

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

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**SBA Small Business
Economic Survival Hotline
617-565-5627**

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Helping small businesses
start, grow and succeed.



Your Small Business Resource

Meet Annie Selke—The Massachusetts 2010 Small Business Person of the Year



Pine Cone Hill's fresh, fun home textiles have been making waves in the home design industry since 1994 when Annie Selke, the founder, started the business with an industrial sewing machine on her dining room table. Later that year Annie showed her designs at the New York Home Textiles Show and caught the eye of a buyer from Garnet Hill. To get the business rolling, Annie recruited her husband, parents, and in-laws to pack boxes and apply price stickers.

As they say, the rest is history. Annie has expanded Pine Cone Hill from her kitchen table to three wholesale businesses: Pine Cone Hill (quilts, bedding, and furniture), Dash & Albert Rug Company and Potluck Studios (tableware, serving ware and accessories). Her latest venture – Annie Selke Homes – sells upholstered furniture through Calico Corners and Calico Corners Home Stores. Of note, is the fact that Annie designs every product herself and her personal philosophy of creating products for real lives has led to her pricing her products realistically which has proven to be a winning strategy.

Pine Cone Hill has grown from 3 employees, 2 customers, 28 skus and a 250 square foot facility to 85 employees, 3600 customers, 10,000 skus and more than 200,000 square feet of space. Their present facility was purchased in 2005 in part with a \$1.4 million SBA 504 loan. The loan enabled Annie to renovate an old brick mill building and turn it into Class A office space to house Pine Cone Hill's headquarters.

Annie has been instrumental in promoting entrepreneurship and women in business in western Massachusetts and donates generously to 14 local organizations.

It is because of Annie's demonstrated staying power, ability to grow her business through sales and job creation, the innovativeness of her products, her response to adversity and her dedication to her community that she was selected as the Massachusetts 2010 Small Business Person of the Year.

Come join us to celebrate Annie Selke's achievements on June 8, 2010 at the 2010 Small Business Awards Breakfast at the DCI Center in Worcester. **See page 2 for more information.**

FREE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

All workshops will be 8 hours with instructor-led discussion and group interaction in a classroom setting. The workshops are designed to educate, motivate, and assist in advancing your business to the next level. Training methods will include: lectures, discussions case studies, and practical exercises

Register at: <http://7jtraining.govtips.biz/home.aspx>

STRATEGIC MARKETING

The competitive business environment of government contracting requires a marketing plan that addresses both internal and external strategies for continued sustainment and growth of your business. In this workshop you will learn to:

- Develop your brand in the federal marketplace
- Position for competition... and winning
- Develop your network

Date: May 25, 2010
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Location: SBA Massachusetts Office
10 Causeway St., Suite 265
Boston, MA

EFFECTIVE PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT

The Effective Proposal Management workshop will discuss some of the recommended approaches to reading and reviewing the solicitation and identifying any ambiguities. Topics covered include:

- Developing a proposal preparation plan
- The Government's evaluation criteria
- Risks factors and their impact on your proposal

Date: May 26, 2010
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Location: SBA Springfield Branch Office
One Federal Street, Bldg. 101-R
Springfield, MA

SBA's Ready—SET—GO
Community Workshops

Learn about SBA's programs & services.

5/19/2010 Career Works, 34 School St., Brockton 2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. Call 508-513-3400 to register.

5/20/2010 Plymouth Career Center, 36 Cordage Park Circle, Ste. 200, Plymouth 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Call 508-732-5399 to register.

5/25/2010 SBA, 10 Causeway Street, Room 265, Boston 10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. Call 617-565-5590 to register.

5/27/2010 Learn about the 8(a) Program for socially & economically disadvantaged business owners. SBA, 10 Causeway St., Room 265, Boston 10:00—11:00 a.m. Call 617-565-8510 to register.

For a full listing of our upcoming events as well as events being conducted by our resource partners go to: www.sba.gov/ma and click on "Events Calendar" link on the right-hand sidebar.

Minority Small Business Recovery Fair

Learn how to survive challenging economic conditions. Small businesses can take advantage of programs geared specifically to meet their needs.

- Financing • Government contracting • Counseling and training

Meet with lenders, technical assistance providers, and federal agencies. Learn about SBA's programs to help you start and grow your business.

Friday, June 18, 2010
Anthony's Pier 4 Restaurant,
140 Northern Ave, Boston
8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.



You are invited to attend the
SBA 2010 Small Business Awards Breakfast
Honoring the Massachusetts 2010 Award Winners

Tuesday, June 8, 2010

Keynote

**Lieutenant Governor
Timothy P. Murray**

DCU Center, South Ballroom
50 Foster Street, Worcester, MA

Registration - 8:00 am
Breakfast - 8:15 am
Program 8:30 - 10:00 am

Massachusetts Small Business Person of the Year

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| 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year | Financial Services Champion |
| 2010 MA SBA District Director Award - CWE | Minority Small Business Champion |
| Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Small Business | SBDC Service Excellence Award |
| Massachusetts Women in Business Champion | Small Business Exporter |
| Massachusetts Veteran Small Business Champion | MA SCORE Chapter of the Year |

Name: _____
 Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Please reserve _____ Ticket(s) at \$25 each Total Enclosed: _____

Please return this form with payment by June 1, 2010 to Pam DiScipio, WBDC, 89 Shrewsbury Street, Suite 300, Worcester, MA 01604, phone 508.755.5734 or email discipio@worcesterbdc.com

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Business Development—Finding a Training Program

Most small business owners didn't go to business school. They don't have MBAs. What they have is talent and skill and a strong belief in what they do. Most small business owners have training and experience in an area specifically related to their business. While this is probably one of the most important things to have, business management skills are not to be ignored. These skills are what can make the difference between keeping a hobby a hobby or being able to turn that hobby into a successful business.

Barbara Poole of B. Felt, in her own words, creates handmade "art to wear" from a combination of wool and silk, decorated with seed and glass beads. Each of her creations is a one of a kind work of art. She uses a variety of felting techniques including wet wool felting, needle felting, inclusions, beading, hand stitching and other fiber art decorating processes to make her scarves, shawls and handbags.



Poole is a hobbyist-turn-entrepreneur. Although she has been making her colorful creations for the last seven years, it wasn't until two years ago that she started to really focus her hobby into a growing business. For Poole, this hasn't always been easy. That is why she turned to the International Institute of Boston's (IIB) Prime Grant Program.

Recently, IIB received PRIME grant funding from the SBA. The grant funding is intended to establish management and technical assistance, access to capital and other forms of financial assistance, and business training and counseling through qualified organizations like IIB to small businesses with five or fewer employees that are economically disadvantaged, and to businesses owned by low-income individuals.

As part of the PRIME program offered by IIB, Barbara was required to take a mandatory 20 hour class covering profit-and-loss, marketing, sales, cash flow and time management. All clients also receive one-to-one business and market planning assistance from a coach. According to Barbara, she is in constant contact with her coach over the phone getting regular advice about her business.

Perhaps one of the best things about this program is that it's free. Entrepreneurs are asked to commit their time, not their money. Yes, there will be homework, as is always the case for business owners. Research is a must in order to run a successful business.



Bob Nelson, SBA District Director, Barbara Poole, B. Felt, Virginia Roberts, International Institute of Boston, Ryan McDonnell, International Institute of Boston

Through this training, Barbara is beginning to focus her business. She is figuring out what all entrepreneurs need to learn – where to spend her energy to create more bang for her buck. She needs to spend most of her time on the most profitable aspects of her business. It is her hope that through these efforts and because of what she has learned she will be more bankable. Barbara is learning the skills that will enable her to go to a bank and get the lender to say yes to her proposal. With some hard work and a well focused business plan, hopefully she will be able to go out and buy that felting machine that would triple her daily scarf production. Having more product available would mean that she'd be able to have more money coming in and eventually this increased revenue could translate into another job.

To find out more about IIB go to: <http://www.iiboston.org>. To learn about IIB's PRIME program go to: <http://www.iiboston.org/prime.html>.

Other Business Training Resources:

The PRIME program offered by the International Institute of Boston is just one of many business training programs available. There are programs focusing on entrepreneurs in every stage of the business process and some programs focus on very specific types of businesses as well. Below is a list of a few training programs in Massachusetts that you may find useful. This list is by no means all inclusive and is more of a jumping off point.

Interise – "StreetWise MBA" Program:

This program is for established businesses grossing between \$250k and \$10 million annually. To find out more go to: <http://www.interise.org/>.

SBA – Emerging 200 (e200) Program:

Established businesses located in Boston may qualify for this program that runs once yearly. For more information contact David Polatin at 617-565-5562.

Center for Women & Enterprise - Power-Up Your Business:

This fast-paced comprehensive program is designed for emerging entrepreneurs with some business background, or for those who have begun a business without a formal plan. For more information go to: www.cweonline.org.

Also, contact your local chamber to see what types of professional training series they may offer.