



MANKATO “ISSUESLIVE” EVENT MARKS FIRST IN A NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON MICROBUSINESS

Minneapolis, MN - Microbusiness Strategies LLC, in association with the Microbusiness Research Institute (MRI) and Minnesota Small Business Development Center (MnSBDC) Network, will host the first “IssuesLive” forums on Friday, February 1, 2008 at South Central University in Mankato, Minnesota. The forum series gathers microbusiness owners (businesses with fewer than ten employees) together with other key stakeholders and nationally recognized experts to discuss key issues related to operating and growing microbusiness.

In addition to microbusiness owners, “IssuesLive” participants will include federal, state and local elected representatives, government administrators, business leaders, non-profit leaders, and academics. During the events, guest and expert panelists will participate in a dialogue with audience members that will be facilitated by representatives from Microbusiness Strategies, MRI, the SBDC network and other partner organizations.

The balance of Minnesota events will take place throughout the spring. Visit <http://www.issueslive.com> for schedule updates and more information.

Minnesota Regional Venues

Date	Time	City	Location	Region
Friday, February 1, 2008	10:00am to Noon	Mankato	South Central University	South Central
Friday, February 15, 2008	1:00pm to 3:00pm	Moorhead	Moorhead State University	Northwest
Friday, February 29, 2008	10:00am to Noon	Marshall	Southwest Minnesota State University	Southwest
Friday, March 7, 2008	10:00am to Noon	St. Cloud	Anderson Entrepreneurial Center	North Central
Wednesday, March 26, 2008	TBA	Duluth	Duluth Entertainment & Convention Center (DECC)	Northeast
Friday, March 28, 2008	10:00am to Noon	Bemidji	Hampton Inn	Far North
Friday, April 11, 2008	10:00am to Noon	Rochester	Rochester Community and Technical College	Southeast
Friday, April 25, 2008	10:00am to Noon	Brainerd	Central Lakes College	North
Friday, May 2, 2008	10:00am to Noon	Minneapolis	University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis	Metropolitan

IssuesLive organizers plan to expand the forum series to include events held at 21 locations around the country from Maine to California, culminating in a Grand Policy Forum in Washington, D.C. later in 2008.

Microbusinesses comprise 95% of all U.S. businesses, according to the most recent data available from the Census Bureau and the Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy. Yet, in spite of the numbers, microbusinesses are not well-understood by economists, policy makers or the private sector. Organizers describe the “IssuesLive” series as a “first of its kind” national needs assessment through which they expect to spread deeper understanding of the role of microbusinesses in the economy

“The point of the exercise, beyond achieving a deeper understanding of the largest segment of the American economy, is to apply what we learn from these exchanges and convert that new understanding into policy and practice that helps microbusinesses - and the overall economy in turn,” said Ron Wacks, CEO of Microbusiness Strategies and President Emeritus of the American Association of Microbusinesses. According to Dawn Rivers Baker, president of MRI. “It’s a bit of a twist on the usual forum format. Instead of making presentations to the audience, we expect the panelists to be learning from the audience. We think these events could provide everyone involved with an excellent opportunity to engage in meaningful, actionable dialogue.”

The initial round of IssuesLive forum events will be hosted by the Minnesota Small Business Development Center Network, at SBDC locations around the state. Michael Myhre, Minnesota SBDC State Director, views the events as a valuable opportunity to improve SBDC services. “This partnership will help assist the Minnesota SBDC Network identify the critical issues which affect its primary demographic, microbusinesses, and design services and products to meet their needs and help them grow and succeed,” said Myhre.

[Minnesota's Secretary of State](#), Mark Ritchie notes, “I am dealing with every business in our state on a regular basis. I know from this experience the value that these microbusiness forums can add to my work and to the work of others who provide business services across this county. This is a very important initiative that needs to happen as soon as possible.”

Each forum event will be webcast live to facilitate real-time participation by stakeholders from around the country. The webcasts will also be archived on the Internet for easy access by anyone at any time. Further, MRI will compile data collected at the events into statistically-based summaries of the issues identified by microbusiness owners during each event. Future MRI research initiatives will examine the extent to which that data is representative of microbusinesses nationwide. A copy of the research summaries will also archived on the Internet.

[About Microbusiness Strategies, LLC](#)

Microbusiness Strategies LLC, and the Microbusiness Strategies Group of Companies, headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a national consulting and strategy firm specializing in connecting business, government, university and non-profit stakeholders with microbusinesses. The "Strategies" Group of companies serves those who serve microbusinesses in their mutual interest. For more information visit: <http://www.microbusinessstrategies.com> and <http://www.issueslive.com>

[About the Microbusiness Research Institute](#)

The Microbusiness Research Institute, a division of Wahmpreneur Publishing, acts as a non-partisan economic and market research company specializing in the microbusiness market (firms with fewer than five employees). While providing its clients with highly targeted market research, the Microbusiness Research Institute pursues collection and dissemination of information to improve public and private sector understanding of microbusinesses in the economy, domestically and globally. Additional information about the Microbusiness Research Institute can be found at: <http://www.microbusinessresearch.org>

Minnesota Small Business Development Center

The Minnesota SBDC Network is a partnership program of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and sponsoring regional service centers. SBDCs work to serve the complex and diverse needs of established and promising small businesses throughout Minnesota. Each service center is staffed by a team of professional business consultants who provide, at no cost, confidential, professional business management and expansion consulting to motivated business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. To learn more about Minnesota SBDC Network visit:

<http://www.mnsbdc.com>

For more information, contact:

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