

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Small Business Tools for Tough Economic Times**

"To say that times are tough for small business is an understatement. Reduced credit, wary customers, and longer payment cycles are all causing many small business owners to lose sleep. But the good news is that small business is the most likely group to start the recovery. It is their persistence, innovation, and entrepreneurial mindset that will turn the economy around," says Rick Wallace, Executive Director for Community Development Resources. "We want to support small business during this period by providing Tools for Business Success, an extensive online toolkit to start and grow businesses."

On the site is a link to a free workshop "[8 Marketing Tips for Recession Stressed Entrepreneurs](#)", produced by the FAMEE Foundation, a non-profit which educates small businesses in effective marketing. For eight days participants will receive a link to a short video that will give practical tips on how to operate during this recession.

The website also has a link to a [free cash flow calculator](#) by MPlans.com where business owners can quickly see how changing their inventory, collections, payable schedule, and pricing will affect their cash flow. "This is a powerful, yet easy-to-use tool that can help you take control of your business," says Marilyn Schlake, Associate Director for the NebraskaEDGE program. "Managing cash flow is the key to surviving tough economic times."

It is also a time for businesses to strengthen relationships with their best customers. Community Development Resources' and the NebraskaEDGE Tools for Business website has two resources to help. Businesses can quickly send a professional appreciation card to their good customers using the link to the [US Postal Service's CardStore](#). There are available templates to use, no set up fee, and no minimum orders, with the cost per card at under \$1. You can also use the [free customer survey tool](#). Businesses can set up a 10 question survey in minutes, and put a link to the survey on all their customer emails.

Businesses can also verify that their website is optimized for the highest web traffic. There is a link to a free tool on the Tools for Business that will [grade any website](#) and offer ways to improve web traffic.

Surviving tough economic times often requires improving selling skills. Community Development Resources' and the NebraskaEDGE Tools for Business site has an [online store](#) which includes sales training books, such as Consultative Sales Power, by Karen Mantyla. This workbook is designed to be "read with a pencil" and is a practical way to increase sales and improve customer loyalty. There are also [free online workshops on selling](#).

These are just some of the tools available on the NebraskaEDGE and Community Development Resources' website. There are also business plan templates, funding sources, training resources and links to local business support. "Small businesses are the engine that drives our economy," says Wallace. "We want to support that engine."

To access these tools, go to <http://cdresources.toolsforbusiness.info> or <http://nebraskaedge.unl.edu> and select "Tools for Tough Economic Times".