

## **Time to Honor Small Businesses**

The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced National Small Business Week for **April 21-25, 2008**. Since 1963, every President has declared National Small Business Week to formally recognize the important role of America's small business community.

In signing this year's declaration, President Bush stated, "As small business owners and employees add to the vitality of our economy, they also inspire others to realize the full promise of our Nation. I join all Americans in celebrating the entrepreneurial spirit and hard work of our small business owners and employees."

In 2008, National Small Business Week will honor the estimated 25.8 million small businesses in America. Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, and their impact is huge. They represent 50 percent of the non-farm GDP. They also create 60-80 percent of new jobs in the country. Through the work of entrepreneurs, jobs are created, families are given hope for a better life, and indeed, whole communities are transformed. National Small Business Week is an important moment to showcase and recognize some of the most successful and inspiring of these entrepreneurs.

The overall economic outlook may be in question, but according to a new report, small business is providing a much-needed employment boost. The ADP National Employment Report highlights the 55,000 new jobs created in March by companies with less than 50 employees. Among medium-size businesses (with between 50 and 499 workers), employment increased by 5,000, while large businesses with 500 or more workers saw employment decline by 52,000.

"This apparent reacceleration of employment among small-size business contrasts with employment declines among larger firms, and is consistent with the stronger growth and resiliency these businesses have demonstrated over the past several years," says Joel Prakken, chairman of Macroeconomic Advisers.

In the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), I have the opportunity to provide free information, coaching and counseling, and training to small business owners. I am always amazed and impressed with how hard they work and how creatively they think.

We all benefit from the diversity and quality of the small businesses that we have throughout Clermont County. Large corporations often get the headlines with their revenue and staffing reports so this is a great week to remember that the economic backbone of our county, our region and our country is found in the small business owners and their employees. Consider the small businesses with which you interact on a daily basis and take time to thank them for their service and the promise they offer for our economic future.

As part of National Small Business Week, the Clermont Chamber of Commerce and its education partners (Grant Career Center, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, & UC Clermont College) are presenting “Planning For Change” on Wednesday, April 23, at Holiday Inn Eastgate at 7:30 a.m. This look into the crystal ball of our economic future will feature leading economist, Brian Beaulieu, Director of the Institute for Trend Research. Members and non-members are encouraged to attend. Call 576-5000 for reservations or to access the services of the SBDC.