

TALKING POINTS | ST. LOUIS KICK-OFF EVENT

Tuesday, April 30; 1:30- 3:30

<YOU WILL WALK TO THE MICROPHONE WHEN COMPTROLLER GREEN INTRODUCES YOU>

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

■ Good afternoon! It's so exciting to be in the Gateway City with you all today. I want to thank Comptroller Green for hosting us and opening this lovely space for today's kick-off. Comptroller Green, you have been such an exceptional spokesperson for us as co-chair of AEO's 2013 National Conference. Thank you for the PSAs and the interviews--you've been a great help for us.

■ Also, many, many thanks to our friends at Justine PETERSEN. You are great partners in our quest to advocate for the interests of small and microbusiness owners. And Galen, a big thanks to chairing our Host Planning Committee. The Committee has done a phenomenal job drumming up excitement and wrangling sponsor support on the ground in St. Louis. I think I see some of the Committee members with us today, thanks to all you; we couldn't have pulled this off without you.

I must take a moment to thank our St. Louis sponsors:

Douglas C. Greene Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, James Stapleton

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Matt Ashby

Heritage Foods, Russ Kremer

International Institute Community Development Corporation, Kathleen Delpha

Justine PETERSEN

Midwest Bank Center | No Contact

PNC Bank

Regions Bank | No Contact

University of Missouri Extension | Matt Ashby and Sharon Gulick

U.S. Bank | Kathy Siddens

Urban Chestnut Brewery

BODY COMMENTS

■ I want to start by telling you about AEO-the Association Enterprise Opportunity. We are a D.C.-based national nonprofit business trade association that represents the interests of the U.S. microbusiness industry and entrepreneurs. We have a network of 400-plus partners and members that **helps underserved entrepreneurs contribute to the economic growth of their communities and America.**

■ One of AEO's chief aims is **giving a voice to microbusinesses** in state houses and on Capitol Hill, and driving awareness of the value that microbusinesses are to their communities.

■ Microbusinesses create paths to wealth for their owners; they open doors to self-sufficiency and financial stability for individuals and families, and they help to rebuild communities. Perhaps, an even more powerful point than those is that **microbusinesses create jobs.** When you build a business, you create a job.

Despite their undeniable importance as job-creation agents and as economic engines, they continue to face tremendous barriers securing basic resources they need to grow and hire.

■ I'll share a few data points that illustrate the immense value of the microbusiness industry:

- First, AEO's research shows that if one in three microbusinesses hired just one employee, the nation would reach full employment---**full employment.**
- Microbusinesses comprise about 90 percent of all U.S. businesses.
- Microbusinesses generate \$4.87 trillion annually for the U.S. economy.
- Microbusinesses allow their owners to accumulate a median net worth of nearly 2.5 times higher than non-business owners.

I'm sure you agree: That's power, right?

■ Yet, despite all of their robust contributions to local economies as job-creation agents, **microbusinesses continue to face hurdles to accessing capital and business support services they need to sustain or exist.**

■ So, we're using this year's conference to tilt the spotlight on current topics that frame an essential question: how can we **change the way capital and services flow to America's Main Street microbusinesses so they can grow and hire.**

■ We are discussing promising practices, novel and innovative lending structures, and innovative delivery models that give microbusinesses what they need to succeed, sustain and flourish.

■ Friends, our agenda also is packed with fun events such as our **Marketplace of Local Microbusinesses next Monday where we will showcase the wares of St. Louis**

entrepreneurs. Our **annual awards luncheon next Wednesday** will celebrate entrepreneurial excellence; **we will award microbusiness owners and microbusiness development organizations such as our friends Justine PETERSEN with up to \$200,000 in cash.** **Daymond John is our special guest speaker.** He is the founder and CEO of FUBU, and you may recognize him as one of the stars on ABC's "Shark Tank."

CLOSING COMMENTS

■ It's going to be a great time, so I hope you can find time to attend the conference, or one of the events.

■ I'll leave you with this: **We can invest in job creation---for St. Louis, for communities and for the country--through microbusiness.** America's microbusinesses are one of the key answers to unemployment and America's economic recovery. Let's support them so they can grow and hire.

■ Thank you all again and I hope to see you next week. You can learn more about conference workshops, events and speakers on our website: microbusinessconference.org.

■ I'll turn it over to, Rob Boyle who is founder and CEO of Justine PETERSEN.