



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **2016 Small Business Development Center Excellence & Innovation Winner**

**Burke, VA** - [America's SBDC](#) is excited to announce that the Charleston Small Business Development Center in North Charleston, South Carolina and its Director, Tom Lauria have received the honor of the National 2016 Small Business Development Center Excellence & Innovation Winner. The Charleston SBDC won the award after being named the South Carolina state winner and the winner for SBA Region IV, which includes South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky.

"We are proud to be a vital resource for local small businesses, and we're humbled to have been recognized on a national level for the success we've helped our clients achieve," said Tom Lauria, who was the area manager from 2007 through 2015. "It's a testament to the efforts of our team and the passion they show for the work they do that has allowed the center to earn this award."

"The team at the Charleston Area SBDC Center are a highly skilled and dedicated group of professionals who help to drive success both with our clients and with the community as a whole. They are sought out because of the breadth and depth of their knowledge and expertise. Whether they are providing core business counseling services or specialized assistance in exporting, government contracting and new product commercialization, they are a key resource for both small businesses and economic development partners," said Michele Abraham, State Director of the South Carolina SBDC Network.

"It's tough to pick a winner from a national network of SBDCs that are committed to continuous improvement, innovation and adapting to the needs of their clients but the Charleston SBDC has done a fantastic job in reaching out to the small business community and helping them expand and thrive, they're a great example for everyone in the national SBDC network, said Charles "Tee" Rowe, President & CEO of America's SBDC.

The Charleston SBDC and Mr. Tom Lauria were honored by SBA on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> in Washington D.C.

**About America's SBDC and Small Business Development Centers:** [America's SBDC](#) represents the Nation's 63 Small Business Development Centers, a national network of partnerships uniting higher education, state and local nonprofit economic development organizations, private enterprise and government. It is the Small Business Administration's largest partnership program, providing management and technical assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their own businesses. Learn more at [www.AmericasSBDC.org](http://www.AmericasSBDC.org).