



**Laurinburg/Scotland County Area
Chamber of Commerce**

For Immediate Release

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Chamber Unveils Small Business Assistance Program

The Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce is leading the charge on small business development by offering entrepreneurs Small Business Day. On Tuesday, May 4, anyone interested in starting or growing their small business is invited to attend one-on-one counseling at the chamber's office, which is located at 606 Atkinson Street. The event is co-sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Appointments for the program will run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and counselors from a variety of business organizations will be on site. Those include Meena Ahuja, director of the Women's Business Center, Beth Wilkerson, assistant regional director of the Small Business Technical Development Center at UNC-Pembroke, Debra Morman, counselor for the Growing America Through Entrepreneurship program, Deborah Hardison, director for the Small Business Center at Richmond Community College, Ray Manuel, lending and credit analyst with the SBA and April Gonzalez, business development specialist with the SBA.

"There are many resources and opportunities available for those looking to start their own business," said Theresa Lamson, chamber president. "Many people want to start their own business, but don't know where to begin. The chamber is bringing in regional and national business resources; this is an ideal time to speak with a counselor to help you on the right path."

A seminar will also be offered at 6:00 p.m. Entitled "Credit 101," Gonzalez will offer up information on the role credit plays in business and in everyday life. The workshop will also highlight how to get assistance in repairing credit, and offer information on how the SBA and its resource partners can help promote small businesses to the next level.

One-on-one counseling will be scheduled in one hour increments, and appointments must be made in advance. "We encourage anyone with an established business or looking to start a business to join us," Lamson said. For more information or to schedule appointments, call the Chamber at (910) 276-7420 or e-mail tlamson@laurinburgchamber.com.

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