



News Release

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NWBC Brings Together Women Business Owners, Program Leaders to Discuss Military Reservists Issue *Conference Call Provides Information, Resources to Those Faced with Temporary Employee Loss*

Washington, DC – In recent months, the temporary loss of employees to the National Guard and military reserves has been an important issue for employers, and is predicted to present challenges for some time to come.

This was the subject of a national conference call hosted by the National Women’s Business Council (NWBC). The call provided information to women business owners regarding the support available in response to the temporary vacancies caused by the loss of employees to the National Guard or military reserves. Featured speakers on the call included General Bob Hollingsworth, USMC (Ret.), Director of the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and Herbert L. Mitchell, Associate Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Office of Disaster Assistance.

“Many businesses – including women-owned firms – are feeling the impact of losing employees to the National Guard or military reserves,” said Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chair of the NWBC and Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies, Inc. “For some firms, particularly small ones, this loss can create significant problems in the company’s ability to remain competitive in an already challenging economy. The NWBC recognizes this concern and organized the conference call to help women business owners understand both their rights and requirements in regards to their much valued Guard and reserve employees.”

“We faced many challenges after September 11, 2001 when we lost two employees to the military reserves,” said Christine J. Bierman, Founder and Chief Executive of Colt Safety, Fire and Rescue in St. Louis, MO. “But

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everyone in the company pulled together and we were able to prepare for the loss of manpower by cross training. Planning in advance for these types of situations and knowing what resources are available to help small businesses through this challenge makes all the difference.”

“This can be a difficult time for many small businesses,” said DeVera Redmond, State Chair of the Washington, DC ESGR Committee and President and Owner of D.R. & Associates. “But we strongly encourage any business owner in this situation to contact ESGR. Our ombudsmen are qualified to help, committed to remaining impartial in their counsel, and can provide valuable information on the rights of and solutions for employers faced with this situation.”

Herbert L. Mitchell, Associate Administrator of the SBA’s Office of Disaster Assistance, added that through the SBA’s Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (MREIDL), 81 small businesses faced with this situation have already received \$6.5 million in loans.

For further information on this issue visit the ESGR’s Web site (www.esgr.com) or the SBA’s Office of Disaster Assistance (www.sba.gov/disaster).

Business owners may hear a free playback of the conference call by following these steps:

- Dial 1-866-803-1430 to access the playback center;
- Press "1" to indicate you would like to listen to your recording;
- Enter 3687613# for your Conference ID;
- Enter 3465975# for your Playback ID.

This conference call is the third in a series of the NWBC’s “Women’s Business Connection,” a monthly conference call for women business owners who want to become more involved in the policy debate on current economic and business issues. The "Women's Business Connection" provides a forum for women business owners to voice their thoughts, concerns and public policy priorities. Conference calls feature key members of the Federal government, public policy organizations, and business and industry leaders.

“Women’s Business Connection” will be held on the **fourth Tuesday of every month at 3:00 PM Eastern Time**. Participants may join the call by dialing **1-877-326-2337** (toll-free) and entering code **#3687613**. The next call is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2003, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM EDT and will focus on the issue of access to international markets. Future calls will address a variety of relevant topics including access to affordable health care

coverage, access to training and technical assistance, and access to capital. For more information about “Women’s Business Connection,” please contact Lindi Harvey, NWBC Director of Program Outreach at (202) 205-6829 or by email at Lindi.Harvey@sba.gov.

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The National Women’s Business Council is a bi-partisan Federal government council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners. Members of the Council are prominent women business owners and leaders of women’s business organizations. The National Women’s Business Council is committed to conducting research on issues of importance to women business owners and their organizations; to communicating these findings widely; to connecting the women’s business community to public policy makers; and to providing programs and platforms for change in order to expand and improve opportunities for women business owners and their enterprises. For more information about the Council, its mission and activities, contact: National Women’s Business Council, 409 3rd Street, SW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20024; phone: 202-205-3850; fax: 202-205-6825, e-mail: nwbc@sba.gov; Web site: www.nwbc.gov.