



News Release

Markell Launches Small Business LIFT in Sussex County

Initiative will help get Delaware's economy moving again by facilitating access to capital for small businesses

Lewes, Del. (April 24, 2009) – Gov. Jack Markell on Thursday announced that Rehoboth Toy & Kite Company is the first Sussex County participant in his Small Business LIFT, which will help small businesses survive the current economic downturn and get Delawareans back to work.

The initiative – Markell's Limited Investment for Financial Traction (LIFT) – uses \$5 million from the state's Strategic Fund to subsidize the interests on small-business loans. Businesses receiving the LIFT subsidy will repay the money to the state after two years, with the individual business owners themselves given personal guarantees as part of the program.

The investment by the state is expected to help between 200 and 500 Delaware small businesses with good credit histories access as much as \$50 million a year in loans from participating banks.

“Growing our economy is the only long-term solution to the historic challenges facing Delaware,” Markell said. “My Small Business LIFT supports the kinds of companies that we need most – Delaware businesses with sound plans for success. Across the country, hardworking small businesses are having trouble gaining access to affordable capital they need to grow and create jobs. Delaware will be different. The loans will be repaid, but it is the best deal a sound small business will be able to find to finance their growth.”

Markell, joined by members of the state's business community and Economic Development Office Director Alan Levin, made the announcement at the Community Bank in Lewes, which is a major participant in the initiative.

“The LIFT program will deliver assistance to fundamentally sound small businesses to help them weather this tough economy,” said Lynda Messick Community Bank Delaware President & CEO. “For a community bank like us, the LIFT program fits hand in glove with our business.”

To qualify for the Small Business LIFT, small businesses must be in operation for at least three years and can have as many as 50 employees. Participating banks agree to defer principal payments during the two years the state is subsidizing the interest.

“I think that this is an exciting program that the governor is doing with the state. This has been a tough economic year all around and every bit helps. Interest on line of credit and business loans really add up over the course of a year and the idea of 0% interest is exciting,” said Rachel Hughes, owner Rehoboth Toy & Kite Company. “I am in the business of selling ‘fun’. This will help with the finances of my operation so I can work more on keeping people smiling.

“The Small Business LIFT demonstrates the Governor’s commitment to Delaware businesses by continuing to grow Delaware business,” Levin said. “Our hope is that this program will serve as a bridge between these difficult economic times and the better days that are in our future.”