



## CALVERT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

175 Main Street  
Courthouse  
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678  
Phone: (410) 535-4583 • (301) 855-1880  
<http://www.ecalvert.com>

*Director*  
Linda S. Vassallo

*Board of Commissioners*  
Gerald W. Clark  
Linda L. Kelley  
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Barbara A. Stinnett

# News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date:** | October 23, 2008  
**Contacts:** Danita Boonchaisri, Marketing/Communications Specialist  
410.535.4583 E-mail: [danitab@co.cal.md.us](mailto:danitab@co.cal.md.us)

Mark Volland, Public Information Specialist  
410.535.4583 E-mail: [vollanrm@co.cal.md.us](mailto:vollanrm@co.cal.md.us)

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### **Small Business Development Center Providing Southern Marylanders with No-Cost Business Assistance for 20 Years**

**PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – October 23, 2008** – Business ideas require much hard work, diligence and perseverance in order to become reality. And once the business opens, it may seem like the hardest part is over, but as any business owner can attest, there are many more challenges to come. What many entrepreneurs do not realize is that there is help available every step of the way, and most of it is free.

The Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a no-cost resource for existing business owners or those exploring a business venture, and its main purpose is to assure business success. Through free, confidential business counseling and nominally priced workshops, the Maryland SBDC network delivers sound advice and support to entrepreneurs and small to mid-sized businesses across the state during any stage in their business life cycle.

In Southern Maryland, SBDC services are delivered through three main offices in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties. Accessing SBDC assistance begins by filling out a brief, on-line business assessment at [www.sbdchelp.com](http://www.sbdchelp.com) or by calling the main office at 301.934.7583.

The Southern Region SBDC has been providing assistance to area businesses for the past 20 years. Last year, its counselors assisted over 400 clients in the tri-county area, spanning numerous industries that included information technology, retail stores, restaurants, auto repair, consulting, physical fitness and recreation, construction and many others.

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“Even with the many businesses that we’ve assisted throughout the region, we still combat a great deal of unawareness about our program,” says Maria Dorsett, business counselor for the Calvert County SBDC. “We strive to spread the word about our services so that more people will take advantage of them. This is important since we find that the earlier a business owner or prospective business owner engages SBDC services, the better we can help assure their success.”

According to the Small Business Administration, 50 percent of businesses fail in the first year. The odds may not favor new business ventures, but small business still remains the engine of the U.S. economy, accounting for 70 percent of new jobs created last year. “The SBDC wants to help give businesses every chance of success. For this reason, we try to provide that dose of reality entrepreneurs might not get otherwise,” said Dorsett.

She says that SBDC counselors work with clients to develop plans that include steps to help them achieve business objectives in marketing, cash flow, business planning, financing and a myriad of other topics. “It’s really up to the client what they want to discuss, but we try to come up with a plan that will push their goals forward,” said Dorsett. With today’s shifting economy providing additional challenges to business owners, the Southern Region SBDC is just one more resource that is available in a business owner’s toolkit.

For more information or assistance, call the SBDC at 301.934.7583 or visit online at [www.sbdchelp.com](http://www.sbdchelp.com).

For more information on the Calvert County, Maryland, Department of Economic Development and the services available to assist County businesses, call 410.535.4583, 800.331.9771 or 301.855.1880; send an e-mail to [info@ecalvert.com](mailto:info@ecalvert.com), or visit our Web site at [www.ecalvert.com](http://www.ecalvert.com).

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