

From: South Carolina SBDC
Sent: 1/15/2016 11:03:24 AM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: The future looks bright for 2016.

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From the Director

The SC SBDC assisted 4,690 entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and start new companies in 2015. As you can see from the numbers below, this resulted in impressive numbers of jobs created and saved, government contract awards and new enterprises opened. The SC SBDC also worked with the SBA, S.C. Department of Commerce, FEMA and other local authorities to help small businesses recover from the historic flooding. We continue in those efforts now.

As we enter 2016, we are excited about the opportunities to expand and enhance the services we provide to entrepreneurs who are pursuing their dreams of owning their own businesses. Greatly expanded military/veterans programs, enhanced export assistance, and a new technology/product commercialization program will help more clients grow successful businesses and contribute to our state's economic health.

The SC SBDC has consultants in 21 locations throughout the state, so please don't hesitate to reach out for help. Go to [<http://files.ctctcdn.com/1abc9ba5201/70ce145c-f91d-4ce1-b76f-94e6e24f53b8.png>](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001TS9VMv47jL_7t_TJgLvT71r0Xo25PM9kbJHDTEySyiqSR0Q0VkB8M4UW9JLiiElwZrGGQHL8n3t2xLlgFrRuaQa8N9yENxLmhY4ggSq1o1pPS8pRP7mlluGQ1TcuVsQaiwulKmx22O-F1iUIQCzejSs11YEiRe8rB06o_ioJkzGkILXvrvsybff-tMGEeMCeyCU3l5EiEtVdYhPhkU_26nwjXkd_HIFEtI3icfgJN8wGy0SY1LaQnwHGudsGQl1bFtkitzpr_m1FwlK8pHHS6JucDzQmWPUnkdoTWjFPA9w-3wgVS1489ObYit7ekkc8z82MigemOceleZ0lSnB_ZR0pcPKj3YQ&c=7KjYTyDbmdodSM0tXm0kpxhU-t8HuHLYEZ0CiVZxryqfzFsZhcyDw==&ch=FY7suaLjRDcAsdm8aAyyvwzkD3W6m_GpWoFlbYyr6mkooSP6hOd8IKQ==> to find the center nearest you.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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"The SC Small Business Development Centers are a valuable resource for new entrepreneurs."

*Marvin Keene
Owner*

*Kona Ice
Myrtle Beach*

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Laura Disano
Business Consultant
Aiken Area SBDC

Meet Laura

Born and raised in Newport, Rhode Island, Laura DiSano holds a BA and MA from the University of Rhode Island (BA & MA). Upon completion of her Masters, she spent 12 years in higher education. Her professional expertise in this field focused on the design, development and proposal/grant writing of programs which served disabled and disadvantaged students. She was and continues to be passionately committed to providing access to higher education for poor and disabled students as "the tool" to achieving their full human and economic potential.

"When I joined SBDC over five years ago after retiring from a Fortune 100 Company, I had no idea of the breadth and depth that I would encounter in serving South Carolina's small businesses. Whether my clients are engaged in owning a coffee shop or being CEO's of biopharmaceutical companies that are preparing for IPOs, working with them on solving a variety of business issues is both challenging and rewarding", DiSano says. "In addition, I have been deeply integrated into the city and have had the opportunity to serve on economic development task forces and search committees that impact the business community. That coupled with Aiken SBDC's deep partnership with USCA and our SBDC state and regional leadership makes a phenomenal platform from which to nurture, grow and support both emerging and existing businesses in our community. It is an incredible opportunity to work here."

DiSano's primary career spanning over three decades in business financial services includes over 20 years at Fleet and Bank of America where she held a variety of executive positions in business development, sales and marketing, product development, strategy, operations, delivery systems and communications. Her roles crossed corporate, retail and commercial lines of business. She completed her banking career as market executive for Rhode Island for the business banking commercial lending function, serving businesses with up to \$50 million in annual revenues. Her team met the capital and financing needs of these companies as well as key needs in cash management, payroll, leasing, merchant processing, retirement and investment services.

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Michele Abraham
SC SBDC State Director

2015 results:

- 1278 Jobs created and retained
- >\$1.4 Billion in government contracts
- >\$52.9 Million in financing obtained
- 183 New businesses started
- 4,710 Clients served

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Chef Belinda Smith-Sullivan
Chef Belinda Spices

Chef spices up business by focusing on product development

Aiken Area SBDC client Belinda Smith-Sullivan, or Chef Belinda as the cooking world has come to know her, has gone from food writing and being a personal chef to building a spicy empire, Chef Belinda Spices.