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**U.S. GOVERNMENT URGES TEXAS BUSINESSES TO PROTECT
THEIR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FROM THEFT OVERSEAS**
Small Business Particularly Vulnerable, Says U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Austin, Texas – U. S. Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property Stephen Pinkos and U.S. Representative Lamar Smith (TX-21) today warned an audience of Austin small-businessmen and -women that they are increasingly vulnerable to overseas intellectual property theft -- even if they do not export -- and urged them to consider protective action.

In remarks before the “Conference on the Global Intellectual Property Marketplace,” sponsored by the Commerce Department’s U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Pinkos and Smith urged the audience to consider intellectual property protection in the United States and overseas a priority business decision. Pinkos noted that 90 percent of the companies exporting goods from Texas in 2002 were small- and medium-sized firms. Pinkos referred the audience to the USPTO’s new Web site, www.stopfakes.gov/smallbusiness, for information about how they can protect their businesses.

“Texas’ innovators and inventors are among the best that our country has to offer, and the intellectual property that they develop is critical to the U.S. economy as a whole,” Pinkos said. “This seminar in Austin will educate Texas small business owners and arm them with the information they need to protect their intellectual property and continue to grow our economy.”

Congressman Lamar Smith, Chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property, also attended the seminar and emphasized the importance of new legislation supporting intellectual property rights.

While theft of intellectual property poses a serious threat to all American businesses, small businesses are particularly vulnerable because they often lack the knowledge and expertise to effectively combat it. Because small businesses typically do not have personnel or maintain large operations in other countries, theft of their intellectual property overseas can go undetected.

The Austin seminar is the third in a series the USPTO is hosting across the country to help educate American small businesses about the realities of piracy and counterfeiting. During the two-day seminar (September 12-

www.stopfakes.gov/smallbusiness



13, 2005) in Austin, intellectual property experts from the agency are providing attendees with details and useful tips about protecting and enforcing their intellectual property rights in the United States and around the world. The next seminar will be held September 26-27 in Miami, Florida.

The Austin seminar represents one of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's many efforts to educate small businesses about intellectual property protection. Currently, the agency is conducting a nationwide awareness campaign that helps small businesses know when to file for intellectual property protection, what type of protection to file for, where to file and how to go about it. The effort features outreach targeting industry sectors especially at risk of intellectual property theft, a Web site specifically designed to address the needs of small businesses, and free informational materials informing small businesses about the problem and steps they can take to mitigate it.

The campaign, in turn, is part of a much larger government effort. The *Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy* (STOP!) initiative aims to combat criminal networks that traffic in fakes, stop trade in pirated and counterfeit goods at America's borders and help small businesses secure and enforce their rights in overseas markets. As part of the initiative, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office maintains a toll-free telephone hotline, 1-866-999-HALT, that helps businesses leverage the resources of the U.S. government to protect their intellectual property rights.

For more information about the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's effort to educate American businesses about intellectual property rights [visit www.stopfakes.gov/smallbusiness](http://www.stopfakes.gov/smallbusiness).

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