

# IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

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## SOUTHERN TIER SUPPLY STARTUP FINDS SUCCESS

Before launching his startup, Brian Peters graduated from Syracuse University and enjoyed a corporate career in the technology and medical sales sectors, including working for health care and personal care corporate giant Kimberly-Clark. Peters brought the best of his experience at the \$19 billion dollar corporation to his new business: "Coming from an organization like Kimberly-Clark, you learn a lot about what brings customers back. There's a lot of tissue product in the market, but chances are in your lifetime you've bought Kleenex. I think working in a culture like Kimberly-Clark made me want to recreate a similar culture in my business."

Six years ago, Peters returned from New York City to his hometown of Elmira, and three years later he launched his own business-to-business distribution company. A third-generation entrepreneur, Peters used his

life savings to start Peters Supply from the ground up, with only a business name, two original employees and some home-made business cards.

"When we initially started, we were buying wholesale. We would build up an order, the supplier would come into our market and meet us in a parking lot. We'd back up our rental truck for the day, unload what they had into our truck and we'd go deliver the orders," explained Peters.

Marketing to commercial, manufacturing, educational and municipal

customers with a philosophy of minimizing expenses and reducing inefficiencies helped the company quickly outgrow its original space in an apartment spare bedroom on the Westside of Elmira.

In the second year of operations, Peters Supply moved into its 53,000-square-foot leased location on Magee Street. Previously a Sears distribution warehouse, the faded, peeling Sears & Roebuck logo is still visible on an interior wall. Peters Supply invested in

*Cont. on p. 2*

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From left: Ed Booth, Peters Supply facility maintenance sales consultant; Brian Peters, owner of Peters Supply; and Chris Bennett, Peters Supply facility maintenance sales consultant.

## SOUTHERN TIER SUPPLY STARTUP FINDS SUCCESS

### Cont. from p. 1

upgrading the idle warehouse to add electricity, lighting fixtures and heating as well as essential pallet shelving units for their growing inventory.

Today, customers can place orders by phone, fax, face-to-face or online for hundreds of thousands of different products, ranging from janitorial supplies and paper products to industrial packaging and safety supplies. Elmira's prime location for delivery

routes has assisted the company's growth; existing customer base is generally located within a 100-mile radius, and Peters hopes to expand even further in the



coming years.

"The website was a major investment for us.

Working with our software provider, we implemented an e-commerce solution that represents a growing percentage of our business in both dollar and volume," explains Peters.

Peters met with SBA Elmira Branch Manager Brian Qualey early in the company's development to learn about SBA programs. Last November, Peters Supply received an SBA-backed line of credit from Five Star Bank. Jobs Act enhancements enabled the

company to access the credit line without traditional guarantee fees. With increased access to credit, Peters Supply was able to expand its existing inventory and product lines and increase its staff. "The SBA Express program is fantastic. Especially for a small business, where every dollar counts, to be able to invest the dollars that would normally be taken up in fees and use them instead to grow the business was such a winning opportunity," explained Peters.

## SBA HOSTS NATIONAL HEARING ON REGULATORY FAIRNESS

Small business owners nationwide are invited to share their concerns over excessive enforcement of federal rules during a national U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Fairness hearing in Columbia, Maryland on Tuesday, May 24 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SBA National Ombudsman Esther H. Vassar will meet with members of the Regional Regulatory Fairness boards, representatives from federal agencies and small business owners nationwide (via

teleconferencing) to hear issues and comments about federal regulatory enforcement and compliance actions. Small business owners, representatives of trade associations, community and business leaders are invited to comment about compliance actions, enforcement of regulations by federal agencies.

The National Ombudsman will direct specific issues addressed at these hearings to the appropriate federal agency for a review of the fairness of

the enforcement action. In many instances, the National Ombudsman's action has resulted in federal agencies reducing or waiving penalties and/or compliance actions in cases of unfair or excessive regulatory enforcement. Testimony must be submitted in writing in advance.

Small business owners, leaders from business organizations and trade associations may testify during the hearing by registering in advance. RSVPs should be made to Jose

Mendez or Yolanda Swift in the Office of the National Ombudsman at (202) 205-2417, or [jose.mendez@sba.gov](mailto:jose.mendez@sba.gov), or [yolanda.swift@sba.gov](mailto:yolanda.swift@sba.gov).

The teleconference toll-free number is (866) 740-1260, access code 3212002#. Those desiring confidentiality may request that their name not be released, and may submit written testimony in lieu of a public appearance. For additional information about the Office of the National Ombudsman, please visit their [website](#).

# SMALL BUSINESS EVENTS CALENDAR

## Social Media Seminar

JUNE

1

The Corning SBDC is offering a workshop on using social media in business, Marketing for Generation X, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on June 1.

This workshop will highlight the key trends in social media to help you make good decisions regarding how to use it to effectively promote your business.

Topics covered will include Facebook business pages, on line advertising with Google and Facebook, mobile marketing including Yelp and Foursquare, and LinkedIn for business.

The speaker will be Evhen Farmiga who has over 18 years of leadership experience in corporate, financial, and military organizations. He teaches various professional skills, process improvement, and business technology classes.

The cost of the workshop is \$20 per person and prepaid registration is required by May 28th by contacting the SBDC at 607-937-6861 or [sbdc@corning-cc.edu](mailto:sbdc@corning-cc.edu).

## Marketing 101 Seminar

JUNE

1

The Albany SBDC will present the Marketing 101 seminar at from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on June 1. Small Business Development Center Business Advisor Kate Baker will illustrate the process of developing an effective marketing plan for your business.

Topics covered in the seminar will include: how to identify potential customers; how to conduct market research ; price-volume-service matrix and how it applies to your business; how to identify the return on investment of your marketing activities; how to select the appropriate marketing activities for your business; how to develop a marketing plan; and how to track your results and return on investment.

The seminar will be held at the SUNY Adirondack Regional Higher Education Center in Queensbury. To register or for more information, please contact the Albany SBDC at 518-485-7647 or [kbaker@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:kbaker@uamail.albany.edu).

## The 4 G's of Government Contracting for Women Entrepreneurs

JUNE

7

Women TIES and the Women's Business Center of New York State will present a joint workshop for women entrepreneurs on the 4 G's of Federal Government Contracting in Cortland.

The event is also supported by the SBA Syracuse district office, SBDC at SUNY Institute of Technology and SBDC at Onondaga Community College.

This special event will provide women entrepreneurs with information on how to get started, how to get registered, how to get connected, and how to get contracts. Roxanne Mutchler, Government Contracting Coordinator, NYS SBDC Procurement Assistance Center and Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center, will be the guest speaker. Topics covered will include how to do business with the federal government; how to register with three sources - the Central Contractor Registration, SBA Dynamic Small Business Search and Online Representations and Certifications Application; the advantages of contracting by subcontracting to a prime contractor; the resources to identify what government agencies buy your products and services; and how to find bidding opportunities.

Networking and continental breakfast with HSBC Bank - Cortland Office, the SBA Syracuse district office, SBDC at SUNY Institute of Technology, and SBDC at Onondaga Community College runs from 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m, followed by the main program from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. A luncheon buffet and more networking occurs from 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. Register for \$55 by June 2 with Women TIES by phone at 315-471-1987 or online at [www.womenties.com](http://www.womenties.com).



Roxanne Mutchler,  
NYS SBDC PAC  
Govt. Contracting  
Coordinator



President Barack Obama hailed small business owners as the backbone of the nation's economy in his proclamation of the week of May 15-21 as National Small Business Week:

*"Our country started as an idea, and it took hard-working, dedicated, and visionary patriots to make it a reality. A successful business starts much the same way—ideas realized by entrepreneurs who dream of a better world and work until they see it through. From the family businesses that anchor Main Street to the high-tech startups that keep America on the cutting edge, small businesses are the backbone of our economy and the cornerstones of America's promise."* —excerpt from President Barack Obama's proclamation

## EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE APPOINTED TO SBA ADVISORY COUNCIL

Fifteen individuals from across the country have been appointed to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Council on Underserved Communities (CUC).

Building on SBA's core programs and Recovery initiatives, the CUC will provide input, advice and recommendations on strategies to help strengthen competitiveness and sustainability for small businesses in underserved communities. These strategies will be focused on increasing entrepreneurship and technical assistance, creating new and strengthening existing outreach and training, and raising awareness in underserved communities of SBA programs and services.

The CUC is chaired by Catherine Hughes, founder and chairperson of Radio One and TV One,

and will have 20 members who represent a diverse range of backgrounds and geographic areas.

"One of SBA's core missions is to support small businesses in traditionally underserved communities, including minorities, women, veterans, people with disabilities and in rural areas," SBA Deputy Administrator Marie Johns said. "The Council on Underserved Communities will provide valuable insight and advice into how we can ensure that small businesses in these communities throughout the country have access to the tools they need to grow, create jobs and win the future."

The CUC's first meeting will be held in July, in Washington, DC. Before the first meeting, members of the CUC will hold listening sessions in their regions to hear from small business owners and members of

the community about what they need from the SBA.

"Thirty years ago, I grew my business with the help of an SBA loan," said Hughes. "Now I'm so pleased to be chairing the Council on Underserved Communities and help entrepreneurs in communities across the country take advantage of those same opportunities for success."

The CUC is part of the SBA's ongoing efforts to expand its reach into underserved communities. While the nation's economic recovery is moving forward, that recovery has been uneven, particularly for socially, economically and geographically disadvantaged small business owners. To help SBA better address the challenges facing small business owners, the CUC will meet regularly and advise SBA

on ways to increase access to capital and promote sustainability, growth, and job creation.

Among the 15 members of the CUC recently appointed is Dasil "Das" Elius Velez, Senior Executive with the New York State Empire State Development Corporation. Das Velez is currently serving in New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's administration with the Empire State Development Corporation as the executive director of Minority and Women Business Development. Prior to Velez's appointment, he served as senior advisor to Gov. David A. Paterson. He has also held a number of executive positions in public service sector and was a founding partner of Carro, Velez, Carro and Mitchell LLP, which became New York City's largest Latino law firm.