



News Release

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SBA Chief to Highlight Small Business Trade during Portugal Visit

WASHINGTON, DC — SBA Administrator Steve Preston will highlight small business opportunities in the global marketplace when he travels to Portugal Oct. 6-10, 2007. The trip is Preston's first international visit since his confirmation more than a year ago.

"As more American small businesses look to foreign markets, it is important for SBA to support their efforts to expand globally," said Preston. "This exchange of ideas with our friends in the international small business community will help the agency improve its programs for entrepreneurs interested in exporting or international contracting."

Preston will have several speaking engagements during the trip, including: an address to the American Club in Lisbon on small business leadership in global growth; a speech at the IAPMEI Conference on the key role of financing for innovation; a speech to the first Global Summit of SME Organization Leaders on SBA's mission and operations.

Small business exporting has increased significantly in the last decade. There were almost 10,000 more small businesses exporting from the U.S. in 2005 than in 1999, accounting for 29 percent of the known value of American exports. More than 97 percent of all U.S. exporting companies are small and more than 70 percent have fewer than 20 employees. (*"Profile of U.S. Exporting Companies 2004-2005,"* U.S. Census Bureau).

"Small business exporting is on the rise and playing a larger role in the U.S. economy," noted Preston. "However, there are some barriers to international trade that haven't been fully torn down, in the form of tariffs, duties and quotas. These barriers discourage U.S. small businesses from marketing their goods and services outside the country. SBA can play a key role in overcoming these and other barriers."

SBA has Regional Senior International Trade and Finance Specialists located in 17 U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEAC) across the country where small business owners can get the technical assistance and advice they need to go global. The USEACs support the following **international trade loan programs:**

- Export Express,
- Export Working Capital (EWCP),
- International Trade Loans and
- SBA/Export-Import Bank Co-Guarantee EWCP Loans

With the help of its USEAC Regional Trade and Finance Specialists, the SBA has doubled its export

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loans since 2003. In FY 2006, for the first time ever, it recorded more than \$1 billion in loans to small business exporters, generating more than \$2 billion in export sales. SBA makes 15 loans per thousand small business exporters, compared to 4 loans per thousand of the general small business population.

“I believe small business can become an even bigger driver of international trade,” concluded Preston. “Exports are important for American economic success, and small businesses already play a significant role. With their proven dedication, and with SBA’s help, entrepreneurs can continue to increase small business exports.”

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Further information on USEACs and SBA’s export programs can be found through SBA’s website: <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/internationaltrade/index.html>