



Press Release

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SBA Announces Licensing of Additional Small Business Investment Company In North Carolina

Charlotte, NC – Dogwood Equity, management group of the North Carolina Economic Opportunities Fund, has been licensed as an SBA Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) in North Carolina.

North Carolina SBA District Director, Lee Cornelison will present Dogwood Equity with their SBIC License at Dogwood Equity's first annual meeting reception on Wednesday, May 14, 2003, at 6:00pm at the Capital City Club in the First Union Building on Fayetteville Street in Raleigh.

Dogwood Equity focuses its investment in non-metropolitan North Carolina. Specifically, all North Carolina counties except Mecklenburg, Wake, Durham, Orange, Guilford, and Forsyth. The fund, which manages approximately \$75 million, would make investments ranging from \$500,000 to \$5 million. They have received over 250 business plans. Dogwood Equity was licensed in July 2002.

The sources of investment capital include \$29.6 million from banks and other institutional investors and \$7.5 million from the state pension fund.

"We're excited to receive the license and with it the ability to leverage additional dollars to grow small businesses in North Carolina," said Dogwood Managing Partner Rick Carlisle.

Prior to founding Dogwood Equity, Carlisle served as Secretary of Commerce from 1998-2001. He previously served as Economic Policy Advisor to the Governor from April 1993 to August 1997, and as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Commerce until his appointment as Secretary in 1998.

This brings the total number of North Carolina SBA licensed Small Business Investment Companies to 10.

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Lee Cornelison, District Director of SBA's North Carolina District Office, said "The licensing of this SBIC in North Carolina increases the opportunity for companies in the Southeast to get the funding they need to grow."

The SBIC program was created to help small U.S. businesses meet long-term, capital needs not available through banks or other private capital sources.

Small companies often require business loans of the type not generally made by banks, or equity financing in the critical \$250,000 to \$5 million range not usually obtainable from private venture capital firms. SBICs fill this gap. Also, while more private venture dollars are being invested in foreign companies, the SBIC program focuses solely on the small U.S. companies that create almost all the net new jobs in the United States.

Many major U.S. companies received early financing from SBICs, including Intel, Apple Computer, Staples, Federal Express, Sun Microsystems, Sybase, Inc., Callaway Golf, and Outback Steakhouse.

To contact Dogwood Equity call Rick Carlisle at (919) 256-5000 or e-mail rcarlisle@dogwoodequity.com.

*For more information about SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640 or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov. The SBA, in co-sponsorship with Staples, has introduced an online newsletter **SBA Solutions**. For a free subscription, go to <http://web.sba.gov/list> and select New **SBA Solutions Newsletter**.*

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