

"Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success"



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Spotlight on Success – Steve Buresh's Cheesecake Store

For years Steve Buresh made his cheesecake for friends and family. When he lost his job during the recession he decided to take control of his career. With his family's support and encouragement he opened Steve Buresh's Cheesecake Store. After three years of making his specialty cheesecake in a shared kitchen and selling online he will open a storefront location in Plainfield, IL. While entrepreneurship runs in his family, Steve said he had a lot to learn about running a business. He turned to the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Joliet Junior College**; "I met some great people there who helped me. I learned a lot about operating a business from the classes and seminars I took," Mr. Buresh says.

His entrepreneurial roots sprout from Frank Buresh's Lobster House, which his grandfather started at home. Like his grandfather, Steve decided to include his own name in his business. "I'm putting myself out there by doing that," Mr. Buresh explains, "It's a takeoff on my grandfather's ideal. He put his name on everything. He believed if you put your name on it, you put your heart into it too."

As the Cheesecake Store grew, Accion became an invaluable partner for capital. "I was on my 12th bank rejection when I learned about Accion from **the SBDC at Joliet Junior College**. The Accion loan process was great and very fluid; everything just meshed together," he said. With the Accion loan, Mr. Buresh could purchase the equipment and supplies to grow his business. "The Accion loan gave me the boost I needed and the feeling that this would work," he says.

Mr. Buresh's advice to aspiring entrepreneurs; "just keep going." Despite the difficulties, Mr. Buresh says there have been many great moments as a small business owner. "It's the greatest feeling when you supply a product or service that makes customers happy and they come back for more. I think that's what many small business owners feel good about. It's not just about the money."

It's easy to see why customers keep returning to the Cheesecake Store. His cheesecakes are made fresh to order and contain no dyes or preservatives. Mr. Buresh includes interesting twists on traditional concepts such as his peanut butter and jelly cheesecake,

banana split cheesecake, maple bacon cheesecake and cheesecake in a jar for those on the go.

Mr. Buresh recently hired 5 part-time employees and plans on opening two more stores in the next five years. "We deliver to customers up to 30 miles away, so it would be nice to have a store they could go to." In the meantime, he is hard at work serving the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana area.

Michael McClinton, business analyst with the **Illinois SBDC at JJC**, notes that Mr. Buresh "was very passionate and proactive in pursuing his business goals. It is a privilege to assist clients like Steve who are eager to put their ideas into action."

For more information about Steve Buresh's Cheesecake Store, visit www.cheesecakestoreonline.com.

Angel Investment Credit Program

The purpose of the [Angel Investment Program](#) is to attract and encourage the placement of investment dollars into early-stage, innovative companies throughout Illinois. The investment dollars provide these companies with much needed access to working capital to further their growth and success in our state. The Angel Program is allocated \$10 million in tax credits annually, from 2011-2016. Tax credits are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers the Angel Program.

Please click on [Angel Investment Tax Credit](#) to find out more details and to apply for the program.

Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit

The Illinois Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit gives small business owners an extra boost to grow their business over the next year. After creating one or more new, full-time positions that meet the eligibility requirements, small businesses can register here to receive a \$2,500 per job tax credit.

Based on feedback received during the pilot program from the small businesses and entrepreneurs from across the State the program has been extended to run from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2016. The other new piece to this program is that PEO's (Professional Employer Organizations) is now able to receive a tax credit based on their working relationship with an eligible business.

The "Put Illinois to Work" businesses are still a key component to the Illinois Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit. If you hire your worker-trainees into full-time positions before June 30, 2016, no matter what size of business you operate, you will be eligible to receive a tax credit.

Please explore the web site to learn about the Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit and the other resources available for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Encourage small businesses to register their new positions and obtain the credit without ever having to leave their office. Remember that tax credit eligibility begins with the date of hire and registration for the credit may be made at any time up until June 30, 2016. Please go to the website at www.JobsTaxCredit.Illinois.gov or click on <https://jobstaxcredit.illinois.gov/SBJCTC-FLYER.pdf> for more details about the program.

Maximizing Neoserra – December Impact Survey

The final impact survey for 2014 will be sent this week. Since this is the last month to record impact for 2014 it is crucial that SBDC's accurately collect impact data. We suggest SBDC staff assist clients in completing the online or paper survey to ensure accurate figures.

Valued Resources – Increase SBIR/STTR Proposals

The goal of the DOE SBIR/STTR Phase 0 Program is to increase the number of high quality SBIR/STTR proposals submitted to the Department of Energy by women- and minority-owned small businesses, as well as small R&D firms located in states that have historically had low submission rates to the DOE SBIR/STTR programs. The services - administered by Dawnbreaker and funded by the Department of Energy - are completely **FREE to eligible small businesses and qualified individuals** who commit to form a company should they win a DOE SBIR/STTR award. Eligible parties receive one or more specialized services following an initial assessment by a member of the Dawnbreaker team. Services may include Letter of Intent (LOI) writing assistance; Phase I proposal preparation, review, and submission assistance; communication and market research assistance; small business development training and mentoring; technology advice and consultation; intellectual property consultation; and indirect rates and financials. **For more information or to see if you qualify for free Phase 0 services, visit their website.**

Network News and Moves - ManageHub Accelerator

The deadline for signing up for the first ManageHub Accelerator for 2015 fast approaching. Applications are now being accepted and are due Wednesday, December 17. Business owners and centers can sign up at www.ManageHub.info/accelerator. Please help us promote this resource by including in your email announcements. Illinois SBDCs are also encouraged to check it out and participate. Also, the ManageHub course is included in the Illinois SBDC's eLearning Center hosted by the Global Classrooms. Check it out.

America's SBDC Network Connect

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see the December 11th edition of the [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#). Please note that the America's SBDC Network Connect newsletter will have a new look in 2015 and it will also move from a weekly to bi-weekly publication. Also please note there will be no newsletter the weeks of December 22nd and January 2nd.

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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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