

SBA Program Helps Bridge Gap

A report released by the Small Business Administration noted that the national network of Small Business Development Centers play an essential role in the economic development of their states and local communities through their direct face-to-face counseling for small businesses. The report was produced by the National Small Business Development Center Advisory Board and focuses on SBDCs' impact on small business access to SBA's programs and services, including access to SBA capital, procurement, disaster and international trade programs.

The report confirms that SBA's SBDC program remains an essential part of the agency's mission to help small businesses. The report demonstrates statistically the prolonged impact that SBA-funded SBDCs have on the formation and growth of small businesses.

A key finding of the report is that SBDCs help local economies by improving the odds for startup small businesses. "SBDCs" the report says, "are solely focused on creating and supporting small businesses which in turn pay taxes, provide employment and diversify the economic base for their states...The businesses that work with the SBDCs are the job creators and enterprises that have the potential for survival and growth."

The report found that the 900 SBDC service locations provide a necessary local footprint in the communities they serve, delivering unique offerings tailored to the needs of the small business community.

Last year, more than 557,000 entrepreneurs received business advice and technical assistance through the SBDC program. In its more than 30-year history, SBDCs have assisted millions of small business owners and entrepreneurs to successfully start and grow small firms by fostering entrepreneurship and growth through innovation and efficiency.

MBL Holiday Closures

**Presidents Day
February 20, 2012**

Obama to Elevate SBA Chief to Cabinet

President Barack Obama has decided to exercise his executive authority to elevate the head of the SBA to a cabinet position.

The announcement came with a broader proposal to combine the SBA with five other government offices that would become a single, streamlined agency. Under Obama's plan the SBA Administration would no longer be in the cabinet once the reorganization is complete.

In a speech given on January 13 President Obama said, "As of today, I am elevating the Small Business Administration to a cabinet-level agency. Karen Mills, who's been doing an outstanding job leading that agency, is going to make sure that small-business owners have their own seat at the table in our Cabinet meetings."

Senior administration officials said the decision speaks to her accomplishments at the agency, such as reducing lender paperwork for SBA-backed loans, enforcing stricter oversight of government contracting and rolling out several laws that facilitated more lending to small businesses.

Notable small-business advocates, including Sen. Olympia Snowe (R., Maine), the ranking member of the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, have urged the President to restore the SBA to cabinet level, as it was under the Clinton administration.

Previous administrations have elevated people to cabinet-level status, which is mostly a symbolic way of saying they and their subject areas are considered important.

The MBL Mission:

"To aid, counsel, and assist our participating credit unions and the member businesses they serve"

Monthly Training Seminar

In February MBL will offer a seminar on Loan Closing. The steps in the closing process will be explained, as well as closing documents and their purpose. The seminar is part of MBL's free monthly seminar series, and is open to all credit union business lending staff.

Loan Closing

Wednesday, February 8th

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. (MDT)

Session number: 801 892 250

Session password: Wednesday1

A link to the training will be provided in a separate email.

For more information contact Sarah Hettinger at (801) 545-7958 or SHettinger@mblllc.com.

Advisory Council & MBL University

March 6, 2012

In response to participant feedback, the Advisory Council and MBL University have been converted to virtual meetings. Both events will be hosted online via WebEx.

The Advisory Council is a forum for MBL users to discuss best practices, challenges and pertinent regulatory changes.

MBL University will officially launch MBL's new Lender Certification Program. The comprehensive program will include basic training, program development courses and continuing education modules.

Small Business Borrowing at 4 Year High

Borrowing by U.S. small businesses rose in December to the highest level in more than four years, pointing to continued strength in an important corner of the economy.

The Thomson Reuters/PayNet Small Business Lending Index jumped 19 percent in December. This increase was the 17th consecutive double digit rise. The Thomson Reuters/PayNet Small Business Lending Index measures the overall volume of financing to U.S. small businesses.

At 112.6, the index matched the level registered in November 2007; it was last higher in August of that year, as the subprime mortgage bubble was bursting.

"This data shows there's some underlying strength," PayNet founder Bill Phelan said in an interview. "When you get these capital project investments, you can really move the needle on the economy."

The U.S. economy grew at its fastest pace in one and a half years last quarter, despite a beleaguered housing market and lack luster consumer spending. The PayNet survey suggests that the growth could continue at least for the next few months.

PayNet tracks borrowing by millions of U.S. small businesses. The index is correlated with changes to the U.S. gross domestic product a quarter or two in the future.

SBA BASE RATES FEBRUARY 2012

WSJ Prime	3.25%*
1-Month LIBOR Base Rate	3.26%*
SBA Fixed Base Rate	4.72%*
SBA Peg Rate	2.375%**

*Effective for the first business day of February 2012

**Effective for the period between January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012

The MBL Mission:

"To aid, counsel, and assist our participating credit unions and the member businesses they serve"