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### **Small Business Owner Attends Presidential Economic Forum in Texas**

St. Louis small-business owner, Joe Balsarotti was one of about 240 people invited to participate in President Bush's Economic Forum in Waco, Texas on Aug. 13, 2002.

President Bush hosted the forum at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The President brought together government decision makers, investors, small business owners, industry experts, workers, unions, corporate executives and economists to discuss how the current economy is performing and the steps needed to foster sustained economic growth for the future.

Balsarotti, 37, owner of Software To Go in Clayton, Missouri was a small business representative in the 'Technology and Innovation' panel which also included Jerry Yang, Founder of Yahoo, Meg Whitman, President and CEO of ebay, Charles Vest, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Greg Mankiw, Professor of Economics, Harvard University and about 25 others. The panel was Chaired by Secretary of Energy, Spencer Aberham.

Joe was especially surprised when he was able to make his remarks directly to Vice President Cheney and later met the President, "Being able to speak directly to the Vice President and let him know how the Government's policies effect my business was an opportunity most business owners never get. I hope I represented small business well. After the sessions were over, we were treated to a luncheon during which the President stayed well past the time scheduled to meet, greet and actually talk to every attendee. President Bush even made time for those of us who brought cameras and signed autographs. I'll never forget this experience."

Balsarotti, who began his computer, software and consulting career in 1981, has long been active in civic and business organizations, as well as involved in state and federal advocacy. He currently serves as Chairman of the Clayton Merchant's Association, member of the ASCII Computer Dealer Advisory Board and Chairman of NFIB/Missouri's Leadership Council as well as being a delegate to the Congressional Small Business Summit in 1998, 2000 and NFIB National Small Business Summit in 2002.

"It's a great honor for me to be invited to represent the views of small businesses such as mine at a forum with President Bush and Vice President Cheney," Joe said. "Hopefully, Congress will act on the President's pro-small business agenda and the Government reduce the regulatory and tax burden on all businesses to allow innovation and growth."

Software To Go, founded in 1983, is one of the region's oldest full-service technology providers and offers computer, software, repair, maintenance and consulting; specializing in total solutions for small businesses, government, education and individuals looking for unsurpassed service, knowledge and value. More information is available at [www.software-to-go.com](http://www.software-to-go.com)