

# MISSISSIPPI MAGNOLIA NEWS

April 2010

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### Economic Recovery

- Loans to Start or Expand Your Small Business
- Surety Bonds for Supply, Service or Construction Firms
- Gov't. Contracting Opportunities
- Training Programs



**Janita Stewart**  
District Director

The Mississippi Magnolia News is a publication by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Mississippi District Office.

Helping small businesses **start**, **grow** and **succeed**.



Your Small Business Resource

## JONATHAN MAISANO SELECTED AS SBA'S MISSISSIPPI 2010 SMALL BUSINESS PERSON

The Mississippi U.S. Small Business Administration has selected Jonathan Maisano as its 2010 Small Business Person of the Year. Maisano was judged on his company's staying power, growth in number of employees, increase in sales and/or unit volume, current and past financial reports, innovations of product or service, response to adversity and contributions to aid the community. He was nominated by Dave Philo of the Gulfport Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) Chapter.

While attending college for restaurant management, Jonathan began working as a bus boy in the fine dining restaurant industry in 2000. Through hard work, a thirst for knowledge, and a commitment for superior customer service, he quickly became a food server at one of the most prestigious restaurants on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It was there where he fell in love with wine and the process of great wine making. He thought the Coast lacked a quality wine and spirits store for those who greatly enjoy wine and wanted to expand their knowledge, and palate. He also thought important the combining of superior fine wine with great food.

He decided to take the plunge and began working with Dave Philo, a counselor with the Gulfport SCORE Chapter. "SCORE helped him develop a business plan and he was soon able to attain a SBA guaranteed loan from Hancock Bank to start his business. "My original plan was

to open the business in September 2005, but Katrina caused a great deal of damage to the wine display racks I had ordered custom built", said Jonathan. Undaunted, he made the necessary repairs and was able to open the day after Christmas that year.



Maisano's Fine Wine and Spirits offers an extensive collection of wines, a Walk-In Wine Cellar, a user-friendly Wine and Spirit Kiosk, and a free quick-chilling service on any bottles in the store. Jonathan Maisano holds a certificate from the Court Of Master Sommelier's and he and his staff have a relentless and evident commitment in helping others expand their knowledge in hopes of discovering the perfect wine or spirit for their dinner or their personal palate.

Jonathan's entrepreneurial endeavors weren't fulfilled. He again worked with Dave Philo to secure a SBA Gulf Opportunity (GO) loan to open a second business, Maisano's By The Glass, in September 2009. "This business is the first wine bar in Mississippi to use the Enomatic® wine preservation system to keep all the wine fresh and at optimal quality," said Jonathan. The second business is strategically located just a few doors from his first and builds foot traffic for both businesses through cross promotion.

Jonathan's duties as the owner of two small businesses are broad and include two extremely important goals - (1) Offer a quality product and (2) provide exceptional customer service. These efforts have enabled him to grow from a single faceted building occupying 2 employees to 14 employees; a wine shop now offering over one thousand wine choices and over five hundred spirit selections for customers to browse. All of these accomplishments, and yet *he's only 26 years of age!*

Though Jonathan works long hours maintaining both businesses, it is important to him to spend time with his wife Jennifer, family and friends. Jonathan will attend SBA's National Small Business Week celebration on May 23- 25 in Washington, DC where he will represent Mississippi and compete for the title of National Small Business Person of the Year. He will receive his Mississippi award during a ceremony scheduled in July at the Imperial Palace (IP) Casino & Resort in Biloxi, MS.



## Congratulations Mississippi SBA 8(a) Graduates!!

The following firms graduated from the Mississippi 8(a) portfolio during this past 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter ending March 30, 2010

**First Construction Company**  
Edwards, MS

**TLSL Inc.**  
Walnut, MS

**Hattiesburg Building  
Contractors**  
Hattiesburg, MS

Interested in learning more about the benefits of being an 8(a) certified small business?

Take the online self assessment tool at <http://training.sba.gov:8000/assessment>. Still have questions? If so, call the Mississippi SBA District Office at (601) 965-4378, ext. 13, 14 or 19.

## Homeowners, Renters and Businesses Urged To Prepare for Disaster Before It Strikes

As those living near the Gulf of Mexico and along the Eastern Seaboard prepare for the 2010 hurricane season (forecasted to be “above average” in activity), SBA is reminding small businesses, homeowners and renters to write down their emergency preparedness plan before a disaster hits. The catastrophic events of the last few years demonstrate the need for preparedness at the individual level, to diminish the risk to life and property. In the aftermath of the Midwest Floods and Hurricanes Gustav and Ike—which pounded parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas—the SBA approved more than 23,000 disaster

loans for a total of \$1.2 billion.

Disaster preparedness for homes and businesses should include a solid emergency response plan, adequate insurance, backup of vital records, and a Disaster Survival Kit.

Don't wait until its too late. Visit SBA's Disaster website at [www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/index.html](http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/index.html), and click on the business and/or homeowner/renter links on the right of the webpage for more information on SBA disaster loans available.



## New Law Offers Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment

Two new tax benefits are now available to employers hiring workers who were previously unemployed or only working part time. These provisions are part of the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act. Employers who hire unemployed workers this year (after Feb. 3, 2010 and before Jan. 1, 2011) may qualify for a 6.2-percent payroll tax incentive, in effect exempting them from

their share of Social Security taxes on wages paid to these workers after March 18, 2010. This reduced tax withholding will have no effect on the employee's future Social Security benefits, and employers would still need to withhold the employee's 6.2-percent share of Social Security taxes, as well as income taxes. The employer and employee's shares of Medicare taxes would also still apply

to these wages.

In addition, for each worker retained for at least a year, businesses may claim an additional general business tax credit, up to \$1,000 per worker, when they file their 2011 income tax returns. Revised forms and further details regarding these two new tax provisions are available online at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## Show Me the Money



The Mississippi SBA office guaranteed 650 loans to Mississippi small businesses totaling more than \$123.4 million for the second quarter of fiscal year 2010 (October 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010). Approved were 241 ARC loans totaling \$8.16 million and 200 GO Loans valued at just over \$12 million. For a complete list of lenders, dollar volume and number of loans made through the second

quarter of FY 2010, go online to [www.sba.gov/ms](http://www.sba.gov/ms) and click “Show Me the Money” under Resources.

Want to know more about SBA's loan programs? Sign up to attend a free SBA Loan Clinic held in Jackson or Gulfport monthly by registering online at [http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/ms\\_jackson/ms\\_spot\\_onlineregistration.html](http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/ms_jackson/ms_spot_onlineregistration.html).

## SBA Warns Small Businesses of Fraudulent Attempts Offering to Help Them Secure SBA Loans

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is warning small businesses to use caution if they are contacted by firms offering to help them apply for funds available through SBA programs.

SBA and SBA's Office of the Inspector General (SBA OIG) have received several complaints from small businesses about abusive marketing practices, scams, and exorbitant fees charged by firms offering to help them obtain a loan, grant, or other federal funds, from SBA.

Some of these complaints include:

- ◆ Firms charging small businesses high fees to provide assistance applying to SBA funding programs. Some firms allegedly guaranteed that the small business would obtain SBA funding if they paid the fee. SBA does not endorse or give preference to specific private companies or their clients.
- ◆ Firms charging small businesses for services never requested after the small business gave bank account and routing information to a caller claiming to be a firm offering assistance. SBA recommends that small businesses never provide

social security numbers, bank account information, or credit card numbers to anyone; and, never over the telephone.

- ◆ Firms alleging that a small business would be issued a "forfeiture letter" that would make the small business ineligible for any SBA funding for three years if the small business refused to use the firm's services.

When electing to use a third party to apply for SBA funding programs, small businesses should also bear in mind:

- ◆ Small businesses can get free assistance in person or by calling one of SBA's 68 District Offices and from information on SBA's Web site ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)). They can also get assistance from Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, Veterans Business Outreach Centers and SCORE Chapters, either free or for a reasonable fee. Location and contact information for the centers can be found on SBA's Web site.
- ◆ Small businesses should ask for references and confer

with trusted colleagues and institutions, such as the Better Business Bureau, when selecting service providers.

- ◆ Small businesses should clearly establish and document: 1) What they are being charged; 2) When they will be charged; 3) What they must do; and 4) What services they will receive.

SBA's Office of the Inspector General will investigate and respond to all complaints. SBA encourages anyone with knowledge of a misrepresentation regarding SBA Business Loan Programs, or any other SBA program, to contact SBA OIG by calling the OIG Hotline toll-free at (800) 767-0385, or submitting an online report at the SBA OIG Web page ([www.sba.gov/ig](http://www.sba.gov/ig)), and click the link for "Report Fraud Waste or Abuse."

Anyone who has a question regarding an SBA loan or any SBA program, may contact their local SBA District Office by going to <http://www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html>, the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK-SBA (1-800-827-5722) or e-mail [answerdesk@sba.gov](mailto:answerdesk@sba.gov).

### Free and Confidential Business Counseling Available through SBA Resources Partners

**SBDC** — The Mississippi Small Business Development Centers provide a variety of business services to startups and existing businesses statewide including counseling, workshops and information services. Call 1-800-725-7232 or go online at [www.mssbdc.org](http://www.mssbdc.org) to find the SBDC office nearest to you. Also, visit [www.sba.gov/ms](http://www.sba.gov/ms) and click on the 'Events Calendar' on the right of the website to find a workshop near you.

**SCORE** — The Service Corps of Retired Executives, is America's premier source of free & confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. SCORE has helped more than seven million small businesses. Visit their website at [www.scoregulfport.org](http://www.scoregulfport.org) or call 228) 863-0054 for information.

**Women's Business Center** — The Crudup-Ward Activity Center (CWAC) located in Forest, MS and the Mississippi Action for Community Education, Inc. (MACE) located in Greenville, MS provide one-on-one business and financial counseling and technical assistance for women, and others, seeking to start a new business or improve their existing business. Call CWAC at (601) 469-3357 or MACE at (662) 335-3523 for more information.



## SBA Proposes Women-Owned Small Business Rule to Expand Access to Federal Contracting Opportunities

The SBA released a proposed rule aimed at expanding federal contracting opportunities for women-owned small businesses (WOSB). The proposed rule is available for public comment until close of business May 3, 2010.

The proposed rule is part of the Obama Administration's overall commitment to expanding opportunities for small businesses to compete for federal contracts, in particular those owned by women, minorities and veterans. This proposed rule identifies 83 industries in which WOSBs are under-represented or substantially under-represented in the federal contract marketplace. This rule is aimed at providing greater opportunities for

WOSBs to compete for federal contracts, while achieving the existing statutory goal that 5 percent of federal contracting dollars go to women-owned small businesses.

The creation of a rule to increase federal contracting opportunities for WOSBs was authorized by Congress in 2000. Since that time, SBA took a number of steps to study and analyze the market, including looking at participation by women-owned small businesses across all industries. Various draft rules were made available for public comment in prior years, but the Obama Administration chose last year to draft a new, comprehensive rule, based on the analysis of the prior

studies and on all the questions and comments previously received.

For more details on the components of the proposed Women-Owned Small Business rule, go to [http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba\\_homepage/news\\_release\\_10-05.pdf](http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_homepage/news_release_10-05.pdf).

The public may submit comments to this proposed rule to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or by mailing them to Dean Koppel, Assistant Director, Office of Policy and Research, Office of Government Contracting, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 3rd St. SW, Washington, DC 20416. Please reference RIN 3245-AG06 when submitting comments.

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For those who have just joined the Newsletter list, be sure to read prior newsletters in our [Archives](#).

Helping small businesses **start, grow** and **succeed**.



Your Small Business Resource

*The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created on July 30, 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. We recognize that small business is critical to our economic recovery and strength, to building America's future, and to helping the United States compete in today's global marketplace. Since its founding, the U.S. Small Business Administration has delivered about 20 million loans, loan guarantees, contracts, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance to small businesses. Although SBA has grown over the years, the bottom line mission remains the same. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands and Guam.*

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO MONTIQUE CLARK OF THE JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY SBDC

Montique Clark, Administrative Officer of the Jackson State University SBDC, was selected as the 2009 Mississippi SBDC STAR. Clark received the award and was honored during the 2009 Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) Conference held September 14-17, 2009 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

Montique was selected due to the work she accomplished as Chair of the Administrative/Secretarial Committee. She and the committee were tasked with creating a systematic structure resulting in short training modules for the administrative staff. These modules were to be (1) created in a priority order based on the most important tasks that a new administrative staff should accomplish; and (2) computer based along with testing and could only be completed with a minimum passing test score of 90%. Finally, the staffer could print out a certificate of completion when a module test, with a



passing score, was completed. At the time of her selection as MSBDC State Star, Montique's leadership had resulted in the completion of the first two modules with a third in process and several others in concept. Montique understood in the beginning of this project that it might take three or more years to complete with approximately 25 modules and would have to be created from nothing – she volunteered anyway.

The Mississippi SBA Office congratulates Montique on her selection as the 2009 Mississippi SBDC STAR.

*Pictured L to R are Doug Gurley, Mississippi SBDC Director; Charles "Tee" Rowe, ASBDC President/CEO; Montique Clark, 2009 Mississippi SBDC STAR Award Recipient, Janita R. Stewart, Mississippi SBA District Director, Robert Forester, Mississippi SBDC Associate Director; and Gary Reed, Mississippi SBA SBDC Project Officer.*