



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona District Office

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SBA HONORS ARIZONA'S ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPIONS

PHOENIX, AZ – As is years past, in celebration of Small Business Week, the U.S. Small Business Administration is honoring Arizona entrepreneurs and small business champions for their contributions to the economy and the success of small business across the state. During a special luncheon ceremony on April 11 at the Phoenix Convention Center, awards will be presented in the categories of Small Business Person of the Year, Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year, Women in Business Champion of the Year, Minority Small Business Champion of the Year, Small Business Exporter of the Year, Small Business Journalist of the Year, Small Business Advocate of the Year, Financial Services Champion of the Year, and Family-Owned Business of the Year.

“We look forward to honoring Arizona’s Entrepreneurs and Small Business Champions during Small Business Week,” said Robert J. Blaney, the District Director of the SBA in Arizona. “These men and women are the risk takers, the contributors and the innovative business leaders that make our Arizona economy grow.”

Winners of awards at the state level compete with winners from other states for similar awards on a regional basis. Regional winners then go on to compete for national awards presented in Washington, DC during national Small Business Week.

This year’s winner of the Arizona Small Business Exporter of the Year award won in the regional competition and will be among those competing for the national award. The national winner will be announced in Washington during Small Business Week ceremonies, April 23-24.

The winners:

2007 Arizona Small Business Person’s of the Year **Phoenix, AZ**

The winner of this award is an individual who owns and operates, or bears principal responsibility for operating, a small business. Partners who jointly own and operate a small business may be nominated as a “team”, so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four.

This year's Small Business Persons of the Year are **Craig and Kristin DeMarco**, Co-owners of Postino Winecafe.

Craig and Kristin DeMarco opened Postino Winecafe in April of 2001. Located in a historic post office building, Postino sits right in the middle of the Biltmore, Arcadia and Paradise Valley neighborhoods. Initially created as a casual wine bar, Postino has evolved into an award winning restaurant and favorite spot for the community to meet.

While the business itself has remained in the same facility since inception, the owners have been able to leverage the success of Postino to expand into additional restaurant ventures. Craig and Kris are also part owners of LGO Hospitality, LLC, a restaurant holding company managing La Grande Orange Grocery & Pizzeria and Chelsea's Kitchen.

Postino initially opened with 7 employees on staff, including Craig and Kris. They quickly expanded to 30 employees by the second year and have been at approximately 40 employees for the last three years. Employee turnover is very low and restaurant reviews consistently identify the high levels of service offered by the Postino staff.

Postino generated initial year sales revenue of nearly \$500,000 with 9 months of activity. By 2002, sales had grown to slightly over \$1,000,000 and they passed the \$2,000,000 level in 2005. Craig and Kris anticipate 2006 sales to be approximately \$2.5 million.

2007 Arizona Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year **Phoenix, AZ**

The winner of this award is an individual who has fulfilled a commitment to advancing small business opportunities for veterans and has demonstrated accomplishment in obtaining support within the community for the establishment of veteran owned small businesses.

This year's Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year is **Phil Gordon**, Mayor of the City of Phoenix.

Before serving in elected office, Phil Gordon has worn many professional hats. He has taught school, practiced law, was a business owner, served on the Madison School Board and was chairman of Landiscor Aerial Photography Company. As a councilman, he spearheaded Shannon's Law, making it a felony to discharge a firearm within city limits. As Mayor, he lists his three priorities for the city as: Public Safety, Education and Jobs.

Mayor Gordon actively supports legislation and regulatory action designed to help veteran owned small businesses. His advocacy of special support for veterans in city policymaking was demonstrated when he created the Phoenix Military Veterans Commission in September 2004. One of the major outcomes of this commission was the completion and opening of a "hospitality room" in the old U.S. Airways Executive Lounge at Sky Harbor International Airport. Active – duty and retired military veterans could now pass the time waiting for flights in a lounge that caters solely to them. This room shows camaraderie and gives the military people a sense of

having a little something special. Airports across the nation have VIP lounges, but this “first class” facility signifies support and thanks to our veteran community.

2007 Arizona Women in Business Champion of the Year
Phoenix, AZ

The winner of this award is an individual who has fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of women’s business ownership and has demonstrated efforts to increase business and financial opportunities for women.

This year’s Women in Business Champion of the Year is **Dedra Johanneson**, SCORE Counselor for Phoenix SCORE Chapter 105.

Dedra Johanneson is currently a professional counselor with Phoenix SCORE Chapter 105. She has been a SCORE member since 2004, after completing a 25-year career as an entrepreneur, wife, mother, mentor, caregiver, and spokesperson for women in business. In an organization heavily dominated by successful retired male business owners and corporate executives, Dedra has stood out as a true advocate for women in the small business community. Thus, continuing her career commitment to helping women achieve success as entrepreneurs by recognizing the unique challenges facing the female gender.

Besides an active counseling caseload of face-to-face, telephone and email clients, Dedra has been a facilitator and presenter on the Women’s Business Council sponsored by the Glendale Library; the Fresh Start Program for disadvantaged women sponsored by the Arizona Department of Economic Security; and SCORE’s “Start Smart” pre-business planning seminars at the Arizona Small Business Association.

2007 Arizona Minority Small Business Champion of the Year
Phoenix, AZ

The winner of this award is an individual who has fulfilled a commitment to support minority entrepreneurship and has demonstrated efforts to improve conditions in the minority small business community as a whole, not solely for individual personal advancement.

This year’s Minority Small Business Champion of the Year is **Rich Senopole**, Center Director for the Maricopa Community Colleges Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

For seventeen years, as Center Director in more than one of Arizona’s SBDC’s, Rich Senopole has been a strong proponent and developer of programs designed to support minority businesses on every level. In addition, he has been an active strategic partner with several key minority business development organizations, including the Grand Canyon Minority Supplier Development Council, the Arizona Department of Commerce’s Service provider team, and the Chicanos Por La Causa’s annual planning committee for the Seminarios en Espanol since its launch in 2002.

As Center Director for the Maricopa Community College Small Business Development Center, Rich has developed and maintained strong relationships with minority entrepreneurs, minority business development organizations, and key community and business leaders. He uses these relationships to collaborate, strategize and build the success of minority business throughout the state.

2007 Arizona Small Business Exporter of the Year
Yuma, AZ

The winner of this award is an individual who has demonstrated increased sales, profits and/or growth of employment because of exporting.

This year's Small Business Exporter's of the Year are **Christina and Edwin Brown**, Managing Partners for That's Cool, Inc.

At a stage in their lives when most people are thinking about retirement, Ed and Christina Brown launched a company and began selling topless sandals, a new type of strapless footwear that sticks to your feet. In January of 2004, they set up business in Yuma with 8 employees from a temporary services agency and absolutely no manufacturing experience. Their initial production goal was 25,000 shoes per month. Today, their operation has been streamlined for an output of 100,000 shoes per month with two shifts of five permanent employees.

Initially, sale of the topless sandal was restricted to the North America. In the fall of 2005, expansion began into the international market with orders going to Australia. In the winter of 2006, the Browns brought on an individual with extensive experience in overseas marketing. He contracted a Japanese rock star to wear the topless sandal in a video which tripled demand with sales to Japan and Korea.

Christina then put together a marketing campaign which featured topless sandals in salon professional magazines, newspapers and on the CBS Early Morning Show, the Tony Danza Show and the Jay Leno Show. Later in 2006, their topless sandals were featured on Japanese and Australian Television. Today, That's Cool has dealers on almost every continent from Canada to Australia and New Zealand, China to Japan, and all over Europe into the Middle East.

2007 Arizona Small Business Journalist of the Year
Phoenix, AZ

The winner of this award is an individual who has demonstrated a concerted effort to increase public understanding of the importance of small business contributions to the economy.

This year's Small Business Journalist of the Year is **Manny Wong**, founding publisher of the Asian American Times.

In 1990, Manny Wong launched the Arizona Chinese Times, Arizona's first Chinese-language newspaper. With no Chinatown or cultural center for the Chinese who live in Arizona this newspaper gave the various Chinese organizations a forum to exchange news and information.

A year later, the paper was converted to a Chinese-English bilingual format and renamed the Asian American Times. The bilingual newspaper expanded its audience to embrace the entire Asian-American community in the valley with news about events in China or Taiwan, explanations about state government and the latest in small business events.

With a constant smile on his face and utilizing his skills of speaking eight languages, Manny lends a helping hand whenever it is needed. Mr. Wong has demonstrated his journalistic prowess through his editorials which have motivated people, enriched their lives and taught many immigrants about the happiness of success in a small business.

2007 Arizona Small Business Advocate of the Year

Phoenix, AZ

The winner of this award is an individual who has assisted small businesses through advocacy efforts to increase the usefulness and availability of accounting or financial services.

This year's Small Business Advocate of the Year is **Pat Bodnar**, Senior Vice President for the Arizona Credit Union System.

Pat Bodnar joined the Arizona Credit Union System in 1985 and during her twenty-two years held various positions within the organization. She was instrumental in developing a governmental affairs department and continues her responsibility overseeing legal and legislative affairs and regulatory issues affecting both state and federal credit unions. Pat is also responsible for public awareness campaigns, communications, community involvement, international partnerships and member service issues.

The Arizona Credit Union League was founded 74 years ago and is the trade association serving Arizona Credit Unions. Not-for-profit in nature, it includes core services such as government affairs activities, regulatory compliance, legal, consultant services, communications, publications and public relations.

Pat Bodnar was promoted to the position of senior vice president of the Arizona Credit Union System in 2004. She also serves on the National Association of State Association of State Chartered Credit Unions Secondary Capital Task Force as well as the Governmental Affairs Committee.

2007 Arizona Financial Services Champion of the Year

Phoenix, AZ

The winner of this award is an individual who assists small business owners in providing the amount and quality of assistance required to obtain financing to advance small business interests.

This year's Financial Services Champion of the Year is **Lyle Frederickson**, Senior Vice President for Arizona Business Bank.

Lyle Frederickson began his career in banking with Valley National Bank of Arizona which was later acquired by Bank One. His experience has been in small business and middle market lending, both commercial and agricultural. Assignments in business lending were regionally diverse in such areas as Wilcox, Tucson, Buckeye, Mesa, Chandler and Phoenix. Lyle's responsibilities at Valley National Bank included management of 13 small business loan centers in Phoenix and surrounding areas as well as Flagstaff, Prescott and Lake Havasu City. By the end of his tenure with Bank One, Lyle ran the SBA Lending Department for the entire State of Arizona.

Lyle has been active in the American Bankers Association where he served on various national committees. He is also a former member of the Minority Small Business Committee of the State of Arizona, a former member of the executive Board of the Foundation for Technology Financing, and a former member of the Arizona Technology Incubator.

Currently, Lyle Frederickson is responsible for all government-enhanced banking for both Arizona Business Bank and its sister bank, Colorado Business Bank. Combined, their assets exceed two billion dollars.

2007 Arizona Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year
Prescott, AZ

This award honors a family owned and operated business which has demonstrated the potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.

This year's Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year is **All God's Children**, a retailer of Catholic Christian oriented products.

Owned and operated by Theresa Johnsen, All God's Children is a Christian bookstore that offers many gift ideas, books, DVD's, videos and music CD's that are faith-based in nature. Most products are offered in both Spanish and English. Some products are seasonal such as for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter and others for sacramental celebrations such as baptism, confirmation and matrimony.

All God's Children exemplifies what a family-owned business should be. It was created, funded and owes its success to family members. As the business has grown, it's increased employment opportunities for other family members. All God's Children is a model that strengthens family-owned business within the Prescott and Prescott Valley Communities.

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Also at the ceremony, awards will be presented to outstanding SBA lenders for their contributions to the small business community in the categories of Arizona Lender Advocacy Award, SBA Community Lender Award, Arizona 504 Lender of the Year, and SBA Lender of the Year.

The winners will be recognized at the 14th Annual Enterprise Business Conference to be held on Wednesday, April 11, 2007 at the Phoenix Convention Center. For information or the purchase luncheon tickets, please call Ms. Tracy Roberts, the Arizona Small Business association at (602) 265-4563.

For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov/az

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