

October 20, 2003 – Small Business Assistance Available in Delaware County, The Delaware County Times

***Officials tell small businesses how they can expand
by Linda Reilly***

UPPER DARBY -- Federal, state and township reps visited small-business owners in the area over the weekend to offer financial and management assistance and opportunities to succeed.

The entrepreneurs and persons interested in starting a business attended a brief informational seminar on starting a business in the area and how to get it up and running.

The township's chief administrative officer, Thomas Judge Jr., and representatives from the office of U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon, R-7, the Pan Asian Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Small Business Association, the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce, Citizen's Bank, Philadelphia's Pan Asian Chamber of Commerce, Chester Microenterprise Partnership, and SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) met with about 10 people during the afternoon conference at the township's Welcome Center, Walnut Street.

Earlier in the day some representatives visited about 20 shops on Market Street, 69th Street, Garrett Road and Terminal Square to offer assistance to the tenants or business owners.

Philadelphia's U.S. SBA District Director Thomas Tolan and Marketing Director Joseph McDevitt, Delco's C.C. Program Coordinator Dolores McCabe, SCORE's District Director Thomas McGuinness, Pan Asian C.C. associate Julie Wong and CMP representative James Turner, handed packets to each business owner with details, phone numbers and contact persons to arrange loans and learn about opportunities for growth in their businesses.

"We're here to offer our assistance to any business owner," McDevitt said.

Eric Brooks, who opened Eric's Italian Eatery, 6800 Market St., two years ago, welcomed the offers of loans because he wants to expand and open a concession at the United Artists 69th Street Theater, 53 S. 69th St.

"My goal is to franchise," Brooks said, adding he hopes to market his eatery in malls and other areas. "I didn't do any business planning," he said, noting he opened up the Market Street restaurant with cash. "I'm looking for a small \$20,000 loan to get my feet wet to expand."

Turner detailed the opportunities available through the CMP noting the requirement to hire from the community.

Brooks was told to contact SCORE for answers to all his questions on franchising.

Michael Shinn, owner of U.S. Sneaker City, 6834-38 Market St. for nine years, was glad the group stopped in his store.

"I might need a loan in the future for more inventory," said Shinn, who sells

sneakers, sportswear, clothing and accessories.

Shinn's day-to-day issues are parking and security and attracting customers using SEPTA's 69th Street Terminal across the street and expressing his hopes that the township follows through with the proposal to take down the pedestrian bridge.

For information on any of the agencies call the township or the U.S. SBA at (215) 580-2762.