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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What Are the Next Steps for Small Business? *Free Small Business Event Slated for Irvine on April 20*

(Santa Ana)—As the U.S. economy struggles to recover, the vitality of the nation’s small businesses is more important than ever. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms nationwide and employ just over half of all private sector employees. Over the past 15 years, small businesses have generated 64 percent of the net new jobs.

To ensure greater success of small businesses in Southern California, the California Small Business Development Center (California SBDC) is presenting a no-cost daylong event, “Next Step for Small Business: Where Do We Go from Here?” on Wednesday, April 20, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event will take place at the Irvine Marriott, 18000 Von Karman Ave., Irvine, CA 92612. For more information and to pre-register, call (916) 214-6146 or visit www.californiasbdc.org/nextsteps.

“The Orange County SBDC, in concert with the California SBDC, is dedicated to enhancing opportunities for small business owners by providing the tools for success,” said Leila Mozaffari, director, Orange County SBDC. “We are excited to collaborate on this conference that will help business owners grow their businesses by utilizing social media, selling to the government or accessing international markets.”

The conference will feature:

- Welcome comments by Priscilla Lopez, California SBDC; and Raúl Rodríguez, Ph.D., chancellor, Rancho Santiago Community College District;
- Keynote address by Brian Tippens, director of global supplier diversity, development and sustainability, Hewlett-Packard; and
- A luncheon program featuring Joel Ayala, Governor’s Office of Economic Development.

Breakout sessions will cover the following topics:

- Procurement: Steps that your small business can take to improve your chances of winning government and corporate contracts for your goods and services;

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- Access to capital: Strategies for accessing additional capital to grow your business in today's economic climate;
- Social Media/Marketing: Emerging communication channels that will help you reach potential and influence customers or clients; and
- International Trade: Extend your business reach across borders and reap the rewards.

“Next Steps for Small Business” is made possible by sponsors Hewlett-Packard and Union Bank and program partners Business Matchmaking, GoEd and California SBDC.

About the Orange County Small Business Development Center

The Orange County Small Business Development Center (Orange County SBDC), an economic development program of Rancho Santiago Community College District, is partially supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the California State University, Fullerton and the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The Orange County SBDC is a one-stop source for business planning, business development, international business resources, education and training, loan assistance and expansion strategies.

About the Rancho Santiago Community College District

The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.

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