

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 18, 2011

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**Regional Revolving Loan Fund Available to Businesses in the Greater Charlotte Region**

The creation of a \$1,000,000 regional revolving loan fund to help provide gap financing to small and medium-sized businesses was announced Friday by the Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) and the Centralina Economic Development Commission Board of Directors (CEDC).

Earlier this year, the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded an \$800,000 grant to capitalize this revolving loan fund that will support business development and job creation. CCOG and the CEDC will work in partnership with private lenders to make loans that banks might not ordinarily make on their own. This financing measure is a proven tool for the development and expansion of small businesses that are creating jobs but unable to obtain financing at reasonable rates and terms.

"This fund will prove important in ensuring that we keep our local economy growing and keep businesses hiring throughout our area," said Representative Larry Kissell (NC-08). "This is how our government can work best, wisely investing in a local regional effort to help new and existing businesses create jobs here at home. I'm committed to doing all I can to bring our tax dollars back home and make sure that our small businesses and entrepreneurs have access to the capital and tools they need to grow and expand. I'm proud to have worked to help secure this important EDA funding, and I'm glad to see the creation of this revolving loan fund to best invest this money both wisely and efficiently."

The formation of the Centralina Regional Revolving Loan Fund (CRRLF) included a supporting grant from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission of \$220,000 in required matching funds. This match allowed the CEDC, in partnership with CCOG, to request the \$800,000 from the EDA to establish the aggregate \$1,000,000 revolving loan fund for the Centralina region.

"This is an important investment in North Carolina that will allow CCOG and the CEDC to work with private lenders in providing financing to businesses in the Centralina region which has been particularly hard hit by the closure of manufacturing plants," said Senator Kay Hagan (NC-D), a member of the Senate Small Business Committee. "Small businesses are critical to economic development and recovery in North Carolina, and access to credit is the lifeblood of any small business. This regional revolving loan fund will provide the gap financing that North Carolina small businesses need to grow and create jobs."

The revolving loan fund is a self-replenishing pool of money, utilizing interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new ones. While supporting all qualifying regional businesses, specific goals are to promote the long-term viability of value-added agricultural operations and small advanced manufacturing companies. The fund will also provide small and entrepreneurial businesses with access to alternative financial options and encourage community banks and other

financial institutions to lend to all eligible businesses.

"The NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission is very pleased to be a partner of this unique program," said Bill Teague, Chairman of the Commission. "These loans will encourage diversification into advanced manufacturing and value-added agricultural enterprises that will help local economies grow."

Inquiries and loan requests are invited from eligible new or existing business owners in the CCOG nine-county region, on a first-come, first-served basis. The CCOG region includes Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties. Applications will be evaluated by a five-member loan committee made up of CEDC Board members and private lending industry experts. The program will require participation by a borrower's primary lender.

Guidelines and initial application request can be downloaded at <http://www.4noboundaries.org/documents/CEDCRLFLOANAPPLICATIONNOV2011.pdf> or you may communicate inquiries directly to [cedc@centralina.org](mailto:cedc@centralina.org), to the attention of Michael Manis or Victoria Rittenhouse.

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