

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Media Contacts**

**National:** Scott Tillitt - scott@antidotecollective.org, 917-449-6356

**Charleston region:** Annie Byrd Hamnett - annie@byrdhousepr.com, 843-853-9120

**BALLE:** Alissa Barron - alissa@livingeconomies.org, 240-317-2247



## **‘BE YOUR OWN BAILOUT’: BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR LOCAL LIVING ECONOMIES (BALLE) TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE AND LOCAL CHANGE AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual BALLE Business Conference — May 20-23, Charleston, SC**

**Charleston, SC—March 15, 2010** — Economic stimulus need not come only from the Feds. This May, the **Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE)** is bringing together a national community of socially responsible business owners and thought leaders to create meaningful economic change at the grassroots level. Hundreds of entrepreneurs, business network leaders, economic developers, sustainability experts, and local government and community leaders will gather at the **8<sup>th</sup> Annual BALLE Business Conference** to explore new practices in growing community health and wealth and share tested models for social entrepreneurship and local economic development.

The conference, themed “Lighting the Way to a New Economy,” will include 100 speakers, 10 plenaries, 24 breakout sessions, an intensive pre-workshop, 3 ‘living economy’ tours, and a variety of networking and social events. It runs **Thursday, May 20 to Sunday, May 23 in Charleston, SC.**

The underlying message to attendees is to ‘Be Your Own Bailout’ through self-reliance and increased opportunities for locally owned, socially responsible businesses. The conference program will give participants the inspiration, guidance and tools needed to address issues facing communities and to encourage local economic development. “BALLE helps businesses, whatever their field, learn how to be sustainable in the new economy — and this conference will harness and focus those efforts,” said executive director Michelle Long. “The conference is led by businesses — the entrepreneurs and innovators that are building our homes, growing and distributing our food, and powering our lives.”

“Every month, we hear from dozens of communities looking to replicate the economic and community-building successes of local business alliances throughout North America. Local entrepreneurs are the bedrock of our economy, and as local businesses work together, they are empowering communities to build lasting community health and wealth — from the bottom up,” said Michael Shuman, research and

economic development director and author of *The Small-Mart Revolution* and *Going Local*.

**Plenary Speakers include:**

- ◇ Lyle Estill, Piedmont Biofuels and author of *Small is Possible*
- ◇ Jennifer Buffett, NoVo Foundation
- ◇ India Pierce Lee, Cleveland Foundation and the Cleveland Evergreen Cooperatives
- ◇ Eric Henry, TS Designs and Cotton of the Carolinas
- ◇ Woody Tasch, Slow Money Alliance
- ◇ Annie Leonard, filmmaker of *The Story of Stuff*
- ◇ Ben Burkett, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives
- ◇ Marjorie Kelley, Tellus Institute and author of *The Divine Right of Capital*
- ◇ Lily Yeh, The Village of Arts and Humanities and Barefoot Artists
- ◇ David Orr, Oberlin College and author of *The Nature of Design*
- ◇ Judy Wicks, co-founder of BALLE and founder of White Dog Café
- ◇ Leslie Christian, Upstream21 and Portfolio21
- ◇ Kimber Lanning, Local First Arizona
- ◇ Mark Albion, Net Impact and author of *The Good Life*
- ◇ Joseph Riley, Mayor of Charleston

**Program Topics include:**

- ◇ Increasing the Success of your Triple Bottom Line Business
- ◇ Local Living Economy Business Models: Green Building, Food & Farming, Energy, Manufacturing
- ◇ Sustainable Economic Development
- ◇ Building a Thriving BALLE Network
- ◇ Harnessing Community Capital
- ◇ Think Local First Campaigns and Tools
- ◇ The Power of Business Cooperation

Regular conference rates are: general registrants: \$515 through April 15, \$565 through May 13; BALLE Network Leaders: \$465 through April 15, \$515 through May 13. Detailed information regarding specific events, speakers, dates and times can be found on the conference website:

<http://livingeconomies.org/conference/2010-conference>.

**ABOUT BALLE**

The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) is North America's fastest growing network of socially responsible businesses, comprised of over 80 community networks representing 22,000 independent business members across 30 U.S. states and Canadian provinces. BALLE networks create local living economies through the building blocks of independent retail, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, green building, local zero-waste manufacturing, community capital, independent media, and local arts and culture. Founded in 2001, BALLE works to foster vibrant communities, a healthy natural environment, and prosperity for all.

**MEDIA NOTES**

Conference presenters and BALLE leaders are available for pre-conference interviews by phone. Conference passes are available for credentialed media.

###