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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Rancho Santiago Community College District and OC Market Place Team Up to Help Orange County Small Business Owners**

(Santa Ana)—In December, the national unemployment rate was 9.4 percent, down from the previous month's 9.8 percent. With 15.1 million unemployed individuals nationwide and limited employment opportunities, many people are launching their own small businesses. According to research by the U.S. Small Business Administration, only two-thirds of all small business startups survive the first two years and less than half of them last four years.

“What we hear from many of our small business clients is that they struggle to find customers so necessary for their success,” said Enrique Perez, Rancho Santiago Community College District's assistant vice chancellor of educational services. “For many new businesses, opening a storefront is not feasible, but access to new customers will make or break an enterprise.”

Thanks to a partnership forged by Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) and the Orange County Market Place (OCMP), small businesses and entrepreneurs will be offered access to 25,000 potential new customers every weekend. RSCCD is hosting a free informational meeting to introduce the new program on Thursday, January 20, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the RSCCD District Offices Board Room, located at 2323 N. Broadway in Santa Ana. Registration for this event will begin at 1:30 p.m.

The program is tailor-made for businesses that offer products and services that are commonly used and have a reasonable gross profit margin. The OCMP offers face-to-face sales and marketing opportunities as well as the opportunity to test market new products. The launch program includes:

- A range of pricing options for vendor space at the OCMP.
- Operational support, including set-up and tear-down assistance, premium locations, booth design, and more.

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- Business workshops providing practical tips to guide small businesses to success, and one-on-one confidential business consulting offered at no charge by the Orange County Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Business & Entrepreneurship Center—economic development programs of RSCCD.
- Each participating new company referred to the OCMP through the RSCCD program, will receive a \$1,000 scholarship in the form of a credit towards the company's first months space rent.

Interested individuals are encouraged to register by contacting Martha Payan Hernandez at (714) 564-5218 or e-mail [payan\\_martha@rsccd.edu](mailto:payan_martha@rsccd.edu).

### **About the Rancho Santiago Community College District**

*The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.*

### **About the Orange County Market Place**

*The Orange County Market Place, America's premier outdoor shopping event, is held each weekend at the OC Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa, except during the annual Orange County Fair in July and August. The Market Place features nearly 1,000 vendors in an outdoor setting with a wide variety of products and services, including homemade crafts, gourmet foods-to-go, baked goods, jewelry, clothing, toys, sporting goods, kitchen gadgets, collectibles, perfumes, linens, home decor, electronics, luxury used cars and much more.*

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