

PRESS RELEASE

May 18, 2011

For Immediate Release

Contact: Steve Boucher, (603) 271-2341



Free Workshop Series Developed to Help NH Businesses Survive Disaster

Concord – It's 9 a.m. and the streets are flooded. Roads are not easily navigated by delivery trucks and businesses are forced to close their doors indefinitely. Unfortunately, this is a scene that has been repeated more than a few times in the Granite State recently with floods, ice storms and even tornados disrupting business activities.

Bearing in mind that maintaining operations is key to long-term business survival, the New Hampshire Division of Economic Development (NHDED) and USDA Rural Development are working together to promote the importance of preparedness and communications even before a disaster strikes. NHDED and the USDA will host "When Disaster Strikes! How Will Your Business Survive?," a series of workshops in all ten New Hampshire counties to educate business owners and senior level managers on business continuity, social media efforts and media relations – all in an effort for these companies to be better prepared if a natural or manmade disaster were to effect their daily operations. The workshop series is just the first step in helping NH businesses. Concurrent plans also include developing three online web portals focused on supporting the public safety infrastructure.

"We believe education and preparation, especially in times of crisis, are essential to running any business," said NH Division of Economic Development Interim Director Roy Duddy. "The workshops are designed to be a hands-on learning situation with best practices on business continuity, social media and media & public relations. Businesses who participate in the workshops will be engaged and given opportunities to learn how to be prepared before a crisis situation happens."

On December 11, 2008 New Hampshire was hit with a devastating ice storm that left much of the state paralyzed. Entire sections of the state's electric systems crashed, leaving more than 400,000 homes and businesses without power. Many roads were closed due to fallen trees and branches making efforts to restore power that much more difficult. President Bush issued an emergency declaration for New Hampshire. Hardest hit communities included: Belknap, Carroll, Merrimack, Rockingham, Coos, Grafton, Hillsborough and Merrimack. The workshop series and development of the web portals were made possible through a grant provided by the USDA and are designed to help small to medium sized businesses located in counties designated by the Presidential Disaster in the federal fiscal year 2008. With additional support from the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), funding was secured to include Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, the two counties that were not affected by the ice storm. Businesses in all

ten NH counties will receive the opportunity to attend a seminar happening in the county in which their business is located.

Molly Lambert, State Director for USDA Rural Development stated that, “This is an extraordinary opportunity for USDA Rural Development to partner with federal, state and local leaders to create the platform and Internet based tools necessary for businesses to minimize economic loss and more efficiently recover from natural disasters. The ability of this program to assist business owners, their employees, and families to prepare for future disasters is critical to stable, healthy communities across the Granite State.”

“The Community Development Finance Authority wants to nurture an environment in which entrepreneurs have all the tools to succeed. Challenges to operating a business can range from economic to natural disaster. We are pleased to support this workshop series with the main goal of educating business owners on how they can be better prepared,” added CDFA Communications Director Kevin Flynn.

The workshop series will run once in each of NH’s 10 counties. The workshops will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end promptly at Noon.

The break-out sessions will focus on:

Business Continuity: How businesses, non-profits and the public sector can use business continuity planning to prepare and to respond to emergency situations.

Presented by: Jeannette McDonald, Principal, Cogent Solutions LLC

Social Media: Web 2.0 Disaster Management: How to use social networks to plan for and respond to emergency situations

Presented by: Allen Voivod, Principal, Epiphanies Inc.

Public and Media Relations: Communicating in a time of crisis, getting to know your local media before disaster strikes

Presented by: Monica Bardier, Principal, PingPR and Scott Tranchemontagne, Principal, Montagne Communications.

Workshop Series Dates & Locations

Date:	County	Location
June 2	Carroll	Tech Village, Conway
June 7	Cheshire	TBA
June 9	Grafton	Pease Public Library, Plymouth
June 14	Coos	White Mountains Community College, Berlin
June 16	Merrimack	Division of Fire Standards Training and EMS Fire Academy, Concord
June 21	Rockingham	Hampton Police Department, Hampton
June 23	Belknap	Gilford Public Library, Gilford
June 28	Sullivan	Claremont Savings Bank, Claremont

June 29	Hillsborough	New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College
June 30	Strafford	TBA

For more information on the workshop locations and to register visit:
<http://bit.ly/NHDisaster2011>

Registration is required and space is limited.

In addition to the workshop series, three online tools are under development and are focused on the public safety infrastructure. Those three internal websites, which will operate as part of nheconomy.com, the State's economic development web portal, include a business emergency preparedness site, a financing site and a manufacturing site. All will work to ensure that the New Hampshire business community is well positioned to be prepared when the next disaster or disruption in operations takes place.

-END-