

Small Business Administration

News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA Kicks Off Emerging Leaders Initiative for 2012

Entrepreneur Training Initiative Sparks Small Business Growth, Job Creation

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Small Business Administration kicked off its 2012 e200/Emerging Leaders executive-level training initiative in 27 cities and communities, including Helena, Montana. Since 2008 the e200/Emerging Leaders initiative has helped nearly 1,000 promising small business owners in underserved communities across the country sustain and grow their businesses, providing training they use to succeed and create jobs.

Last year's inaugural class of Montana's e200 program included:

- **Veronica Ronnau- Pizazz**
- **Raul Luciani- CP of Bozeman, Inc.**
- **Tanya Chemodurow -Abatement Contractors of Montana, LLC**
- **Jennifer Giem- Great Harvest Bread Company of Butte**
- **Lucille Mooney- Shotcrete Montana**
- **Aubrey May- Clean Team of Montanan**
- **Rachel Andrews- S&K Environmental, LLC**
- **Paul Neutgens- American Steel, Inc.**
- **Lynda Deines- Double Stud Construction**
- **Heather Long- H L Construction**
- **Matthew Silent Thunder- Silent Creations Buffalo Products, LLC**
- **Dave Peterson- Apple Valley Backhoe Service**
- **Greg Parks- Bio Seal, LLC**
- **Margaret "Binky" Bowman- Joe's Jiffy Shop**

"Over the last few years Emerging Leaders has helped expand opportunities for many promising small businesses in underserved communities – in particular those that have been most impacted by these tough economic times," SBA Administrator Karen Mills said.

"Graduates of the program have increased their revenue, created jobs and helped drive local economic growth in their communities. Continuing with this year's lineup of new classes builds on this success and provides even more entrepreneurs in underserved communities with the support, resources and skills to succeed."

Despite the difficult economy, more than half of the businesses that have completed the e200/Emerging Leaders training nationally have shown an increase in revenue totaling more than \$7 million. Nearly 60 percent have reported creating new jobs in their communities. Surveyed participants also reported having secured more than \$7 million in new financing for their businesses, and an increase in confidence when applying for government contracts.

As a result, program graduates have reported securing nearly 500 federal, state and local contracts, worth more than \$112 million.

Don't take our word for it though – listen to members of last year's graduating class!

"The e200 program renewed my spirit of entrepreneurship and rejuvenated my business ownership," stated Aubrey May owner of Clean Team in Billings and 2011 e200 graduate. "It provided me with a network of other business owners that face similar challenges as mine. It was great to share these issues and learn from both of our mistakes."

Paul Neutgens, of American Steel in Billings, said "I thought I was business savvy before I entered this program, but e200 allowed me to find out where I was weak and provided me the opportunity to tune those areas."

The eight-month training includes approximately 100 hours of classroom time per participant and provides the opportunity for small business owners to work with experienced mentors, attend workshops and develop connections with their peers, city leaders, and financial communities. Local recruitment for the 2012 training cycle will start in February, and classes are scheduled to begin in April.

For more information about e200 Emerging Leaders visit www.sba.gov/e200 or you may call Tom White in the Montana District Office at [406.441.1084](tel:406.441.1084).