

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
David Main
Hamilton County Development Co.
513-631-8292

Hamilton County Business Center graduates six startups

Six startup firms will graduate Friday from the small-business incubator at the Hamilton County Business Center, making the successful transition to freestanding businesses.

The milestone will be marked at a Sept. 12 event at the business center in Norwood. The event will also include an open house so visitors can see the renovated third and fourth floors of the Hamilton County Business Center, Ohio's largest business incubator facility.

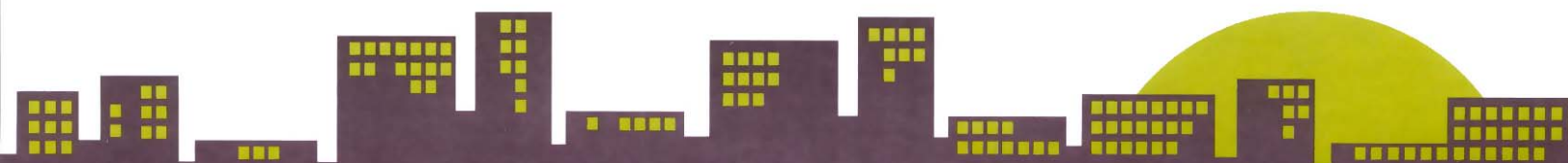
The graduation marks a turning point event in the life of an entrepreneurial start-up, signifying they have met long-term business goals and progressed enough to move on for further growth.

For a period three to five years, the firms have enjoyed the affordable, flexible space, administrative services, business counseling and assistance, and vibrant and supportive environment offered at the Business Center.

The graduating firms are:

- ◆ **Best Express Foods** was founded by a group of food service professionals and has grown to become a national supplier of high quality, frozen food items throughout the United States. In July 2004, the company acquired a manufacturing facility and is now a USDA-approved manufacturer offering high quality, frozen food to a variety of food service markets, including schools, hospitals and the military.
- ◆ **SafeSchools** is an online safety training and tracking system designed specifically for school employees. The company uses a library of courses authored by experts in safety, emergency management, nutrition services, health, behavior and human resources, combined with a compliance tracking system to deliver training for school employees.
- ◆ **Skilled Trades** provides construction personnel to contractors in the areas of carpentry, drywall, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, concrete, welding, roofing and other skills. The company has nine locations throughout the Midwest and as far west as Denver.

(MORE)



- ◆ **Somatic Digital** has developed touch user-interface technology that connects paper directly to digital content that can reside on optical media, the Internet, or hard-drives. The technology allows accessibility for those who normally are unable to connect to digital content, such as physically, visually, or hearing impaired students. The company creates and distributes tools that enable publishers to connect to digital content by touching pages in a book.
- ◆ **ZQI Inc.** is a professional consulting firm led by John Zurick that specializes in leadership consultation, strategic planning, capacity building, fundraising, and project management. Its clients include the Cincinnati Ballet, the World Piano Competition and Yale University.
- ◆ **Acetech Services** is a refurbisher and reseller of prepress equipment.

All are relocating to offices in Hamilton County.

“These companies are excellent examples of what entrepreneurship is all about: innovation, hard work and growth,” said HCDC President and CEO David Main.

The Hamilton County Business Center will also dedicate renovations of the third and fourth floor of its 1776 Mentor Ave. incubator building. The renovations created six new office suites and resulted in other facility improvements, including an improved break and meeting room, and better signage for room numbers and client names.

Since the business center’s inception in 1989, more than 220 businesses have completed the multi-year incubation program and graduated into the community. During that time, its tenants have produced revenues of more than \$200 million. There are 45 companies currently in the program. Those companies alone have created 150 jobs during their tenancy and generated revenue of \$20.1 million during the past year.

###