

For Immediate Release:
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U.S. Secretary of Labor to Meet with Missouri Small-Business Owners

St. Louis small-business owner, Joe Balsarotti was one of about 20 small business owners invited to participate in a roundtable discussion of small business and economic issues with Elaine Chao, U.S. Secretary of Labor on Feb. 21, 2003.

Secretary Chao hosted the roundtable at Wiliker's Restaurant in St. Charles, MO. NFIB State Director Brad Jones moderated the discussion. Balsarotti, 38, owner of Software To Go in Clayton, Missouri joined the following other small business owners at the event: Lyndia Baumgartner- Image Technologies, Debin Benish- Delta Systems, Dennis Brampton- St. Charles Flying Service, Susan Bugarin- Mid-Mo Office Machines, Andrew Habel- HABCO Partnership, Bob Harke- Harke Heating & A/C, Jim Henderson- Dynamic Sales Co., Jerry Hovis- Affordable Fence, Janet Kelly- Jerry Kelly Htg & A/C, Bobby Moritz- National Petroleum Products, Duane Mueller- Cissell Mueller Construction, John Pelzer- Busch's Florist, James Rothberg- American Orthotics, Gary Sheller- Sheller Financial Services, Craig Simon- Professional Contractors & Engineers, Tim Sullivan- Focus Care, Inc., Kathy Swan- JCS Tel-Link, Kathie Zuroweste- The Colony House Restaurant. The Secretary brought together the group to discuss how the current economy is performing and the steps needed to foster sustained economic growth for the future.

Joe was called on to mention his participation in President Bush's small business roundtable, held in January and comment about the importance of increasing the amount which small businesses can expense per year, "It's so refreshing to be able to speak to the Secretary about the problems being faced by mine and other small businesses and actually get a positive response from someone who genuinely seems to care about small businesses, their owners and employees."

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.

"Again I've had the honor of being invited to represent the views of small businesses such as mine at a meeting like this," Joe said. "Hopefully, Congress will pass on the President's tax relief and AHP measures so that the Government fosters innovation and growth while reducing the burden on small businesses"

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