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CONTACT: Jennifer Deamud, MI-SBTDC
Office: 616-331-7482, Cell: 616-295-6232

**Statewide Support Allows Attendance to Soar for the State's Award Program that
Announces the 2012 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch**

MICHIGAN – There is now an opportunity for more people to support Michigan's outstanding, award-winning small businesses at the state's 8th annual "Michigan Celebrates Small Business" awards dinner to be held in Lansing on May 3rd.

"Thanks to this year's generous underwriters, the MCSB organizers have been able to accomplish a longstanding goal to decrease the event's ticket price," says Jennifer Deamud, Associate State Director of the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center. "In a time of ever-growing prices, we are proud to change that trend. For the first time in seven years, the ticket price will drop substantially to \$95."

The expectation with the decreased ticket price is more community members, such as Chambers, EDCs and small business owners will be able to attend to support the businesses in their community that are being awarded.

"Michigan Celebrates is an opportunity to tell the new story of Michigan -- a story of bright futures and exciting companies that are building Michigan's economy," says Penny Lewandowski, Director of Entrepreneurship and Development at the Edward Lowe Foundation. "This is the place to celebrate and acknowledge their success and to learn who and what is driving the state's momentum."

The new Michigan Celebrates underwriters brought onboard this year are Varnum LLP, Michigan Credit Union League, Huntington Bank and DBI Office Interiors

"Last year, we attended the awards event for the first time and were so impressed by the accomplishments of the honorees that we decided to become a sponsor," says Scott Hill, Partner with Varnum law firm. "We assist entrepreneurs and small businesses with their legal needs and understand the many challenges of growing a business. Recognizing success honors the recipients and inspires us all."

PNC has been a supporter of Michigan Celebrates for the previous seven years.

"We're honored to have been the primary sponsor of this prestigious event since its inception eight years ago," says David Morrison, Southeast Michigan Business Banking Market Manager with PNC. "Michigan Celebrates Small Business is very important to PNC because it recognizes those companies and individuals that have taken the risks necessary to grow our economy. At PNC, we have a group of seasoned bankers that help those risk takers succeed."

Tickets are \$95 per person or receive a discount and reserve a table of ten for \$900. The evening includes a cocktail reception, a keynote speaker and the awards dinner at the Lansing Center in Lansing. Black tie is optional. To register online go to www.MichiganCelebrates.biz.

Michigan Celebrates Small Business is a premier annual program to recognize entrepreneurs and small business supporters in a variety of categories. The program is a cooperative effort of the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center, the Edward Lowe Foundation, the U.S. Small Business Administration – Michigan, the Small Business Association of Michigan, and the Greater Lansing Business Monthly.

Underwriters for this year's Michigan Celebrates Small Business event are PNC, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan Certified Development Corporation, Accident Fund Insurance Company of America, Varnum Law, Michigan Credit Union League, Comcast Business Class, DTE Energy Foundation, Huntington Bank, DBI Office Interiors and Dynamic Edge Inc.

For more information about Michigan Celebrates Small Business contact Jennifer Deamud, Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center at (616) 331-7480 or deamudj@gvsu.edu.

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