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St. Louis Entrepreneur named Missouri's "Small-Business Champion"

Jefferson, City, Mo., May 20, 2005 – The state's leading advocate for Main Street businesses, the National Federation of Independent Business, named St. Louis's Joe Balsarotti this year's NFIB "Small-Business Champion."

Balsarotti, owner of Software to Go, earned the award for his tireless commitment to advocacy and activism on behalf of Missouri's small-business owners.

"Whether it be his help with legislation or finding just one more member to join NFIB, Joe Balsarotti has been an invaluable member of the NFIB family," said Brad Jones, NFIB/Missouri state director. "His strong work ethic and positive attitude have helped move NFIB/Missouri forward. He is an excellent choice for Small-Business Champion of the year."

The award is issued annually by NFIB to small-business advocates in each of the 50 states who have set themselves apart through their participation in NFIB programs and causes that benefit the present and future health of small businesses in their state and nationwide. Balsarotti will now be considered for NFIB's Central Region Small-Business Champion award to be announced this summer.

In 1992, Balsarotti purchased Software to Go, the company where he worked as Director of Operations, and is also St. Louis' oldest computer software and hardware shop. Having begun his entrepreneurial career at age 15 as a computer consultant, he has become a go-to guy in Missouri for information and ideas on how to strengthen the small-business community.

He used to run his own radio show, and served as the technology consultant on KMOV-TV during the "Y2K" scare. When it comes to politics, Balsarotti leads by example. He has been a member of NFIB for 20 years and has attended several special conferences held in Washington, D.C. His efforts to raise awareness of small-business issues and his work to help pass business-friendly legislation has not gone unnoticed, as Balsarotti was recently singled out for his efforts on behalf of small business by President George W. Bush during one of his speeches in St. Louis.

Balsarotti created, raised funds for and vigorously promoted the Charlie Runser Memorial Free Enterprise Scholar award. This scholarship is awarded to a Missouri high school senior as part of NFIB's Young Entrepreneur Foundation.

He is also involved with the Clayton Missouri Merchant's Association, and was asked to participate during President Bush's National Economic Summit in Waco, Texas.

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The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) is the nation's largest small-business advocacy group. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB represents the consensus views of its 600,000 members in Washington and all 50 state capitals. For more information on NFIB/Missouri, visit www.NFIB.com/MO.