

## Disaster assistance available to small businesses impacted by salmon fishery closure

Contributed by Editor

Friday, 13 June 2008

Last Updated Monday, 16 June 2008

LAKE COUNTY &ndash; Jovita Carranza, Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), has announced that low-interest loans are available to small businesses that have suffered financial losses due to the closure of the commercial salmon fishing season on the California coast.

By declaring a disaster, Deputy Administrator Carranza's action makes low interest Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) available immediately to help meet financial needs caused by the closure of the 2008 salmon fishing season that began April 10. Carranza's action responded to a May 28, 2008 request from Henry Renteria, Director of California's Office of Emergency Services on behalf of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The declaration covers the California counties of Alameda, Del Norte, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Napa, Plumas, San Benito, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tehama and Trinity; and the neighboring Oregon counties of Curry and Josephine.

SBA is offering working capital loans of up to \$1.5 million at an interest rate of 4 percent with terms up to 30 years.

"SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. These loans can provide vital economic assistance to the fishing and fishing-dependent businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing," said Alfred E. Judd, director of SBA's Disaster Field Operations Center-West.

"SBA customer service representatives will be in the affected communities along the California coast to meet with business owners and answer questions about SBA's EIDL assistance, issue loan applications, explain the application process, and help them complete their applications," Judd said.

Some eligible business owners include: small businesses engaged in salmon fishing in the waters affected by the closure (employees or crew members are not small businesses and are not eligible), and small businesses dependent on the catching or sale of salmon, including suppliers of fishing gear and fuel, docks, boatyards, processors, wholesalers, shippers, and retailers, and other small businesses dependent on revenue from the above.

"We recognize that some affected businesses may be reluctant to seek a loan to meet their immediate financial needs, but we encourage each business to learn how an SBA disaster loan may help them recover from the closure of the fishing season," Judd emphasized. Business owners may also obtain loan information by calling SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955. Hearing impaired individuals may call toll-free, 800-877-8339.

The deadline to apply for these loans is March 3, 2009.

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