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SBA, AEO to Co-sponsor National Conference to Promote Microenterprise Development and Job Creation

WASHINGTON – Expanding opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners will be the focus of the 2010 National Microenterprise Conference and Training Institute, May 10-13, at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, Va.

“Some of the most innovative and promising businesses across the country are microenterprises, small companies that offer significant opportunities to create jobs and strengthen the nation’s competitive edge in the global market,” said Karen G. Mills, administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration. “This conference gives us the chance to bring together a broad coalition of organizations to ensure we are leveraging our resources in effective ways and making sure that these entrepreneurs and small business owners have the tools and support they need to succeed and drive our nation’s economic recovery.”

“Our country has been, and its recovery will be built on the enterprise of our people – on their ideas, their energies, and their willingness to take risks and pursue their aspirations,” said Connie E. Evans, president and CEO of the Association for Enterprise Opportunity. “Through microenterprise development those kinds of dreams can become reality for countless numbers of people to create jobs, support their families and revitalize our communities. This gathering represents more than a conference; it is a validation of our commitment to provide economic opportunity for those who seek to seize the promise of America through microenterprise.”

Cosponsored by SBA and AEO, the event will bring together hundreds of representatives of nonprofit institutions, government agencies, foundations and universities to promote and support small business job creation in the U.S.

The event will focus on microenterprise development, credit building and microfinance, and will feature workshops, town hall meetings, networking opportunities, plenary sessions and speaker presentations on solving the challenges small businesses face in order to succeed in the new economy. Mills will be the luncheon keynote speaker on Tuesday, May 11.

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In addition to Mills and Evans, other confirmed speakers include:

- **Robert Annibale**, Global Director, Citi Microfinance & Community Relations
- **James Gutierrez**, Founder and CEO, Progress Financiero
- **Jennifer Henderson**, CEO, Strategic Decisions, LLC and Director, Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc. Board of Directors
- **Ted Howard**, Executive Director, Democracy Collaborative
- **Chris Larsen**, CEO, Prosper.com
- **Rae-Ann Miller**, Special Advisor to the Director, Division of Insurance and Research, FDIC
- **Eskinder Negash**, Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
- **Jane Oates**, Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Dept. of Labor.

AEO is a national membership organization and voice of microenterprise development in the United States. AEO strives to foster greater understanding of the importance of strong and effective microenterprise initiatives to the U.S. economy, and to increase capacity of the field to support underserved entrepreneurs in starting, stabilizing and establishing businesses.

SBA is an independent agency of the federal government that was created 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.

For more information about the 2010 National Microenterprise Conference & Training Institute or to register as a participant, visit www.microenterpriseconference.org. Media representatives are encouraged to cover the event. To receive press credentials or to arrange advance or on-site interviews, please contact Sara Ignas at signas@microenterprisematters.org or (828) 693-6855.

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