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**Press Contact:** Gloria Chan, OEWD, 415-554-6926, [gloria.chan@sfgov.org](mailto:gloria.chan@sfgov.org)

Juliana Bunim, SF Chamber of Commerce, 415-352-8839, [jbunim@sfchamber.com](mailto:jbunim@sfchamber.com)

**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**SF BIZ CONNECT CELEBRATES MILESTONE BY SHIFTING \$1.92 MILLION IN  
SPENDING TO LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES**  
*San Francisco's Buy Local Initiative Leads by Example*

San Francisco, CA – As a business to business buy local initiative, Mayor Lee's SF Biz Connect encourages large employers to pledge 5% of their spending to local small companies. Today, 40 businesses have taken the pledge with an estimated impact of \$1.92 million of spending directed to local small businesses in San Francisco.

"SF Biz Connect encourages our large businesses to buy local and from their small business neighbors," said Mayor Lee. "Through the Office of Economic and Workforce Development in partnership with the SF Chamber, SF Biz Connect supports our small business which are the backbone to our City's economy and key to the success of San Francisco."

Since its launch last fall, the initiative, through its online platform ([www.sfbizconnect.com](http://www.sfbizconnect.com)) and networking events, has doubled in size registering more than 200 local businesses and 40 pledged partners who are committed to buying local. The platform allows large employers to search for their needs using a range of categories, such as events/catering and promotional items, but also using targeted searches, such as minority, women, or LGBT owned businesses, or businesses founded specifically in San Francisco.

In advance of businesses' holiday purchasing and event planning, SF Biz Connect hosted the Second Annual Showcase connecting local businesses with large companies to streamline annual purchasing. The event took place on Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and offered a unique opportunity to highlight the San Francisco Old Mint where more than 50 small businesses showcased products such as food and beverage, and gift items and services such as catering and for venue space to approximately 100 attendees representing larger businesses.

San Francisco is home to more than 90,000 businesses, most of them are small businesses that employ and create thousands of jobs for the workforce. As the initiative grows, so do success stories like the recent connection between The Organic Pantry Co. and Twitter, an outcome from one of the SF Biz Connect's events during San Francisco Small Business Week in May.

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“These big companies have made a commitment to help support small local businesses like ours. Having our products in both Google and Twitter helps our brand grow and we get a lot of satisfaction knowing that large companies like Google and Twitter love our products,” said Theresa Petry, CEO and founder of The Organic Pantry Co. “We are so thankful to SF Biz Connect for sponsoring events that connect local businesses to large companies in the community. It's a win-win for everyone.”

“Salty Sweet is proud to be a San Francisco business. We get our ingredients from local companies and we bake each cookie in San Francisco,” said Melissa Cohen, owner of Salty Sweet. “As any small business will tell you, this is not without challenges. Working with SF Biz Connect has enabled us to connect directly with businesses that we would not normally encounter in our day to day operations. Saving time on sales outreach allows us to focus on what we do best - making amazing cookies!” Salty Sweets are now featured in two terminals at the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and at Red Door Coffee in 111 Minna Gallery and Ritual Coffee Roasters in Flora Grubb Gardens.

A few examples of companies that have taken the pledge include Pinterest, Omni, Zendesk, Zenefits, Recology, NerdWallet, Hyatt Regency, MacKenzie Communications, Inc., Golden Gate University, HOK, and many more.

“Recology, San Francisco’s recycling and compost collection company, started in San Francisco over 90 years ago and is still serving the City’s small business community today. We believe supporting local, home-grown small businesses, is fundamental to supporting San Francisco as a whole.” said Recology Public Relations Manager Robert Reed. “Small businesses are our customers and we are their customer. By supporting each other we strengthen San Francisco’s economy.”

“The Chamber champions all business and is dedicated to helping local companies grow and thrive,” said Lee Blitch, interim President & CEO of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. “When large companies direct their purchasing power locally, they support our San Francisco economy and create an integrated business community that everyone benefits from.”

SF Biz Connect is a partnership between the Office of Mayor Lee, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and provides a platform for companies to meet in-person through a variety of events during the year. From panel discussions sharing stories from local entrepreneurs and the impact of buying local, to expo style mixers connecting purchasers with local makers and food purveyors, the SF Biz Connect events takes the interaction off-line and spark in-person relationships that lead to new business. For more information on SF Biz Connect, visit: [www.sfbizconnect.com](http://www.sfbizconnect.com).

#### **About the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)**

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development's (OEWD) mission is simple – to create shared prosperity in San Francisco. OEWD provides city-wide leadership for workforce development, business attraction and retention, neighborhood commercial revitalization, international business and development planning. For more information, go to: [www.oewd.org](http://www.oewd.org)

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**About SF Chamber**

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce is the largest and most influential business membership organization in San Francisco. The Chamber serves more than 2,500 member businesses and over 200,000 employees from companies of every size and industry in San Francisco and across the Bay Area. Acting on our mission to attract, support, and grow business through advocacy, economic development, and business development in San Francisco, the Chamber delivers more than 250 programs and events each year and advocates for a prosperous economy and high quality of life for everyone who lives, works and visits the city. More information about the Chamber is available at [SFChamber.com](http://SFChamber.com)

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