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Small Business IT Project to Remove Red Tape, Save Businesses Time and Money

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Business Compliance One Stop Project, a Presidential E-Government Initiative, shows the greatest potential in reducing the paperwork burden on small business, according to a report released by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) today.

"This Administration is listening to the small business community. They've said there's too much red tape, paperwork, and time needed to comply with regulations and they want government to pursue the promise of E-Government as a solution. The Business Compliance One-Stop Project is a direct response to these recommendations and we're committed to making it happen," said Mark Forman, Administrator for E-Government and Information Technology at OMB. "

In response to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, OMB created an interagency Task Force to reduce the paperwork burden on small businesses. The Task Force found that reducing this burden is a challenge fraught with both regulatory and information technology obstacles.

Based on the Task Force's findings, OMB is refocusing the Business Compliance One Stop project on reducing the paperwork burden. By creating a "Business Gateway" for compliance assistance and online transactions, the project will create an integrated e-forms solution that will reduce the paperwork burden further.

"There is so much paperwork on a daily basis that if I try to get any information or certification I have to spend hours after work or pay overtime to have the information needed to fill out the paperwork. It would be wonderful to have some relief from the redundant paperwork," said Jennifer Abernathy, owner of Construction Services Company, a small business in Jewett, Texas. Miss Abernathy can be reached at (903) 626-5411.

In conjunction with the U.S. Small Business Administration, OMB also published a list of the compliance assistance resources available to small businesses and points of contacts today.

In Fiscal Year 2002, OMB estimated that it took businesses and citizens approximately 8.2 billion hours and \$320 billion to collect and submit data to the federal government. The federal government alone has over 8,000 information collection requests authorized by OMB.

One of the targets of the Business Gateway is to increase federal agencies' Government Paperwork Elimination Act compliance to at least 75 percent by September 2004. The development of a Business Gateway will consolidate information collections and reduce redundant data and the overall number of federal forms by at least 10 percent.

The Final Report can be found at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoereg/sbpr2003.pdf and www.businesslaw.gov.

The list of compliance assistance tools available to small businesses are available today on OMB's web site at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoereg/infocoll.html>.

The SBA Ombudsman is also making these lists available today on the SBA Ombudsman's web site at <http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman>.