

	<p align="center">Illinois Small Business Development Center Network</p> <p align="center"><b>WEEKLY CONNECTION</b></p> <p align="center">Entrepreneurship ~ Innovation ~ Technology</p>	
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*"Providing Professional Guidance for Business Growth"*

## July 27, 2015

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### **Spotlight on Success – "Metro East SBDC Salutes Sweet Katie Bee's as Delicious Success"**



O'Fallon residents Kate Hendrix and her daughter Beth Hendrix are nearing the third anniversary of their home-grown, home-baked business—Sweet Katie Bee's Cupcake & Coffee Bar.

The idea to open a cupcake business was borne from the Hendrix women's long-time love of baking and coffee brewing, according to Kate. "Our idea for the bakery/cafe also came from a wish to share our 'Slow Food' commitment with the community," she said.

The international Slow Food movement began in 1986 as an alternative to "fast food" with a focus on high quality, locally sourced, traditional food items. It is represented by more than 100,000 members in 150 countries.

It was also a personal challenge for Beth Hendrix to find recipes for gluten-free, dairy-free and soy-free desserts for her young son as he struggled with multiple food allergies.

"We had to learn how to create recipes that my son and others like him would be able to eat safely and enjoy," Kate said. "Someday, we hope to operate a completely gluten-free or vegan bakery."

All of these lifelong bakers' creations are made from scratch including Sweet Katie Bee's best-selling Beth's Chocolate—a rich chocolate cake made with buttermilk, filled with whipped cream and topped with chocolate butter cream frosting. The double chocolate cupcake is just one of 40 different bakery items in Kate's rotation which runs the gamut

from the unusual—a maple bacon cupcake—to the traditional—a carrot cake cupcake based upon her aunt’s old family recipe. The bakery/cafe also serves lunch Tuesday through Saturday.

According to Kate, the “icing on the cake” of this three-year entrepreneurial journey was the layers of customized business expertise received at no charge from the Metro East Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Jo Ann May, Metro East SBDC small business specialist, has been working with Sweet Katie Bee’s since shortly after the business opened its doors in downtown O’Fallon. The SBDC provided expertise on website development, bookkeeping and options to potentially lower the business’ labor costs.

Through connections made by the SBDC, Sweet Katie Bee’s was able to participate as the focus of a Southern Illinois University Edwardsville marketing and social media student’s class project—again at no cost to the business owners.

“Kate is a wonderful person and extremely dedicated entrepreneur,” May said. “I really enjoyed working alongside her to offer practical ideas, business expertise and the right connections. Our doors are always open to Kate and other Metro East startup owners like her seeking to achieve commerce success.”

Sweet Katie Bee’s owners are extremely proud of their staff.

“Our seven staff members are our best ambassadors,” Kate said. “We’re grateful to them, to our regular customers and to the SBDC. Jo Ann (May) was extremely helpful in developing and refining our financial projections.”

The Illinois Metro East SBDC assists start-up ventures like Hendrix’s as well as existing businesses headquartered in the nine-county region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and [SIUE](#) as a service to Illinois small businesses.

By aiding entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Metro East by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs and encouraging new investment. It enhances the region’s economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses.

-From the [Belleville News-Democrat](#)

## **SBDC’s In The News – Illinois SBDC at Harper College Mentioned in Tribune**

The Illinois SBDC at Harper College was mentioned in a recent Chicago Tribune article, citing a study done by NerdWallet on “The Best places to Start a Business in Illinois”, as a valuable resource for entrepreneurs hoping to start a business in the suburbs surrounding Chicago. Please click [Here](#) for the full article.

## **Maximizing Neoserra – Started Business Milestone Leads to Others**

When adding a Started Business milestone you are prompted with this:

Cost of start-up (\$)

Remember that the amount you enter in this box can be used as a Capital Funding milestone such as an owner investment, loan, etc. You probably can also create a Change in Staff milestone for any new job (including the business owner). Entering the cost of start-up and the job information (type, title, etc.) in the Started Business milestone will **NOT** create separate capital funding or change in staff milestones for that count toward your goal. You will have to enter those separately.

## **Valued Resources – 12 Creative Ways to Expand Your Market and Brand Awareness**

As a business owner (and SBDC Director), it is likely you have read countless books, web research, articles, and such looking for the magic bullet that will help you bring your business to the forefront of your audience's mind. It is likely you have tried many things, but try this list of creative ways to expand your market and create brand awareness to ensure as many people as possible are thinking about business and what it has to offer. See the list [here](#)

## **News and Moves – Difference Between Disaster Risk and Preparedness Level?**

Do You Know the Difference Between Your Company's Disaster Risk and Its Preparedness Level? - Human nature—the tendency to believe that a natural or man-made disaster will never occur—often undermines the clear-headed work needed to create a business continuity plan. In a recent study done by Staples, less than half of small businesses said they were prepared for severe emergencies.

Each year, lack of disaster preparedness takes a severe financial toll on small businesses. Meanwhile, with solid planning, a business owner can protect both financial and human capital, developing an organization resilient enough to withstand any kind of threat.

Learn how preparedness affects your company's bottom line at a free webinar on Wednesday, August 5, hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration and Agility Recovery. SBA has partnered with Agility to offer business continuity strategies at its "PrepareMyBusiness" website. Visit [www.preparemybusiness.org](http://www.preparemybusiness.org) to access past webinars and get additional preparedness tips.

The SBA provides disaster recovery assistance in the form of low-interest loans to homeowners, renters, private nonprofits and businesses of all sizes. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster).

**WHAT:** "The Impact of Preparedness on the Bottom Line" - A live presentation, followed by a question and answer session  
**WHEN:** Wednesday, August 5, 2015 – 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. ET  
**HOW:** Space is limited. Register at <http://agil.me/prep4bottomline>

## **New Online Courses Added to SBA Learning Center**

Two new courses have been added to the SBA Learning Center which may be helpful and informative for your clients. Check them out when you can.

**Understanding Your Customer** – Knowing your customer is a vital part of effectively selling your product or service. This course will introduce you to tools and resources that will help you understand your customer and increase sales.

- Discover how to learn more about your customers

- Learn how to identify your customers' needs and what drives buying decisions
- Create your marketing mix and target your customers using the techniques learned in the course.

**Take Your High-Tech Product to Market** – Your product or service is on the cutting edge of technology, a game changer. Now you need to find the best way to get your breakthrough to market. This course will introduce you to the product life cycle of high-tech products and help you find the best way to enter the market and sell your product or service.

- Identify the unique marketing characteristics of high-tech products.
- Learn about the stages of the Product Life Cycle
- Get an introduction to the Product Diffusion Curve
- See examples of high-tech product pricing, placement and promotion considerations

### **America's SBDC Network Connect**

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to access the latest issue of [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#). In this edition you will find links to information about several resources and services exclusively available to you as a member center of America's SBDC and also updated information about the upcoming America's SBDCs Annual Conference. Check it out!

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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](mailto:Tom.Becker@illinois.gov). Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.  
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