



NEWS RELEASE

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AVCOG RECEIVES \$400,000 FROM SBA FOR MICROLOAN PROGRAM

Augusta, Maine -- Mary McAleney, Maine District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), presented Robert Thompson, Executive Director of Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG) a check in the amount of \$400,000. The funds will replenish the SBA MicroLoan Program delivered by AVCOG. The MicroLoan Program provides very small loans to start-up, newly established, or growing business concerns that might not otherwise be eligible for traditional lender financing. Under this program, the SBA makes funds available to nonprofit community lenders (intermediaries) which in turn, make loans to eligible borrowers in amounts up to \$35,000. McAleney said "It is fitting that this presentation is made during Gov. Baldacci's Creative Economy Conference. Entrepreneurs involved in Maine's creative economy utilize this program to start and expand their businesses."

Robert Thompson, Executive Director, AVCOG, stated "Since participating in the SBA MicroLoan Program in 2001, we have provided funding for 13 area businesses, created and/or retained 38 jobs. AVCOG also provides counseling and technical assistance to these and other microloan clients. This loan program is valuable to the economy of the tri-county area."

The presentation took place at McIntosh and Tuttle Cabinetmakers on Chestnut Street in Lewiston. Owners, Todd McIntosh and Jon Tuttle used the SBA MicroLoan program to start their custom woodworking business in 2002. Their company designs, manufactures and installs custom built high quality kitchens, cabinetry and fine furniture. Within 12 months of operation it became apparent that the business needed more space. They utilized the counseling expertise of the Maine Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at AVCOG and other AVCOG loan funds to move from 3,100 square feet in the Hill Mill to a space of 8,000 square feet.

SBA will be represented at the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy Showcase Resource Room Thursday and Friday.

Other Maine participants in the SBA MicroLoan Program include Northern Maine Development Corporation, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Community Concepts and Coastal Enterprises Inc. For more information on SBA's programs, call 622-8274 or visit www.sba.gov/me.

