Building the Texas Economy
ONE BUSINESS AT A TIME

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

South-West Texas Border Small Business Development Center Network
The University of Texas at San Antonio
The South-West Texas Border SBDC Network and its affiliate SBDC host Institutions extend great thanks to our business and community clients, economic development allies and team members for the diligent work and service that helps grow the Texas economy “One Business at a Time.”

Texas small businesses were challenged during 2016, however remained optimistic as the State of Texas managed to weather the decline of oil prices reasonably well, compared to other “oil states.” Texas continues to focus on job creation and strengthening the competitiveness of its industries, as outlined by the Office of the Governor. As Texas works to promote international trade and investment, small business advocacy, entrepreneurial support, business retention and expansion, the Network will continue to keep its mission aligned.

Comprised of ten centers across South, Central and West Texas, the Network offers the most comprehensive resource in the region for business and community development. Emphasis has been placed on scale-up growth industry clusters and technology commercialization, business start-up, manufacturing competitiveness, high-growth minority businesses, international trade and investment, government contracting and corporate supply-chains, rural development, applied economics and development policy research, and shale energy development. “Building the economy one business at a time” guides the effectiveness of SBDC services as we strengthen Texas and build key international market connections with our partners.

Albert Salgado, Director
SWTXB Small Business Development Center Network

SERVICE RESULTS

| Total Businesses Served | 29,571 |
| Trainings, Seminars & Courses | 1,156 |
| Training Participants | 22,474 |
| Consulting Cases | 7,097 |

ECONOMIC IMPACT RESULTS

| Jobs Created | 6,011 |
| Jobs Retained | 6,443 |
| New Financing | $291,097,000 |
| New Sales | $740,538,000 |
| New Business Starts | 590 |
| Business Expansions | 499 |
| New Tax Revenue Generated | $78,534,767 |
SBDC long-term advising assistance is highly valuable from a public policy perspective because it returns tax revenues to state and federal governments, as well as value and capital to its clients that are greater than the direct cost of providing the service. For every $1.00 invested in the South-West Texas Border SBDC, a return of $15.26 is generated.

*2016 FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL INDEPENDENT STUDY BY JAMES J. CHRISMAN, PH.D.*
The SBDC International Trade Center is one of the largest trade assistance organizations in the U.S., and has already worked with over 20 countries across the Western Hemisphere.

Through a collaboration with America’s Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) and the Centro Regional de Promoción de la MIPYME (CENPROMYPE), the Institute’s International Trade Center received $1.8 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) to continue supporting efforts to replicate the SBDC model in Central America. Countries benefiting from this particular grant include Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, Belize and Nicaragua, where there are currently 38 operating SBDCs; the goal is to facilitate 10-25 new SBDCs.

In 2012, at the Summit of the Americas, the Small Business Network of the Americas (SBNA) was presented, which leverages the U.S. Small Business Development Center (SBDC) model that has evolved over 35 years, driving job creation and broad-based economic growth. The Center leads an SBDCGlobal program as part of the SBDC international expansion initiative stemming from SBNA. The effort is creating a hemisphere-wide network of SBDC programs to assist foreign small businesses start and grow their operations, while also serving as a potential market for the United States.

“\nThe stability and prosperity this development model brings will open up new economic opportunities for the people of Central America for generations to come.\n- Congressman Joaquin Castro\n
Currently, there are a total of 136 foreign operating SBDCs that have been established abroad as a result of the SBDCGlobal program, with more than 182 SBDCs expected to launch in 2017.

- Caribbean region with the Organization of American States has 23 SBDCs operating
- Chile with SERCOTEC will complete 50 SBDCs this year
- Colombia with SENA is launching 117 SBDCs
As the new SBDC Technology Commercialization Center of the UTSA South-West Texas Border SBDC Network, the Center works to increase science, engineering and technology based entrepreneurial capacity through outreach, management advisement and resource support services. The Center provides business counseling to small business owners, university researchers, and entrepreneurs looking to advance their innovations in the marketplace.

**Small Business Vouchers (SBV) Pilot**
In the summer of 2016, the Center worked with the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) SBV Pilot to bring the world-class resources of the national labs to overcome critical technology and commercialization challenges for small businesses in Texas. The Center is proud to report that an advanced manufacturing client has received a voucher in the amount of $89,795 to manufacture superconducting cavities for high power electron accelerators.

**Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership Program Grant**
In September 2016, the SWTXB SBDC Network entered into a partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Innovation & Technology for a statewide effort. This involves all Texas SBDC Network partners to train business advisors in technology commercialization and to provide Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) technical assistance to businesses, with an emphasis on underrepresented communities.

**i6 Challenge Competition**
In November 2016, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced major investments for Texas and other states. The Center, in partnership with the UTSA Office of Commercialization Innovation (OCI), was awarded Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) funds for their South-Texas Innovation Program (S-TIPP). The EDA’s Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship RIS program will allow the Center to spur innovation capacity building activities by facilitating knowledge transfer and adoption of best innovation, entrepreneurship and technology commercialization practices in the regional metropolitan target areas of Austin, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and the Rio Grande Valley.
Gabe Montoya’s passion for craft beer began in Pennsylvania, where after a day of rigorous rock climbing, he and his friends would trek to local breweries to unwind. The day-long journeys led to his interest and taste for craft beer. In 1995, Montoya began working at El Paso’s only local brewery where he became a master brewer. When the business closed in October 2012, Montoya decided to explore a long-desired business venture. In February 2013, Montoya contacted the El Paso Community College SBDC and joined forces with restaurateurs Justin Ordonez and Jason Hunt. The team had hopes of establishing a microbrewery that offered new ingredients and styles. Montoya also knew that he wanted to open the business in a downtown El Paso location, the heart of the desert that was once under water, which initiated the unique name, “Deadbeach.”

Beyond the formalities of starting the business, Montoya also needed assistance in structuring the partnership with Ordonez and Hunt. Over the next two years, the partners worked with the SBDC to access information on hiring procedures, viability of the project, and industry trends, among other needs. To the group’s advantage, Montoya had also purchased brewing equipment from his previous employer.

In November 2015, Montoya, Ordonez and Hunt celebrated the opening of Deadbeach Brewery. Today, Deadbeach Brewery operates at capacity and is one of three operating microbreweries in El Paso. With 70 percent of their business stemming from retail customers, the remaining business stems from local restaurants and bars. Now in its second year of business, Deadbeach Brewery plans to expand in the near future with hopes to sell to retailers in El Paso.
When Dr. Elizabeth Nava and her husband, John Yanaros, took a Labor Day trip in 2014, they didn’t expect to fall in love with their destinations of Fort Davis, Alpine and Far West Texas. After connecting and visiting with area residents, they discovered a need for dental practices in the region. Dr. Nava already had a separate practice operating in Dallas, TX.

The couple immediately moved on the project by approaching the Alpine Chamber of Commerce and the Big Bend Region Small Business Development Center in September 2014. After they signed a lease at the historical Casner Building in Alpine, they worked with SBDC Advisor Loretta Garcia over the following eight months to refine their business plan and prepare SBA loan applications. Dr. Nava managed to secure commercial loans with Stearns Bank and Capital One Bank, in addition to an SBA loan.

Big Bend Builders in Alpine received the contract to build Bella Dental West Texas and the business opened in late November 2015. The state-of-the-art facility is comprised of five operatory rooms, laboratory and sterilization rooms, and a children’s waiting area. With a special focus on handicapped patients and employees, her practice offers procedures ranging from simple teeth cleaning and extractions to braces, root canals and implants. The practice is also equipped with a digital 3-D imager for implants.

In its first year, the practice saw over 1,000 patients. Today, Dr. Nava and hygienists currently see 20-30 patients per day, three times per week. The practice is open an additional two days for patient scheduling, dental hygiene appointments, and insurance processing. The business employs a team of nine dental and management experts.

Bella Dental West Texas is credentialed with over 50 insurance companies and covers over five of the largest counties in Texas, with an additional two counties in New Mexico. In 2017, Dr. Nava plans to expand her staff size in order to bring smiles to 50 patients per day in Far West Texas.
Established by Larry and Flo Loika in 1980, All-Tex Irrigation and Supply assumed new owners in November 2014 when Jeff Perrine and Royce Pyssen bought the company. Perrine and Pyssen met while working at Knox Oilfield Supply eight years prior to becoming business partners and purchasing the company. With strong ties to the Concho Valley, both Perrine and Pyssen had considered pursuing their own business for some time.

Perrine and Pyssen debated whether to start from scratch or look for an established business. Ultimately, they chose to pursue All-Tex Irrigation because of the quality of equipment, cleanliness, and organization of the business. Perrine and Pyssen approached the Angelo State University Small Business Development Center and met with SBDC Business Advisor Paul Howard for assistance with a business plan, cash flow, and profit and loss projections.

The partners later presented their business plan and projections to their lender and secured a loan to purchase the business. The purchase of the business boosted the local economy, saved three full time jobs and created two full time jobs. All-Tex Irrigation & Supply is located on a prime piece of real-estate on the South side of San Angelo, TX. The well-established business specializes in selling a variety of irrigation equipment.

Currently, All-Tex Irrigation specializes in commercial farming and ranching irrigation systems, and carries everything needed to irrigate acres of land or residential homes. The business also provides solutions for irrigation systems, sprinkler systems, new wells, replacement wells, water pressure problems and booster pump systems, among other needs. While All-Tex Irrigation currently works with numerous commercial customers, Perrine and Pyssen plan to market to retail customers in the future.

“\nThe SBDC was instrumental in assisting us with our business plan and projections. They helped us along the way with answers to our questions.

JEFF PERRINE, CO-OWNER

EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE CONCHO VALLEY

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<th>Business Highlights</th>
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<td>Business Start</td>
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<td>Owner Investment — $150,000</td>
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<td>Private Loan — $1.5M</td>
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<td>Jobs Created — 2</td>
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ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY SBDC
Nestor Salinas first approached the Rio Grande College Small Business Development Center in 2010 to start his own transportation service company, X-tra Comfort, Inc. The business provided wheelchair van transportation services to the local community. But after recognizing a need for medical transportation services, he returned to the SBDC in 2013 and formed a new corporation, Med Shield Ambulance Service, Inc., which replaced his former business.

With the expansion and transformation of his previous business, Med Shield Ambulance Services now provides essential ambulatory services in three locations including Eagle Pass, Carrizo Springs, and San Antonio. During its past six years of operation, Med Shield Ambulance Services has received assistance from the SBDC for IRS and State Comptroller compliance, human resources, recordkeeping, QuickBooks and payroll. In 2015, the SBDC assisted Salinas to secure a loan in order to purchase his own building by putting an operating agreement in place and organizing QuickBooks files to maintain accurate financial statements that were required by the banking agency.

Today, Med Shield Ambulance Services employs a talented staff of 67, many of whom participate in SBDC trainings including those in QuickBooks, tax planning, human resources, and recordkeeping related consultations. Office Manager Tony Ovalle says he appreciates how the SBDC has helped make his job easier.

Thank you, Cynthia Gomez from the SBDC, for all the help and support with the tools we needed in making our company a success.

- Nestor Salinas, Owner

MOBILIZING THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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<td>Commercial Loan — $347,400</td>
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<td>Owner Investment — $93,600</td>
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<td>Jobs Created — 17</td>
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<td>Jobs Retained — 50</td>
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Packaging crushed ice into 40 lb. paper bags was the earliest stage of a business that would grow to serve clients across Central and South Texas. Located in San Antonio and opened by Jesus “Jesse” Mireles, III in 2001, Mireles Party Ice is the culmination of a family business that has evolved from early roots.

In 1974, with the help of his father, Jesse and his wife, Melinda Mireles, opened a grocery store that catered to various events with a high volume of requests for kegs and ice. Although the store became the largest keg distributor in San Antonio, Jesse found greater value in focusing the business on ice manufacturing. Through the 1980’s, the couple purchased ice blocks from local ice companies and packaged crushed ice in paper bags. By the 1990’s, Jesse had acquired two 2,400 lb. ice makers and in 2001, he built his first ice plant.

With plans to leave the family business to his son, Jesse Mireles IV, Jesse IV assumed the role of vice president and contacted the San Antonio Small Business Development Center for assistance. Since working on the company’s business plan, loan preparation, distribution forecasts and projections, Mireles Party Ice has seen great progress.

The company secured a $2.6 million SBA loan and has created and retained 35 jobs. Today, the business is in the midst of growing into its second location. With plans to shut down their original location, the new 26,000 square foot facility has the capacity to produce up to 350 tons of ice per day. The company’s 12 operating trucks deliver to a diverse client base including convenience stores, restaurants, bars, construction companies, airlines, food processors and more. By 2020, the company plans to expand its region farther South.
Virgil Tripp is a serial entrepreneur who sold his original business and retired in 1994. After retirement, Tripp had a new vision and started Tripp Research, Inc. with his son-in-law. The business manufactures high grade magazines for 1911-style pistols.

As a client of First National Bank in Bastrop, TX, the bank referred him to the Texas State University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to assist him with starting a new business. In previous business ventures, Tripp had the opportunity to work with the Sul Ross State University SBDC, so he knew the referral to Texas State University’s SBDC would result in successful funding for his new company. Tripp reached out to the SBDC at Texas State University to assist him with exporting the company’s product.

SBDC Business Advisor Bill Thompson completed an export plan, providing Tripp with international market research and guidance to implement the plan in various international markets. Thompson assisted Tripp Research, Inc. in finding an export broker and obtaining an SBA loan from First National Bank. With Thompson’s assistance, Tripp was able to increase the company’s annual revenue by $700,000; Tripp Research also retained nine jobs and created one more.

Today, Tripp plans to double Tripp Research’s production capacity and add a new line of product. In advance of such plans, Bill Thompson has already introduced Tripp and his son-in-law to Jim Caldwell of the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC). Thompson and Caldwell are currently working together to help Tripp Research with production line efficiency to double their capacity and expand their sales.

Through SBDC and TMAC, Bill and Jim have supplied real life, practical help that assists us in the small business arena.

- VIRGIL TRIPP, OWNER

TRIPP TO DOUBLE COMPANY CAPACITY

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<td>- Business Expansion</td>
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<td>- SBA 7(a) Loan—$149,000</td>
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<td>- Increased Sales—$700,000</td>
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<td>- Jobs Created — 1</td>
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<td>- Jobs Retained — 9</td>
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TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SBDC
Every piece of jewelry has a story behind it. Storey Jewelry, Inc. in Gonzales, TX has an over 100-year-old story to tell. The business first opened in 1903 as Gomez & Bright Jewelers and Music Store. Owner Chauncey Bright’s son-in-law, Glynn Storey, a former store apprentice, took over the store following Bright’s death. And over the course of 70 years and a couple of name changes, Storey Jewelry, Inc. finally came to be in the late 1970s.

In 1972, Bill Storey joined his father, Glynn, and became an outstanding jeweler and watchmaker. He later took over management after his parents transitioned into retirement and in 1979, he hired Paul Neuse to work as a part time jeweler and apprentice. Neuse would later become a CPA and settle in Houston with his wife. But, in 1996, Bill Storey asked Neuse and his wife to return to Gonzales and take ownership of the company. Twenty years later, Neuse began contemplating an expansion for Storey Jewelers. He reached out to the University of Houston-Victoria Small Business Development Center (SBDC), where he began working with former SBDC business advisor, Kacey Butler. With ideas of moving the store from its original location in downtown Gonzales to the city’s marketplace, Neuse and Butler discussed his business plan, expansion, and financial projections. Additionally, the SBDC provided an industry report that compared Storey Jewelry’s performance to the general industry.

With the assistance of a combination of funding from Sage Capital Bank, SBA, and the Gonzales Economic Development Corporation, Neuse and his wife relocated and opened the new Storey Jewelry in November 2015. Neuse hired one of the world’s best jewelry store decorators and together, they created a state-of-the-art facility. And, although hesitant about the success of a cosmopolitan store in South Texas, Storey Jewelry, Inc. is thriving and looking forward to another 100 years in business.

- Paul Neuse, Owner

FAMILY JEWELERS READY FOR ANOTHER CENTURY

Business Highlights

- Business Expansion
- SBA Loan
- Jobs Created – 3
- Jobs Retained – 3

Kacey and the SBDC gave me the tools and guidance necessary to work through some complex lending processes.

- Paul Neuse, Owner

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-VICTORIA SBDC
Carlos Fuentes, a professional pharmacist in Laredo, had been interested in opening a small business in the city for several years. In 2009, Fuentes decided to venture down a different path and approached the Texas A&M International University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for guidance on opening a business locally.

During that time, he completed a management certification program and while in the program, he prepared a business plan for an optical company. Following the preparation of his business plan, Fuentes requested information regarding financial options and a location for his business. After working with his SBDC business advisor and visiting several locations that had been recently released on the market, Fuentes found one that was appropriate and signed a lease agreement. The Texas A&M International University SBDC not only assisted in finding the right location for the business, but helped Fuentes access capital as well.

During the renovation of the location, Fuentes' business advisor assisted him with a working capital loan from Celtic Bank. Working with the SBDC resulted in Fuentes receiving the working capital loan for $150,000. With the SBDC’s assistance, the SBA Celtic Bank loan was approved and funded in time for the grand opening of Times Square Optical. Today, the business employs a staff of six with plans to grow.
Since April 2016, Dr. Mohammad Ayman Ghraowi, his wife, Sohair Sabawi Ghraowi, and his brother, Mohammad Bashar Ghraowi have been operating the Ghraowi Chocolate Company in Corpus Christi, TX. The history behind the company is just as rich as the chocolate they manufacture. As a young man, Ayman and his siblings helped their father in the chocolate making business. Ayman later left his home country of Syria to study and practice medicine in the U.S. and his brother stayed behind to operate the family business. Bashar, a chocolatier, would later bring a secret Syrian recipe and join his brother in the U.S. to open and operate the company.

While in the U.S., Ayman’s wife helped him manage their privately owned cancer centers for 20 years throughout South Texas before selling to Christus Spohn Hospital. Although

We owe all of our success to Celia’s continuous guidance, her sincere effort in helping us and keeping us going in the right direction.

- SOHAIR SABAWI GHRAOWI, OWNER

GHRAOWI FAMILY SHARES DELECTABLE PASSION

Ayman has stayed active with the hospital, he and Sohair returned to a different passion. In May 2014, the couple met with the Texas A&M Innovation Center in Corpus Christi to obtain industry and market research material on chocolate manufacturers. Thereafter, the center requested assistance from Del Mar College SBDC Business Advisor and International Trade Liaison, Celia Garza, to assist in creating a business plan for immigration purposes. Garza teamed-up with local immigration lawyers and coordinated special business workshops associated with business Visas. The training helped Garza and Sohair work with an immigration attorney to complete a highly detailed business plan and 3-year financial projection plan. Garza also created an investment and start-up cost analysis, and provided international trade and technical support for issues associated with importing and exporting, logistics, FDA labeling/ packaging, licensing/ permits, hiring employees and building a web presence.

Today, Sohair believes she is ready to expand the chocolate business and continues to work with Garza to select the perfect storefront for a second location.

DEL MAR COLLEGE SBDC
ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF BRILLIANCE

Established in 2010 in Mission, TX, Brilliant Inventors, LLC was created as a medium for innovative ideas to be tested and developed. Through this company, Sam and Jennifer Shipp developed a new invention: The Knife Glider®

The Knife Glider® aims to help individuals eliminate the common cause of most food-preparation injuries in the kitchen and to make food preparation more sanitary. The Knife Glider® is patented, and is 100 percent EPA- and Phthalate free. It is also made of FDA-grade plastic and is dishwasher safe. In December 2015, Sam and Jennifer were one of two inventors selected from a nationwide search to appear on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” where Jennifer also accepted a $10,000 award from Joy Mangano, the inventor of the Miracle Mop®.

Mangano was the inspiration for the movie “Joy.” The couple has also been featured on Kitchenware News, among other local media. In July 2016, The Knife Glider® appeared on HSN with selling legend Bob Cercosta. Currently, Sam and Jennifer are producing a nationwide infomercial set to launch March 2017. The goals for the couple are to produce jobs by keeping their manufacturing local, generating strong revenue, and infusing money into the local economy.

Due to their innovativeness and tenacity to succeed, Sam and Jennifer have received many local awards, including the 2015 Innovation through Technology Business of the Year award by the Harlingen SBA District Office. They went on as one of 10 national SBA finalists to present The Knife Glider™ in Washington DC. Additionally, Sam and Jennifer competed for and received two Ruby Red Ventures Grants of $10,000 and $15,000 by the Mission Economic Development Corporation, as well as a McAllen Chamber of Commerce Innovation Grant Award of $10,000. These funding awards were made possible with guidance and support from the UTRGV SBDC.

Business Highlights

- Business Expansion
- Owner Investment — $30,000
- Increased Sales — $372,605
- Jobs Retained — 2

Everyone at the SBDC has been with us through both the tears and the victories. We consider them lifelong friends.

- SAM SHIPP, OWNER
Brothers Carlos and Sergio Gordoa approached the SBDC International Trade Center in 2011 to seek assistance in wholesale, retail and trade. For over 20 years, the brothers had been operating multiple facilities in Mexico as suppliers of raw material for industrial recycling. The company had also begun to trade and export their materials from Mexico.

With an interest in the U.S. market, the brothers contacted the San Antonio Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to find a location for their business in the San Antonio region. They also worked with the SBDC International Trade Center to discover possible export markets. In 2013, the Gordoa brothers found a location in Von Ormy, TX, just outside San Antonio. The brothers have continued to trade and recycle nonferrous materials for purchase and resale. When the Gordoa brothers first started working with the SBDC International Trade Center, the business reported initial export sales of $160,000 to two countries. Today, Goal Industries, Inc. has made significant strides with exports to Brazil, Mexico, China, Spain and Belgium. And in 2016, the company reported export sales of over $9 million. In 2017, the company plans to further expand with the formal operation of the Von Ormy yard on the retail side, hiring 10 more employees to operate its physical location. Goal Industries, Inc. continuously strives to be the finest supplier of raw material for industrial recycling, focused on the quality of its materials, customer care and operative excellence.

Business Highlights
- Business Expansion
- Increased Export Sales — $9.8M
- Exports — 5 countries
- Jobs Created — 1
- Jobs Retained — 2

The Center has provided us with valuable market information and assisted us in developing an extensive database that has helped Goal Industries prospect new suppliers and customers.

- CARLOS GARDOA, OWNER
When Scott and Maricela Gray formed their own company, Elevate Systems, they knew they would need assistance to grow the company that would eventually secure contracts with the U.S. military. As a top priority, they contacted their local SBDC Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC).

Based in San Antonio, Elevate Systems specializes in engineering design, reverse and re-engineering, drawing package creation, 3D modeling and analysis, rapid prototyping and additive manufacturing (3D printing), among other services. They have completed projects for the U.S. Air Force and Army, utilizing technologies like 3D modeling, analysis and printing to re-engineer military aircraft parts, providing major cost savings for the federal government. The company redesigned an impeller for the B-52 Bomber that was 3D printed and is flying on 20 airplanes today. They have also provided overhaul services for a compressor that supports a particular onboard Air Force mission, which resulted in saving approximately 66 percent of the cost where the original equipment manufacturer was unable to perform. Elevate Systems utilized 3D printing for the tooling of the compressor reassembly. They also won work with the U.S. Army, supporting 3D modeling and structural analysis on the Blackhawk and Apache Helicopters.

Prior to securing such contracts, Maricela and Scott contacted the SBDC PTAC to obtain guidance, acquire appropriate certifications, receive QuickBooks training, and build a resource network. Now in their fourth year, they have diversified into commercial design markets. A primary project includes the development of augmented virtual reality goggles that can be found in retail stores like Target and Best Buy. Today, Elevate Systems is an Economically Disadvantaged Woman Owned Small Business, a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, a Hispanic Woman Owned Small Business, a TxDOT Certified Small Business and a HUB.
**STRRENGTHENING RURAL Communities**

In January 2014, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for the City of La Grange approached the Texas State Small Business Development Center for a GAP analysis. The analysis, completed by the Institute’s SBDC Rural Business Program, provided statistical data reporting retail expenditures versus retail receipts for the community.

Texas State SBDC Rural Business Advisor, Bill Thompson, pointed out that the analysis highlighted the building material industry as an industry with over $1.3 million in annual leakage for the City of La Grange. EDC Director Scott Byler said the GAP analysis serves as a great tool for businesses interested in relocating to their community.

The City of La Grange had a large vacant building space available after the closing of a Walmart store. Ongoing dialogue with a commercial real estate agent representing the vacant building space led the La Grange EDC to consider the Sutherlands Home Improvement and Building Materials Corporation as a possible new retailer. Byler utilized the information from the GAP analysis in a presentation to the real estate agent, who in turn, presented the information to Sutherlands.

By Fall 2014, the company had opened for business, marking a major economic impact for the City of La Grange. Beyond a significant increase in sales tax impact, Sutherlands created 25 jobs in the community. The nearly 100-year-old company currently operates 48 stores across 14 states, with 13 stores in Texas.

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**NEW FUNDING ENERGIZES TEXAS TRADE GROWTH**

Funded by the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) Grant Initiative from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) aims to increase the number of Texas small businesses exporting to foreign markets and to boost the value of exported goods and services.

TDA has partnered with the Texas Governor’s Office of Economic Development and Tourism, the UTSA SBDC International Trade Center, and the U.S. Department of Commerce to develop and implement a program to offer Texas small businesses export training, technical assistance, market expansion opportunities through participation in the state-led trade shows, and financial support to conduct individual export activities. This includes Gold Key Matching Services, International Partner Search, Discover Global Market Conferences, foreign language translation, foreign market sales trips, website optimization for global customers, fees for shipping sample products, and so much more. Through TDA’s partnership with the ITC, eligible small businesses will have the opportunity to receive on-site, customized training, professional consulting, and market research related to international sales, logistics, finance, compliance, and personnel management.

For more information, contact Berenice. espinoza@utsa.edu or contact TDA’s grants office at (512) 463-4406 or grants@texasagriculture.gov
SBDCNet REACHES Milestone

80,000th research request signifies support for the nationwide network of America’s SBDCs

SBDCNet, the official National Information Clearinghouse of the U.S. Small Business Administration, is hosted by UTSA’s Institute for Economic Development. The program services more than 1,000 organizational members across the ASBDC Network of Small Business Development Centers located in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam.

In Spring 2016, the SBDCNet completed its 80,000th small business research project request. The milestone not only signifies the demand for the research services it provides, but the efficacy of its researchers, both graduate students and full time professionals. In 2016, SBDC business advisors reported that the SBDCNet saved them 27,780 work hours, which allowed them to serve the equivalent of an additional 5,556 long-term SBDC clients.

Overseen by director Matthew Jackson, SBDCNet provides small business research services to SBDC business advisors. From manufacturing in Pennsylvania, to wine production in California, or medical innovations in Texas, the SBDCNet services diverse information and business resource needs. Researchers can provide a broad range of financial, market and demographic research reports customized to a client’s industry and geographic location. In addition, SBDCNet now offers an array of products and services to support small to mid-size community development.

The University of Texas at San Antonio’s South-West Texas Border SBDC Network would like to acknowledge and thank the many partners that make small business assistance available.
The South-West Texas Border SBDC Network stretches for 79 counties across south, central, west and Gulf Coast Texas. This vast and diverse territory encompasses 108,000 square miles including our state’s capitol.

To meet the challenge of providing services to aspiring and experienced entrepreneurs, we operate 10 professionally staffed SBDC centers. Each center matches clients and expertise, ultimately helping to create jobs and grow the economy. The SBDC is funded in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), The University of Texas at San Antonio, as well as colleges and universities throughout our territory. Our confidential business advising services are offered at no cost to SBDC clients.

The 29,571 advising and training clients served in 2016 represent almost 20 percent of the 148,784 employer businesses in the service area. Our SBDC clients continue to outperform the average Texas business in sales and employment. Those clients, who represent our long-term impact, also generated more than $62 million in state tax revenues for Texas.

For more information:
www.txsbdc.org | 210.458.2450