

## Community Investments Vol. 15, Issue 2 Incubated Businesses Thrive

Author(s): Bruce Ito, Associate Community Affairs Specialist, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco  
August 2003

Successful and innovative incubators that serve a diverse clientele with a variety of products and services are located throughout the Fed's 12th District. Incubators are not limited to urban environments and cities; more and more, incubators are emerging in rural areas as a way to diversify and stimulate the economy. In this series of four articles, we go inside the places entrepreneurs go to get their business off the ground.

Incubators provide more than just office space for a start-up. The success of a business hinges on a multitude of factors. In the lead article by Linda Knopp of the National Business Incubator Association, she describes incubators as "service programs, not just buildings...no building can grow companies, provide mentoring and handholding, and assist an emerging company in meeting the benchmarks necessary for growth."

The Renaissance incubator in San Francisco serves over 700 entrepreneurs a year, and a remarkable 84 percent of businesses that have graduated from their program are in business today. Sharon Miller, CEO of the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center writes about two graduates of their program whose high tech business flourished because of the assistance it received in Getting Off the Ground in San Francisco.

While one-third of incubators focus on technology companies, an array of businesses benefit from incubators. Dr. Myaing Thein describes the Culinary Business Incubator (CBI) on the island of Oahu, Hawaii in *Cooking Up Business Aloha Style*. CBI assists low-income immigrants and refugees in starting their own restaurants, helping to bring the cuisines of diverse cultures to the mainstream population from a state-of-the-art kitchen in an unlikely place.

Incubators are not only important vehicles to promote small businesses development, they can also provide a unique opportunity to revitalize communities. In *Public/Private Incubator Produces Redevelopment*, Judi Dohn writes about the genesis of the Henderson Business Resource Center (HBRC) of Nevada and its role in the revitalization of a declining downtown. Learn lessons from this exciting story about how leveraging public and private partnerships turned a financial institution into a historic mixed-use facility that serves the needs of blossoming small businesses.