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SBA, SCORE and HP Set to Launch 2006 Business Matchmaking *Online component to be added to highly successful initiative*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), SCORE-Counselors to America’s Small Business, and HP today announced plans for the continuation of the highly successful Business Matchmaking initiative for 2006.

Business Matchmaking, made possible through a cosponsorship between the SBA, SCORE and HP, matches small businesses with buyers from the corporate sector as well as local, state and federal governments. Since its inception in 2003, Business Matchmaking has, through regional events held all across the country, generated more than 36,000 one-on-one appointments resulting in more than \$37 million in contracting opportunities for small businesses.

Four regional Business Matchmaking events are planned for 2006. The kickoff will take place on February 13 in Oakland, Calif., followed by events in Houston (8/2), Philadelphia (9/22) and Miami (11/16).

Also being launched today is a new feature to the initiative called the Business Matchmaking Online Network. This dynamic online resource will offer web-based educational tools including the Virtual Business Matchmaking Workshop, monthly "webinars" featuring procurement and supplier diversity experts, access to important downloads of articles and links to helpful resources.

“Business Matchmaking has been a tremendous success over the past three years and I am very pleased to see the initiative continue to grow in 2006,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “We are fortunate to have partners such as SCORE and HP joining us in creating even more contracting opportunities in the public and private sectors for small businesses. Business Matchmaking, coupled with new initiatives such as the Online Network, take us in that direction.”

“SCORE proudly supports this vital initiative to help small businesses reach new corporate and government markets,” said SCORE CEO Ken Yancey. “Last year, SCORE provided expert business advice to clients through face-to-face and online Business Matchmaking events. SCORE will continue to provide this vital service to America’s entrepreneurs.”

“HP is committed to empowering small businesses to achieve their vision and is proud to continue our involvement in the Business Matchmaking initiative,” said John Dayan, vice president of marketing and business development – Americas, Personal Systems Group, HP. “In addition to opening doors so small businesses can make connections with government agencies and corporations, HP is one of the largest procurers of goods and services at these events.”

Complete details on Business Matchmaking, including the 2006 schedule and the new Online Network, may be found at www.businessmatchmaking.com.

About SBA

SBA, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of direct and guaranteed business loans and disaster loans worth more than \$59 billion, SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, SBA and its resource partners offered management and technical assistance to more than 2.6 million clients. SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses. America's 25 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.

About SCORE

Since 1964, SCORE “Counselors to America’s Small Business” has assisted more than 7.2 million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through counseling and business workshops. More than 10,500 volunteer business counselors in 389 chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small business. For more information about starting or operating a small business, call 1-800-634-0245 for the SCORE chapter nearest you. Or, visit SCORE on the Web at www.score.org.

About HP

HP is a technology solutions provider to consumers, businesses and institutions globally. The company's offerings span IT infrastructure, global services, business and home computing, and imaging and printing. For the four fiscal quarters ended Oct. 31, 2005, HP revenue totaled \$86.7 billion. More information about HP (NYSE, Nasdaq: HPQ) is available at www.hp.com.

***Disclaimer:** SBA's participation in this Cosponsorship is not an endorsement of the views, opinions, products or services of any Cosponsor or other person or entity. All SBA programs, services and Cosponsored Activities are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. The SCORE Association is funded by the SBA (Cooperative Agreement No. SBAHQ-06-S-0001). Reasonable arrangements for persons with disabilities will be made, if requested, at least two weeks in advance. Contact: information@businessmatchmaking.com. Cosponsorship Authorization Number: 06-6100-04.*