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Contact:

Jonah Bruno | jonah.bruno@esd.ny.gov | (212) 803-3740 | pressoffice@esd.ny.gov | (800) 260-7313
Jola Szubielski (Ag & Markets) | jola.szubielski@agriculture.ny.gov | (518) 457-0752

**NEW YORK STATE, THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF NEW YORK,
AND HUDSON VALLEY AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION HOST CONFERENCE AND RESOURCE EXPO TO
HELP AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND BEVERAGE BUSINESSES GROW**

*Small Business Owners Meet Financial Industry Representatives to Learn
About Accessing Capital*

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced that Access to Capital, a free conference and resource expo to help people in the food-and-beverage and agricultural industries access capital and grow their businesses, was a resounding success, with dozens of Mid-Hudson business owners coming out to learn about how to expand their companies.

Numerous representatives from the financial industry and federal, state, and local government agencies gathered at the Henry A. Wallace Center, at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Home, to give small business owners an inside perspective on alternative funding sources, what lenders look for in potential borrowers, and how to access potential international markets. The resource expo was a collaboration between ESD, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, in partnership with the Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation.

“New York State’s talented entrepreneurs deserve all the support they can get, especially when it comes to figuring out that next step to make their businesses grow,” said ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. “At Access to Capital, small-business owners learn about alternate funding sources and ways to expand and increase their market potential.”

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, “Access to Capital provides a unique opportunity to get all the right people in the room together who can help small businesses in the food, beverage and agricultural industries find solutions to challenges

they may be facing with funding matches and technical assistance. This resource expo is a great way to connect the dots and ensure our New York companies are getting the assistance they need to grow and for these industries to continue to thrive.”

“The agricultural industry is essential to the New York State economy, and the New York Fed is committed to supporting this important sector,” said Anand Marri, Vice President for Outreach & Education at the New York Fed. “Access to Capital events like this can help New York food and beverage firms connect with local capital providers, develop a better understanding about their financing options, learn how to access international markets, and more. This marks our eleventh Access to Capital program focused on agricultural enterprises and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners to improve the livelihoods of farmers and food entrepreneurs across our region.”

Todd Erling, Executive Director of Hudson Valley AgriBusiness, said, “As the Hudson Valley’s only economic development agency specifically focused on the viability of the agricultural economy in our region, we are dedicated to fostering new and growing agribusinesses. Accessing capital can be one of the key, yet most challenging, components for new entrepreneurs and those who are seeking to scale up their businesses. Hosting this event in Hyde park is an excellent opportunity for producers from the Hudson Valley to participate.”

“Under Governor Cuomo’s leadership ESD does more than ever to help small businesses and create jobs in the Mid-Hudson Region,” said ESD Mid-Hudson Regional Director Meghan Taylor. “The Mid-Hudson’s agricultural and food-and-beverage industries are major sectors of our regional economy, and I am pleased to see such a great turnout at this important forum.”

Access to Capital was first launched in 2014, with the goal of aiding owners of small food, beverage, and agriculture businesses, who often have difficulty finding industry lenders and entering international markets. Realizing that companies need capital and markets to grow, ESD teamed up with the state Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to help business owners connect with specialized banks, funds, investors, and government programs for their industries.

The first Access to Capital forum, held in Albany in 2014, was such a success that it was expanded to four events across the state in 2015 and three this year. The previous two were held in Rochester and Niagara Falls.

About Empire State Development

Empire State Development is New York’s chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits, and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support

prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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