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NH SBDC and NH Tech Alliance Partner to Launch Cybersecurity Initiative

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

DURHAM, N.H.—The NH Small Business Development Center (NH SBDC) at the University of New Hampshire and the NH Tech Alliance have teamed up to offer cybersecurity knowledge and resources to small businesses in the Granite State. According to research from the Ponemon Institute, 66% of small businesses have been the target of a cyber-attack and 63% were victims of a data breach.

"As the cybersecurity landscape continues to change rapidly, so must a business' strategy and operations," said Liz Gray, NH SBDC state director. "By keeping our finger on the pulse of today's rapid economic and technological changes, we can adapt our advising approaches and educational offerings to meet the unique needs of the Granite State's small business community. Small businesses can no longer afford to remain unaware of cyber threats or complacent with inadequate technology. They need to take action to enhance their systems and processes to remain resilient in today's online economy."

NH SBDC's Phase 2 Business Resiliency Survey report (https://www.nhsbdc.org/phase2-businessresiliencysurvey), released earlier this month, indicates that businesses are growing increasingly more concerned about this topic; 52% of survey respondents said they are very or somewhat concerned about cybersecurity, up from 40% in June of 2020.

The Cybersecurity Initiative will launch Tuesday, April 13, at 11 a.m. with a virtual event featuring cybersecurity and technology experts (https://ic.nhsbdc.org/Events.aspx?mode=0&zip=&miles=25&center=16005&topicnum=14&format=0&days=90&sort=M&layout=0) Jeremy Hitchcock, currently co-founder and CEO of wifi management and IoT security startup, and Ryan Robinson of Mainstay Technologies. The initiative will provide a web-based training program that guides businesses through cyber planning practices based on five central concepts: identify, protect, detect, respond and recover. Content will be delivered via a monthly webinar series, blog articles and eCourses. Businesses can also access one-on-one confidential advising from SBDC's team of business advisors. All program offerings are provided free of cost to New Hampshire enterprises.

A major component of the initiative is access to the Data Assured program. Data Assured materials include an easy-to-use workbook to help businesses protect themselves from a cyber-attack and to help them recover from a cyber-attack. Upcoming webinars include Jacob Blacksten with the Delaware SBDC, developer of the Data Assured program, presenting May 6, on how to use the workbook, and "Identifying Cybersecurity Risk for Small Businesses" presented by Mainstay Technologies May 17.

NH SBDC is also pleased to announce the release of "Cybersecurity for Small Businesses," its first cybersecurity eCourse, as part of the cybersecurity initiative. The eCourse, developed by Khole Gwebu, associate professor of decision sciences, offers an overview of small business preparedness, including mitigating the risk of an attack, handling incidents and handling remote worker concerns.

"As the cybersecurity landscape continues to change rapidly, so must a business' strategy and operations," said Gray. "We encourage business owners to be proactive and reach out to NH SBDC. Planning ahead can help businesses keep from falling victim to a cyber-attack."

NH Tech Alliance executive director Julie Demers noted that "The increased remote workforce of many small businesses has underscored the importance of a business strategy and operating plan that prioritizes cybersecurity. We are thrilled to be able to provide an opportunity for the cybersecurity experts in our membership to share their experience and expertise with NH's small businesses."

For more information, including the Data Assured Program workbook, cyber eCourse and other resources visit https://www.nhsbdc.org/cybersecurity (https://www.nhsbdc.org/cybersecurity).

NH SBDC (https://www.nhsbdc.org/) is the state's leading resource for business advising and education for small businesses. NH SBDC supported 7,178 businesses in 2020 through direct advising and live webinars. SBDC's team of certified business advisors provides highly individualized, confidential advising, at no charge to NH enterprises. NH SBDC is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and through assistance provided by the State of NH. It is an outreach program of the UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics.

The New Hampshire Tech Alliance (https://nhtechalliance.org/) is a statewide technology association supporting companies at every stage of growth and development from start-ups to established leaders in the global economy. The Alliance is committed to nurturing a vibrant tech ecosystem by building partnerships, enhancing knowledge, and shaping public policy.

The University of New Hampshire (http://unh.edu) inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation, and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top-ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. As one of the nation's highest-performing research universities, UNH partners with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, and receives more than $110 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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