



# News

U.S. Small Business Administration

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GREAT FALLS JOB SERVICE EMPLOYEE NAMED SBA'S VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR**

**HELENA, MT** –Joe Fletcher, Veterans Employment consultant with the Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center, has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2004 Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year for Montana. Fletcher will be recognized at SBA's annual Small Business Week awards ceremony May 7, 2004, at Missoula's Doubletree Inn, along with a cast of outstanding business owners and advocates.

As a veteran himself, Joe Fletcher understands the challenges, questions, and concerns facing today's veterans. Through the Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center, Fletcher works tirelessly to assist his clients with obtaining employment, changing employment, and/or opting for entrepreneurship. Each month Fletcher conducts a three and a half day U.S. Department of Labor Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for all retiring and/or separating service men and women. He is intimately involved with the local business community where he facilitates its partnership and participation in the TAP program. Along with information about job search techniques, resume writing, dressing for success, and interviewing skills, Fletcher insures information is provided on how to start one's own business. He does so using available small business resources such as the local Service Corps of Retired Executives, the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, and the U.S. Small Business Administration's Veteran's Assistance program.

Fletcher is an active advocate in Great Falls and the state for veterans' issues and causes, especially as they relate to economic conditions and employment. His involvement with state and local community organizations, i.e. VFW, American Legion, DAV, International Association of Workforce Professionals and the Montana Veterans Memorial Committee has provided him with the opportunity and means to disseminate information to veterans about small business opportunities.

Joe Fletcher was nominated by Suzie David of the Small Business Development Center in Great Falls.

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Other award winners being honored include: William Woody of Nightingale Nursing Services, Inc. of Missoula – Montana Small Business Person of the Year; Jack Morgenstern of Century Companies, Inc. of Lewistown – First Runner-up Small Business Person of the Year; Jennifer Keck of Big Sky Travel Nurses, Inc. in Conrad – Woman owned Business of the Year; Frederick “Rick” Larson of Employee Benefit management Services, Inc. – Entrepreneurial Success Award; Ryan Deskins of R&R Pressure Washing of East Helena – SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Kim Wild of TowHaul Corporation, dba Smith Equipment USA of Belgrade – National Small Business Exporter of the Year; Mandi Luce-Heinle and Sarah Ann Hamlen of Innovative Marketing Solutions, LLC of Hathaway – Main Street Business of the Year; Jerry Sullivan of Flint Creek Valley Bank in Philipsburg – Financial Services Advocate of the Year; Sheryle Shandy of Billings Food Bank & Montana Harvest Kitchens/Montana Harvest Gift Boutique in Billings – Home-Based Business Advocate of the Year; Flathead Business Journal of Kalispell – Small Business Journalist of the Year; Craig Smith of the Fort Peck Community College in Poplar – Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year, and Joy Ott of Wells Fargo Bank Montana, N.A. in Billings – Women in Business Advocate of the Year.

For more information on SBA programs and services, contact the Montana SBA District office at (406) 441-1081 or log onto [www.sba.gov/mt](http://www.sba.gov/mt).