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NOTE: SMC Acting President Tom Henschke is available for interviews about the trip.

Pennsylvania Small Businesses Take Message to Harrisburg

SMC Business Councils members from southwestern and central PA will converge on Harrisburg on May 3 to tell legislators how they can help restore jobs in the Commonwealth and create a more business-friendly climate in Pennsylvania.

SMC members will bring their message to key legislators at their offices at the State Capitol and meet with other lawmakers and members of Gov. Edward Rendell's administration at an evening reception. They will also have lunch and meet with officials from the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council, an independent state agency that has done crucial work on health care cost and quality in the Commonwealth.

"It's simple. If we don't go, we aren't heard," said Eileen Anderson, government relations manager at SMC Business Councils. Anderson is the driving force behind the scenes for the trip. SMC Business Councils and its members want a more competitive, business-friendly environment in the Commonwealth so that small businesses can create jobs that will put more Pennsylvanians back to work. SMC advocates:

- (1) Reducing health care costs for individuals and employers, and keeping insurance affordable.
- (2) Reducing business taxes and state spending.
- (3) Increasing access to capital for small businesses.
- (4) Encouraging small business regulatory reform as set forth in House Bill 229.
- (5) Developing a small business resource portal that will provide an easy-to-access location.

SMC members and staff will be talking to legislators and state officials about specifics in each of these areas. SMC's initiatives, which can be found in the Government Advocacy section of smc.org, are all revenue-neutral, meaning they can be carried out without additional government funds. This is an especially strong selling point in today's economy as well as the fiscal crisis that is gripping the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Anderson said that speaking to lawmakers is a crucial part of changing attitudes toward business at the Capitol, and affecting positive change.

"Many lawmakers don't know what it's like to run a business," Anderson said. "As experts in the

trenches, our job is to educate them on our issues and propose solutions to solidify the future of small business.”

The marathon advocacy trip, which begins early in the morning with a bus from SMC’s offices in Churchill to Harrisburg, is a tradition that stretches back two decades.

“SMC members have been on the front lines and recording legislative successes that have saved small businesses hundreds of millions of dollars,” said Tom Henschke, acting president of SMC Business Councils.

The most recent success was the 2009 reauthorization of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council.

For the past 65 years, SMC Business Councils has helped Pennsylvania businesses grow and prosper. With offices in Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, SMC has thousands of members in the service, manufacturing and commercial sectors. A nonprofit organization, SMC’s professional staff operates a variety of business advocacy and development programs and services exclusively for its members.

Find SMC on the Web at smc.org.