BY CB STAFF

In today’s challenging environment, the 2013 Baldrige Performance Excellence Program will provide a valuable framework that helps entrepreneurs plan, perform and measure results, particularly within an uncertain environment. The Puerto Rico Small Business & Technology Development Center (P.R.-SBTDC) and Quality Texas Foundation will be offering an orientation about the program and leadership topics to qualified entrepreneurs during a kickoff conference Feb. 22, which will be held 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Caribe Hilton Hotel in the Condado sector of San Juan.

This is the third year the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence will be presented on the island by the P.R.-SBTDC, which is comprised of eight, one-day workshops each month with topic experts, experienced examiners and national Baldrige examiners for each criterion discussed.

The program has helped businesses enhance their strategic and operational areas to achieve improvements and excel in today’s competitive marketplace. As of date, more than 120 companies have participated, reporting significant operational improvements, with an impact on the workplace environment and exceeding financial results. Their impact, results and testimonies after implementing the Baldrige Criteria are the best evidence of its effectiveness.

“Those who participated in the 2011 and 2012 Baldrige Program are evidence of the efficiency and effectiveness of its strategies and operational processes,” said Carmen Martí, P.R.-SBTDC executive director & national Baldrige examiner. The 2011 and 2012 results and economic impact have motivated the leadership of the P.R.-SBTDC and Quality Texas Foundation to collaborate with the educational programs of the Baldrige Criteria of Excellence and Quality Texas award programs.

The Baldrige Program can be implemented for all sectors, including business, services, healthcare, education, retail, government and manufacturing. The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is embodied in the seven key areas of leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, measurement analysis & knowledge management, workforce focus, operations focus and results.

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“Through experienced Baldrige examiners and national Baldrige awardees, we educate, share industry best practices, obtain feedback and learn, and improve businesses during their journey of excellence. The goal of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program is to transform companies into sustainable business models that ensure continuous growth. The education facilitates entrepreneurs to improve their efficiency and develop better processes and tools for sustained growth,” Martí highlighted.

“We invite all businesses to join us at the Orientation Kickoff Meeting of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. I guarantee the Baldrige journey of learning best practices, as well as the networking experience with peer entrepreneurs and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality awardees, will be exceptional and meaningful for your business,” Martí concluded. For further information, or to register for the Feb. 22 orientation, call 787-763-6811, or email mguzman@prsbtdc.org. The program is designed for established businesses with more than 25 employees and/or more than $1.5 million in annual sales.

P.R.-SBTDC has a more than 15-year commitment working with the entrepreneurial community through a cooperative agreement between Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The program has promoted growth, innovation and exports to thousands of small businesses on the island. The P.R.-SBTDC Network is accredited by the SBA and the Association of Small Business Development Centers, which regulates a national network of more than 1,200 offices throughout the U.S. and Caribbean.

The Small Business Development Centers were created by Congress to offer technical and managerial advice in the development of small businesses. The individualized counseling services offered by certified business consultants at each center are free of cost. The P.R.-SBTDC has constantly aligned business solutions, educational programs and business networking opportunities to meet the emerging needs of entrepreneurs, with visible gains in results and economic impact.