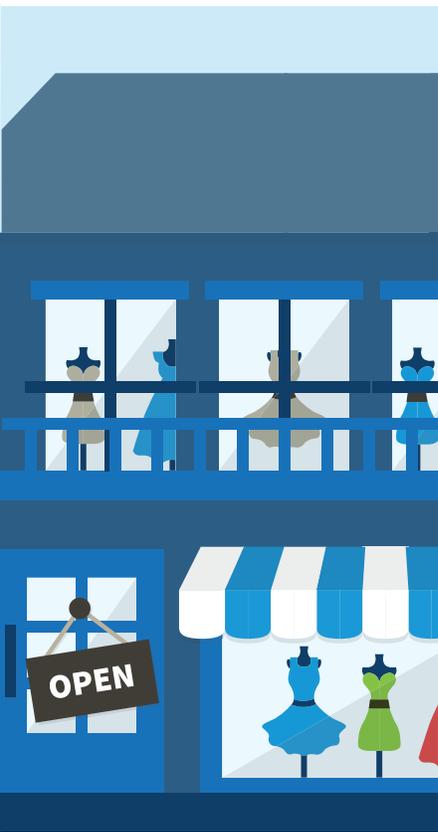


April 30th to May 6th

#SmallBusinessWeek

**NATIONAL
SMALL
BUSINESS
WEEK
2017**



Celebrating America's Entrepreneurs
www.sba.gov/nsbw



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Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for joining us in celebration of the true engines of our economy—the nation’s 28 million small businesses.

As Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, I am honored to be their advocate.

National Small Business Week honors the innovators who take a risk on an idea, invest in their communities and create jobs. Their skills and creativity not only support their own families, they make our neighborhoods vibrant places to live and work and fuel our nation’s economic strength.



Small businesses are responsible for two out of every three net new jobs in the U.S. each year. More than half of all Americans either work for or own a small business. As an entrepreneur myself, I feel a tremendous responsibility to each of them. Like all small business owners, I know what it’s like to take a risk on an idea, manage cash flow, navigate regulations and tax laws, and create jobs. This week, we salute the courage and persistence of those who don’t always get the attention or appreciation they deserve.

As we celebrate our small businesses, we also highlight the services SBA provides—both in Washington, DC, and in our communities from coast to coast. Resource partners like Small Business Development Centers, Veterans Business Outreach Centers, SCORE, and Women’s Business Centers counsel entrepreneurs on starting, scaling and succeeding in business. Our community lending partners provide financing solutions. And we train small businesses on how to compete for government contracts and the ability to sell their products to the world’s largest consumer—the federal government. Finally, SBA provides a helping hand to small businesses recovering from disasters. These four roles—counseling, capital access, contracting, and disaster assistance, which we call “three Cs and a D”—aim to support small businesses at every stage, whether they are starting up, expanding or getting through a tough time. My hope is that as more people learn about the services SBA provides, we can revitalize a spirit of entrepreneurship in our country and more people will have the confidence, skills and resources they need to succeed as small business owners. As they succeed, our economy and our nation succeed—and that’s something all of us can celebrate.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda S. McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda McMahon

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Phoenix Award for Outstanding Small Business Disaster Recovery 2017

Robert Leonardis, President Ember Industries, Inc.

321 Carlson Circle
San Marcos, TX 78666

Ember Industries builds, tests and calibrates electronic devices and wire and cable assemblies. Its products are used to build oil field above-ground tank level monitors and Lockheed military aircraft drones.

On May 25, 2015, Rob Leonardis was forced to shut down his business when the nearby Blanco River crested. The flood destroyed about one-third of Ember's raw material inventory, as well as office furniture, computers and servers, and its high-tech production equipment.

Immediately, Rob's core crew of employees, some of whom had lost their homes in the flood, came to the Ember building after the flood waters receded and worked with Rob to clean up the debris. He became a cheerleader and coach, encouraging his workers not to give up and to visualize the day when they could resume production.



In July 2015, Ember Industries was approved for a \$2 million SBA disaster loan. By Oct. 15, Ember rehired 60 of its 68 employees. It took Ember Industries just six weeks to resume production. Rob and this team revamped their business continuity plan to offset losses from future disasters.

Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Volunteer 2017

Susan M. Jack

198 Fulton Road
Clendenin, WV 48334

Susan Jack and her 16-year-old daughter Jodi had all their belongings in a storage unit in Clendenin, West Virginia. They had planned to leave in June 2016 for new opportunities in a suburb of Dayton, Ohio.

Those plans were upended by torrential rains on June 23, which led to the flooding of the nearby Elk River. One of the worst floods in West Virginia's history resulted in 23 deaths and widespread property and infrastructure losses. Clendenin's business center was destroyed. Susan lost everything.

Instead of moving to Ohio, Susan decided to stay and help Clendenin recover. With her construction background, Susan worked dawn to dusk clearing debris and mud out of the damaged homes. She also inspected property damage, provided timelines for rebuilding on many properties and even served as a construction foreman. Unable to work at night

because the city's power grid had failed, forced Susan and other volunteers to rest.

As donations began to arrive, Susan worked with other volunteers to coordinate the distribution of materials, like plywood and drywall, as well as cash and gift cards to those in need, doing much of the deliveries on her own. She developed a solid volunteer team that was attuned to the needs of the area flood victims, arranging with local churches to house and cook meals for those volunteers.



More than eight months after the June flooding, Susan continues her volunteer recovery work. She purchased a flooded-out home in Clendenin to encourage others to rebuild. Her fellow volunteers say the work on her own house is still taking a back seat to others in need.

Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official 2017

Carol J. Huchingson, Administrative Officer Lake County

225 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453

A small blaze torched a few patches of dry grass in Lake County, in northern California, on the afternoon of Sept. 12, 2015. The combination of drought conditions and high winds created the inferno named the Valley Fire. Within 24 hours, 50,000 acres had burned and 1,958 structures were destroyed.

At the time, Carol Huchingson was Lake County's director of social services. She immediately shouldered the residents' concerns about debris removal, making sure permits were quickly dispatched to remove burned trees and begin new construction. Her extraordinary passion for taking care of the local residents led county officials to expand her job, appointing her the county's fire recovery coordinator.

Carol looked beyond recovery, seeing one of her tasks as helping the community return to its pre-fire vibrancy and economic solvency. She orchestrated collaborations with federal agencies and faith-based organizations to connect local residents to information about housing grants and SBA disaster assistance. Carol also made sure interagency meeting minutes were posted on social media and shared with local media outlets. She later made the meetings public to let residents know the county was being held accountable for the recovery.

Carol even needed the utility crews replacing destroyed cable lines, asking "How much line was laid today? How much more needs to be done?" By the end, utility firms estimated they laid 200,000 feet, or more than 37 miles of cable lines, throughout the burn zones.



Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official 2017

Stephen K. Benjamin, Mayor City of Columbia

1737 Main St.
Columbia, SC 29201

The relentless rainstorms that began on Oct. 1, 2015 unleashed historic levels of devastation on the city of Columbia. According to city reports, nearly 12 trillion gallons of water had fallen, causing 19 fatalities, nearly \$12 billion in property damages and flooded roads. In addition, several dams collapsed under the deluge.

Before the storms hit, Mayor Stephen Benjamin reached out to officials in cities like New Orleans that had recovered from floods, to develop a response and recovery plan. He also used local and national media outlets, as well as social media, to encourage businesses and residents to prepare for the worst.

The devastation caused by the 1,000-year flood was enormous. Taking advantage of daily press briefings and social media, Mayor Benjamin provided timely

updates on road conditions, shelter locations, evacuations, and locations of recovery centers. He made himself available for every media request, conducting the interviews in the neighborhoods hardest hit, rather than in an operations center.

Starting early in the morning and working into the night, Mayor Benjamin reached out to national and local nonprofit organizations to support the coordination of relief efforts. He delivered bottled water to the elderly and the sick. He personally thanked first responders for their service. While visiting a shelter, Mayor Benjamin spoke with an elderly man, who said he had lost everything he owned. "All we could do was hug and weep together," Mayor Benjamin said.

Mayor Benjamin is now working with FEMA and South Carolina officials to develop a canal repair solution that will protect the drinking water supply for more than 400,000 residents.



Alabama

Jodie Ray Stanfield, Owner **Local Joe's Trading Post**

4967 Rainbow Drive
Rainbow City, AL 35906

The Stanfield family took a bold risk in opening a restaurant in 2010. Local Joe's Trading Post started as a country store located at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains near Canoe Creek in Etowah County, Alabama. The country store grew quickly to become a leading catering company and restaurant. It has now grown to more than 50 employees with four locations, including the original location, Southside, Ala., Alexandria, Ala. and the most recent in Cave Springs, Ga. Each location carries many local products, as well as the base menu of Local Joe's well known six smoked meats, sides and the famous Local Joe's Sweet Tea.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

Jodie Stanfield worked with the Alabama Small Business Development Center to develop the day-to-day operations of the company and plan for the expansion of Local Joe's, which has proven to be a success. The Stanfield family has grown the original Local Joe's to include a bakery, a wine room, a walk-in cooler and freezer, a commercial kitchen and an inside dining area. With Jodie's commitment, Local Joe's has increased sales from \$500,000 annually to \$2 million in revenue to date and the family-owned business has grown regionally.



Alaska

David McCarthy, Founder, CEO **Jason Motyka, Founder, CFO** **Denali Visions 3000 Corp.**

P.O. Box 107
Denali, AK 99755

During a summer road trip in 2006 on his motorcycle, David McCarthy—a trained chef, master brewer and Chicago restaurateur—fell in love with Alaska. While exploring Denali, he met his business partner, Jason Motyka. Jason owned the landmark Denali Park Salmon Bake, a property with 42 individual log cabins and an on-site restaurant. Together David and Jason started DV3 Corp., the parent company for several restaurants and lodgings with a focus on hospitality, tourism and entertainment in Alaska.

In 2011, David and Jason received an SBA loan to expand DV3 Corp. from one business to five. DV3 Corp. has nearly 600 employees and has sustained healthy growth in revenue while steadily increasing the number of jobs in Alaska. With the addition of the new

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

location in Anchorage, DV3 Corp. has added 250 jobs in the Anchorage area (120 full time with 130 full-time jobs in the summer months) while generating \$4.7 million in revenue from the additional property.



DV3 Corp. donates to numerous local and national organizations through financial contributions, donations of goods and services, or providing event space for local meetings and fund raisers. DV3 Corp. is committed to being a notable corporate citizen who is actively involved within the local community.

Arizona

Vickie Herd, Owner
Bella Rose Estate, LLC and
Extended Family Disability Services

1380 S. Price Road
Chandler, AZ 85286

When Vickie Herd gave birth to her first child, Chad, born with Down syndrome, she never imagined starting a business that would help other families like hers. A few months after Chad graduated from high school, Vickie started Extended Family Disability Services to help other young adults with developmental disabilities continue in a learning environment after high school.

EFDS was established in 2005 to serve young adults with cognitive challenges by teaching life skills and continuing education in reading and math. EFDS concentrates on two main services: day treatment and training adults, and home and community based services, accommodating clients at their

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

developmental skills level. It also provides respite, relieving the burden of constant education and adjustment to the adult world, usually left to parents and family.

EFDS's sales more than doubled between 2011 and 2014, as did its net income. Vickie opened a second business in 2013, the Bella Rose Estate, a wedding and events center. The business has seen consistent growth and has bookings through the end of 2017.

In 2015, Vickie purchased the 5,000-square-foot facility she leased for almost two years with a \$1.8 million SBA 504 loan. Ownership cut her costs by \$2,000 monthly. Vickie now operates both her businesses under one roof.



Arkansas

Victoria A. Washington, President
Vision Information Technology Consultants, LLC

1123 S. University Ave., Suite 240
Little Rock, AR 72204

After working several years as a requirements engineer for the Central Intelligence Agency, and later as a systems engineer for a federal contractor, Victoria Washington decided to start her own business in 2003. Vision Information Technology Consultants, LLC provides engineering, enterprise IT and program management services and solutions to federal contractors, which includes the Department of Defense.

While growing the business, Victoria became certified as an SBA 8(a) firm and earned additional certifications as a HUBZone, minority and woman-owned business.

In 2012, the company was enjoying the success that comes with working several federal contracts when the bottom fell out. Vision IT lost a large contract

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

when troop withdrawals in Afghanistan began that same year. Victoria had to let all her employees go. She started leveraging everything to stay afloat.

Victoria continued to work hard to procure the next contract. The effort paid off. Sales increased in 2013 from \$74,000 to \$3 million in 2015. Staff increased from one to 21 during that same time period.

With a firm belief in cultivating the next generation of leaders, Victoria contributes time, money and resources to STEM Coalition, Million Women Mentors Program, Girls of Promise, and Junior Achievement of Arkansas. She is president of the board of directors for the Little Rock Juniors Volleyball Club.



California

Lars Christopher Herman, President Herman Construction Group, Inc.

2060 Wineridge Place, Suite A
Escondido, CA 92029

Lars C. Herman resigned his commission with the Civil Engineer Corps in June 2009 after serving in various positions and rising to the rank of Lieutenant, CEC, USN. He immediately established Herman Construction Group, Inc., an 8(a)-certified construction company specializing in federal projects. HERMAN competed for and won more than 80 general construction and design-build contracts ranging from \$3,000 to nearly \$24 million throughout the United States. Many of the projects were performed with several government agencies, including the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, Veterans Administration, and the State of California, private and commercial clients. HERMAN has proven to be an industry expert in renovation,

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

repair and upgrading active research facilities, laboratories, VA hospitals, and military medical treatment facilities.

Amidst dwindling government budgets and a highly competitive market, HERMAN not only survived the Great Recession but grew exponentially by penetrating niche markets that were underserved by small business prime contractors specializing in construction within occupied medical spaces. The SBA's 8(a) Business Development and Mentor-Protégé programs helped HERMAN develop the necessary tools for its double-digit growth. During 2013-2015, HERMAN received more than \$80 million in contracts set aside for small businesses. In 2016, HERMAN won an additional \$51 million in set-aside contracts.



Colorado

Lorena P. Cantarovici, Owner Maria Empanada

1298 South Broadway Ave.
Denver, CO 80210

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Lorena Cantarovici was raised most of her life by her single mother, Maria. After working as a branch manager for Argentina's largest private bank, Lorena earned a master's degree in marketing, and moved to Denver to improve her English.

Lorena made empanadas for a party and was later approached by a Denver caterer for a big order. New orders for empanadas came in, and Lorena quickly outgrew her home kitchen. In 2010, Lorena attended a Small Business Development Center workshop to draft her first business plan.

As the demand for her empanadas increased, Lorena borrowed \$4,000 from her family and bought a 900-square-foot space with three tables and six seats. Despite the restaurant's early struggles, Maria Empanada's volume continued to grow. Lorena used

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

an SBA microloan to buy a 3,500-square-foot location in the South Broadway area of Denver.

Each empanada is handmade by artisans, creating, says Lorena, a product superior to the machine-made empanadas. Maria Empanada has since become the nation's leading artisanal empanada restaurant concept with Argentine empanadas, tartas and specialty desserts.

In September 2016, Lorena used an SBA 7(a) loan to open another location of Maria Empanada. From 2013 to 2015, total sales have increased from \$113,673 to \$1 million, and the number of employees has grown from four to 28.

A percentage of Maria Empanada sales is donated to nearby elementary schools on designated night events. Leftover empanadas are given to homeless shelters and faith-based organizations weekly.



Connecticut

Carla Bartolucci, President Euro-USA Trading Co., Inc.

41 Norwich Westerly Road
North Stonington, CT 06359

Carla Bartolucci started her dream of producing organic products that could improve the lives of her family and other families in 1995. Euro-USA Trading Co., Inc. is a distributor of organic foods throughout the U.S. and Canada, and is known for its leading organic food brands, Bionaturae and Jovial.

After losing her parents to cancer, Carla became interested in organic foods and together with her Italian-born husband, Rodolfo, founded the Bionaturae brand. Combining their passion for food, farming and tradition, the couple grew Bionaturae to be one of the country's leading brands of organic foods. Carla's vision of all natural pastas, sauces, oils and vegetables quickly became a reality that has

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

blossomed into a business with more than \$32 million in revenue annually and 20 employees.

In 2006, Carla uncovered a nearly extinct species of wheat, einkorn, that helped her gluten-sensitive daughter to flourish. The ancient grain was planted by Neolithic farmers thousands of years ago. Carla set up a network of organic farmers to grow the grain and developed a new brand, Jovial, focused on ancient einkorn wheat products and gluten and allergen free foods.

In March 2015, with the help of a \$2.5 million SBA 504 loan, Carla purchased a 28-acre historical farm in North Stonington, Conn., where the company has constructed its new headquarters.



Delaware

Donna L. Vanderwende, Owner Vanderwende Farm Creamery

4003 Seashore Highway
Bridgeville, DE 19933

How does a third generation dairy farm in western Sussex County, Delaware expand its business?

The answer was obvious: Open a creamery. Sell ice cream. That was the solution Donna Vanderwende settled on in 2010. Donna's in-laws, William and Ellen Vanderwende, purchased the dairy farm in 1954, starting with six cows and \$35. The farm has since grown to 4,000 acres and 225 registered Holstein cows, which are milked twice a day.

Donna and Bill Pfaff, Southern Delaware director for the Small Business Development Center, spent hundreds of hours working on a solid business plan.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

The work paid off. When the Vanderwende Farm Creamery opened in 2012, success was immediate, with a steady expansion in facilities, sales and employees. Now with a large scale production facility, three retail outlets and an ice cream food truck, Donna has more than doubled the number of employees and enjoyed more than a 50 percent increase in sales during the last three years. They also added a wholesale department serving restaurant customers throughout Delaware and Maryland.

The Vanderwendes are long-term supporters of the local community, giving thousands of dollars in donations and in kind donations to basketball and soccer teams, the Food Bank of Delaware and the Bridgeville Library.



District of Columbia

Robert William Dozier Jr., President & CEO **RWD Consulting, LLC**

1050 17th St., NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036

Robert W. Dozier Jr., president and CEO of RWD Consulting, LLC, used his nearly 30 years of experience as a former senior account manager for Fortune 500 companies at Pitney Bowes and with federal, state, local government and commercial entities to make RWD Consulting what it is today. Since its inception in 2004, and under Robert's leadership, RWD Consulting has provided its expertise to more than 40 federal government agencies, strategic partners and private companies.

RWD Consulting, an 8(a)-certified company, provides management services, operations support, administrative support, technical and creative services, supply chain management and research for the public and private sectors. The company's

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

participation in the 8(a) Business Development program has helped it to secure several federal government clients, such as the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Department of the Army. Robert believes that the four C's—Competent, Competitive, Customer-oriented and Compassionate—not only define what RWD does, but what it is as a company. The company has more than 80 employees and boasts a revenue of more than \$5 million.



Robert gives back to the small business community by reviewing business plans and marketing strategies, helping small businesses to develop business process techniques to grow their businesses.

Florida

Paul Morrow, President **South Dade Air Conditioning and Refrigeration**

14510 SW 284th St.
Homestead, FL 33033

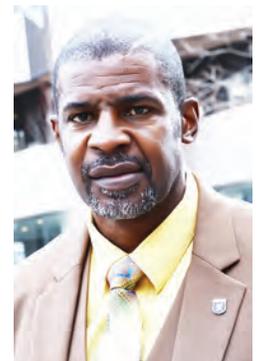
Returning home after being injured serving in the U.S. Army in 1985, Paul Morrow began a career in air conditioning and refrigeration repair. To capitalize on the growing need for professional HVAC services in the local residential market, Paul launched South Dade Air Conditioning and Refrigeration that same year.

As South Florida became an in-demand lifestyle destination, Paul's company expanded to serve customers throughout the Miami-Dade Metro Area, including Broward and Monroe counties. He later opened a second office in Selma, Alabama.

SDAC has expanded into facilities maintenance, building maintenance and operations, grounds maintenance and landscaping, major capital improvement projects, design/build construction work, renovation and remodeling, specialty remediation and more.

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The company is a participant in the SBA's 8(a) Business Development program. It is also a Veterans Administration-certified, Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business. Much of the company's early expansion and capital access came from a \$250,000 SBA loan.



While caring for his terminally ill mother in 2012, Paul delegated the management of the company to his deputies. SDAC's previous sales of \$2.1 million and net worth of \$81,633 dwindled to the negative status by December 2014. He replaced the staff, hired a solid new team, and turned the deficit around by winning \$4.5 million in new federal contracts in 2015. By 2016, sales had increased to \$7.3 million.

Paul mentors at-risk youth in economically disadvantaged areas of South Florida and Alabama. He also trains aspiring entrepreneurs and military veterans with small business ownership and HVAC trade skills.

Georgia

Kevin Boykin, CEO Path-Tec, LLC

5700 Old Brim Road
Midland, GA 31820

Kevin Boykin opened Path-Tec, a medical logistics company that specializes in the packaging, transport and tracking of laboratory specimens, in 2005. With the guidance and support from the Columbus Small Business Development Center, he has grown the business from operating out of a cramped rental storage unit, to owning a 130,000-square-foot facility.

After hearing customers complain about rising laboratory costs and testing errors, Kevin knew his vision for better products and services would work. Kevin leveraged more than 20 years of experience in the medical field that includes sales, manufacturing and laboratory operations.

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From 2013 to 2015, Path-Tec's sales grew from \$9 million to \$25 million. His staff increased from 55 to the current 150.

While many of the firms Kevin's business competes with may specialize in one aspect of the medical logistics field, what sets his company apart is the ability to integrate all aspects of the process into a seamless operation.

Along the way, Kevin received support from the local Small Business Development Center, ranging from basic business idea development counseling to access to capital, growth planning, market research, financial analysis, CEO mentoring and an onsite energy efficiency study. Kevin credits the SBDC for much of his company's success.



Guam

Derrick Muna Quinata, CEO/Dealer Principal Monster Auto Corporation (dba Guam AutoSpot)

255 E. Marine Corps Drive
Hagatana, GU 96932

Derrick Muna Quinata was initially exposed to the car sales business at age 3, when his mother started selling cars for a living. Still very young, he told his mother that, one day, he would own a car dealership.

When you're determined in life, dreams, as habits, die hard. After graduating from college with a degree in administration and working for the government for some time, Derrick decided he could make more money selling cars, so he left his secure job and went to work for an uncle's dealership. In 2008, he started his own business, Guam AutoSpot, which he built from the ground up.

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Equipped with his years of experience, a fierce resolve to succeed, and assistance from SBA resource partners, Derrick took Guam AutoSpot from an operation with only five cars on consignment to a Mitsubishi franchise in 2013, becoming a major player in Guam's auto industry with sales exceeding \$17 million in 2014.

As a responsible citizen, Derrick supports his community through helping organizations such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Boy Scouts of America, the American Cancer Society and the American Red Cross, among others. He also started the Buick Open, a golf tournament, with proceeds supporting local charities.



Hawaii

Garrett W. Marrero, President/CEO
Melanie M. Marrero, Vice President/COO
Maui Brewing Company

605 Lipoa Parkway
Kihei, HI 96753

Maui Brewing Company started in 2005 as a small seven-barrel brewpub restaurant in Kahana on Maui with the help of SBA financing. Today, it is the largest craft beer producer in the state of Hawaii.

By 2007, increasing demand led Garrett and Melanie to open a second location in Lahaina with a 25-barrel capacity, giving them the ability to provide brewery tours, making it a tourist destination as well. Soon, they were producing more than 19,000 barrels, boosting revenue more than \$10 million per year by 2013. This boosted the confidence of the two entrepreneurial partners to move ahead with an aggressive expansion strategy.

Further growth for the Maui Brewing Company brand will include expansion of the brewpub-restaurant venture. Their new 18,000-square-foot

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

restaurant opened in January 2016 on Oahu. The new brewpub employs 240 people. A second brewpub restaurant will open in 2017 in Kailua in Windward Oahu. A Kihei eatery will open in late 2017. By the end of 2018, Maui Brewing Company will employ a workforce of 700.



Garrett and Melanie support charitable causes and projects with action and leadership as well as financial support and donations. Some examples include supporting nonprofits on Maui with a percentage of sales. They are the founders of the Maui Brewer's Festival, which attracts visitors and generates revenue for the Maui Arts and Cultural Center, hosting fundraising events in their facility. They work with elected officials to improve the business environment and a variety of industry and quality of life issues.

Idaho

Eric Browning, Founder and CEO
Steve Browning, Cofounder and CFO
Blue Spring Partners (DBA Fin Fun)

3018 N. Holmes Ave.
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Brothers Eric and Steve Browning had separate, successful careers working in the private sector and their own businesses when, in 2012, they decided to join forces with their parents and take over the day-to-day operations of Fin Fun so their parents could go on a mission for their church.

Fin Fun was born in 2009 when one of the granddaughters asked Grandma Browning to make a mermaid fin for her. Grandma rose to the challenge and made the mermaid fin. When the girl hit the local pool, it became an instant success. Eight years later, Fin Fun has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, People Magazine, Fast Company, and Entertainment

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

Tonight. The business was ranked #119 "Fastest Growing Company" on the Inc. 500 list because of its 3,000 percent growth over three years.



Part of Fin Fun's success was financed with an SBA loan that the company used to purchase an office building, warehouse and land. This access to capital facilitated the expansion of the company, which also exports its products—patented monofin, swimwear, blankets and pool toys—to more than 170 countries.

Eric and Steve are passionate about giving back to the community, in particular children, so Fin Fun gives a percentage of its profits to about 18 charitable organizations.

Illinois

Sonat Birnecker Hart, President
Robert Birnecker, CEO
Koval Distillery, Inc.

4241 N. Ravenswood Ave.
Chicago, IL 60613

In his role as Deputy Press Secretary for the Austrian Embassy in Washington, D.C., Robert Birnecker and his wife, Sonat, often attended diplomatic receptions where, as customary, wine and other spirits were served. Robert came from a family that owned an award-winning distillery in Austria, so the couple decided to build a distillery business of their own when the time came.

The time came in 2008, when Sonat and Robert also decided to start a family and move to Chicago, where Sonat had grown up. Koval Distillery, Inc. was born. Koval was the nickname of Sonat's great-grandfather, who had immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s to start his own business.

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

Koval was the first distillery in Chicago since the mid-1800s, and under Sonat and Robert's expert leadership, the company has developed into a thriving business that owns four buildings, employs more than 40 people, and produces 20 different organic, kosher products. Koval also exports to more than a dozen countries and, with the help of an SBA 504 loan, aims to improve product availability in both domestic and international markets.



Since giving back to their local community is important to the couple, Koval helped promote more than 300 charitable organizations in 2016 through donations and events.

Indiana

Joey Rivera, Ph.D., President/CEO
Rivera Consulting Group

A Highway 311
Sellersburg, IN 47172

The U.S. Marine Corps supplied Joey Rivera with the structure and sense of mission missing from his life. At 22, Joey returned to southern Indiana, where he lived in his car, while attending Indiana University Southeast. Needing a job, Joey joined the U.S. Army Reserve and channeled his energies into education. While working on his Ph.D., Joey began doing information technology work at Fort Knox Army Post, and launched what would soon become Rivera Consulting Group. Since its inception, Joey's one-man show has blossomed into an enterprise that employs more than 120 employees in 10 states.

Joey used SBA services to their fullest and was the Indiana District Office 2016 8(a) Graduate of the

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

Year. He has received monthly guidance and counsel from the SBA Indianapolis District, where he first learned how to leverage the 8(a) program while building his business profile and value proposition. Joey has used the SCORE program for his company's initial board of advisers, and has attended countless SBA seminars ranging from Small Business Finance to Sales and Marketing. Joey also uses the SBA loan guarantee program to help obtain lines of credit to purchase property to build Rivera Group's corporate office.



Joey also gives back what he has received from the SBA, volunteering as a guest speaker and mentoring 8(a) companies that seek guidance on how to be successful within the government marketplace.

Iowa

Ben Puck, President **Puck Custom Enterprises**

1110 100th St.
Manning, IA 51455

During the farming crisis of the 80s, Ben Puck set out to save his family's farm by becoming a manure applicator for larger farms. He partnered with his brother to create Puck Brothers Pumping. Today, Ben finds himself teaching the world how to handle manure in the 21st century and, with the SBA's help, was able to not only save his family's farm, but also contribute to his rural Iowa community by providing much needed jobs.

A few years after launching the joint venture with his brother, Ben began running the business solo as Ben Puck Pumping. He then embarked on a long-term growth project. After a process that saw the company evolve from a vacuum truck operation to high-capacity spreaders and eventually its own proprietary,

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

patented equipment for hose drag operation and four other pending patents, Ben's business, now incorporated as Puck Custom Enterprises. It boasts great success both commercially and in the field of innovation.

PCE's drag hose service grew steadily over the years. With assistance from the SBA 504 loan program, the company financed a new building, purchased new equipment, and has grown the company to 50 full-time and 10 part-time employees.

Ben and his family support charitable organizations, local churches, schools and other businesses, helping Manning remain a vibrant rural community.



Kansas

Kenneth G. Bellesine, Owner **Central Electropolishing Company, Inc.**

103 N. Lawrence Ave.
Anthony, KS 67003

In 1985, Ken Bellesine's curiosity piqued when he heard about a unique industrial process called electropolishing being done by a company in Houston. Electropolishing is an electro-chemical metal finishing process that can make nickel, stainless steel and other metals shine like chrome. Ken began working with the company in Houston to assist him in developing his own company, Central Electropolishing Company, Inc., CELCO.

Ken sought SBA assistance to further develop his company. He worked with the South Central Kansas Economic Development District to create a business plan.

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Ken later reached out to the SBA for financing options. He made sure his loan application included information that quantified the potential market value. The SBA approved his 7(a) loan in 1986 to finance the construction of a building and equipment for the company.

Since the first 3,000-square-foot building was erected in 1986, CELCO has grown 15 times that size and does electropolishing work for about 300 companies located in 48 states, Mexico, Canada and Puerto Rico. CELCO also provides acid passivation, aqueous cleaning and oxygen cleaning services.



Kentucky

Debra Dudley, President and Cofounder Oscarware, Inc.

749 Priceville Road
Bonnieville, KY 42713

Oscarware, Inc., a family-owned manufacturing business, was founded in 1989 by Debra and Rex Dudley. They pioneered the concept of manufacturing outdoor cooking with a disposable “Grill Topper” designed to provide campers a quick, easy and inexpensive way to cook in parks and campgrounds.

Since that first product, Oscarware has expanded to 17 outdoor cooking gadgets, all manufactured in Kentucky. Oscarware has grown to 32 employees and distributes products across the United States. It now exports its products to Canada and Europe, with assistance from the SBA STEP exporting program.

When Rex Dudley passed away unexpectedly in 2006, Debra took over at the helm of the company. She reached out to the Western Kentucky University

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SBDC, and since then has received extensive counseling and assistance with marketing, product development and financial forecasting of the business.

The SBDC also helped Debra develop a strong business plan that enabled the company to obtain several commercial bank loans. This influx of cash was used to become current on two SBA 7(a) loans and to purchase materials and supplies. Those two SBA loans are now paid in full. Last year Oscarware obtained another SBA 7(a) loan to fuel its rapid growth.

In the past three years, revenue has grown more than 32 percent, and its net worth has more than doubled.

Oscarware annually contributes to local charities, civic groups and schools.



Louisiana

Alejandra “Alex” Hernandez, President Hernandez Consulting & Construction, LLC

3221 Tulane Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70119

Alex Hernandez founded Hernandez Consulting in 2005 after serving in the military and working in the private sector. Inc. Magazine named Hernandez Consulting as part of the Inc. 500 list of fastest growing companies in the United States. At Hernandez Consulting, Alex manages projects for a number of federal agencies, such as the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Agriculture, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Department of Energy.

Hernandez Consulting, LLC is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned, 8(a) and HUBZone-certified small business. The firm originated in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to help with debris removal and demolition. Today, the company is a fully functioning

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construction and design firm with 50 employees. Hernandez Consulting is headquartered in New Orleans and performs the vast majority of its work in the state of Louisiana.

Alex considers the welfare of his employees to be of utmost importance. The company offers above average compensation and generous benefit packages. Alex attends multiple recruiting events and job fairs each year, especially those focused on veterans and other under-served local communities. The company proudly boasts that nearly one-third of its employees are military veterans.



Maine

Leigh Kellis, Founder/Owner The Holy Donut

194 Park Ave.
Portland, ME 04101

In the winter of 2011, Leigh Kellis got a craving for donuts, so she started looking for the best recipe she could find—a potato-based donut. To test the unique donut, Leigh brought a sample to a local coffee shop to see if it would sell them. Initially, Leigh got the shop to agree to sell a dozen per day. Leigh soon turned her idea into the Holy Donut.

As the Holy Donut grew, Leigh was faced with challenges, primarily finding enough space to run a commercial kitchen. By reaching out to the Portland chapter of SCORE, Leigh and her business partner, Jeff Buckwalter, were able to manage the challenges as they came. They moved from a shared commercial

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kitchen to their own shop in 2012. A year later, the Holy Donut opened its second location, bringing sales up to a million donuts per year. Production is more than 200 times Leigh's initial one dozen per day. Further expansions are planned, with another location scheduled to open in Scarborough in March 2017.



Just as Leigh has taken a stake in her community by committing to as many local ingredients as she can, she also gives back by choosing one local nonprofit to support each year. All Holy Donut employees are encouraged to volunteer in their communities. The business offers up to 16 hours of paid time off to employees who choose to volunteer their time.

Maryland

Kara DiPietro, President & CEO Hospitality Millwork Construction, Inc. (t/a HMC, Inc.)

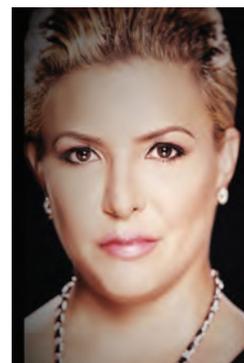
7190 Oakland Mills Road, Suite 10
Columbia, MD 21046

A lifelong love of learning led Kara DiPietro to teaching elementary school right out of college. Her business-owner father, Gerry Dzurek, acknowledged Kara's thirst for expanding her realm of experience. After running the successful HMC, Inc., a firm that designs and builds cafe and dining facilities for large food service operations, such as hospital cafeterias, for more than 20 years, Gerry decided to open a Los Angeles office. He asked Kara to come on board and take over the East Coast operations.

Kara initially focused on marketing while learning about the daily operations. It wasn't long before Kara was up to speed on everything, from HMC's construction processes to human resources management.

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Since taking the helm, Kara has instituted process improvements, increased employee morale, grown revenues by 20 percent and has positioned HMC to become one of the largest design-build millwork firms in the Mid-Atlantic region. Along the way, she sought assistance from the SBA Baltimore District Office, the Maryland Small Business Development Center Network and the Procurement and Technical Assistance Program to learn more about government contracting and the Women-Owned Small Business Contracting Program.



Massachusetts

Victoria R. Bondoc, President Gemini Industries, Inc.

200 Wheeler Road
Burlington, MA 01803

At the age of 4, Victoria Bondoc was diagnosed with a rare condition that permanently left her with 20/200 vision, extreme sensitivity to light and colorblindness. But Victoria was a girl with an attitude: “The only disability in life is a bad attitude. Life does not care about what you want, what you need, or what you deserve. The will to fight and the will to succeed helps you create the future that you choose, and to achieve your goals.”

That no-fail, no-excuses approach is the driving force behind the success of Gemini Industries, Inc., the 8(a)-certified firm founded by Victoria more than 30 years ago that has created more than 1,360 jobs

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through contracts for more than \$200 million supporting national defense programs.

Under Victoria’s determined leadership, Gemini’s operations have expanded to 12 locations across the U.S. and overseas. Over the three-year period ending December 2015, she increased sales from \$51 to \$468 million in contract awards, increasing net worth from \$8.7 to \$10.5 million.



Victoria has also contributed more than \$170,000 to support business and community programs, including: the American Cancer Society and the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, among others. She serves on the board of directors of several organizations.

Michigan

Jon Lanning, President Inontime, LLC

7900 Logistics Drive
Zeeland, MI 49464

Inontime is a logistics firm specializing in local trucking and warehousing. Its work consists mainly of day runs between Zeeland and Chicago, Detroit or Indianapolis, moving inventory and finished goods for many of West Michigan’s large scale manufacturers. In 2010, the company began operating a trucking route in South Carolina at the request of a customer. That division has grown to include a small warehouse with 10 trucks.

Inontime received a \$2.2 million SBA 504 loan in 2011 to purchase a new building. It formed a separate LLC to purchase the building and then opened up ownership in the new LLC to every company employee.

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From 2013 to 2015, sales grew from \$19 million to \$25 million, and staff increased from 203 to 315.

The company contributes 20 percent of its pre-tax profits to organizations as part of its stewardship effort. The funds are distributed through a team member voting process. Over the years, the organization has supported many valuable community charities, such as the Holland/Zeeland Labor Day Big Truck Parade. Additionally, each full-time employee receives a charity check in the amount of one paycheck. Inontime doesn’t track how the money is spent; it only asks employees to use the extra cash for a cause or need that will improve the lives of others.



Minnesota

Shirley Joann Wikner, CEO **Aviation Charter and Executive Aviation**

9960 Flying Cloud Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55347

Shirley Wikner conquered her fear of flying by obtaining her private pilot's license and then becoming co-owner of Aviation Charter and Executive Aviation in 1988 with her husband, Roger, who loved flying. When he died suddenly in 2012, she became the sole owner of the company. She fought on several fronts to preserve it, emerging stronger than ever. Thanks to Shirley's tenacity—and with a bit of help from the SBA and its resource partner WomenVenture—Aviation Charter and Executive Aviation now has 54 employees. The business works throughout the contiguous United States, Canada and Mexico, providing corporate flights, flights to organ transplant teams, patient transport, and air freight services.

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In 2014, Aviation Charter received an SBA-guaranteed loan. More recently, Shirley graduated from the Scale Up! Twin Cities program offered by WomenVenture, one of the SBA's Women's Business Center grantees, which provides critical resources and support to established women-owned businesses that have a proven track record and are ready for exponential growth with goals of increasing revenue and creating jobs.



Today, Aviation Charter is a 24-hour, on-demand air charter company, run in conjunction with Executive Aviation, with a terminal and maintenance facility. It has 10 aircraft, ranging from twin-turbine prop jets to small business jets, as well as first-class terminals for clients.

Mississippi

Mary J. Russell, Owner **Sugaree's Bakery**

110 W Bankhead St.
New Albany, MS 38652

Mary Jennifer Russell is the founder and owner of Sugaree's Bakery, which she started as a home-based business in 1997. She transitioned into a brick-and-mortar location in 2001 when she opened her retail bakery in downtown New Albany, Mississippi.

Sugaree's Bakery is a Southern heritage small-batch bakery with a mission to help preserve the culinary traditions of the Deep South. Mary Jennifer has grown the bakery to include 30 employees who serve three business categories: retail, mail order and wholesale. Sugaree's has represented Mississippi at events from New York to New Orleans and has been featured in Southern Living, Huffington Post, Local Palate, Mississippi Magazine, Legends Magazine, Taste of

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the South, Saveur, The Week, Desoto Magazine, Eat Drink Mississippi Magazine, Mud and Magnolias Magazine, the Washington Post, Oprah Magazine, and the New York Times.

Mary is also very active in community development efforts. She served with the New Albany Main Street Association for 12 years. As promotions chair, she created many successful local events, such as Arts, Beats, and Eats; Folk Art on the River; Hill Country Halloween; and Tallahatchie on Tap. Her involvement as a founding sponsor of the Biscuits and Jam Farmers' Market has brought a lot of energy, attention and investment in the local food systems in North Mississippi. All of these diverse events act as catalysts for rural economic development via promotions and tourism in New Albany.



Missouri

Phillip Cohen, Founder and President Cohen Architectural Woodworking

9 Industrial Drive
Saint James, MO 65559

Phillip Cohen starting building porch swings in 1975, using walnut, cherry and cedar. A year later, Phillip and his wife, Gina, converted half their 575-square-foot home into a workshop. They used the space to build birdhouses, baby cradles and toy trucks. In 1982, he bought his first business license and was soon building cabinets for large general contractors, shipping the products across the United States.

In 2004, Cohen Architectural Woodworking narrowed the product line to commercial cabinetry and built a 12,000-square-foot facility. Three years later they added 9,000 square feet to their existing building. As the company expanded, Phillip worked with the Small Business & Technology Development Center at Missouri Science and Technology University to fine tune his financial operations and business plan.

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In 2010, the recession and the loss of a large client sent the company into a nosedive. Phillip's sales team secured short-term work that had very quick turnaround times. As a result, the company pulled through that difficult period.

The company's performance improved. In 2013, Cohen Architectural Woodworking had 40 employees and a total of \$5 million in sales. By the end of 2015, the company saw \$11 million in sales. It currently employs 75 people and is based in a 54,250-square-foot plant.

Giving back to the community is a priority for Phillip. Through the company's Cohen Cares Program, employees can donate part of their pay tax-free to a fund helping the needy. When a Saint James family lost its home in a fire, the Cohen Cares Program covered the family's rebuilding costs.



Montana

Mark Bretz, CEO and Chairman of the Board Bretz RV and Marine

4800 Grant Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59808

It was 1967, the so-called "summer of love," when Frank and Vi Bretz turned their love of camping into a small business in Missoula. Their idea was to create a new opportunity for local families and visitors to Montana to have great summer outings at affordable prices.

That first year they conducted business from a leased service station. They focused on renting small travel trailers. Fifty years later, Bretz RV and Marine is the largest RV and boat dealer in the six-state region including Montana. Mark has successfully expanded the business into a premier dealership with additional locations in Billings and Boise, employing more than 200 full and part-time workers.

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Once Bretz RV and Marine outgrew several locations, the family purchased 4.5 acres of land and a 10,000-square-foot building. In 1990, the company expanded with a 6,000-square-foot addition to the shop. Mark remodeled the building and purchased two additional acres in 1992 with financing through the SBA 504 loan program. The sales lot was enlarged and customer parking was increased. The business received additional SBA financial assistance in 2016 for a new facility, which provided additional outdoor space for inventory.

Mark is a co-founder and the treasurer of the Recreational Dealers Cooperative Association, the world's largest RV dealer buying group. His past community involvement includes being a member of the Montana Academy of Distinguished Entrepreneurs (MADE) at the University of Montana in Missoula.



Nebraska

Cody and Chrystal Brooks, Owners White River Feed, LLC

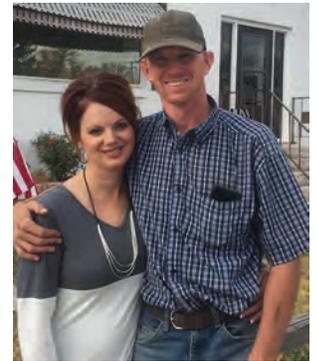
345 Oak St.
Chadron, NE 69337

Cody and Chrystal Brooks have a long history with White River Feed, a farm and ranch supply store in Chadron, Nebraska. Cody worked for the company for 12 years before purchasing it in 2012 with his then business partner, Craig Hoffman. The Nebraska Business Development Center helped Cody and Craig construct a business plan to receive a loan and line of credit. The NBDC helped Cody develop 12-month projected sales, profit and loss statements along with his business plan, which proved to be useful long after securing the loan.

White River Feed offers a variety of farm and ranch supplies along with feed and seed. It sells agrichemicals, herbicides, pesticides, steel panels and

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gates, steel cattle feeders, steel feed bunks, wood and steel fence posts, and horse care supplies. Cody's strategy for increasing sales is simple, he believes strongly in word-of-mouth advertising. White River Feed's sales have increased every year since its purchase, and it now has five employees. Cody also worked with the NBDC Procurement Technical Assistance Center to secure three government contracts in 2015. Cody and Chrystal bought out Craig's share of the business. They are currently considering expansion into South Dakota.



Nevada

Dr. Eva D. Littman, Owner Littman Medical Services, PC (dba Red Rock Fertility) Sunset Surgery Center, LLC

9120 W. Russell Road
Las Vegas, NV 89148

Dr. Eva Littman started her medical practice, Red Rock Fertility Center, in 2008. Red Rock Fertility Center provides treatment in the areas of in vitro fertilization, intrauterine insemination, egg donation, gestational carriers, egg, embryo, and sperm freezing. Red Rock Fertility is certified by both national and state regulatory agencies and provides a high level of customer service to its patients and surgeons.

In 2014, Dr. Littman received an SBA 504 loan through TMC Financing for equipment, purchase and renovation of a 10,444-square-foot medical office and surgery center, which she opened in early 2016. The

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new space provided Dr. Littman with more than 4,000 square feet of additional space and allowed the combination of the two inter-related businesses into a state-of-the-art facility. As a direct result, Dr. Littman was able to grow her staff to 32 employees. She anticipates hiring several additional employees in the next few years.

In 2015, Dr. Littman graduated from the inaugural class of the SBA Emerging Leaders program in Nevada. Currently, she participates in the 2017 Leadership Program from the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and is also the recipient of its 2016 Business Excellence Award. She has been voted "Top Doctor in Fertility" for the past five years by several notable publications.



New Hampshire

**Jake Reder, Ph.D., Cofounder, Director and Chief Executive Officer
Celdara Medical, LLC**

16 Cavendish Court
Lebanon, NH 03766

Jake Reder cofounded Celdara Medical, LLC in 2008, and has assembled a team of highly regarded and skilled scientists who give hope and health to patients by transforming academic innovations into medicines that aim to cure the world's most challenging diseases.

Under Jake's leadership and direction, Celdara Medical has worked with 200 academic institutions across the nation to review prior academic research to determine if synergies exist that can "reactivate the science." This could provide value to patients as well as the academic institutions when a product can be taken to clinical trials and then commercial production.

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In eight years, Celdara Medical has grown to 27 employees with operations in Lebanon, N.H., New York, N.Y. and the District of Columbia. The company secured funding through the SBA's Small Business Innovation Research program for several of its projects. In 2015 the firm was recognized for its pioneering work in medical science as one of 23 firms in the nation selected to receive the SBIR program's annual Tibbetts Award.



Celdara Medical continues to navigate the path from science to medicine, accelerating innovation to improve human health.

Jake was assisted by the Upper Valley NH Chapter of SCORE. He took classes through SCORE to help augment his bookkeeping and marketing skills.

New Jersey

**Dr. Lisa Aumiller, Owner
HousePaws Mobile Veterinary Service**

801 Centerton Road
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

You wouldn't be wrong if you said that Dr. Lisa Aumiller has taken the road less travelled. Seven years ago, when she came to a crossroads in her career as a veterinarian, she loaded up her Chrysler Pacifica with her stethoscope and microscope and treated dogs and cats along the way. This marked the beginning of Dr. Lisa's Mobile Veterinary Service, now known as HousePaws Mobile Veterinary Service, which specializes in bringing veterinary services to the home. After a year on the road, HousePaws Mobile Veterinarian Service began to take off. To cut down on rental expenses, Dr. Lisa received an SBA-backed loan and opened her first location in Mount Laurel.

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HousePaws Mobile Veterinary Service has grown to 54 employees, seven mobile units, two ambulances and

13 veterinarians who see patients in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties. Recently, those

services have expanded to the areas of Swedesboro, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania. A new Atco, New Jersey location and a soon to be announced Pennsylvania location will complete the expansion. Dr. Lisa merged her business with Bathing Beauties Mobile Pet Grooming and joined forces with another local business owner to provide 24/7 P.E.T.S. (Pet Taxi Emergency Transport Service).



New Mexico

Mario Burgos, President & CEO
David Burgos, Vice President
Burgos Group, LLC

320 Ranchitos Road NW, Suite B
Albuquerque, NM 87114

A commitment to excellence, strategic leadership, and willingness to change and diversify has been the recipe for success for the Burgos Group, LLC. Since 2006, brothers Mario and David Burgos have led their company to significant growth. The company has shown substantial increases in year-to-year revenues, with 117 employees working out of three offices, providing facilities operations, professional technical services, and general and electrical construction to commercial and government clients in more than seven states.

When the recession hit them in 2009, and private commercial opportunities declined, the brothers changed their business model to focus on government contracts. Mario Burgos sought SBA assistance to make the transition. Burgos Group, LLC became an SBA 8(a)-certified company and secured a \$25,000

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7(a) SBA-guaranteed loan. Mario continued to take advantage of SBA trainings, including 7(j) training and Emerging Leaders.



Burgos Group LLC now has numerous local, state and federal government customers, which earned the company the honor of being named SBA's 2015 "Prime Contractor of the Year" for the South Central Region. The company marked another significant company transformation in 2014, when the Burgos brothers added an electrical construction and service division. It employs more than 50 people for mostly private commercial contracts. The Burgos brothers continue to lead a successful company in both private commercial and governmental arenas.

New York

Pamela Newman, CEO
ISS Action

158-12 Rockaway Blvd., Suite 200
Queens, NY 11434

Pamela Newman started her company, ISS Action, in 1991. The New York City-based firm provides badge and ID services, armed and unarmed guards, emergency response plans, risk management and mobile patrols. Its clients include NASA, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Department of Homeland Security, the City of New York and New York State.

Pamela is 8(a) certified, an Emerging Leaders graduate and has leveraged \$5.45 million in SBA financing to grow the company. Since 2013, ISS Action has increased its workforce by 150 percent, from

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

101 to 255 employees. Meanwhile, company revenue has grown annually from \$10 million to \$14 million.



ISS Action stands out in the male-dominated security industry because the company's executive team is comprised mainly of women.

Now in its 26th year of business, ISS Action fulfills contracts in Alabama, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York and Virginia. Pamela shares some of the company's profits with eligible employees by contributing to their retirement accounts. In 2016 she also gave \$80,000 to charitable causes in New York State.

North Carolina

Michelle K. Coffino, CEO/Owner **Queen City Metal Recycling & Salvage, LLC**

2800 N. Tryon St.
Charlotte, NC 28206

Michelle Coffino is the CEO and owner of Queen City Metal Recycling and Salvage. However, she didn't get her start in a scrap yard. Michelle has been a hair stylist for more than 30 years. Among her salon clients was the owner of a local metal and scrap recycling company. The two discussed Michelle potentially taking over the business, and in 2013, it re-opened as Queen City Metal Recycling. The 4.5-acre yard collects thousands of tons of metal, including steel, copper and aluminum. It also recycles electronics and hundreds of cars every month.

Thanks to SBA financing, Queen City Metal Recycling has experienced significant growth since changing hands. First year sales were more than \$1 million and topped \$5 million in 2015. The company's export sales

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are expected to increase in 2017. Queen City Metal Recycling started with 10 industrial accounts and now serves 85 companies, schools and nonprofits in the Charlotte area and beyond.

Michelle has contracts with two large national auto auction companies. Through a nonprofit sister company, QC Auto Sales, she buys and refurbishes these cars and sells them at cost to economically disadvantaged individuals who don't have transportation.

Queen City Metal Recycling has also instituted a "second chance" program, which includes hiring ex-convicts and those with mental illness or substance abuse issues.



North Dakota

Eric Mauch, CEO **Carla Schwartzenberger, Managing Partner** **Razor Consulting Solutions, Inc.**

1416 10th St. SW
Watford City, ND 58854

By 2010, Eric Mauch decided he had worked long enough for others and determined it was time to launch his own business. His years at a Fargo-based brokerage firm and later on at Microsoft as a global business intelligence manager gave him the knowledge base and skills to start on a path to success.

That year, Eric approached Carla Schwartzenberger, a former Microsoft worker herself, and together started Razor Consulting Solutions, a firm specializing in custom software design and services, such as project management, accounting, financial and business intelligence, as well as technical product and customer support.

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Since graduating in 2016 from the North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center and the SBA's

Emerging Leaders Program, Razor Consulting has diversified its customer base. It established a presence in the government contracting arena, maintained its workforce of 50 employees, and helped the local economy.

In its six years of operation, Razor Consulting has grown substantially. It was recently named the fastest growing private company in North Dakota by Inc. Magazine, and ranks among Inc.'s top 5,000 fastest private companies in the nation.

Eric and Carla regularly volunteer their time and talents to their communities and participate in various employee-driven charitable initiatives.



Ohio

Robert Chapman Kocian, President The Auto Bolt Company

4740 Manufacturing Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio 44135

Founded in 1948, Robert Chapman Kocian has owned and operated the Auto Bolt Company since 2005. For more than 65 years, the company has manufactured a range of specialty fastener products for a variety of industrial markets and applications in North America, including heavy truck and trailer, agriculture and outdoor power equipment, construction and heavy equipment, and aftermarket and high-performance racing.

Robert, who has more than 28 years of experience in the fastener industry, has led the company's resurgence and growth. Just a year after Robert acquired the company, it received a \$372 million SBA 504 loan from Certified Development Company Growth Capital Corp., which was the first of several SBA loans that has allowed Auto Bolt to realize sustained growth. In the last five years, the company

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has received six SBA 504 loans to purchase a new 100,000-square-foot industrial building and acquire manufacturing equipment. The company also received a \$140 million SBA Community Advantage Loan in 2014, which provided permanent working capital.



Auto Bolt's workforce has grown more than 35 percent, and it now employs upward of 60 employees. In addition, revenues are up more than 55 percent in the last four years. The company has provided an important economic effect to the local community. It has used lender partnerships that encourage and support comprehensive approaches to economic development.

Oklahoma

Melinda Stinnett, CPA, CIA, Managing Director/ Founder Stinnett & Associates, LLC

8811 S. Yale Ave., Suite 300
Tulsa, OK 74137

After spending 12 years working as a public accountant for both domestic and international businesses, Melinda Stinnett decided it was about time to work for herself. She founded Stinnett & Associates, LLC in 2001.

Melinda's company is a professional firm that specializes in internal audits, business process design and re-engineering, information security, assessment and fraud investigations, industry best practices and many other business improvement areas.

Based in Tulsa, Stinnett & Associates also has offices in Dallas, Houston, Oklahoma City and San Antonio, providing clients services designed to be integrated with their companies' key activities to help them streamline processes, reduce costs and enhance controls.

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Having benefitted from SBA assistance in the form of business planning, guidance and counseling, Melinda is involved in the development of educational programs for management, process owners, audit committees, and board members. She is a speaker for various professional organizations, including the Oklahoma Society of CPAs, the Institute of Managerial Accountants, PASO, the Oklahoma State University Financial Accounting and Reporting Conference, and the MIS Training Institute.



Giving back to the community is a key aspect of Melinda's life. She is actively involved in many charitable activities and organizations, among them Boy Scouts Troop 26, the American Heart Association and the University of Tulsa Conference of Accountants.

Oregon

Brandon Vaughn, President **All-Clean Property Maintenance, LLC**

29241 SE Kerslake Road
Troutdale, OR 97060

Brandon Vaughn worked alongside his father, Jim, for nearly 11 years cleaning windows. Jim owned All-Clean as an owner-operator with a single employee since 1978. In 2011, when Vaughn's father could no longer perform physical labor, the business could have closed.

Brandon, then 26 years old, approached his father with a plan. He offered to buy the company, with the goal of growing the business, and in 2012, together they formed an LLC, with Brandon operating as president.

All-Clean has grown nearly 10 times in size, expanding its services to cleaning hospitals, schools, government buildings, as well as residential homes.

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It now has 21 employees and closed out 2016 with more than \$1 million in revenue.

For more than 30 years, All-Clean operated out of a home office with one van. Now All-Clean operates out of a 2,000-square-foot warehouse/shop and office space in the Troutdale countryside with three vans, four trucks and two sales vehicles. All-Clean plans to open its second branch in 2017.

Better still, Brandon has lived up to his promise to take care of his parents in their retirement.

One major partner in this venture was the Oregon SBDC, which provided invaluable counseling and mentorship.



Pennsylvania

Elvin Eugene Stoltzfus, President **Pik Rite, Inc.**

60 Pik Rite Lane
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Being one of 19 children in a farming family gave Elvin Stoltzfus a strong sense of family values and work ethic. Forced by circumstances to abandon school at age 13 to help on the farm planting and harvesting vegetables, cemented the values that he would carry on years later as the head of Pik Rite.

According to the old saying, "necessity is the mother of invention," after harvesting tomatoes and other vegetables by hand for many years, in 1983, at age 25, Elvin and a friend built the first Pik Rite tomato harvester. After three years tinkering with and improving the original machine, they built three more harvesters and the company was incorporated.

Pik Rite manufactures quality-built harvesters and agricultural manure spreaders and does commercial

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waste handling. The machinery is customized to meet the requirements of several industries, and is distributed by a network of 225 spreader dealers and 52 tank dealers.

Assistance from the SBDC at Bucknell University, among others, helped Pik Rite with equipment development. The company has grown consistently over the years, and its machinery has been exported to 27 countries.

Elvin and his wife, Molly, are extensively involved in numerous civic and community organizations, including the Expectations Women's Center, the Buffalo Mennonite Church and Farm Service Agency Board, among many others.



Puerto Rico

Víctor M. Rivera and María Paula Rivera, Owners Atención Atención, Inc.

267 Sierra Morena, PMB 316
San Juan, PR 00926

Atención Atención is a children's entertainment and educational company owned by Víctor Rivera and his sister María Rivera. The passion of the Rivera family for music, education, history, social environment and the well-being of children motivated them to first create a music band and then a television show that combines happy characters, learning songs and elementary education.

The Riveras, along with their 67 employees, have generated nearly \$2 million in annual sales.

Víctor and María have placed their talent and commitment into developing Atención Atención. The company diversified with the sale and distribution of educational products for kids, including CDs, DVDs and toys related to the show's characters.

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

The idea of having a television program led to a pilot taping that became a DVD, "Atención Atención, the Special," followed by "Atención Atención, the



Special 2." By the end of 2009 the company signed a contract with Univisión Puerto Rico to present the first season of a weekly children's program. Atención Atención is the winner of 10 Emmy Suncoast Awards. It is a Latin Grammy Nominee under the Category "Best Children's Album," and is also the first Hispanic/Puerto Rican program to be aired on Netflix.

The company received a \$350,000 working capital loan from the SBA's 7(a) loan program.

Rhode Island

Gary Mark Palardy, President/CEO Blue Moon Industries

235 Promenade St., Suite 400
Providence, RI 02908

At the tender age of 17, Gary Palardy began his journey into business as a co-op student working for Raytheon (Data Systems). Gary worked in minicomputer design, writing machine-level diagnostic software and software to stress test various peripheral equipment. Later this included operating systems design and development. With the introduction of the microprocessor, the market changed and presented an opportunity for Gary to work for himself. In 1991, Gary created Blue Moon Industries to provide business software-related consulting and software development services.

Gary worked diligently building the business while he self-funded expenses with monies earned through an engineering consulting practice. In 1996, Blue

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

Moon Industries released its first software module that's still available today. As of 2016, Blue Moon has developed 20 add-on software modules for Microsoft Dynamics GP. Its products are used in more than 1,200 companies, exported to about 10 countries, and considered one of the leading Independent Software Vendors by both Microsoft and the Microsoft Dynamics community.



After enduring difficult economic times during the recession, Gary received an SBA-backed loan and a Patriot Express line of credit in 2012, which helped the company win sizeable projects and leverage growing profits to hire consulting and software engineering resources.

South Carolina

Vickie Wyatt, President **J.I.T. Manufacturing**

428 Oglesby Lane
Cowpens, SC 29330

Vickie Wyatt, President of J.I.T. Manufacturing, and her husband, Reggie, started the company in 1992 with only four employees and just one customer. Today, J.I.T. Manufacturing still has its very first customer and that customer is still a substantial part of J.I.T. Manufacturing's business. Vickie has applied her more than 30 years of business experience to growing J.I.T. and venturing into new markets as a woman-owned business. Since starting the business in 1992, the business has expanded to include laser cutting, CNC punching, certified welding, precision forming, shearing, insertion and assembly. The company has received positive testimonials from

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

customers for its high standards of customer service, the quality of products, and on-time delivery of services.

When J.I.T Manufacturing's sales failed to keep pace with financial projections, the Charleston Area Small Business Development Center stepped in and explained the government procurement system and enrollment in the System for Award Management database to Vickie to help expand the company's network of contacts with contractors such as BAE Systems, SAIC and JAAKEL, which are always seeking diversified subcontractors like J.I.T. Manufacturing. The company now has 40 employees and Boeing chose it to become a member of its Mentor-Protégé program in 2011.



South Dakota

Beth Hanna, Owner and Director **Building Blocks Childcare and Learning Center, LLC**

1714 Frontier St.
Brandon, SD 57005

Beth Hanna is living her dream and achieving success. As owner and director of Building Blocks Childcare and Learning Center, she has grown it to become a one-stop childcare center for families in her rural Brandon, South Dakota community.

Beth thrived as an in-home daycare provider and worked in various childcare centers before she was given the opportunity to start Building Blocks in June 2011. With assistance from two SBA 7(a) loans, Beth leased a space and the center opened with 50 children. By the end of 2011, the center had a waiting list; Beth recognized the need to expand.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

In 2013, she received an SBA 504 loan to purchase the facility Building Blocks operated from and additional adjacent land for future growth. With another SBA 504 loan, construction began in early 2014. The Building Blocks School Age Center opened in August of that year.

Today, there are 255 children in the care of Building Blocks. It has 26,600 square feet of space and 45 employees. Through its dedicated owners, management and staff, Building Blocks is living its mission to provide exceptional care, nurture and age-appropriate learning opportunities in a safe, loving environment.



Tennessee

Daniel G. LeVan, Chief Executive Officer SED, Inc. (dba ENER3)

100 Cherokee Blvd., Suite 124
Chattanooga, TN 37405

EnerG3 is an energy management company dedicated to helping companies save money on their electric bills while reducing their carbon emissions. Dan LeVan started the company in 2012, gathering a team of engineers, financial experts and project managers to develop a customized approach of putting the needs of clients first.

EnerG3 started out as a franchise doing local commercial and industrial energy efficiency retrofits. Dan made the shift to offering onsite energy generation, following clients to their other U.S. locations.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

Dan reached out to the Tennessee Small Business Development Center in Chattanooga, taking classes in pursuing government contracts, and he also sought individual coaching. The company grew and now has staff in offices in San Diego, Nashville and Toronto, Canada. The company has completed three projects in Ontario, Canada, which included a combined heat and power solution for a Canadian plastics company.



In 2013, ENER3 had two employees and two contractors, with total sales of \$479,000. By 2015, the company had grown to nine employees, 16 contractors and gross sales of \$2.1 million.

Texas

Deborah Paris, President and Manager StraCon Services Group, LLC

6100 Southwest Blvd., Suite 510
Fort Worth, TX 76109

Deborah Paris, president and manager of StraCon Services Group, LLC, started the business in 2008 with \$80,000 on personal credit cards following receipt of her first contract. She had 20 years experience supporting the government as an Integrated Product Team member who provided flight simulators for the V-22 tiltrotor aircraft for the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force clients.

Despite the Great Recession, Deborah received an SBA-backed loan in 2010 and survived the economic downturn by sustaining successful performance on government contracts, which helped the business to flourish.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

While sequestration would force every company supporting our military to re-think its strategy to survive in a severely constrained and competitive funding environment, Deborah applied her knowledge to help government clients with the integration of complex maintenance and aircrew training systems. She assists the government, industry and warfighter teams with developing processes and procedures that maintain collective alignment throughout the procurement process. Under the advisement of business opportunity specialists in the SBA's Dallas/Fort Worth office, Deborah participated in the SBA's Emerging Leaders Program. The Strategic Growth Action Plan that Deborah developed in this program helped her to grow her business from eight to 100 employees.



Utah

Stefanie and Joshua Bevans, CEO and CTO Design To Print, Inc.

175 North, 400 East
St. George, Utah 84770

The initial idea for Design To Print came to Josh Bevans while speaking on a technology panel in San Francisco in 1994. At that moment, he knew he wanted to build an ultra-modern, high-end graphic print production shop in southern Utah, which he did in 1995. Josh and his wife, Stefanie, are co-owners of both Design To Print, Inc. and Steamroller Copies, Inc., which Josh established in 1992. Design To Print has become the largest print provider in Southern Utah with international reach.

Stefanie is responsible for domestic and international business relations throughout the U.S., Canada, Asia and Europe. She oversees more than 80 employees and all business development, marketing, productions,

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

human relations and administrative affairs. Josh and Stefanie received SBA-backed loans and guidance from the Procurement Technical Assistance



Center. Design To Print also has worked with companies from China, Puerto Rico, Italy, England, Australia, France, Belgium and Greece. It has produced work for Fortune 500 companies, the NBA, NASCAR and the Olympic committee. It was the first printer to bring large-format, high-resolution color printing to Utah. The company prints large scale billboards, banners, full color vehicle wraps and fine art reproductions.

Vermont

Mike Rainville, President Maple Landmark, Inc.

1297 Exchange St.
Middlebury, VT 05753

The Maple Landmark concept began in the late 1970s, when high school student Mike Rainville started creating wood toys in his parents' basement in Lincoln, Vermont. In 1979, at age 16, Mike started selling his woodwork wholesale. After graduating from college in 1984, Mike and his grandfather built a three-story, 3,500-square-foot workshop in Lincoln, to expand Maple Landmark and make it a full-time operation.

After acquiring a local toy company in 1987, Mike started producing a line of wooden toy trains, which were a holdover product from the company he bought. The NameTrains, two-inch high magnetic, brightly colored wooden train cars in the shape of letters, launched in 1994 and became the company's signature product. The success of the NameTrains led to a 75 percent increase in sales.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

By the mid-1990s, the company was manufacturing a diverse array of children's toys, educational aids and novelty items used in product marketing. They had outgrown the workshop, so in 1996 Maple Landmark moved into a new 6,400-square-foot facility and showroom. Three years later, Mike used an SBA loan to cover the cost of an 8,500-square-foot expansion.



Maple Landmark faced a five-year downturn in sales beginning in 2002. One of several factors that caused the decline was Chinese imports. Failure not being an option, Mike made shrewd financial decisions. The company never missed a payroll, refinanced some debt, always made their tax and bank payments, and paid themselves last. A 2007 lead paint recall of Chinese toys led to the turnaround. By years end, sales were back to 2001 levels.

Virgin Islands

Maya Matthews-Sterling and Kevin Schnell, Owners Caribbean Solar Company, LLC

5000 Estate Enighed
PMB 143
St. John, USVI 00830

Maya Matthews-Sterling and Kevin Schnell met in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands in 2000. In 2012, they combined their knowledge, skills and experience to establish Caribbean Solar Company, LLC, a full-service solar sales and installation company.

Caribbean Solar Company is dedicated to providing clean, reliable solar energy for residential, commercial and utility-scale installations. Thanks in part to an SBA loan and SBDC counseling, the company employs five people and generates close to \$1 million in sales.

Maya holds a master's of public health degree from Tulane University, with a concentration in international complex emergencies and disasters,

Small Business Persons of the Year 2017

and prior to launching Caribbean Solar worked for the Policy & Research Group. At CSC, Maya oversees office administration, development, strategic initiatives and marketing.



Before starting Caribbean Solar Company, Kevin spent seven years as a self-employed subcontractor in the roofing industry. His experience with photovoltaic solar systems includes formal training with GAF Solar and DOW Solar. As co-owner of Caribbean Solar Company, Kevin is responsible for procuring and maintaining customer relations.

Both Maya and Kevin contribute to several charitable organizations, including Animal Care Center, St. John School of the Arts, the Rotary Club and the Island Green Living Association.

Virginia

Corliss Udoema, President & CEO Contract Solutions, Inc.

10627 Crestwood Drive
Manassas, VA 20109

After a successful 32-year career with the federal government, Corliss Udoema started Contract Solutions, Inc. in 2006 to provide professional support services to federal and state government agencies and private sector clients. CSI is an 8(a) and economically disadvantaged woman-owned small business that works throughout the country providing service support in a number of disciplines.

CSI sought and received assistance from the SBA's Office of Government Contracting. Using its 8(a) certification, CSI bids on set-aside contracts that allow the company to gain access to federal contracts that would otherwise be more difficult to win. After several years of steady growth, CSI has increased its contracts and revenue, ensuring delivery of services.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

In 2013, CSI participated in the SBA's Mentor-Protégé Program. The program allowed Corliss to win a contract with her mentor and later negotiate a subcontract with the same vendor, allowing her to continue the contract for four additional years.



Corliss is also the founder and President of Agape Love in Action, a nonprofit organization providing support for those in need. The dedication to her clients, employees and the community has helped grow CSI since opening its doors.

In addition, Corliss is a small business SCORE counselor, providing business mentoring to other entrepreneurs.

Washington

Rozanne Garman, President RHD Enterprises, Inc.

4405 7th Ave. SE, Suite 100
Lacey, WA 98503

Rozanne Garman started RHD Enterprises, Inc., an 8(a) and HUBZone-certified, woman-owned design-build firm in 2005 out of her home, incorporating in 2008. By the age of 26, Rozanne designed pre-engineered buildings across the U.S. with solely the benefit of on-the-job training. The company specializes in a broad range of construction projects primarily in the federal, commercial and industrial sectors. RHD has specialized divisions focusing on design, general construction, metal fabrication and welding. Its projects range from small service projects of less than \$100,000 to complex projects valued at \$10 million.

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

RHD currently operates throughout Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, Minnesota, and Arkansas and has 27 employees. The company received assistance and training from the Washington State Procurement Technical Assistance Center, SCORE and the SBA's Women's Business Centers. This training helped RHD secure more than 30 projects with upward of \$9 million in bonded work and \$10 million in hand with agencies, including the Veterans Administration, General Services Administration and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. RHD recently received a contract with the NOAA that serves all states west of the Mississippi and all of the Pacific Islands. The company's revenue has increased to \$12.5 million.



West Virginia

Matthew Paul Knott, President/CEO River Riders, Inc. and Clarion Inn Harpers Ferry

408 Alstadts Hill Road
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

While attending Shepherd College in 1994, Matt Knott began working as a white water rafting guide at River Riders, in Harpers Ferry, to help pay for his education. Four years later, after obtaining a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in marketing, Matt was able to purchase River Riders from his employer.

Matt's passion for and experience in the outdoor adventure industry allowed him to grow his company from 10 employees with \$200,000 in sales in 1998, to 156 employees and \$44.27 million in revenue in 2015.

Different from traditional white water rafting outfits that operate on a seasonal basis, River Riders is an

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

adventure resort that offers year-round opportunities for recreation and connection to the beauty and natural environment for which West Virginia is known.

Matt's success has been helped along the way by assistance from the West Virginia Small Business Development Center in Martinsburg, which helped him secure a \$3.95 million loan from United Bank that was used to expand and renovate his facilities.

As a way to give back to the community, River Riders gives away thousands of free passes and cash donations annually to charitable organizations that use them to raise funds through auctions. He also helps several schools in the area.



Wisconsin

Kristina Pence-Dunow, President & CEO Hometown Trolley, Inc.

750 Industrial Parkway
Crandon, WI 54520

Hometown Trolley's history is humble, beginning in 1978 as a maker of horse trailers to a leading North American manufacturer of trackless trolleys. Since 1993, Kristina Pence-Dunow, president and CEO, has led the company's turnaround, and with her family developed a whole new generation of trolleys.

Throughout the years, Kristina tapped the experience of University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's Small Business Development Center for assistance with plant expansions and more recently for the acquisition of a major competitor. In addition to the assistance provided by the SBDC, Hometown secured SBA 7(a) loans for each stage of growth.

Over the past four years, Hometown Trolley added a new 18,000-square-foot production facility to help

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

accommodate growing from 12 to 47 employees. In addition to its growth, Kristina is proud to tap local craftsmen and businesses as vendors. This includes using a saddle maker who makes all the leather grab straps, a seamstress who makes the vinyl seat cushions, and other oil, lumber and supply businesses. These business arrangements are especially meaningful for Forest County, a designated HUBZone.



The future for Hometown Trolley looks bright. With the acquisition of a main competitor, Hometown Trolley strengthened quality and became more efficient in manufacturing. In addition, it is exploring exporting as another avenue for growth. Hometown Trolley also holds Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Women's Business Enterprise certifications.

Wyoming

Janie Wait, President Intermountain Record Center, Inc.

3765 Airport Parkway
Casper, WY 82604

In 1983, Janie Wait and her family purchased the source-document portion of Wyoming Microfilm Service and started InterMountain Microfilm Service. When her father passed away in 1996, Janie took over as president. As the company's expertise in microfilm production improved, the company grew and would later be named InterMountain Record Center, Inc., a Wyoming subchapter S Corporation.

SBA counseling and technical assistance allowed Janie to successfully expand her business. The business started with one employee and three partners operating from a 2,000-square-foot facility. By the

Small Business Person of the Year 2017

mid-1990s the company had eight employees and moved into a 6,000-square-foot building, increasing its customer base to 256 and doubling its gross revenue. In 2002, the company moved to an 8,000-square-foot facility, employing between 11 and 14 people. Its customer base is more than 500.



Janie is a huge advocate for employing disabled individuals in a variety of positions in her company. She partners with the Wyoming Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, among others. Five out of 14 IRC employees are disabled in some manner. The company was recognized as "Employer of the Year" in 2010 by Community Entry Services.

Small Business Investment Company of the Year Award 2017

James H. Kirby, CEO & Director Deerpath Capital Management, LP

405 Lexington Ave., 53rd Floor
New York, NY 10174

Deerpath Capital Management, LP was founded in 2007 by three principals who still lead the firm today: Gary Wendt, James Kirby and John Fitzgibbons. Deerpath is a leading provider in senior debt financing to lower-middle market companies in the United States across a diverse range of industries, including: technology, healthcare, business services, consumer/retail, distribution, niche manufacturing, energy services and financial services. The firm has offices in New York, Fort Lauderdale, Houston, Los Angeles and Chicago, run by a robust senior investment team with strong origination, credit, transaction execution and portfolio management skills.

Across its four funds, Deerpath has completed almost 200 investments, deploying more than \$1.4 billion in invested capital. Deerpath currently manages three SBIC partnerships and approaches each investment as an opportunity to establish long-term relationships with private equity sponsors, management teams and entrepreneurs. SBA invests long-term capital in privately owned and managed investment firms licensed as SBICs. Once capitalized, SBICs make debt and equity investments in some of America's most promising small businesses, helping them grow. In FY16, the SBIC program achieved 313 licensees managing more than \$28 billion in assets, \$6 billion in financing to 1,200 small businesses, helping to sustain 122,000 jobs with no cost to taxpayers.



Jody C. Raskind Microlender of the Year 2017

Wendy Katherine Baumann, President/Chief Visionary Officer Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation

1533 N. RiverCenter Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Wendy's passion and personal mission has always been to improve the financial well-being of others.

That passion is what led her in 1993 to join the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving women entrepreneurs as an SBA Women's Business Center and microlender.

Since its inception, WWBIC has assisted more than 58,000 people, loaned about \$53 million to small business borrowers, and helped create or retain 10,500 jobs. In 2016 alone, WWBIC approved 159 loans for \$8.1 million and provided business education and technical assistance to more than 3,600 people, which translated into a big stimulus on the community it serves.

Under Wendy's leadership, WWBIC ranks among Wisconsin's top 10 SBA microlenders, fifth in volume of both Micro and Community Advantage loans and sixth in number of loans for both programs. Also, in response to what they saw as a major need in the community, in 1999 WWBIC launched the Financial Capabilities initiative, which has resulted in 152 first-time homeowners, 89 businesses started or expanded and 94 people attending college.



A sought-after speaker for national and international forums and a gifted advocate and coalition builder, Wendy has tirelessly lent her business savvy, compassion and leadership skills to positively change the economic landscape of her community.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence for Manufacturing 2017

Susannah Raheb, Corporate Supplier Diversity Leader

Lockheed Martin Corporation

6801 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817

Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company with more than 98,000 employees worldwide specializing in the research, design, development, manufacturing, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The majority of Lockheed's projects are with the federal government and the remainder is comprised of international government and commercial sales of products and services. Lockheed actively engages with Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, SCORE, Small Business Development Centers and Women Business Centers for supplier development and matchmaking assistance for small businesses.

Lockheed Martin has a corporate-wide comprehensive subcontracting plan, and it exceeded all of its negotiated contract goals. It was one of the first companies to join the SBA's Supplier Pay initiative, which allows prompt payment to small businesses in 15 days. It is also a strong supporter of the SBA's Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs. In FY 2016, Lockheed awarded 21.8 percent in subcontracts to small businesses, totaling \$3.39 billion; 4.3 percent to small disadvantaged businesses, totaling \$671 million; 4.4 percent to women-owned businesses, totaling \$691 million; 1.5 percent to HUBZone small businesses, totaling \$235 million; and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses received 1.7 percent of subcontracts, totaling \$264 million.



Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Research and Development 2017

Helen Lawley, Small Business Liaison Officer

Wyle Laboratories, Inc.
2400 NASA Parkway
Houston, TX 77058

Helen Lawley is the Small Business Liaison Officer for Wyle Laboratories, Inc., which provides scientific and technical services related to human spaceflight and U.S. Air Force programs. Wyle also provides solutions for life sciences, pilot and health crew training and support, aerospace medicine, scientific services and specialized engineering. The company has been a key contractor to NASA and USAF for more than 40 years. Wyle's other customers include the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and the European Space Agency. It recently won three major contracts at NASA's Johnson Space Center and has been approved for the SBA's Mentor-Protégé Program.

Helen participates in local events and roundtables at NASA sites monthly to support small businesses by providing a platform for underrepresented small businesses seeking guidance on how to navigate government contracting in the federal marketplace. In FY 2015, Wyle awarded 77.8 percent in subcontracts to small businesses, totaling \$17.1 million. Service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses received 41.2 percent of subcontracting dollars, totaling \$9.1 million; small disadvantaged businesses received 18.4 percent in subcontracting dollars, totaling \$4.05 million; women-owned small businesses received 14.7 percent in subcontracting dollars, totaling \$3.2 million; and HUBZone businesses received 10.6 percent in subcontracting dollars, totaling \$2.3 million.



Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence for Services 2017

Randy Lycans, Jacobs Vice President & ESSA Group General Manager Jacobs Engineering, Inc.

1500 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 400
Huntsville, AL 35801

Jacobs Engineering, Inc. is the prime contractor for NASA's Engineering and Science Services and Skills Augmentation contract to provide engineering, science and technical support for several of its offices. It has been the prime contractor to NASA since 1989, and has successfully competed for and won five consecutive contracts with the agency. It also has been an active participant in NASA's Mentor-Protégé Program since 2000. Jacobs has an unwavering commitment to engaging small businesses in subcontracting opportunities. As a result, Jacobs has met or exceeded the small business contracting goals established by NASA since 1992.

Randy Lycans, the ESSA Group General Manager, and Dr. Ron Belz, Jacobs's Small Business Liaison Officer, work together to provide direction to small businesses, alerting them to business matchmaking events and subcontracting opportunities on the ESSSA contract. Randy's direction led to a dramatic increase in subcontracting awards to small businesses. In FY 2016, Jacobs awarded 48.4 percent in subcontracts to small businesses, totaling \$70.7 million in contracts, with 10.9 percent in subcontracts awarded to small disadvantaged businesses, 15.7 percent in subcontracts to women-owned businesses, 4.7 percent in subcontracts to HUBZone small businesses and 8.4 percent in subcontracts awarded to service-disabled veteran-owned businesses.



8(a) Graduate Firm of the Year 2017

Leah Heimbach, President Healthcare Management Solutions, LLC

1000 Technology Drive, Suite 1310
Fairmont, WV 26554

Leah Heimbach, a former paramedic, critical care nurse and healthcare attorney, co-founded Healthcare Management Solutions, LLC in 2002 to provide innovative solutions to the healthcare industry. HMS specializes in ensuring healthcare facilities are in compliance with federal regulations. HMS is headquartered in Fairmont, West Virginia and has an office in Columbia, Maryland. It has 220 employees, many of whom work remotely across 23 states.

Leah credits the 8(a) Business Development program for much of the company's success in developing and expanding its federal footprint. Her clients include:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, and Federal Acquisition Service. HMS received the Marion County Chamber of Commerce's "Small Business of the Year" award in 2007, and was named Washington Technology Magazine's Fast 50 in 2014. The company was selected to participate on a CMS panel during a Small Business Industry Day in 2016. One of HMS's largest projects was building a playground at a local elementary school that accommodates the needs of children of all abilities, ensuring the park was compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.



National Exporter of the Year 2017

Rose Morris, President Abram's Bed LLC, dba The Safety Sleeper

300 Camp Horne Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

The adage "necessity is the mother of invention" certainly holds true for Rose Morris, mother of three, a patent-holder and inventor of Abram's Bed or the Safety Sleeper.

Worried about protecting her son Abram, who is on the autism spectrum, as he struggled with erratic sleep patterns, Rose created and pitched a customized tent over his bed, keeping him safe. Wanting to help other families, she turned her invention into a business venture dubbed the Safety Sleeper in 2009.

The bed-topping tent utilizes metal frames, mesh, padding, dual entrances and an air mattress for portability. The Safety Sleeper is lightweight, movable and fits into a suitcase-sized carrying case.

In the past three years, employment has increased from six to eight. In those same years, sales have

soared by more than 200 percent. In 2016, the Safety Sleeper hit the \$1 million sales mark.

Rose received counseling through the SCORE Pittsburgh Chapter, the Duquesne University SBDC and Chatham University's WBC, which she used for business planning and exporting. The Safety Sleeper is exported to 12 countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

Rose continues to update the bed. She secured money from an SBA-funded accelerator. End users of the Safety Sleeper benefit from engineering and design modifications made by students at the University of Pittsburgh's Swanson School of Engineering.

Sharing with the community is one of Rose's priorities. She cofounded a nonprofit foundation, Fund it Forward, dedicated to helping families of special needs children obtain equipment not covered by insurance. She has also counseled other special needs entrepreneurs.



Prime Contractor of the Year 2017

Sherrill Lester, President QMF Steel, Inc. (QMF Supply, Fab, Manufacturing)

3846 Interstate 30 East
Campbell, TX 75422

Founded in 1989, QMF Steel, Inc. opened with two owners and a part-time driver, selling steel to companies in its county. In 1994, Sherrill Lester and Steve Lester purchased the company and added aluminum and stainless steel to its product line. They also hired a full-time driver and a sales person. The sales in QMF's first year reached \$1 million, delivering products across Texas. It now sells an average of \$6.5 million in materials, manufactured goods and fabricated structures. It has 28 employees delivering products across the country. Its capabilities include: engineering, certified welding, project management, installation and delivery.

QMF received its first federal contract with Federal Prison Industries in 2009 during the economic downturn. It has since received five contracts and will hold contracts with FPI until 2018. QMF manufactures and fabricates for infrastructure, defense and commercial construction industries in addition to federal contracting. The Procurement Technical Assistance Center provided training to QMF for creating capability statements, identifying and locating government contracts, and also assisting it with Mentor-Protégé milestones. QMF also attends the Small Business Development Center's monthly meetings to meet potential business partners. QMF was named the Dallas Business Journal's "Power Player of the week" in 2016.



Subcontractor of the Year 2017

Michael Bilodeau, Owner/CEO **IO Environmental and Infrastructure, Inc.**

2840 Adams Ave., Suite 301
San Diego, CA 92116

IO Environmental & Infrastructure, Inc. is a service-disabled veteran-owned environmental remediation and construction firm specializing in high hazard services, including: investigation, remediation, removal, earthwork, habitat restoration, and landfill construction. Its expertise includes: air, soil, groundwater, soil gas, treatment system effluent and sediment sampling and waste stream characterization. Michael Bilodeau, CEO of IOEI and graduate of Goldman Sachs's 10k Small Business program, used his leadership skills to double IOEI's revenue to \$15 million. The company employs 45 employees, with a 40 percent veteran workforce. The company has offices in San Diego and Long Beach, Calif., Redmond, Wash. and Nicholasville, Ky.

IOEI received SBA assistance from the Veteran's Business Outreach Center, SCORE and the North San Diego Small Business Development Center. The SBDC counseled IOEI on proposal writing, government contracting, marketing, finding buyers, human resources and hiring, identifying opportunities and securing additional funding. As a result, IOEI has doubled its revenues.

It was awarded more than \$5 million in federal contracts and received almost \$1 million in lines of credit from the SBA. In 2007, IOEI received its first contract from Tetra Tech to provide water coolers for trailers. Now, Tetra Tech is subcontractor to IOEI on a \$45 million environmental multiple award contract.



SCORE Chapter of the Year 2017

The Greater Boston SCORE Chapter

Laura Colcord, Co-Chair

Howard Fineman, Past Co-Chair

Thomas P. O'Neill Federal Building
10 Causeway St., Room 265
Boston, MA 02222

The Greater Boston SCORE chapter is a vibrant, 70-member chapter that covers the City of Boston, Cambridge and nearby suburbs. The chapter counsels small businesses in 18 locations, with a concentration in its downtown office, shared with the SBA's Massachusetts District Office.

SCORE Boston has worked diligently to serve all of the small businesses in its territory. It has developed top notch counselors who continually concentrate on improving its diversity to effectively communicate across generations. Boston's dynamic business ecosystem is a hub for hundreds of educational and research institutions that support innovation and tech startups. Increasingly, other organizations have sought partnerships with the chapter for workshops, mentoring and innovative support models for startups

and small businesses.

The chapter is led by Laura Colcord, co-chair of Boston SCORE. She joined the chapter in 2015, bringing 35 years of business

experience. Laura has reinvigorated Boston's workshop program, tripling the number of workshops offered and increasing the number of attendees by more than 400 percent. Howard Fineman served as co-chair of the chapter in fiscal year 2015-2016, after joining SCORE in 2009. Howard has a wealth of experience and is a SCORE-certified business mentor and current business owner. Boston SCORE continues to build on its legacy of excellent chapter leadership and superior client service.



Women's Business Center of Excellence Award 2017

Elena Vasconez, Director

MiCasa Career Resource Center for Women, Inc.

360 Acoma St.
Denver, CO 80223

Elena Vasconez has more than 15 years experience in business development, strategic planning and organizational development. As a bilingual business consultant, she has helped launch more than 200 businesses and has taught a variety of business courses both in English and Spanish. As the director of the Women's Business Center at Mi Casa Resource Center, she leads a team of eight people who help more than 900 startup and existing businesses annually through affordable entrepreneurial training, micro lending, computer training, financial literacy, legal support, and individual business counseling. She also manages a successful satellite office.

Under Elena's guidance, the SBA recognized the Denver Women's Business Center as the 2014 "Women's Business Center of Excellence" for Region VIII.

Elena serves as a board member and treasurer for the Association of Women's Business Centers. She is an active member of the Advisory Board for Colorado Enterprise Fund, Advisory Board for Social Enterprise at Mi Casa Resource Center, and is the chair of the advisory board for the business program at Arapahoe Community College.

As a business owner, Elena started High Impact Solutions, LLC. Elena has an MBA and a master's degree in organizational development from Azusa Pacific University.



Veterans Business Outreach Center of the Year 2017

Matt Sherwood, Executive Director

VetBizCentral

501 S. Averill Ave.
Flint, MI 48506

VetBizCentral is based in Flint, Michigan, yet the organization, a Veterans Business Outreach Center, has been supporting the entrepreneurial dreams of veterans in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan since 2005.

One of the first Veterans Business Centers to be awarded grant funding in 2009, VetBizCentral provides free business counseling to active military, veterans, National Guard members and reservists. Under the leadership of Executive Director Matt Sherwood, the organization conducts regional workshops on starting a business and marketing a business as veteran owned. It holds networking events to help veteran business owners connect with federal and state procurement opportunities.

Matt brings a high level of commitment to the organization. He focuses his efforts on providing new veteran business owners his business insights and experiences. His previous work experience in municipal government as well as in the private business sector enables him to provide current and new clients some of the basic business skill sets required by any successful business owner. He is passionate about helping his fellow veteran business owners establish prosperous businesses, and he does that by leading his clients to entrepreneurial resources that exist to help them succeed.



**David Riggs, Center Director
Ohio Small Business Development Center
at Hamilton Mill**

20 High St.
Hamilton, OH 45011

In 1996, the Ohio Small Business Development Center at Hamilton Mill was established at the Chamber of Commerce. Through its programs and services, the SBDC provides entrepreneurial development assistance, training programs and high-end business consulting to existing businesses and startup ventures.

The SBDC has shown performance improvements over the past four years. In addition, the work of its director and business adviser has contributed to the SBDC at the Mill attaining a statewide 98.3 percent customer satisfaction score, with 91.9 percent being extremely satisfied.

The SBDC provides a resource network for its clients and works closely with four major chambers of commerce in the county. Despite only having two

employees (David Riggs and Mark Lankford), it maintains fully staffed offices in two locations with both counselors (who are certified as Kauffman Institute FastTrac facilitators) meeting clients at both locations. The SBDC also provides flexible appointment times, including Saturdays.

The local Micro Enterprise program uses a complete teaching and evaluation program developed by SBDC personnel. The SBDC helps build small businesses in its service area through a number of programs and activities, combined with strategic partnerships with other business-oriented entities, to provide a strong entrepreneurial assistance environment in Butler County, Ohio.



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¹Source: Google/Ipsos MediaCT/Purchased, Understanding Consumers' Local Search Behavior, May 2014
²Source: Marketing Sherpa, Search Marketing Benchmark Report (SEO Edition), 2012

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SMALL NEVER CLOCKS OUT | SMALL ALWAYS FINDS A WAY

SMALL DREAMS UP BOLD BEAUTIFUL IDEAS | NEVER FORGETS A FACE

SMALL IS ALL IN & GOES ALL OUT | SMALL IS THE HEART & THE ENGINE

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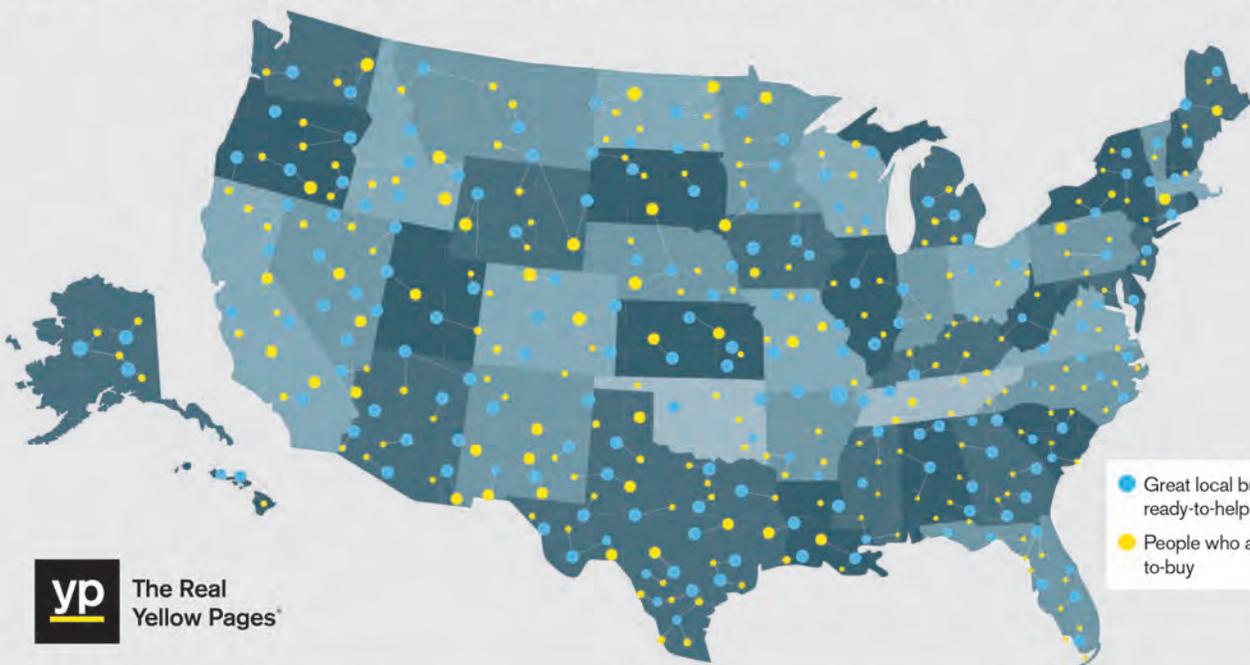
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IBC Tote & Plastic Drum Manufacturing Process
Encore Container (SC)
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The **SCORE** Mission:

Foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education.

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