

Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Florida SBDC Network Receives Presidential Award for Export Service

FSBDCN State Office (Pensacola, Fla.) - U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker today presented the Florida SBDC Network with the President's "E" Award for Export Service at a ceremony in Washington, DC. The President's "E" Award is the highest recognition any U.S. entity can receive for making a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports.

"[The] Florida SBDC has demonstrated a sustained commitment to export expansion. The "E" Awards Committee was very impressed with the Florida SBDC's work to help first time exporters understand the export process and enter new international markets. The organization's dedication to expanding export knowledge through its extensive pro bono work was also particularly notable. [The] Florida SBDC's achievements have undoubtedly contributed to national export expansion efforts that support the U.S. economy and create American jobs," said Secretary Pritzker in her congratulatory letter to the company announcing its selection as an award recipient.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2016, the Florida SBDC Network is a leading source of export assistance for small businesses in the state. Through the network's International Trade Services, businesses that are new-to-export or are looking to grow through exports receive training and consulting that exposes them to profitable management practices and international marketing techniques.

Through a partnership with Enterprise Florida and the U.S. Commercial Service, International Trade Specialists prepare Export Marketing Plans (EMPs) for qualifying Florida-based manufacturers and service providers. Specialists spend approximately 100 hours on each EMP, creating a customized report with target market recommendations, overseas trade opportunities, and an action plan for market entry.



Michael Myhre, Florida SBDC CEO and Network State Director, and Debbie Bernard, International Trade Specialist for the FSBDC at Palm Beach State College (right), accept the award from Secretary Pritzker (left)

"It is an honor to receive the President's "E" Award in recognition of the export assistance our network provides to hundreds of Florida's small businesses each year," said Michael Myhre, CEO and Network State Director for the Florida SBDC, who, alongside Debbie Bernard and Katie Arroyo, International Trade Specialists for the Florida SBDC at Palm Beach State College and the University of North Florida, respectively, accepted the award on the network's behalf. "The Florida SBDC Network dedicates a considerable amount of resources to our International Trade Services and this award reflects the passion and dedication of our International Trade Specialists in helping businesses identify and pursue opportunities in the global marketplace."

In 1961, President Kennedy signed an executive order reviving the World War II "E" symbol of excellence to honor and provide recognition to America's exporters. Today, Secretary Pritzker honored 123 U.S. companies with the President's "E" Award for their outstanding work to reduce barriers to foreign markets and to open the door to more trade around the world. Among the award recipients were Newberry-based Endoscopy Replacement Parts, Inc., a client of the Florida SBDC at the University of North Florida, and HornerXpress Worldwide, Inc., a training client of the Florida SBDC at Fort Lauderdale. Other Florida winners were Palladio Beauty Group and the Tampa Hillsborough Economic Development Corporation.



In 2015, U.S. exports totaled \$2.23 trillion, accounting for nearly 13 percent of U.S. GDP. Nationally, exports contributed to the U.S. economy, supporting an estimated 11.5 million jobs.

U.S. companies are nominated for the "E" Awards through the Department of Commerce's U.S. Commercial Service office network, located within the Department's International Trade Administration, with offices in 108 U.S. cities and more than 70 countries. Criteria for the award is based on four years of successive export growth and case studies which demonstrate valuable support to exporters resulting in increased exports for the company's clients.

For more information about the "E" Awards and the benefits of exporting, visit www.export.gov.

About the Florida SBDC Network: The Florida SBDC Network, the state's principal provider of business assistance, is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2016. Since its inception, the Florida SBDC Network has nourished a statewide partnership between higher education and economic development to provide emerging and established business owners with management and technical assistance, enabling overall growth, increased profitability, and economic prosperity for the state. In 2014, the initiatives of the Florida SBDC Network resulted in 42,664 jobs created, retained and saved; \$5.8 billion in sales growth; \$140.2 million in capital accessed; \$210.2 million in government contract awards; and 952 new businesses started. A statewide network of over 40 centers, the Florida SBDC is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida and other private and public partners, with the University of West Florida serving as the network's designated lead host institution. The Florida SBDC Network is nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs. For more information, please visit www.FloridaSBDC.org.

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State Designated as Florida's Principal Provider of Business Assistance [§ 288.001, Fla. Stat.]

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