



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Michael Graham
Public Information Officer
(520) 837-6686
michael.graham@tucsonaz.gov

Date: September 26, 2013
TDD: 791-2639

CITY GOES LIVE WITH SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE LINE

The City of Tucson Office of Economic Initiatives announces the launch of the Small Business Assistance Line. The phone line has been created with a focus on Tucson's small business entrepreneurs, acknowledging their value in our community's economy and to strengthen their capability, survivability, and ultimate success. The phone line will help small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs navigate the City's departments, programs and personnel through a one-stop shop to allow them more time to focus on growing their business and less time calling city staff in different departments. The Small Business Assistance Line – 837-4100 – is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is available in both English and Spanish.

Staff from the City Manager's Office of Economic Initiatives will work individually with callers to address questions and determine business owners' needs, guide business owners through City processes for licensing, planning, and permitting, connect business owners with City staff and resources to provide solutions and refer them to additional business resources available at the local, state, and federal levels.

Council Member Karin Uhlich, who strongly supported the program said: "I applaud the City Manager for taking this critical next step in response to Mayor and Council's direction to continue making Tucson a better place in which to do business. Based on the guidance provided by the city's Small Business Commission, I am confident the Small Business Assistance Line in the Manager's Office will be a great success."

Katharine Kent, owner of The Solar Store and outgoing Chair of the Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Business Commission, said, "Council Member Uhlich's continued support for small business in Tucson is exemplified by her push to make sure this happened. Having a direct, well-publicized phone number in the City Manager's Office, available to all small business owners in the community, will be so important. The manager directs the city departments, and it's key that he has dedicated staff members to help small business owners resolve issues regardless of what they are or which department they involve."

Small Business Commissioner Karen Clifton, owner of Clifton Photography, said, "Council Member Uhlich has worked with us for the past two plus years on this issue. She's always understood how important it is. After all the work we've put in, it's great to see it come to fruition."

The Small Business Assistance Line is one in a series of developments that the City enacted to support the growth of new and existing businesses, foster job creation, and strengthen Tucson's economic base. Recent actions include improvements in the permitting process, the hiring of an Economic Development Specialist for International Trade to further the City's position with Mexico and other countries, organizing 21 business incentives and programs to spur private investment, and creating a Downtown Redevelopment Area which, along with the Sun Link Streetcar project has revitalized Downtown Tucson.

###