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## **Small Businesses Meet Their Match In Time For Valentine's Day** *SBA, HP and SCORE Host Western Regional Business Matchmaking Event*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), HP and SCORE-Counselors to America's Small Business are kicking off the first Business Matchmaking event of the year in Oakland, CA.

This event, often referred to as “speed dating for small businesses,” allows small business owners the opportunity to talk face-to-face and negotiate for contracts with buyers from large corporations as well as federal, state and local agencies.

SBA, HP and SCORE welcome a winning team of cosponsors this year, each with a long history of supporting small business: Lockheed Martin, MasterCard, eAgency, Chevron, Administaff, FedEx, AMD, AFLAC and American Airlines.

With more than 550 small businesses, 925 sellers and 157 buyers registered, today's event is expected to be one of the most successful in the history of the initiative. The event has attracted buyers from throughout the state California, the city of Oakland, and various state and federal agencies.

Since its inception in 2003, Business Matchmaking has, through regional events held all across the country and through the Online Network pilot, generated almost 37,000 one-on-one appointments resulting in more than \$35.4 million in contracts for small businesses.

The event is being held at the Oakland Convention Center from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Aside from one-on-one appointments, participants may attend four workshops: Tips for Selling to Government and Big Business; Financial Strategies, Challenges and Opportunities; Essential Technology for Small Business Growth; and Services for Success. The afternoon luncheon will be hosted by Chevron, a cosponsor for the Oakland event.

Three other regional Business Matchmaking events are planned for 2006: Houston on August 2, Philadelphia on September 22 and Miami on November 16.

Complete details on Business Matchmaking, including the 2006 schedule of events and registration details as well as information on the new Online Network, may be found at [www.BusinessMatchmaking.com](http://www.BusinessMatchmaking.com).

*Editor's note: Please see the first press release announcing the 2006 plans for Business Matchmaking, including comments by key co-sponsors, at [www.BusinessMatchmaking.com](http://www.BusinessMatchmaking.com).*

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