



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA-BACKED LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESSES UP SHARPLY IN FIRST HALF OF FY 2004

Santa Ana, Calif. – The number of small businesses receiving loans backed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Santa Ana District Office, through the first two quarters of FY 2004 is up by more than 26 percent, compared to the same period a year ago. The Santa Ana District Office services Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The Santa Ana District Office also reported a large increase in SBA Express loans, with 488 approved loans in the first half of the year compared to 370 at this time last year. The increase is largely due to significant efforts by the agency to make SBA Express loans of under \$250,000 more widely available by making it easier and faster for lenders to approve the loans.

In Orange County, total number of loans for the first two quarters of FY 2004 is 625 with a dollar amount of \$177.7 million, an increase of 14 percent from the same period a year ago. In Riverside County 247 loans were made with a dollar amount of \$79 million the first half of this fiscal year, an increase of 43 percent from the same period a year ago. In San Bernardino County 278 loans were made with a dollar amount of \$94.2 million for the first half of FY 2004, an increase of 45 percent in the number of loans from the same period a year ago.

Santa Ana District Office also saw a 21 percent increase in the SBA's major loan program, the 7(a) General Business Loan Guaranty program during the first half of FY 2004 compared to the same period the previous year. A comparison of the first half of FY 2003 to FY 2004 in the number of Certified Development Company (or 504) loans shows an increase in loan volume of 48 percent.

In other SBA program areas, over 16,000 entrepreneurs received business counseling and technical assistance through the SBA District Office, SCORE, Women Business Center and the Small Business Development Centers. Firms in SBA's 8(a) program in the Santa Ana District portfolio received through the first half of FY04 \$123.8 million in government contracts. There are 190 firms in the District's 8(a) portfolio, an increase of 11 new firms into the 8(a) program during the first half of FY04. SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program provides management and technical assistance, networking and federal contracting opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

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