their bases of operation, NJSBDC is offering the “Next Stage Growth” series at three SBDC locations in the central, southern and northern parts of the state.

NJSBDC’s “Next Stage Growth” workshops feature 8 course topics presented over a nine-week period at 3 hours per session. The program launches March 27 at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Raritan Valley Community College in North Branch (Central, N.J.). Each session runs from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. at a cost of \$149 per session. To register online, visit [www.njsbdc.com](http://www.njsbdc.com) and click on “Next Stage Growth” box on the left column. Topics include:

**March 27 - Stepping Up to New Levels of Growth and Success:** Gain an overview of strategies and best practices aimed at helping business leaders establish priorities and optimize organizational performance.

**April 10 - Knowing Your Market: Who and Where Are Your Customers and What Do They Really Want?** Learn about market research methodologies to help identify current and future markets, the nature of competitors, market trends, customer satisfaction levels, and other important information essential to growing your business operations.

**April 12 - Marketing Upstream - Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone:** Apply the tactics necessary to create “centers of influence” and to play a more dominant role in your industry.

**April 19 - Strategic Selling System - Process and Practices:** Develop strategic selling skills to enable top performance in your industry and to conquer your customer goals in today’s aggressive marketplace.

**April 24 and April 26 (2-part course) The Right People for the Right Job - Attracting, Retaining and Engaging Your Workforce:** Apply “best practices” for employee recruitment, commitment and the leverage of human resources to optimize your business competitive advantage.

**May 8 - Keeping Score: Where’s My Cash?** Learn how to mine and analyze information from financial statements and measuring business performance.

**May 10 - Exit Strategies-You Can’t Leave Unless You Know Where the Door Is:** Work within a framework for setting goals relating to your retirement from the business.

**May 24 - Business Valuation-Creating a Meeting of the Minds in Real Dollars:** Apply real tools in assessing the value of a business whether it involves buying or selling a business.

“The courses are affordable and held over several weeks so that business leaders can make time to expand their skills, access the advice of professionals and learn from the experiences of their peers on the issues they’re facing in their businesses,” said Deborah Smarth, associate director of the NJSBDC.

Each workshop is developed by subject-matter experts and delivered by seasoned business practitioners and consultants. The courses are intended to give you the know-how and competencies necessary to take your established small business to the next level of performance.

Participants can interact with classmates in a variety of activities, in addition to receiving tools, resources and information that will reinforce course concepts and have immediate practical application.

Owners whose businesses are beyond entry stage and in need of assistance for growth or development will find immense value in the form and substance of these courses.

The “Next Stage Growth” series is being offered in Southern N.J. at Rutgers University in Camden, April 20, 27; May 4, 11, 18; and June 1, 15, 22; and from Sept. through Nov. in the northern part of the state at Bergen County Community College in Hackensack. For more information, call 1-800-432-1565.

### **About NJSBDC**

The NJSBDC network ([www.njsbdc.com](http://www.njsbdc.com)) is the premier provider of comprehensive services and programs for small business in New Jersey, helping businesses expand their operations, manage their growth or start new ventures. NJSBDC, headquartered in Newark on the campus of Rutgers University, consists of 11 service centers with a presence in every county. Expert staff and practicing business consultants help established small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to develop business plans, find financing, identify new markets and expand their operations.