

“Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success”



October 27, 2014

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Spotlight on Success – Ability Engineering Technology

Ability Engineering Technology (AET) is a multi-disciplined engineering, design and manufacturing company, based in South Holland, IL, specializing in providing engineered, cryogenic and process equipment and precision-machined parts for application within the energy, industrial, and scientific market segments. The AET products used in diverse industries as oil & gas, pulp & paper, Water treatment, mining, transportation, food, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, petrochemicals, industrial gases, and scientific R&D.

The Illinois SBDC International Trade Center (ITC) at Governors State University

has been working with Ability Engineering very closely to help the business expand the global market. Ability Engineering expressed interest in expanding their market share in Ghana's oil and gas industry in early 2013. With ITC's support, the company applied the STEP grant and joined the Trade Mission to Ghana and Ethiopia. During the trade mission, Ability leadership met with local government and business leaders, and had business-to-business matchmaking meetings to identify sales opportunities and potential partners. The CEO of Ability Engineering, Eugene Botsoe said, "Company was started in 1947, but really starting focusing on international expansion in 2013 after the first Trade Mission trip." In 2014, AET opened an office in Ghana and is now registered with Ghana's Petroleum Commission as a supplier of goods and services for their Oil & Gas industry.

Ability has also developed a strong business development pipeline in China and India. They have sold Helium gas purifiers in China, and they are in the process of closing a deal with a German company that has a subsidiary in China. The company commented, "This will be our first direct sale of purifiers to China, and there is a large market opportunity sells these types of equipment as well as other cryogenic equipment for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)". In order to complete the deal, the ITC introduced the U.S. Export-Import Bank Global Credit Express pilot program. EXIM Bank recently extended a Line of Credit to assist AET enhance the capital competency and increase its exports.

In 2013, Ability Engineering has reported export sales of \$375,000 to Asia. The new order from China was \$350,000, already shipped to China in Oct, 2014. Currently the ITC is working with the State office to help the business find sales representatives or distributors in India and China, and applying the STEP grant to participant the Manufactory Trade Mission in China.

The CEO Eugene Botsoe commented, "We have been very impressed with the support and assistance we have received to date from the International Trade Center at GSU. We did not know what to expect, and they have done an excellent job of making the process of international expansion seem less daunting."

Illinois SBDC 30th Anniversary

Over the past three decades the Illinois Small Business Development Center Southern Illinois University Carbondale has helped hundreds of new and expanding businesses throughout the region and a big celebration will recognize that success. The event, "Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success," will take place from 3 to 6 p.m., Nov. 14, at the Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center, 1740 Innovation Drive in Carbondale. Robyn Laur Russell, director of Business Development and International Trade and of The International Trade Center, said the center hopes to connect with many of the current and former SBDC clients. Russell asks that anyone who has been a SBDC client at any time during the last 30 years and who is still operating a successful business to contact her at rrussell@biz.siu.edu or at 618/536-2424.

The event will include guest speakers, client success stories and awards. Plans also call for a trade show highlighting SBDC's wide variety of clients, including a "Taste of SBDC," featuring a large number of food producers.

Small businesses, defined by the state of Illinois as those with fewer than 400 employees, comprise 98.3 percent of employers and have a major impact on the state's economy. These businesses employ 58 percent of the private-sector labor force. There were 1.2 million small businesses in Illinois in 2010, the most current total available.

After the federal Small Business Development Act of 1980, the Small Business Development Center program began and the first Illinois centers, including the one at SIU, opened in 1984. The program provides free, individualized and confidential consulting services for businesses at all stages of development- from helping determine viability to assisting with business expansion. The Illinois Small Business Development Center/International Trade Center is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

For more information on the "Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success" event, or entrepreneurship, business development programs and the many services SBDC offers, visit the website at sbdc.siu.edu, call 618/536-2424 or email sbdc@siu.edu or click on [Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success](#).

International Trade and Small Business Conference

You and your clients are encouraged to attend the first annual International Trade & Small Business Conference, "Stay Local. Sell Global." presented by the Illinois Small Business Development & International Trade Center at the College of Lake County. The event will be held on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the University Center of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois. The cost is \$30 (lunch included). Members of the Illinois SBDC Network and their clients can gain free admittance by requesting a special promotion

code by contacting the Illinois SBDC and International Trade Center at CLC. To register, visit www.staylocalsellglobal.eventbrite.com or call (847) 543-2033.

Export Awareness and Development Award

Congratulations to the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center at ICNC and its director, Laura Flamm, for being presented the Export Awareness and Development Award at the Governor's 2014 Illinois Export Awards event in Chicago on October 23, 2014. Located in the Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago, ICNC was established in 1967. For over 45 years, ICNC has been providing no-cost business development, advocacy, training and export advice to area companies. It owns and manages an incubator facility in the Kinzie Industrial Corridor, providing affordable space in an entrepreneurial community of more than 100 businesses that access ICNC's business development, advising and support programs. Again congratulations to Laura and the Illinois SBDC ITC at ICNC for its outstanding efforts supporting Illinois small businesses.

Maximizing Neoserra – Changing a Pre-Client to a Client

See the site below to learn how to understand the definition of a pre-client and how to change a pre-client to a client.

<http://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n71>

Valued Resources – Global Classroom Update

All centers should now have at least one staff member with access to Global Classroom. All Illinois ITC's will share one platform as will all Illinois PTAC's. If you would like to be added to your Center's platform or have not received your login information, please contact Ericka Perkins at Ericka.Perkins@illinois.gov or 217-558-6300.

Network News and Moves

SBDC Photo Submissions for Success Magazine

Success magazine is planning to feature Small Business Development Centers in its December 2014 issue, and their photo team is looking for any "still photos illustrating SBDCs in action" that it could additionally use for its web-edition. For those interested, the magazine's Photo Editor, Mr. Mark Perlstein, has requested any SBDC photo submissions from you no later than by Monday, November 3rd.

- 1) Photo specifications: Jpeg images only, and;
- 2) Illinois SBDCs can submit photos directly to Mr. Mark Perlstein, Photo Editor mperlstein@success.com with a cc to mark.petrilli@illinois.gov. Please ensure you have the needed approval from your client before you send the photos. Thanks.

America's SBDC Network Connect

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see the October 23, 2014 edition of [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#).

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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