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SBA Commitment to Women Bears Significant Results

WASHINGTON – As part of the U.S. Small Business Administration's record-breaking performance in FY 2004, the agency and its lending partners provided more loans to women-owned businesses than ever before. In the past year SBA backed almost 18,000 loans to women-owned businesses under its two primary loan programs, amounting to \$2.5 billion, more than double the number of loans to women as recently as FY 2001.

"All of our program areas are committed to assisting women's businesses, a commitment that comes directly from President Bush," Administrator Hector V. Barreto said. "Our deputy administrator, Melanie Sabelhaus, is one of the nation's strongest advocates for women entrepreneurs."

Aside from the record-setting loan performance, Administrator Barreto noted that women-owned small businesses also received \$1.5 billion more in federal contracts in FY 2003, the most recent year for which data is available. The total value of federal contracts to women-owned businesses rose from \$6.8 billion to \$8.3 billion, a total of 2.98 percent of all federal prime contract dollars. From FY 2000 to FY 2003, prime contract dollars increased by 81 percent, or more than \$3.7 billion.

In the last two years the SBA has also embarked on the highly successful Business Matchmaking program to create more contracting opportunities for small businesses. Since its inception, the Business Matchmaking program has created approximately 22,000 one-on-one appointments between small business owners and buyers from federal and local governments as well as buyers from the private sector. Of those businesses that received contracts, 50 percent have been women-owned businesses. Women-owned businesses have also received 65 percent of the contracting dollars.

"President Bush has asked to be judged on his actions and results," Barreto said. "I think these numbers stand by themselves."

For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at <http://www.sba.gov> in English, or www.negocios.gov in Spanish.

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