



# Press Release

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Contact: Dr. Diane Barlar, Director of Marketing & Development  
[dbarlar@uwf.edu](mailto:dbarlar@uwf.edu)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Florida SBDC Network Initiates Lenders' Hall of Fame

The Florida Small Business Development Center Network (FSBDCN) is proud to announce the formal addition of the first Small Business Lenders' Hall of Fame to the annual agenda of its Professional Development Conference held June 5-8 in Naples, Florida. The recognition of 8 regional best practice partnerships takes into account the many ingredients in the recipe for success in small business start ups, growth and maintenance. Florida's SBDC Network of 31 locations and the local banking and non-bank institutions work closely with entrepreneurs and small business owners to help achieve a remarkable track record of statewide small business successes.

To underscore the importance of partnering technical assistance and capital access to successful business development and creating a positive statewide business environment, the Florida Small Business Development Centers publicly recognized their best practice financial partner for 2004 by awarding lifetime status in the Florida SBDC Network Lenders' Hall of Fame. They are: the Regional SBDC in Pensacola at UWF, **Mary Jo Joseph**, Small Business Loan Source, LLC; the Regional SBDC in Tallahassee at FAMU, **Percy L. Goodman, Jr.**, Community Enterprise Investment, Inc; the Regional SBDC in Jacksonville at UNF, **Elizabeth Barron**, CIT Small Business Lending Corporation; the Regional SBDC in Orlando at UCF, **David A. Felker**, BankFirst; the Regional SBDC in Tampa at USF, **Brad Owens**, Bank of America; the Regional SBDC in Boca Raton at FAU, **Fred Crispen**, Business Loan Express; and the Regional SBDC in Ft. Myers at FGCU, **Patricia Sessions**, Banco Popular North America. An awards banquet took place June 7, 2005, where seven selected awardees were recognized and inducted into the FSBDCN Lenders' Hall of Fame.

The Florida SBDC Network provides a critical contribution to economic development in Florida. The productive partnership with lenders in 2004 helped to see a new business opened by an SBDC client every 17 hours, a new job created by an SBDC client every 3 hours, \$14,672.00 in sales growth generated by a client every hour, and \$1,968.00 in tax revenues generated by SBDC clients every hour. Over 12,341 entrepreneurs were counseled statewide and another 24,458 attended one or more of the 1,569 training events and over 80,210 individuals requested business information through a local SBDC.

**Florida SBDC Network**  
State Director's Office  
University of West Florida  
401 E Chase St, Ste 100  
Pensacola, FL 32502  
850.473.7800 / f 850.473.7813  
[www.FloridaSBDC.com](http://www.FloridaSBDC.com)