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DSLBD LAUNCHES 2015 TRADE CALENDAR AT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS FORUM

Session focuses on upcoming opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe.

(Washington, D.C.) – Last week, the District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), and the DC Chamber of Commerce led an international business forum, *New Trade Opportunities for Exporters*, to unveil ExportDC's 2015 calendar of trade events and to introduce the upcoming trade mission, *Explore Europe*, which will take District small businesses to Spain, Belgium, Poland and Romania in May 2015.

"The District of Columbia is committed to supporting its small businesses locally as well as globally," said DSLBD Director Ana Harvey. "Poland and Romania's economies are seeing faster growth than many nations in the European Union. ExportDC is providing our small business the opportunity to position themselves in these rapidly growing markets."

Wednesday's event was the first in a series of monthly forums that will focus on small business exporting. It was organized as part of ExportDC's International Speaker Series, an export program in partnership with the DC Chamber of Commerce and the US Commercial Service. The next session will be held on April 23rd and will focus on trade opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Small business owners in attendance enjoyed presentations by seasoned international trade professionals from the Embassy of Georgia, the America-Georgia Business Council, the US Department of Commerce, and DSLBD. They discussed such topics as exploring opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically Georgia, Poland and Romania, and federal funding available from the Small Businesses Administration to help offset international marketing expenses through the DC State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Program.

Among the program options available to DC small businesses in the *Explore Europe* trade mission is the Cyber Security Business Development Mission to Poland and Romania. Cyber security is one of the fastest growing sectors in Central and Eastern Europe. In Poland alone, the market for IT security reached \$156 million in 2013 and is expected to grow at over 10% per year over the next five years. DC is home to a large number of small export ready IT firms with Defense contracting backgrounds. These businesses have the chance to leverage the high demand in these markets to expand internationally.

For more information about ExportDC services, the 2015 International Speaker Series, and the upcoming European trade mission, visit dslbd.dc.gov/page/calendar-trade-events.

About the District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development

The District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) fosters the economic growth, development, and retention of District of Columbia based businesses, and promotes economic development throughout the District's commercial corridors. For more information, go to dslbd.dc.gov or contact us at dslbd@dc.gov. Follow DSLBD on Twitter at @SmallBizDC, or like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/smallbizdc.

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