



# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CORPORATE, COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY GATHER TO SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS**

#### *The Business Roundtable's BusinessLINC Explores New Initiatives In Hard-Hit Communities*

Washington, D.C. – Corporate, community, and government leaders from across the country join together over the next two days in Washington, D.C. to address ways the business community can stimulate economic growth in distressed cities and rural areas working with local small businesses. The conference, hosted by BusinessLINC, will focus on strategies for expanding opportunities and building capacity for small businesses, spurring economic development, and involving corporations in the effort. Led by The Business Roundtable, the association of chief executive officers of leading corporations, BusinessLINC is a national initiative that fosters partnerships between large and small businesses to strengthen and grow vulnerable economies.

The conference will highlight:

- Innovative programs from BusinessLINC's 15 local coalitions in distressed rural and urban communities;
- Three new coalitions and a fourth being launched this fall;
- Announcement of BusinessLINC's partnership with the National Conference of Black Mayors;
- Announcement of BusinessLINC's partnership with the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency; and
- The release of two new BusinessLINC Guidebooks for organizations looking to promote small businesses, sponsored by the Business Roundtable.

“With the economy working to regain its footing, responsible businesses are stepping in to help small businesses grow, improve and better serve the community,” said Don Graves, Jr., Executive Director of BusinessLINC. “This conference will focus on the work done on the ground to engage small and large businesses to enhance the competitiveness of the companies involved, to strengthen small businesses – which employ more than 24 million Americans – and to help struggling communities thrive.”

Currently, fifteen communities around the country host BusinessLINC coalitions: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Flint (MI), Houston, the Mississippi River Delta, Nashville, New York City, Richmond, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and the Southwest Border. The Connecticut Coalition is scheduled to launch this fall.

## **BRT'S BUSINESSLINC CONFERENCE EXPLORES NEW INITIATIVES**

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“This conference showcases the innovative work undertaken in cities and rural areas across the country, and highlights why the BusinessLINC program is such an effective model. Through BusinessLINC, large and small businesses are coming together to develop strategies that work for their communities,” said Ramani Ayer, Chairman of the National BusinessLINC Coalition and Chairman & CEO of The Hartford Financial Services Group. “By looking at what the local coalitions are achieving and learning from their best practices, the larger business community can learn how to get more involved in making a difference with their companies and in their communities.”

The conference's packed agenda includes panel discussions with local media, financial and community development experts, congressional staff, legislative strategists, and key local coalition leaders. The conference will feature an address by Ramani Ayer, National Chairman of the BusinessLINC National Coalition and Chairman & CEO of The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. Ronald N. Langston, Director of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, The Honorable Marilyn Murrell, President of the National Conference of Black Mayors and Mayor of Arcadia, Oklahoma, and John Castellani, President of the Business Roundtable will also address the attendees.

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*BusinessLINC was created in 1999 by The Business Roundtable, the U.S. Treasury Department, and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The National Coalition, led by The Business Roundtable, works closely with these organizations as well as with the Minority Business Development Agency of the U.S. Commerce Department. The network is designed to bring large corporations and small businesses together to increase the exchange of business opportunities and experience and to promote the success of local, often minority and women-owned, businesses. The work is done at the local level, where each coalition is chaired by a corporate CEO, hosted by a local business, community, or civic association, and comprised of corporate partners. BusinessLINC stands for **L**earning, **I**nvestment, **N**etworking and **C**ollaboration, the key attributes for successful partnerships.*

*The **Business Roundtable** is an association of chief executive officers of leading corporations with a combined workforce of more than 10 million employees in the United States and \$3.7 trillion in revenues. The chief executives are committed to advocating public policies that foster vigorous economic growth and a dynamic global economy.*

