

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 22, 2003

CONTACT: Brad Jones (573) 634-7660
Valerie Bollman (202) 554-9000

President Bush Talks to Local NFIB Members About Small Business and the Economy

St. Louis NFIB members Joe Balsarotti, owner of Software To Go, and John Cochran and Greg Hantak, co-owners of JS Logistics, today participated in a roundtable discussion lead by President Bush, which focused on discussing small business' role in putting the nation's economy back on track.

"It was a great honor to participate in a discussion with the President of the United States and be able to explain directly to him the concerns of all small-business owners," said Balsarotti.

The event, which took place at JS Logistics, allowed President Bush to hear the small-business viewpoints of five NFIB members in a private roundtable discussion.

Following the roundtable discussion, President Bush rallied the support of a larger crowd for his new tax-relief plan, which will accelerate the income tax rate reduction from 2001 and increase small-business expensing limits by \$50,000.

"The president's stimulus plan will allow small-business owners to invest more money into our businesses and create new jobs, which will ultimately improve our struggling economy," said Hantak.

Balsarotti, who began in the computer and software business in 1980, has long been active in local civic and business organizations, as well as involved in state and federal advocacy. He is chair of NFIB/Missouri's Leadership Council and was a delegate to the NFIB National Small Business Summit held in Washington, DC, in 1998, 2000 and 2002.

Cochran began his transportation and distribution business in 1983. Hantak became a co-owner in 1985. Cochran and Hantak currently employ 125 people along with 450 to 500 independent contractors. They have been members of NFIB for 15 years, and Hantak has served on the Leadership Council for one year.

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 13,000 members in Missouri and 600,000 members in Washington and all 50 state capitals. More information is available on-line at www.nfib.com/MO.