



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

## **PRESS OFFICE**

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## **U.S. Small Business Administration Announces Plans to Mark Agency's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Small Business Administration turns 50 this year, and in Washington, D.C., and dozens of cities across the country, the SBA will spotlight the entrepreneurial heroes who have started and grown small businesses as it marks this anniversary.

In addition to honoring 50 years of small business success, the agency is looking toward the future. At 10 public forums starting in October and ending in April 2004, citizens will discuss the needs of small businesses and what the SBA can do to better assist them. The forums will be designed to listen to and record what American entrepreneurs find relevant.

“The President and I recognize the vital role small businesses play in creating opportunity for millions of Americans,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “His small business agenda is designed to create an environment where entrepreneurship can flourish by providing small businesses with the information they need to succeed, saving taxpayer dollars by ensuring open competition to government contracts, and tearing down regulatory barriers to job creation.”

National recognition of the agency's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary kicks off Aug. 1 at The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library and Museum in Abilene, Kan., where the signing of the Small Business Act by President Eisenhower on July 30, 1953 will be commemorated.

“Since 1953, the SBA has helped more than 20 million Americans start, grow and expand their businesses – placing more than \$170 billion in direct or guaranteed loans into the hands of entrepreneurs,” said Barreto. “SBA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gives us a perfect opportunity to reflect upon our history and to plan innovative methods to better serve America's entrepreneurs.”

One of the cornerstone events of the 50<sup>th</sup> will be the National Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo, Sept. 17-19 in Washington, D.C. During the conference, the National Small Business Person of the Year will be announced and a new “Hall of Fame,” honoring the highest achievements in entrepreneurialism, will be inaugurated.

While recognition is an important part of the event, there will also be opportunities for small businesses to conduct business by meeting potential clients at a national contracting match-making event. Educational seminars are also planned on topics ranging from access to capital, entrepreneurial development, importing and exporting, contracting, e-Government, regulatory relief, franchising and “Protecting Your Small Business.”

The SBA's Web site at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) lists the 50th anniversary events and links to a registration site for the NECE conference. The site will be updated regularly with new event information.

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