



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Senator Mary L. Landrieu, Chair**

Remarks for
Roundtable entitled, *“The SBA in Your Community: A Review of
SBA Field Operations”*

June 30, 2011

(As prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon and welcome to this roundtable entitled “The SBA in Your Community: A Review of SBA Field Operations.” Let me begin by thanking each of our SBA District Directors for joining us today. We are fortunate to have a great panel representing Directors from across the country and each of SBA’s 10 regions. I would also like to recognize Eugene Cornelius, Deputy Associate Administrator for Field Operations who is in the audience. He is here to listen in but also to help answer any questions that may come up on agency wide policy.

As the title of the hearing notes, the District Directors who are here today are literally on the “frontlines” of the SBA’s operations. While policy is made here in Washington, you are the ones actually assisting entrepreneurs and carrying out SBA’s programs in our communities. Today’s roundtable will give our committee invaluable feedback from the career SBA employees on what they’re seeing in their office every day.

I am particularly interested in what you have to say because I know many District Offices are “doing more with less” these days. This is because, unfortunately, year after year under President Bush, the SBA saw cuts to its staffing and programs. Over eight years, the Bush administration slashed more than a

quarter of the agency's funding. Field Operations, as the largest office within SBA, saw its budget and staffing reduced as part of these cuts.

Currently SBA Field Operations has almost 900 employees and 100 office locations in each state and territory in the United States. During the Clinton Administration, however, there were over 1,800 employees and 100 locations. As a local example, our District Office in New Orleans had 21 employees in 2001. Now there are 11 employees.

While I recognize that no one here today will bemoan any staffing or resources challenges, I think these figures frame up well the hardworking and dedicated spirit of you and your staff. Every Director here today is living proof that we can have success with a "leaner and meaner" team during these tough economic times. You are indeed "doing more with less" so it is important to hear directly from District Directors on the successes and challenges in their communities. With that in mind, today we want to address a few key topics: 1) learn about the structure of District Offices and how they operate day-to-day; 2) discuss how SBA District Offices coordinate with Federal, State, local agencies and other groups; 3) discuss how the economic downturn is impacting your community and your experience with provisions from the Small Business Jobs Act; 4) discuss how you help the SBA prevent fraud; and 5) hear from you on small business success stories or common challenges faced by local entrepreneurs.

I would like to go around the table and allow everyone to spend a moment to state your name, which office you are representing, and any brief comments before we begin the discussion.

Following your remarks, I will ask the first question to the group.

RULES OF THE TABLE

There are a few rules I'll ask each of you to follow in responding to questions:

1. If you would like to respond or offer input to a question or topic, please place your name card straight up and I will recognize you.

2. Unlike other roundtables where certain witnesses are asked testify on one specific issue or certain specific issues, the issues we discuss today are issues all of you are experts on. Therefore we could get 10 responses to every question. The problem with that is we only have an hour and half for this roundtable. So I ask all of you to be brief as possible and not to be repetitive of other witnesses so that we can get through all of these important issues.

I am joined here on the dais by my Policy Director, Brian van Hook, and by Diane Dietz of Senator Snowe's staff. I plan to stay as long as I can before I need to step out and turn things over to staff. The record will be open for two weeks for any additional materials or statements.

Let's begin with Mr. Cadena.