



Amy Bassett, director of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Maine District, left, joins the graduates of the SBA's first Emerging Leaders class in Maine.

PHOTO / COURTESY U.S. SBA MAINE DISTRICT OFFICE

Nine smallbiz CEOs graduate from SBA's Emerging Leaders program

BY MAINEBIZ STAFF

CEOs of nine Maine small businesses graduated Tuesday as members of the U.S. Small Business Administration's first Emerging Leaders class in Maine.

The ceremony was held at Eastern Maine Community College.

Emerging Leaders is a six-month federal training program designed to help second-stage businesses to improve their overall strength by focusing on access to capital, human resources, marketing techniques, selling to the government and other important strategic goals. Throughout the training, participants begin developing a three-year strategic growth plan for their firms.

Prior to the award ceremony, graduates delivered oral presentations about their growth plans to a panel of subject matter experts. This year's class was led by Ann Marie Swenson,

who worked with the nine Maine CEOs to take their firms to the next level.

This year's Emerging Leaders graduates are:

- Troy Greenleaf, General Rental Center of Old Town
- Elena Metzger, Print Bangor of Bangor
- Michael Sealander, Sealander Architects of Ellsworth
- Janet MacDonald, MacDonald Pet Care of Bangor
- Charles Downes, Downes Enterprises LLC of Bucksport
- Steve Salsbury and Tara Hartson, Herrick & Salsbury Inc. of Ellsworth
- Paige Wilcox, Wilcox Wellness & Fitness of Bangor
- Mitzi Skehan, Invironments of Hermon
- Heidi Neal, Loyal Biscuit Co. of Rockland
- Rebecca Henderson, Renaissance Dogs of Holden.

"We are very proud of our graduates," said SBA District Director Amy Bassett. "For the past six months, they worked extremely hard and were provided with an abundance of material that they needed to understand in order to develop a plan to successfully grow their businesses — all while still operating their businesses. Maine is extremely lucky to have such dedicated small business owners driving our economy." **M**