



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: January 18, 2008
Release Number: 08-06

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Internet Address: <http://www.sba.gov/news>

SBA Staff Chief Heads to Department of Transportation

WASHINGTON, DC — Joel Szabat, chief of staff of the Small Business Administration, leaves the agency next week to become the deputy assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Molly Wilkinson, formerly the General Services Administration's chief acquisition officer, will become SBA's new chief of staff.

"The agency has made incredible progress during Joel's tenure and his leadership was a key factor," said SBA Administrator Steve Preston. "We're proud of the strides made in the year and half that he has been on board to make SBA more effective and accountable to its customers."

During Szabat's tenure, SBA eliminated a backlog of more than 100,000 Katrina loan applications and put \$6 billion into the hands of disaster victims rebuilding their lives and communities along the Gulf. Contracting reforms have generated nearly \$5 billion in new opportunities for small businesses. Szabat also served on the President's Task Force for Returning Global War on Terror Heroes, securing approval for SBA's new Patriot Express loan program. In just seven months, Patriot Express has provided more than \$79 million to help veterans, reservists and their spouses start or expand small businesses.

"The men and women of SBA have done the American taxpayer a great service," Szabat said. "Loan and contracting support to small businesses have doubled, while the agency reduced its budget by more than a quarter since 2001. SBA can proudly match its record against any organization, public or private."

Szabat also noted that SBA staff are supporting and driving Administrator Preston's reform agenda. In the annual employee survey, administered by the Office of Personnel Management, staff gave the highest-ever positive response to over two-thirds of the questions asked.

Szabat has 21 years of public service, mostly in transportation. In 2005 he directed the U.S. government's transportation reconstruction efforts in Iraq. He has also been a management consultant for transportation in the private sector.

"I have been very fortunate," Szabat said. "I have most recently worked for Steve Preston and Norm Mineta, two of the finest bosses and individuals I have ever known. And now I am joining Secretary Mary Peters and her team at Transportation. This is as good as it gets."

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