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# PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Kelly McLeod, Marketing Specialist

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### FSBDC Network Awarded DCA--Emergency Management's Business Continuity Pilot (BCP) Project to Help Businesses Prepare for Disasters

Pensacola, FL: Small businesses in a seven county area in Florida can now improve their ability to survive a disaster through the Business Continuity Pilot (BCP) project that was recently awarded to the Florida Small Business Development Center (FSBDC) Network by the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Emergency Management. The goal of the project is to help small businesses reduce personal and economic costs of disasters by preparing them to protect against natural and man-made disasters.

Mitigation Counselors are very enthusiastic about the project and encourage small business owners to take advantage of the free services available through the BCP. The pilot focuses on conducting on-site facility audits of small businesses to assist them in developing disaster preparedness plans and implementing mitigation measures into business operations.

"This project will enable Florida's small businesses to play an essential role in building disaster resistant communities," said Craig Fugate, Director, Florida Division of Emergency Management. "The FSBDC Network is an excellent example of how public-private resources can be integrated to benefit Florida's citizens."

The Business Continuity Pilot is administered by the FSBDC Network's State Director's Office in Pensacola and operates through the University of North Florida (UNF) Small Business Development Center in Jacksonville to provide targeted services to Duval, St. John's and Clay counties, and the University of West Florida (UWF) Small Business Development Center in Ft. Walton Beach to provide services in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties. The pilot is a one-year project that began June 30, 2002.

"It is critical that small businesses have access to the information and tools they need to prepare for, respond to and recover from a major emergency or disaster situation," says FSBDC Network State Director Jerry Cartwright. "We are very pleased that the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Emergency Management, selected us to participate in this project and are committed to ensuring that Florida's businesses are prepared and ready to respond in the event of a disaster."

For additional information about the BCP project or to schedule an appointment with a Mitigation Counselor, contact Charles Parry or Harris Barker, UWF SBDC at (850) 863-6546 or Greg Hardee, UNF SBDC at (904) 620-1026.

*The FSBDC Network is the first source for business assistance, with over 25 years of experience helping entrepreneurs start and grow successful businesses in Florida. The Network features 29 centers strategically located throughout the state. Through the Network and its professionally trained Certified Business Analysts, existing small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs in all industries and every phase of development have access to free and confidential, one-on-one counseling in virtually any area of business management, as well as educational training events and information resources.*

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