



NEWS RELEASE

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Sergio Velazquez Receives National Champion Award for 2004

SANTA ANA, CALIF - Sergio Velazquez, President of Velazquez Publishing, Inc., and a resident of Santa Ana, CA was named National Champion of the Year 2004 by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Velazquez was also named the District Small Business Journalist Advocate of the Year 2004. Velazquez is publisher and editor of Miniondas and Farandula USA, two reputable Spanish language newspapers in Southern California. His selection was announced by District Director Sandy Sutton: "Sergio Velazquez is recognized for his commitment to excellence, dedication to community development, and business savvy. His newspapers provide business information for our Spanish speaking entrepreneurs."

Velazquez's first years in the publishing business were not easy. While keeping a full time job during the day, he worked nights on publishing his first newspaper, Miniondas. He was the reporter, editor, printer, and advertiser. On weekends he would cover sporting and other events accompanied by his family. He created the first Orange County Youth Soccer League in association with the Boy Scouts of America in Santa Ana because he felt the need to promote a recreational activity like soccer to troubled Hispanic youths. Taking advantage of his readership, he covered the games and went on to invest in Velazquez Publishing. Within a year, he had quit his job to focus solely on the newspaper.

Velazquez Publishing, Inc. serves the largest immigrant group in Orange County. Velazquez brings timely information in Spanish on economic, social, and political issues to his community. Taking into consideration his experience as a small business owner, he includes articles which assist small business owners to better understand the rules and regulations of operating a business in California. For the past three years Miniondas has sponsored and advertised the Spanish Small Business Fair, which provides workshops in Spanish to business

owners on filing taxes, understanding government programs, writing a sound business plan, and exporting.

Velazquez is a strong believer in growing with the local community. He knows that if local businesses thrive his business will also thrive. He spends many hours visiting businesses and sharing his business experience. He frequently extends two weeks of free advertising to struggling businesses and advises those businesses on how to create visibility and get customers in the door.

Today, the weekly publication *Miniondas* has grown to a staff of 24 employees, 36 pages and to a circulation of 55,000. Sergio has also spawned a sister publication for Hispanic women called *Farandula* with a similar circulation of 55,000, covering entertainment, food, women's health, and beauty advice.

Santa Ana Economic Development Specialist Laura Gimenez nominated Velazquez for "helping the community to prosper for over 30 years." He will be honored locally at the SBA's Small Business Award Luncheon on May 26, 2004, at the Grove of Anaheim, CA as part of a nationwide salute to small business. For further information on the luncheon contact the Orange County Small Business Development Center at (714) 564-5200.