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News Release

Small businesses supported by East Bay effort

DATE Oakland, CA: Business owners in Contra Costa County will be flocking to an event on Wednesday, May 23, 2012, to connect with experts in starting, growing and sustaining small businesses. The free, half-day event, from 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. will be held in the Antioch Community Center, 4703 Lone Tree Way, in Antioch.

The event will connect businesses at various stages with the resources designed for each group, including financing, financial planning, marketing, employee management, legal, and a range of other services. Business owners will also have an opportunity to network and cultivate new customers and talk to the resources representatives directly. Please see our website to register as a participating small business or to become a resource partner: www.ebsmallbusiness.com.

To better support small businesses, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA) and its partners are launching an East Bay Small Business Initiative to improve the connection between entrepreneurs, small businesses and available resources.

“What we know is that more than half of all East Bay small businesses need some kind of advice or specialized service just to survive. We want to help them thrive and grow,” said Jim Foley, Wells Fargo Bank’s Greater Bay President and leader of the effort. “By bringing them together with resources that are typically needed for each business lifecycle, we will have something to offer all businesses and can assist as many as possible.”

The initiative is being organized by East Bay EDA, Inner City Advisors (ICA), Wells Fargo Bank, with the support of the Alameda and the Contra Costa Small Business Development Centers, Alameda County Workforce Investment Board and the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The event targets entrepreneurs, small and growing companies and will feature presentations and panel discussions on a range of important topics to help businesses succeed. Topics include financial planning, marketing, employee management, legal, and more. Business owners will also have an opportunity to network and cultivate new customers.

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Follow-up support will be conducted by Inner City Advisers, an Oakland-based non-profit which helps businesses secure needed resources, grow and create quality jobs. "Running a business is a great responsibility and entrepreneurs need to know there is a network of support to help them succeed. We help connect them to that support," said Jose Corona, CEO of Inner City Advisers."

This is the first of a series of Small Business Symposia that will be held in 4 locations throughout the East Bay this year. "I'm so pleased that this effort is kicking off in Contra Costa County and really encourage area business owners to attend," said Mary Nejedly Piepho, Contra Costa County Supervisor and Vice Chair of East Bay EDA. "The *Building on Our Assets* report produced by the East Bay EDA in 2011 found that nearly 70% of jobs in the East Bay are created by businesses employing less than 100 people. That percentage is even higher in Contra Costa County. Therefore our small businesses need and deserve everything the leadership of this County and the East Bay can do to support them."

Future events are planned for Berkeley, Danville, and Fremont. Check our website for the next event and to connect to additional resources! www.ebsmallbusiness.com.

About the East Bay EDA

The East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA), located in Oakland, California, is a public-private partnership founded in 1990 to serve the San Francisco East Bay (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties). The East Bay EDA's mission is to establish the region as a world-recognized location to grow businesses, attract capital and create quality jobs.