BUILDING THE TEXAS ECONOMY ONE BUSINESS AT A TIME

2017 ANNUAL REPORT
Building the Texas Economy

The Texas economy continued to thrive on small business competitiveness, growth, job creation, and diversifying business opportunities throughout 2017. However, the South-West Texas Border SBDC Network, along with our sister network in Houston, addressed a major challenge in 2017.

On August 25, Hurricane Harvey landed near Rockport as a Category 4 storm, leaving devastating damage. To magnify the situation, it tracked northwest and stalled in the Victoria area. Our SWTXB SBDC Network immediately began working with FEMA and SBA Disaster officials stationed at Business Recovery Centers in Rockport and Port Aransas.

Texas SBDCs have been assisting small business owners with Economic Injury and Physical Damage loans, analyzing the feasibility of reopening or relocating, projecting losses and future revenues, and restoring financials among other needs. As Governor Abbott focuses on rebuilding Texas, SBDCs are targeting small business recovery.

Comprised of ten centers across 79 counties, the Network offers the most comprehensive resource in the region for small business and community development. Emphasis persists on scale-up growth industry clusters and technology commercialization while our SBDCs continue providing services in business start-up, manufacturing competitiveness, international trade, government contracting and corporate supply-chains, rural development and small business research.

As the South-West Texas Border Network faces new challenges to “Build the Texas Economy One Business at a Time,” we continue to provide innovative and excellent service to our clients. I wish to thank all of our key stakeholders for your leadership and commitment and look forward to a very successful 2018.

Albert Salgado
Executive Director
South-West Texas Border SBDC Network

In 2017, the Texas State Star came home to the South-West Texas Border SBDC Network when Business Advisor, Patrice McElfresh, earned the award. She provides clients with advice on all aspects of start-up and scale-up with specialization in marketing, business plan development, business financing, and food industry management. A UTSA alumnus with extensive training, McElfresh has provided clients with direction and advice since 2005.

America’s Small Business Development Center (ASBDC) Network recognizes “State Stars” who significantly contribute to their regional or state SBDC program.
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 $8.91 is generated.

*2017 FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL INDEPENDENT STUDY BY JAMES J. CHRISMAN, PH.D.
Less than two years after Chilean President Michelle Bachelet celebrated the opening of Chile’s first Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Valparaiso, the country commemorated the completion of its national SBDC network with the opening of its 51st Center in August 2017.

Chile is one of several countries where UTSA’s Institute for Economic Development is helping spur foreign job growth and economic development, in turn, expanding market access for the United States. In 2015, the Institute’s International Business Advisors began consulting and training the Chilean Ministry of Economy. As a result, Chile has provided business consulting to over 19,000 entrepreneurs and has created 2,435 jobs to-date.

“Thanks to our joint work, we have been able to develop our Small Business Development Centers [CDN - Centros de Desarrollo de Negocios]. I’m pleased to participate in the official launch of this center because with it, we are accomplishing our goal,” said President Bachelet.

The Institute’s SBDC International Trade Center (ITC) leads the expansion of the U.S. State Department’s Small Business Network of the Americas (SBNA), which leverages the high-performing U.S. SBDC model. In 2017, the SBDC ITC also received $1.42 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA). The countries of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, where 45 SBDCs are currently operating, will receive the business development training needed to facilitate 17 new domestic SBDCs and three SBDC International Trade Centers.

With the 2018 Summit of the Americas slated for April, the SBDC ITC will again join forces with its state and federal partners to continue strengthening SBNA. Plans to expand the initiative’s capacity to 100,000 entrepreneurial projects per year are firmly underway.

“The UTSA banner has a firm presence abroad and we continue to serve as a strong partner for the U.S. State Department,” said Robert McKinley, UTSA Senior Associate Vice President for Economic Development. “Our efforts are strengthening foreign economies and sparking business opportunities between the U.S. and the countries we work with.”

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TECHNOLOGY ACCREDITATION
In its first year, the SBDC Technology Commercialization Center (TCC) has collaborated with partners at the university, regional, state and federal levels to help science and technology companies advance their innovations through some of the most rigorous grant competitions. The Center also earned its national accreditation, distinguishing the SWTXB SBDC Network as one of 18 “Technology Accredited” SBDC Networks in the United States.

GUIDING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS
Engaged in the Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership grants program, the SBDC TCC partnered with all Texas SBDC Networks and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Investment & Innovation to provide outreach and technical assistance to guide tech companies through Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant applications. These grants, referred to as America’s Seed Fund™, provide critical early stage research and development funding to help small businesses commercialize cutting edge innovations. The SBIR/STTR program sets aside over $2.5 billion annually.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PARTNERSHIP
In October 2017, SBDC TCC Director Bijo Mathew partnered with the Kansas SBDC for its “Encountering Innovations Week” conference held at Wichita State University. The event allowed the Center to showcase Texas innovators to DoD technology scouts. The U.S. Navy also selected the SBDC TCC as the Texas host for its December 2017 Naval Sea and Air Systems Command SBIR/STTR Innovation Summit, a premier event that provided an opportunity for technology-based businesses in Texas to connect with the U.S. Navy, which annually invests $350 million in innovative ideas.

INNOVATING FOR HER
Two UTSA alumni, Bianca Cerqueira, Ph.D. and Lauren Cornell, M.S. took on the battle against breast cancer. Their biotechnology start-up company, NovoThelium, is developing a bioengineered human scaffold that allows mastectomy patients to regenerate a nipple from their own cells, maintaining projection, natural pigmentation, and improved sensation. The SBDC TCC assisted NovoThelium with their SBIR Grant applications and the Rice Business Challenge, where they landed among the top six contestants; the Venture Challenge Competition and the Texas Venture Labs Investment Competition, where they took first place awards; and the Small Business Administration InnovateHER Challenge, where they earned a spot among the top 10 national finalists. InnovateHER highlights products and services that have a measurable impact on the lives of women.

Pictured Above: UTSA alumni, Bianca Cerqueira, Ph.D. and Lauren Cornell, M.S. work in their laboratory.

Photo Courtesy: Courtney Campbell, UTSA Photographer
The starting point:
Alberto Gonzalez and Christopher Ramirez developed El Paso Rubber Recycling while attending The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). Required to create a mock company, the two capitalized on the opportunity to evolve the idea into a business endeavor. After researching several waste management problems, a solution to combat discarded tires and industry manufactured scrap arose. The discarded material would be reused to create eco-friendly products, offering both environmental and economic benefits.

The development:
The two approached the El Paso Community College SBDC in February 2016. Business Advisor Elizabeth Mariscal assisted the owners with strengthening their business plan, considering start-up costs, and reviewing financial projections. Shortly after, El Paso Rubber Recycling launched its operations. In 2016, Gonzalez and Ramirez also received assistance from the South-West Texas Border SBDC Network’s International Trade Center to locate suppliers and begin importing rubber products, purchasing equipment, and launch international sales.

The outcome:
- Gonzalez and Ramirez invested $75,000 and created three jobs.
- El Paso Rubber Recycling imports from China and Mexico, and sells recyclable rubber to the polymers industry, cement producers, and auto parts producers nationally.
- The company also started producing tire-derived fuel, an interim solution to scrap tire waste.
- Gonzalez and Ramirez coordinated an internship program with UTEP’s College of Engineering and have since employed three students who have earned academic credit for researching and testing products.

We were able to expand our knowledge of running our business with the assistance of the SBDC and the International Trade Center.

- Alberto Gonzalez, Owner, El Paso Rubber Recycling

Recycling Ideas, Realizing Dreams
The help I have received from the SBDC available right here in Alpine, along with my business advisor’s personal attention, is reassuring and I am more confident in my business.

- Larry Crawford, Owner, Hammerfest Forge

THE STARTING POINT:
Artist blacksmith, Larry Crawford, can transform cold and rigid steel into elaborate structures. For over three decades, he has brought his inspired designs to life through traditional blacksmithing. Crawford’s high-end metalwork emphasizes craftsmanship and aesthetic integrity while pleasing the needs and desires of his clients. His passion for blacksmithing fueled his entrepreneurial spirit to establish Hammerfest Forge in 1995, originally based in Marble Falls, Texas.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
After 20 years in Marble Falls, Crawford contacted the Sul Ross State University SBDC, where he worked directly with SBDC Director Patricia Long on the proper steps to relocate his business in the Big Bend region. The two worked on the appropriate filings to reopen the business and obtain financing. As a result of the collaboration, BBVA Compass Bank financed the project and the business officially reopened in Alpine, Texas in April 2017. From hardware, lighting, and furniture, to elaborate liturgical and architectural ironwork, Crawford manufactures intricate and elaborate structures that remain timeless.

THE OUTCOME:
• With SBDC assistance, Crawford secured a $30,000 commercial loan from BBVA Compass Bank in addition to an owner investment of $24,000.
• The company added three jobs and expanded its service area to Far West Texas.
• Crawford also reaches clients in Houston, Dallas, and Austin.
• Hammerfest Forge services corporate institutions, homeowners, designers, architects, contractors, churches, and small businesses.
PAPERLESS SOLUTIONS IN AN ELECTRONIC WORLD

The SBDC has allowed me to see the growth of my company and a dream come true to provide a great place for employees in our community to work.

- Brent Jameson, CEO, Onboarding Solutions

THE STARTING POINT:
While Onboarding Solutions operated successfully for just over three years, owner Brent Jameson had a vision of expanding. With an interest in competing for monetary prizes, Jameson explored the opportunity of competing in the 2017 San Angelo Business Plan and Texas Rural Challenge “Texas Strong Fast Pitch” competitions. Both required extensive planning, preparation and an array of documentation. Jameson worked with Angelo State University SBDC Business Advisor Dezara Johnson and ASU business students who, under Johnson, helped Jameson prepare for the competitions.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
Johnson first met with Onboarding Solutions in January 2017, leading to the creation of a business overview, business plan, financial projections, and a presentation for judging panels. Onboarding Solutions transforms traditional paper-based transactions in human resources, transportation, and education into streamlined electronic processes. The company eliminates paperwork associated with new hires and student registration, allowing human resources to stay connected on all aspects of hiring, personnel changes, disciplinary actions and more. Processes that formerly took three weeks are reduced to three days. Some research firms have estimated an onboarding system can save companies anywhere from $600 - $1,100 per new hire.

THE OUTCOME:
• Onboarding Solutions won a combined $26,000 from the San Angelo Business Plan and Texas Strong Fast Pitch competitions.
• The company created five new jobs and has the capacity to serve customers nationwide.
• The company’s clientele includes companies from all industry types including the Department of Transportation and public, private, and charter school districts. Its largest client uses its systems in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas.
• Onboarding Solutions plans to grow in 2018 with a target on untapped school districts in Texas and the U.S.
THE STARTING POINT:
Nine years after graduating from the Texas Wesleyan University School of Law and earning her license to practice in the State of Texas, Sandra Cortes approached the Sul Ross State University-Rio Grande College SBDC with one goal in mind. After working for a local law firm and gaining a vast amount of experience, the ambitious 33-year-old felt ready to open her own law firm in Eagle Pass, Texas.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
Business Advisor Cynthia Gomez worked with Cortes to provide information on the appropriate legal structure, pre-venture licenses, and local permits associated with establishing an independent law firm. Gomez also guided Cortes in obtaining a commercial loan to support start-up costs for her practice. In addition, Gomez assisted Cortes with human resources hiring policies and documents, including QuickBooks and Payroll services. To date, Gomez continues to assist in the areas of human resources, recordkeeping, and report filing.

THE OUTCOME:
- Cortes invested $81,000, secured a $75,000 commercial loan, and created nine jobs.
- The Mata-Cortes Law Firm is one of a few area law firms specializing in litigation and personal injury; the firm sees approximately 20 clients monthly.
- After its first year of operation in August 2017, the Mata-Cortes Law Firm reported an approximate 150 clients.

By working with the SBDC, I learned that a successful law firm must go beyond just the practice of law, and into the realm of sound business decisions.

- Sandra Cortes, Owner, Mata-Cortes Law Firm, LLC

JUSTIFYING EXCELLENCE
FROM FARMERS MARKET TO MILLION-DOLLAR ENTERPRISE

The SBDC has been, and always will be, an invaluable resource for my company no matter how big it grows.

- Jaya Shrivastava, Owner, Sassy Lassi

THE STARTING POINT:
What began as an eatery endeavor rapidly turned into an unimaginable path toward exponential success. Jaya Shrivastava first approached the Texas State University SBDC in 2011 with an interest in opening an Indian restaurant, but after realizing she had no experience in restaurant management, former Business Advisor Dick Johnson encouraged her to pursue a different endeavor; the manufacturing of a drinkable yogurt called Sassy Lassi, which Shrivastava was selling at local farmer’s markets at the time.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
Through Johnson’s relationship with the Texas Department of Agriculture, he managed to facilitate a meeting between Shrivastava and the Whole Foods Market corporation. The corporation agreed to distribute her product at three locations in Austin, Texas. Seven years later, Sassy Lassi has grown to occupy the shelves of 30 Whole Foods Market stores, 154 H-E-B locations, and 400 Walmart stores in Texas. Sassy Lassi has relocated three times to manage its growth; the company is currently leasing a 30,000 sq. ft. facility.

THE OUTCOME:
• To finance Sassy Lassi’s expansion, Shrivastava invested $180,000 and worked to obtain a $1.25 million SBA 7(a) loan, as well as a $65,000 commercial loan.
• Access to these loans allowed Shrivastava to retain 11 jobs.
• Sassy Lassi currently distributes regionally, but firm plans are in place to expand nationally.
• Shrivastava is now working with current TSU SBDC Director Joe Harper on a second SBA loan.
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
AT SAN ANTONIO
SBDC

As we have faced challenges over the years, the SBDC has been there providing amazing service to our small business. The SBDC is a San Antonio treasure!

- Henry ‘Pete’ Van de Putte, CEO, Dixie Flag & Banner Co.

THE STARTING POINT:
A legacy client of The University of Texas at San Antonio SBDC since 1993, Dixie Flag and Banner Company has experienced exponential growth since Chairman and CEO Henry “Pete” Van de Putte, Jr. first worked with then Business Advisor, Mary Peters, on an SBA loan that would finance expansion into a 13,000 square foot facility. A manufacturer of flags and banners since 1958, the company has evolved into a trusted industry leader and its work can be seen across some of the most esteemed and recognized venues in the U.S.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
Dixie Flag’s relationship with the SASBDC would develop over the next two decades as would its own leadership. Now a third-generation company led by Pete’s daughter, Vanessa Van de Putte, President & COO, multiple Dixie Flag employees have gone beyond advising with current Business Advisor Crystal Darby and engaged in SASBDC’s Building Business Excellence (BBE) course. The seven-week strategic leadership program supports established companies scale up. The Values Based Leadership (VBL) facet of the BBE training has since been adopted by Dixie Flag. The nationally regarded professional development tool created by HOLT CAT is practiced by prominent organizations including the San Antonio Spurs.

THE OUTCOME:
• Dixie Flag and Banner Company has provided flags for the San Antonio Spurs, the Valero Alamo Bowl, the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, five U.S. Presidential Inaugurations, and more.
• The company has manufactured flags as large as 150 feet by 300 feet.
• Since the 1950s, the company has grown to employ 38 staff members and over the last 10 years, the company has plateaued at sales between $2.3 million and $2.7 million.
• Today, Dixie Flag and Banner Company has annual sales exceeding $3 million.
SADDLE UP, SCALE UP

The SBDC has been very helpful and instrumental to the overall success of Circle Y Saddles, Inc. over the years. The SBDC has proven to be a very valuable asset to the community.”

- Mark Jemelka, COO, Circle Y Saddles, Inc.

THE STARTING POINT:

Circle Y Saddles, Inc. has manufactured quality saddles since 1960 in Yoakum, Texas. Current owner, Steve Tucker, purchased the company in 2003. A second Brand acquired in 2012, Reinsmen Equestrian, continued to operate in Tennessee. When Executive V.P. Mark Jemelka needed to relocate Reinsmen to Yoakum for logistical and financial reasons, he contacted the University of Houston-Victoria SBDC and connected with former Business Advisor Lisa Barr. Circle Y Saddles is America’s leading saddle brand and sells its products internationally through a network of authorized dealers. Reinsmen Equestrian produces the only factory produced domestic-made bit in the U.S. and stands as an elite brand.

THE DEVELOPMENT:

Prior to working with the UHV SBDC, Circle Y had also worked with the UTSA Institute for Economic Development’s Southwest Trade Adjustment and Assistance Center (SWTAAC). At the time, a third branch of the company, Precision Saddle Tree, which manufactures the wooden tree portion of the saddle, caught fire in 2013. The fire stopped production for one year. SWTAAC assisted the business in obtaining technical and management assistance to deflect the effect of foreign trade. In addition, Jemelka and Barr collaborated with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Yoakum Economic Development Board for rebuilding assistance and employment subsidies to retain skilled labor.

THE OUTCOME:

- Jemelka and Barr secured a $200,000 grant from the Enterprise Fund with the Yoakum Economic Development Corporation and a $1.2 million commercial loan package.
- After the expansion project, Circle Y consolidated its operations and relocated Reinsman Equestrian from Tennessee to the new 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse addition in Yoakum.
- Circle Y created 10 new jobs and retained 85.
- Circle Y now works with current Business Advisor, Shirley Sommer, to address issues including the updating of saddle pad production equipment to the latest technology.
TARGETING A NEED

Without your services and Theresa, I would have been lost in the wilderness writing my business plan and making my financial projections.

- Dr. Ryan T. Rogers, Padre Dermatology, PLLC

THE STARTING POINT:
A board certified Dermatologist and fellowship trained Mohs Micrographic Surgeon, Dr. Ryan T. Rogers decided to open his Texas-based practice, Padre Dermatology, PLLC, while completing his fellowship at the Dermatologic Surgery Specialists P.C. in Macon, Georgia. Mohs Micrographic Surgery is considered the gold standard for treating all forms of skin cancer on the head, neck, hands, feet, and other areas of the body. With a medical degree from UT Health San Antonio and trained in all areas of general dermatology, surgical dermatology, and facial rejuvenation, Dr. Rogers brought an extensive skillset to the City of Corpus Christi.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
In 2016, Dr. Rogers contacted the Del Mar College SBDC and connected with Business Advisor Theresa Moffitt. For six months, they worked remotely via email and phone calls to prepare a business plan and a detailed 36-month projected balance sheet, profit and loss estimates, and cash flow to apply for financing. After securing financing for the start of his medical practice, Dr. Rogers continued to collaborate with Moffitt on plans for his expansion in 2017.

THE OUTCOME:
• Dr. Rogers obtained a commercial loan and a line of credit.
• Padre Dermatology, PLLC created five jobs and retained another five.
• After just six weeks of operation, Padre Dermatology reported positive cash flow.
• Dr. Rogers is the only Mohs fellowship trained surgeon to offer the procedure within a 100-mile radius of Corpus Christi.
NEW MARKETS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

With the help and guidance of our advisor and the SBDC, we were able to grow our business by getting the certifications needed.

- Hector Alonzo, Sr., CEO, H.N.A. Electric, Inc.

THE STARTING POINT:
An alumnus of Texas A&M University, Hector Alonzo, Sr. acquired various positions at reputable electric companies, where he developed hands-on experience with lighting power, underground duct banks, temporary power, and more. In 2007, Alonzo, Sr. acquired ownership of H.N.A., Inc. and by 2015, he became the owner and president of H.N.A. Electric, Inc. Running the company in partnership with his son and daughter, Hector and Lolis, the family had a larger vision for the company.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
In 2015, Alonzo, Sr. contacted the Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) SBDC and began working with Business Advisor Tina Rodriguez on obtaining certification as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Historically Underutilized Business (HUB), and a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE). Receiving DBE, HUB, and MBE certifications from the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, and the South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency opened the door to new opportunities.

THE OUTCOME:
• H.N.A. Electric accessed new markets including state and federal agencies, which increased revenue, created and retained employees, and financed equipment and the business location.
• The company’s portfolio includes Wal-Mart, Falcon Bank, Summit Building & Design, TAMIU and The Outlet Shoppes at Laredo.
• The company has expanded its service area across Texas.
• The U.S. Small Business Administration San Antonio District recognized H.N.A. Electric as the local 2017 “Family-Owned Business of the Year.”
THE STARTING POINT:
When Abel Gonzalez received news from his doctor that he only had seven years of physical mobility left before being confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life, he refused to accept it as his reality. Diagnosed with severe Rheumatoid Arthritis, Gonzalez extensively studied and focused on his diet and physical fitness, managing to eliminate the illness and reverse most of the physical damage. His fight for an active lifestyle led him to an unbelievable opportunity that has evolved beyond his dreams.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
Gonzalez walked onto NBC’s American Ninja Warrior show and was one of the few athletes to complete the obstacle course and advance. Today, Gonzalez is an active competitor on NBC’s American Ninja Warrior and USA Network’s Team Ninja Warrior. Gonzalez has garnered millions of viewers and supporters. But, Gonzalez’s fitness journey also led him to pursue another desire: to open a ninja warrior-themed fitness gym. Gonzalez approached The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley SBDC in 2015 and connected with Business Advisor Aaron Gonzalez who assisted with developing a business plan including financial projections and obtaining key market research.

THE OUTCOME:
• In 2016, Gonzalez opened AXIOS Warrior Academy, a training facility focused on healthy, therapeutic human movement with modern equipment modeled after American Ninja Warrior.
• After the business outgrew its facility, Gonzalez worked with the SBDC to obtain financing for a larger facility.
• The new location in Mission, Texas is 5,000 square feet, five times the size of his original gym.
• Today, Gonzalez trains members of all ages and travels the country sharing his #WeAreAllAbel story from a televised stage.
The ITC has been of assistance to us in helping us identify possible sales opportunities as well as possible new distributors.
- Mariann Jones, Administrator, McMillan Flow Control

THE STARTING POINT:
A world leader in its industry, McMillan Flow Control manufactures compact flow sensors, switches, and controllers that are used in multiple industries, including semiconductor manufacturing equipment, automotive fuel consumption research, pharmaceutical research, water quality monitoring, and scientific research. Based in Georgetown, Texas, McMillan faced many common problems for small manufacturing exporters and in June of 2016, became a client of the SBDC International Trade Center.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
With less than 50 employees, McMillan regularly deals with challenges including timely payments by foreign buyers, cultural and language issues, and finding distributors interested in selling solutions, rather than simply adding their product line. Doug Smith, Assistant Director for the SBDC International Trade Center, has been working with Administrator Mariann Jones to grow their export sales by identifying new customers in the United Kingdom and Canadian markets, as well as a study of opportunities in Australia.

THE OUTCOME:
• McMillan products can be found on nearly every continent.
• The company’s products account for above 40 percent of recent sales.
• McMillan Flow Control’s major export markets include Japan, Taiwan, and Germany.

SBDC INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER
210.458.2470 | texastrade.org
THE STARTING POINT:
Alamo City Engineering Services, Inc. (ACES) is a cybersecurity and information technology company headquartered in San Antonio, Texas. ACES works exclusively within the federal and state government markets, and local government to include education. The company became certified as a Veterans Administration Certified Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB), an SBA Certified HUB Zone Small Business and a State of Texas HUB Certified Business. ACES President Craig Stephens first turned to the PTAC to obtain these valuable certifications.

THE DEVELOPMENT:
As a prime contractor, ACES has provided satellite communications, enterprise network and telecommunications, and Information Assurance / Cyber Operations to support defense and national security customers globally since 2001. Stephens connected with Business Advisor Curtis Mohler, who assisted with CVE-VA Vetbiz recertification processes, and System Award Management (SAM) and SBA profile reviews. Mohler provided training on federal databases to expand their business footprint in federal and state markets. He also provided contact information for key federal and state procurement officials.

THE OUTCOME:
• ACES has received contracts for The Executive Office of the U.S. President, the U.S. Army, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Veterans Administration, and more.
• In 2017, the company retained 30 employees and expanded its business nationally to service all business sectors.
• In June 2017, the company received a four-year defense industry contract supporting the U.S. Marine Corps Systems Command valued at $27 million.

The efforts of the SBDC PTAC have assisted ACES in our expansion into the government markets, which include federal, state and local governments as well as educational institutions.

- Craig Stephens, President, Alamo City Engineering Services, Inc.
THE ROAD AHEAD

In its 8th year, the 2017 Texas Rural Challenge (TRC) turned out its largest attendance to-date. Hosted at the Waco Convention Center by the UTSA Institute for Economic Development, the SBDC Rural Business Program, and the Office of the Governor, the conference garnered approximately 400 attendees.

As one of the only statewide conferences to focus on rural matters, TRC provided over 20 educational sessions and memorable keynotes including host of “The Daytripper,” Chet Garner, and CEO of Bear Creek Smokehouse, Robbie Shoults.

The pinnacle of the conference featured the “Texas Strong” and “Texas Student Challenge” business pitch competitions, which provided $20,000 in cash awards to support the business endeavors of the students and business owners competing. The event closed at sunset with a reception on the Waco Suspension Bridge.

On the road ahead, the Texas Rural Challenge will continue evolving to bring key stakeholders together to address pressing issues and policy impacting Texas rural businesses and communities.

HARVEY Recovery

Following Hurricane Harvey’s Texas landfall in August 2017, the UTSA South-West Texas Border (SWTXB) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network coordinated efforts with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to assist Texas small businesses impacted by the devastating Category 4 storm, which yield unprecedented damage and destruction.

The storm caused billions in damage and affected millions across five states. At its peak, Hurricane Harvey submerged one-third of Houston under water and ravaged Texas’ smaller towns and cities including Corpus Christi, Port Aransas, Rockport, and Victoria.

SWTXB SBDC Network affiliate centers at the Del Mar College SBDC in Corpus Christi, the University of Houston-Victoria SBDC, and Texas State University SBDC in Austin will provide continued disaster assistance to small businesses. At no cost, business advisors will assist with reconstructing damaged or destroyed business records, re-establishing operations, updating or rewriting business plans, and counseling for financial, accounting, marketing, and other post-disaster challenges. To find a local SBDC and explore its services, visit sbdctexas.org or txsbdc.org.
Exploring THE BUSINESS MARKET

As the only official research arm for America’s Small Business Development Center (ASBDC) Network, the SBDC National Information Clearinghouse (SBDCNet) provides superior market research services to more than 1,000 ASBDC members across the United States. With 63 SBDC Networks representing each U.S. state, SBDCNet has completed a striking 86,000 research projects to-date since 1998.

SBDCNet produces a broad range of financial, market and demographic research reports. These research projects are requested through an SBDC business advisor for a client, who typically leans on this type of research to explore the marketability of their goods and/or services. SBDCNet’s research projects saved business advisors nationwide 27,504 work hours, which allowed them to serve the equivalent of 5,501 additional long-term SBDC clients. In collaboration with state and federal partners, SBDCNet also conducts innovative trainings year-round. What makes SBDCNet so unique is its targeted audience of business advisors. SBDCNet director Matthew Jackson also worked with the U.S. Small Business Administration to secure supplemental funding for new small business cybersecurity trainings. The webinar series will assist business advisors to guide clients on meeting new federal requirements for small businesses conducting work for the Department of Defense. Jackson has partnered with UTSA’s SBDC Procurement Technical Assistance Center and the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security to produce the training curriculum, which Jackson plans to roll out in 2018.

With its high volume of research work, SBDCNet adds one more unique component to its operations – student experiential learning. In 2017, the Center employed nine students and four interns, all of whom attended San Antonio area universities. Students contribute heavily to SBDCNet’s research and overall impact while building stronger resumes that complement their academic and career goals.

Sarah Flores, 23

With a goal of becoming a CPA, Sarah Flores joined the SBDCNet in 2015. She develops customized business research reports in response to SBDC Advisor inquiries by identifying and compiling relevant, secondary market research from a number of electronic and physical information resources.

“I believe I’ve gained a competitive advantage against my fellow peers with the professional experience I’ve learned from the Institute. Having a director that actively encourages his employees to develop and implement new ideas has provided me with a confident voice.”

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 13 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 29,914 advising and training clients served in 2017 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 $46 million in state tax revenues for Texas.

For more information:
www.txsbdc.org | 210.458.2450

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