



For Immediate Release

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For More Information:

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Operation Acceleration is Gearing up to Tour Central Pa.

Covering over 700 miles and stopping in seven locations throughout Central Pa., Operation Acceleration is heading our way later this month. And they have one clear mission: ***To provide qualifying businesses with up to \$15,000 in information technology project funding.***

The grant program is called IT Kickstart and is coordinated through the Center for eBusiness and Advanced Information Technology (eBizITPA), which is a Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority initiative that began in 2002. It is designed to help Pennsylvania-based companies apply e-business technology to business processes, increasing efficiency and improving competitiveness.

According to Susan Breon, president of eBizITPA, “The whole idea with IT Kickstart is to get Pennsylvania business to accelerate plans on that IT project they’ve been putting off. This program provides the incentive to finally get it done.”

And what an incentive. IT Kickstart provides funding—up to \$15,000 per company—as well as IT expertise to guide a company through its project. Companies can work with an existing IT provider, or eBizITPA can help identify one that best meets individual project requirements.

eBizITPA first launched IT Kickstart in northwest Pa. in 2004, and is currently in its second time through the program in that region.

Breon said, “We’ve had dozens of companies through the program in Northwest Pa. And many are now reaping the benefits of the work they’ve completed—new interactive web sites, accepting electronic orders from customers, custom integrated software programs—all kinds of projects that make them stronger and more competitive. And now that IT Kickstart has proven itself, it is time to launch the program throughout Central Pa.”



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Ron May, IT program manager at eBizITPA, added “The goal of this road tour, which we’re calling *Operation Acceleration*, is simply to raise awareness about the IT Kickstart program throughout Central Pa., and to inform companies about how the process works, what types of projects qualify, and how they can begin the process of securing project grant dollars.”

But May added that local IT providers will also want to learn more.

“This program will provide all kinds of opportunities for IT providers throughout the region.” said May. “If you’re an IT provider in Central Pennsylvania, you’ll definitely want to come to the information sessions and get the details.”

To launch *Operation Acceleration*, eBizITPA has been working in collaboration with the Industrial Modernization Center (IMC) and the Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP).

According to Carlos Colon, senior e-business consultant at PennTAP, “We have been working very closely with the people at eBizITPA to bring IT Kickstart to Central Pa. The program meshes perfectly with PennTAP’s objective of supporting technology-based economic development.”

IMC executive director Joe Fao agrees that IT Kickstart could potentially have a lasting impact on the region’s economy.

“In the short term, we’re going to see a lot of local IT providers getting an economic boost from these grant dollars,” said Fao. “In the long run, we’re going to see a number of these other companies that are now able to compete nationally and globally as a result of these IT projects. It’s just going to make the region that much stronger.”

The media are welcome and encouraged to attend the press conferences and the information sessions. There will be plenty of interview opportunities at both events. Please see Schedule Addendum for locations and times.

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Schedule Addendum

Operation Acceleration Road Tour Schedule

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Information sessions are full presentations where we will explain in details how the program works, and we'll answer any questions from companies, IT providers, and the media.

7:45-8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30-9:30 a.m. Information Session/Presentation/Q&A

9:30-10:00 a.m. Networking

Williamsport, PA

Tues., Sept. 20

at The Genetti, 200 West 4th Street

State College, PA

Wed., Sept. 21

at Celebration Hall, 2280 Commercial Blvd.

Altoona, PA

Thurs., Sept. 22

at The Ramada Inn, 1 Sheraton Drive

PRESS CONFERENCES

Press conferences will be brief stops where we will outline the highlights of the program, and we'll answer any questions from companies, IT providers, and the media. Weather permitting, press conferences will be held outside.

Lewisburg, PA

Mon., Sept. 19 at 3 p.m.

at SEDA-COG, 201 Furnace Road

Lock Haven, PA

Tues., Sept. 20 at 3 p.m.

at the Best Western, 101 E. Walnut Street

Philipsburg, PA

Wed., Sept. 21 at 3 p.m.

at the Moshannon Econ. Dev. Partnership, 200 Shady Lane

Bedford, PA

Thurs., Sept. 22 at 1:30 p.m.

at the Bedford Co. Dev. Association, 1 Corporate Drive