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## Michele Abraham Named Director of South Carolina's Small Business Development Center

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# Michele Abraham Named Director of South Carolina's Small Business Development Center

## Quick Facts

- The S.C. SBDC is a state-wide network of 16 offices with 35 full-time employees that provides low-cost help to entrepreneurs and small-business owners.
- Last year, the S.C. SBDC worked with approximately 2,500 clients to raise nearly \$60 million in capital.



Michele Abraham

COLUMBIA, S.C. - **Michele Abraham** has been named state director of the **Frank L. Roddy South Carolina Small Business Development Center** (SBDC) effective Jan. 25.

Abraham, former state director of Ohio's SBDC, will serve as chief executive for the **S.C. SBDC**, a state-wide network of 16 offices with 35 full-time employees that provides low-cost help to entrepreneurs and small-business owners.

"The SBDC is a tremendous asset for economic growth in our state," said **Roger Weikle**, dean of the College of Business Administration at Winthrop University and chair of the search committee. "People have creative ideas and need help with access to capital to finance their plans and new opportunities for their existing business. We are fortunate to have found Michele. She has done this work in a large SBDC, in private industry and has managed small businesses of her own. She knows strategy of high-tech industry clusters that is essential for future growth. She has the energy and the leadership skills to take this huge segment of our state's economy and help lead the recovery."

Abraham said small businesses support the majority of jobs in this country and that she is looking forward to joining South Carolina's SBDC and having a role in South Carolina's economic progress.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, driving innovation and providing the vast majority of jobs in our country," Abraham said. "I am honored to have the opportunity to work with this dedicated group of professionals who are a key component in helping these businesses succeed. The university consortium headed by Dr. Weikle has impressed me with its commitment and willingness to do whatever is necessary to support the South Carolina SBDC."

**South Carolina's SBDC** is primarily financed by the U.S. Small Business Administration with additional support provided by state funds from South Carolina and a consortium of the four universities where offices are located: USC, Clemson University, S.C. State University and Winthrop University. The SBDC collaborates within the consortium, which Weikle chairs, to offer student instruction in entrepreneurship, finance and other courses relevant to small-business development.

SBDC services include consulting, continuing-education programs and instructional resources.

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**Abraham** brings to the S.C. SBDC an impressive scope of experience. She was director of Ohio's SCDC, a network of 39 centers, from 2006 – 09. Under her leadership, Ohio's SBDC in 2008 created or retained more than 50,000 jobs and helped clients increase sales by more than \$124 million, access more than \$148 million in capital and obtain more than \$126 million in government contracts. During that time, she also served as chief of strategic management for the Ohio Department of Development.

After graduating from Bowling Green State University in 1975, Abraham worked several years in Columbia as a sales representative for Eastman Kodak. She went on to work in private industry and manage small businesses of her own in addition to directing a large SBDC. As a business-development manager for Owens Corning, she built a mature, stagnant business from \$6 million to more than \$23 million in annual sales. As a manager for Atlantic Research Corporation, she led marketing and business development of a start-up business venture in aerospace and defense applications to \$11 million in annual sales. She also has worked on projects with Boeing and DOW and in sales and business development for SP Systems.

She replaces John Lenti, who retired after 20 years of service.

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