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SBDC Business advisors recognized for performance at regional conference

EUREKA — The North Coast Small Business Development Center’s Natalie Craig and Tina Nerat have been recognized by the Northern California SBDC Regional Network for their outstanding performance in 2011.

The awards were presented during the All Network Conference held in Berkeley on Feb. 3 attended by more than 150 SBDC affiliates and business community representatives from all over Northern California. The awards shine a light on SBDC Business Advisors Craig and Nerat, who have excelled in efforts to create positive economic impact in their local community.

In 2011, Craig, Nerat and a cadre of other SBDC advisors provided one-on-one consulting and training to nearly 17,000 entrepreneurs in Northern California. Those services led to the creation and retention of more than 2,500 jobs, sales increases of over \$62 million and over \$50 million in capital infusion (loans and equity) for client businesses in 2011.

“This special acknowledgment is a way of recognizing business advisors who go beyond the call of duty and who most significantly help the businesses they assist grow and prosper,” said NorCal SBDC Regional Director Kristin Johnson. “The good work of Natalie and Tina has directly helped businesses create jobs and increase sales in their communities.”

The SBDC is part of a national network of centers that assist small businesses by providing no-cost coaching and technical assistance and is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBDC was created for the purpose of helping entrepreneurs build their business and contribute to the economic development of their local communities. The NorCal SBDC Network encompasses 14 Northern California counties from the Oregon border to Monterey and is the largest territory in the state.

Craig, a Business Advisor with a specialty in graphic arts, was awarded the 2011 Economic Impact award for the North Coast SBDC.

“Natalie goes beyond producing graphic arts, coaching business owners to help them understand how these items work within their overall branding,” said North Coast SBDC Director Michael Kraft. “During what was a tough year personally, Natalie was number one at the North Coast SBDC in the percentage of her clients who achieved a substantial economic impact.”

Nerat, a Business Advisor helping those businesses in the Eel River Valley and Southern Humboldt, was awarded the North Coast SBDC Team Contributor award.

“We chose Tina Nerat for the Team Player award because, on a monthly basis, she simply makes us at the North Coast SBDC better. She spots problems and opportunities and brings them to our attention in a way that exceeds our expectations,” Kraft said.

To find out more about the North Coast SBDC go online to www.northcoastsbdc.org or call (707) 445-9720.

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About the NorCal SBDC Program: *Small Business Development Centers of the Northern California (NorCal SBDC) help individuals start, manage and grow their businesses.*

The SBDC Business Advisor’s expertise can help take the mystery out of business management and allow small businesses to focus on the issues most critical to the success of their company. Our Business Advisors – many of whom are entrepreneurs themselves – have years of experience and know what it takes to operate profitably and grow a business in Northern California. SBDC services address: business plans, financial projections and budgeting, operating challenges, purchase or sale of a business, funding your venture, loan packaging, and more. All private coaching/advising services are offered at no cost to the client. To find out more information about the NorCal SBDC and its service centers go to: www.norcal_sbdc.org

About the California SBDC Program: *The California Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Program is the leader in providing small business owners and entrepreneurs with the tools and guidance needed to become successful. Local SBDCs provide comprehensive and expert guidance on issues such as start-up basics, financing, business and marketing plan development, procurement and government contracting. One-on-one advising is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and local partners and is offered at no cost. Consulting is supplemented by low-cost or free seminars and conferences. These services are delivered throughout California via an extensive network of 38 Small Business Development Centers. The California SBDC network serves more than 50,000 small business owners annually. Learn more by visiting: www.californiasbdc.org*