

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Berkshire Regional Small Business Development Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst Isenberg School of Management Wins**

**Massachusetts and New England  
SBDC Service Center Excellence and Innovation Award**

**BOSTON** – The Berkshire Regional Small Business Development Center led by Keith Girouard, Regional Director, has been named the winner of the 2015 SBDC Service Center Excellence and Innovation Award according to an announcement by Robert Nelson, Massachusetts SBA District Director.

“I am very pleased to be recognizing the phenomenal work of Keith and Nancy in the Berkshires.” said Robert Nelson “The numbers speak volumes about what is happening as a direct result of this center with significant impacts in business starts, job creation and capital infusions into the area's small businesses!”

Keith has been advising since 2007, leaving behind his own business consulting firm to impact a wider net of entrepreneurs in the public space. Keith’s experience made him a great fit to lead the Berkshire Regional Office; previously he led a community development corporation for 5 years and taught small business management at the college level – so he understands economic development and what it takes for a community to form business opportunity.

"As employees of the Isenberg School of Management at UMass, we are proud to be working with small businesses and building our local economy one business at a time." said Keith Girouard.

In addition to Keith, Berkshire Regional Office staff include: Nancy Shulman, a Senior Business Advisor who earned her MBA from the University of Massachusetts Isenberg School of Management and who has owned four small businesses, and Susan Himmel, Client Services Coordinator and Office Manager who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from The College of Saint Rose and who has over 18 years of strong, diversified administrative experience.

According to Georgianna Parkin, State Director of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management, "Keith, Nancy and Susan are a fabulous team. They continually work to enhance the climate and opportunities for success for small business in the region."

The center surpassed deliverable goals in every category this year – the amazing part, the center achieved this with the equivalent of only one business advisor. Along with Keith, Nancy Shulman is the only other part time advisor currently serving the region.

During this past fiscal year, the center provided 909 hours of business advising to 199 client firms; with 60 long term cases, 71 extended engagement cases and 23 business starts. The center was also successful in securing \$5,512,111 in financing for 25 clients, creating 105 jobs and retaining 173 jobs. These outcomes are outstanding considering the size of the team!

The center has built a strong reputation by leveraging the active community and deploying a “guerilla partnering” approach to outreach so that the public learns about the MSBDC through strong institutional partnerships. During the year, the center partnered with several community stakeholders to raise awareness and execute specific initiatives that benefit the small business community. Some of the collaborative partners this year include: the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Drury High School in North Adams, Berkshire Community College, the Schumacher Center for a New Economics, Berkshares Inc., and various banking institutions.

The business counseling and advisory role provided by Keith and Nancy at the Berkshire Regional Office “is invaluable not only to myself and MountainOne Bank, but to the business community at large. They are true assets to our community,” says Vice President of Commercial Lending, Tracy McConnell of MountainOne.

The Berkshire Regional Small Business Development Center will be honored along with the other Massachusetts Small Business Week 2015 award winners at an event at Sheraton Framingham on May 4, 2015.

### **About SBA National Small Business Week:**

Every year since 1963, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation announcing National Small Business Week, which recognizes the critical contributions of America’s entrepreneurs and small business owners. More than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and they create about two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. each year. As part of National Small Business Week, the U.S. Small Business Administration takes the opportunity to highlight the impact of outstanding entrepreneurs, small business owners, and others from all 50 states and U.S. territories. Every day, they’re working to grow small business, create 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs, drive innovation, and increase America’s global competitiveness.

### **About Massachusetts Small Business Development Centers:**

The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) Network provides one-to-one free comprehensive and confidential services focusing on, business growth and strategies, financing and loan assistance as well as strategic, marketing and operational analysis. In addition, low cost educational training programs are offered across the state targeted to the needs of small business. The MSBDC network is a partnership of the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development and a consortium of higher education institutions including UMASS Amherst and the Isenberg School of Management.

For more information on MSBDC, please visit: [www.msfdc.org](http://www.msfdc.org).