



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: February 10, 2003

Contact: Mike Stamler (202) 205-6919

Release Number: 03-07

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

SBA ADMINISTRATOR BARRETO REMINDS BUSINESSES OF FEB. 12 DEADLINE FOR ECONOMIC CENSUS

WASHINGTON – Small business owners – who represent 99 percent of all American businesses and employ 50 percent of the American work force – should make their voices heard by completing the 2002 U.S. Economic Census forms they've received and sending them in by the Feb. 12 deadline. The census forms were sent to over five million firms in December.

"When I owned a small business, I learned that if you listen to your customers, they will tell you what they need to succeed," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. **"Right now, the U.S. Census Bureau wants to hear from you by asking you to send in your 2002 Economic Census form. It is asking for essential information about America's businesses.**

"Make sure the voice of small business is heard. Complete your 2002 Economic Census. America needs your numbers."

Small business participation is critical to the success of the Economic Census. Of five million questionnaires distributed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 4.8 million were sent to firms the SBA considers small. Businesses that received forms are required by law to return them.

The Economic Census takes place once every five years, in much the same manner as the census count of the general population which takes place every 10 years.

Businesses needing help with their forms may call the Economic Census help line at 1-800-233-6136 or visit www.census.gov/econhelp.

All responses to the Economic Census are guaranteed confidential by Title 13 of the U.S. Code. Only persons sworn to uphold Title 13 can review individual profiles. The information is also exempt from public inquiry through the Freedom of Information Act.

*For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640. Also, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov. SBA, in partnership with Staples, has introduced a new online Newsletter **SBA Solutions**. For a free subscription, go to <http://web.sba.gov/list>, and select New **SBA Solutions Newsletter**.*

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