



Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center

21st Century Jobs Fund Awards more than 100 Million to high-tech research, commercialization projects

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm had the pleasure of announcing the 61 awardees selected by the Michigan Strategic Economic Investment and Commercialization (SEIC) Board who will share more than \$100 million from the first round of the 21st Century Jobs Fund initiative to create jobs in Michigan's emerging technologies. The initiative is part o a comprehensive *Jobs Today, Jobs Tomorrow* economic plan to grow Michigan's economy.

The 21st Century Jobs Fund is a \$2 billion, ten-year initiative designed to accelerate the diversification of Michigan's economy. The commercialization component of the initiative devotes approximately \$800 million for competitive-edge technologies in the targeted sectors of life sciences, alternative energy, advanced automotive materials and manufacturing, and homeland security/defense. These

awards recognize some of the most promising and innovative job-creating ideas Michigan has to offer.

Proposals approved include the following:

- Life sciences: 25 proposals - \$45.7 million
- Alternative energy: 4 proposals - \$8.9 million
- Advanced automotive materials and manufacturing: 26 proposals - \$37.3 million
- Homeland security/defense: 6 proposals - \$9.3 million.

The complete list of awardees is available at www.michigan.gov/21stcentury

To read the entire article please visit: [Office of the Governor Website](http://www.michigan.gov/21stcentury)

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Region 8 of Michigan's MI-SBTDC is hosted by Lansing Community College

MI-SBTDC CLIENT HIGHLIGHT: By: Donald Cross, A-Z Remodeling & Handyman Services LLC.

I started A-Z due to reading about many elderly people being taken advantage of on home repairs and remodeling. You would hear of people being charged large sum of money for simple repairs around the house, no one should have to pay \$300 to repair a toilet. So I started A-Z Handyman Services LLC in 2000. The business took off and over the last 5 years. A-Z has gotten into



bigger jobs and into more of the kitchen and bathroom remodels, basement finishing, decks, additions, and we still take care of the little jobs. Due to the business doing more medium to larger remodels A-Z name was changed to A-Z Remodeling and Handyman Services LLC.

At A-Z we stress to people that to protect your project, using a licensed an insured builder/remodeler you have the State to go to if there is any problems do with your contractors. And A-Z stresses to get more than 1 bid on your project. Do not pay for projects in full up-front, but do a pay schedule of 3 payments, and always get the project in writing, signed, and any changes to project in writing and signed. Ask for references; ask to look at pictures of their work. Do your homework before hiring a company to do your project. So I say, if you treat people with respect and do quality workmanship at a fair price, clean-up the work-site you can stay as busy as you want to be. Word of mouth goes a long way. Please visit our website at

www.a-zremodeling.com.

Frequently Asked Questions:



Would a partner (s) make it easier to be successful in my Small Business?



A business partner does not guarantee success. If you require additional management skills or start-up capital, engaging a partner may be your best decision. Personality and character, as well as ability to give technical or financial assistance, determine the ultimate success of a partnership. A successful partnership usually occurs when partners compliment each other so that one's weakness is another's strength. If you decide a partner is a good idea, make certain each of you has a clear, written understanding of your responsibilities and your rights.

This Cooperative Agreement is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.

General Business Counseling: What is Franchising?

A franchise is a legal and commercial relationship between the owner of a trademark, service mark, trade name, or advertising symbol and an individual or group wishing to use that identification in a business. The franchise governs the method of conducting business between the two parties. Generally, a franchisee sells goods or services supplied by the franchisor or that meet the franchisor's quality standards.

Franchising is based on mutual trust between the franchisor and franchisee. The franchisor provides the business expertise (marketing plans, management guidance, financing assistance, site location, training,

etc.) that otherwise would not be available to the franchisee. The franchisees brings to the franchise operation the entrepreneurial spirit and drive necessary to make the franchise a success.

There are primarily two forms of franchising:

- Product/trade name franchising and
- Business format franchising.

In the simplest form, a franchisor owns the right to the name or trademark and sells that right to a franchisee. This is known as "product/trade name franchising." The more complex form, "business format franchising," involves a broader ongoing relationship between the two parties. Business format franchises often provide a

full range of services, including site selection, training, product supply, marketing plans, and even assistance in obtaining financing.

To learn more about:

- The advantages and disadvantages of franchising,
- The franchisor's responsibilities,
- What is contained in a franchise packet, and
- Understanding the franchise contract,

[Franchise Registry](#)
[Franchise Directories & Evaluation](#)

For additional information:
[Consumer Guide to Buying a Franchise](#)

Small Business Tips: Finding a Niche

A market in its entirety is too broad in scope for any but the largest companies to tackle successfully. The best strategy for a smaller business is to divide demand into manageable market niches. Small operations can then offer specialized goods and services attractive to a specific group of prospective buyers.

There are undoubtedly some particular products or services you are especially suited to provide. Study the market carefully and you will find opportunities. As an example, surgical instruments used to be sold in bulk to both small medical practices and large hospitals. One firm realized that the smaller practices could not afford to sterilize instruments after each use like hospitals did, but instead simply disposed of them. The firm's sales representatives talked to surgeons and hospital workers to learn what would be more suitable for them. Based on this information, the company developed disposable instruments which could be sold in larger quantities at a lower cost. Another firm capitalized on the fact that hospital operating rooms must carefully count the instruments used before and after surgery. This firm met that particular need by packaging their instruments in pre-counted, customized sets for different forms of surgery.

While researching your own company's niche, consider the results of your market survey and the areas in which your competitors are already firmly situated. Put this information into a table or a graph to illustrate where an

opening might exist for your product or service. Try to find the right configuration of products, services, quality, and price that will ensure the least direct competition. Unfortunately, there is no universally effective way to make these comparisons. Not only will the desired attributes vary from industry to industry, but there is also an imaginative element that cannot be formalized. For example, only someone who had already thought of developing pre-packaged surgical instruments could use a survey to determine whether or not a market actually existed for them.

A well-designed database can help you sort through your market information and reveal particular segments you might not see otherwise. For example, do customers in a certain geographic area tend to purchase products that combine high quality and high price more frequently? Do your small business clients take advantage of your customer service more often than larger ones? If so, consider focusing on being a local provider of high quality goods and services, or a service-oriented company that pays extra attention to small businesses.

If you do target a new niche market, make sure that this niche does not conflict with your overall business plan. For example, a small bakery that makes cookies by hand cannot go after a market for inexpensive, mass-produced cookies, regardless of the demand.

Upcoming Trainings & Programs:

www.misbtdc.org/region8

Trainings

Building a Successful Marketing Plan

October 11, 2006
8:30am—12:00pm
Cost: \$70 per person or 2 for \$125

Steps in Developing a Business Plan

October 19, 2006
12:30pm—4:00pm
Cost: \$90 per person or 2 for \$160

Financials with QuickBooks: Intro level

October 20, 2006
8:30am—5:00pm
Cost: \$125 per person or 2 for \$225

Finding the Money: Investors and Bankers

October 25, 2006
9:00am—11:00am
Cost: \$25 per person or 2 for \$45

Financials with QuickBooks: Advanced level

December 1, 2006
8:30am—5:00pm
Cost: \$125 per person or 2 for \$225

Programs

Evening with the Experts

October 10, 2006
6:00pm—9:00pm
Cost: FREE
To register call (517) 483-1921

Business Basics Orientations

Offered weekly, Wednesdays
12:00pm—1:30pm
Cost: FREE
To register call (517) 483-1921

**For more training
information or to register
call (517) 483-9853 or visit
www.misbtdc.org/region8**



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MI-SBTDC Mission Statement

The Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) enhances Michigan's economic well being by providing counseling, training, and research, and advocacy for new ventures, existing small businesses and innovative technology companies. With regional, satellite and affiliate offices statewide the MI-SBTDC positively impacts the economy by strengthening existing companies, creating new jobs, retaining existing jobs, and assisting companies in defining their path to success.



<http://www.sba.gov>



<http://www.lcc.edu>

Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center

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Got a tip or story? Let us know!

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Finding Solutions for Growing Businesses

Personal vs. Business

Starting up a business can be a tremendous strain on your personal finances. It can take six months or more before your new venture is profitable and can provide financial support for you and your family. Before going into business it is always wise to get your finances in order.

Write a **monthly household budget** that accounts for your income and your household expenses. Be as conservative as possible, because it is vital to your success that you have the resources to maintain your household expenses while your business is growing. Any strain on your personal budget will put the financial success of your business at risk. It is also a good idea to check your personal credit situation. Too often, entrepreneurs think that their business credit and personal credit are separate. A business' credit is built upon the owner's personal credit. Because you have not established a business credit history, lenders and suppliers will use your personal credit history to determine your terms of credit. To obtain a copy of your credit report, refer to one of these credit bureaus:

[Equifax](#) [Experian](#) [Trans Union](#)

The Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center regional office, affiliated with the Business & Community Institute at Lansing Community College is one of 12 offices statewide, providing services and support to the Michigan small business community in the areas of counseling, training and research.

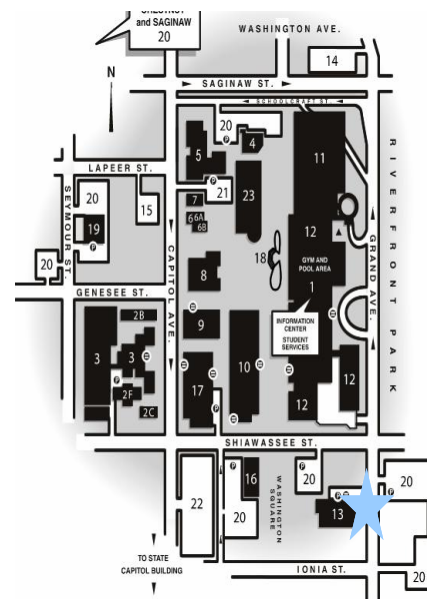


The Lansing Community College's Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center at the Business & Community Institute, contributes to the promotion of economic development by assisting in the creation of new small business and the retention and expansion of existing small businesses. We achieve this mission by providing technical

assistance to prospective and existing business owners and managers in Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, Ionia, Livingston, and Shiawassee counties. We provide our clients with the education and training needed to establish and grow a successful small business.

ADDRESS:

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