

# Business Opportunities

## Helping New Businesses Get Up and Running

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people are finding there can be big benefits to starting their own small business.

Many of them turn to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for help. According to SBA administrator Hector V. Barreto, since 1953 the agency has helped more than 20 million Americans start, grow and expand their businesses.

It has also placed more than \$170 billion in direct or guaranteed loans in the hands of entrepreneurs.



Hector V. Barreto

Guests can register for this year's 2003 SBA's National Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo (NECE) at SBA's Web site. The conference, an important part of the SBA's 50th anniversary commemoration,

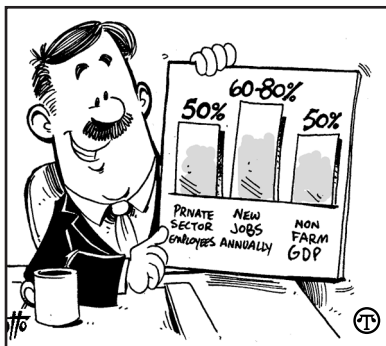
takes place September 17 - 19, at the Washington Hilton and Towers in Washington, D.C.

Attendees will have access to workshops on access to capital, contracting, e-government, customer service, marketing and other issues. A matchmaking component will bring together sub and prime contractors with small businesses to make deals at the conference. In addition, the trade show will feature 175 exhibitors.

The agency, which has helped so many, offers these tips:

- Before starting out, list your reasons for wanting to go into business. Some of the most common ones are the desire to be your own boss, financial independence or wanting creative freedom.

- Next, determine what business is right for you. Ask yourself



**Studies show that small businesses account for the majority of new jobs in the country.**

how you like to spend your time, what your skills are, how much time you have and if any of your hobbies or skills are marketable.

- Conduct the necessary research to find out the niche your business will fill. Try to figure out how practical your idea is. Will you have an advantage over existing firms?

- The final step is developing a pre-business checklist. Any small-business owner should be able to answer these questions.

- What will the legal structure of the business be?

- What kind of financing is needed and how will it be obtained?

- Where will the business be located?

A strong business plan can be a cornerstone of starting a business. It can help to prevent problems and guide the business during its initial startup phase.

For more information, to take an online tutorial, or to register for the conference, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), or call the toll-free number 1-800-ASK-SBA.