



# Media Alert

ILLINOIS DISTRICT OFFICE

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## Entrepreneurs Meet Illinois Small Business Stars and Learn How to Finance and Grow a Business

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*SBA hosts business matchmaking session; recognizes Katrina Markoff of Vosges Ltd.; Elaine Krieger of Krieger Kiddie Corporation; Hedy Ratner and Carol Dougal of Women's Business Development Center; Doris Symonds of T.A.L.K.; Jacob Elster and Taylor Mork of Crop to Cup; Colleen Kramer of Evergreen Supply Company*

**CHICAGO, IL** – SBA Regional Administrator Marianne Markowitz and Illinois District Director Judith A. Roussel salute the state's top small business leaders at the **48<sup>th</sup> Annual Illinois Small Business Week Awards, Training, Matchmaking & Business Expo**. Awards will be presented acknowledging these business owners and advocates for their outstanding entrepreneurial achievements.

“Our Illinois state winners represent the best in their field. They continue to set an excellent example of hard work and dedication. We look forward to showcasing the accomplishments of these business owners and advocates, and recognizing them for a job well done,” said SBA Illinois District Director Judith Roussel.

The event will provide entrepreneurs an opportunity to connect with local lenders and meet federal, state and local buying agencies including Navy Great Lakes, Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Aviation Administration. The event will also feature workshops on capital access and reinventing your business through social networking.

“This Administration continues to support small businesses with legislation like the [Small Business Jobs Act](#) which is giving small businesses the tools they need to be successful, create jobs, and drive our economy forward,” added SBA regional Administrator Marianne Markowitz.

**WHO:** SBA Chief of Staff, Ana Ma  
SBA Regional Administrator, Marianne Markowitz  
SBA Illinois Director, Judith Roussel  
Illinois DCEO Director, Warren Ribley

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 30, 2011  
8:00 AM-5:00 PM—Lender and Procurement Matchmaking Sessions  
12:00 NOON-1:30 PM—Awards Luncheon (Main Dining Room)

**WHERE:** Union League Club of Chicago  
65 West Jackson Blvd, Chicago, IL 60604

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### **Award Winners Bios**

**Illinois Small Business Person of the Year—Katrina Markoff of Vosges, Ltd.**—Vosges Haut Chocolat is an international luxury brand selling its exotic truffles worldwide. With retail outlets in Chicago, New York, and Las Vegas, Katrina continues to grow her company. As a Graduate of Le Cordon Bleu, Katrina has traveled the world to obtain the rarest spices, flowers, and premium chocolate that provide every truffle lover that one and only true haut-experience. Katrina's vision, passion, and business acumen has featured her products in Whole Foods Market to luxury retailers such as Nieman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Bergdorf Goodman. Vosges, Ltd. is on the rise and is fine representation.

**Entrepreneurial Success Award Winner—Elaine Krieger, Krieger Kiddie Corporation--** Krieger Kiddie Corporation (which includes Clothes Mentor®, Plato's Closet®, and Once Upon A Child®)—is a local retail chain of apparel resale stores that currently operates from 12 Chicagoland locations with projected 2011 store sales exceeding \$10 million. Elaine is also this year's *National Entrepreneurial Success Award Winner*. She received national recognition at this year's *National Small Business Week* (May 16-20, 2011) during an award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

**Women's Business Center of Excellence Award—Hedy Ratner and Carol Dougal, Women's Business Development Center**—Since 1986, the mission of the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) has been to provide services and programs that support and accelerate the women's business ownership and strengthen the impact of women owned businesses in the economy. WBDC fulfills this mission by delivering a comprehensive array of education, advocacy, certification, coaching and financial assistance services.

**Women's Business Champion of the Year—Doris Symonds, T.A.L.K—** *Teaching and Learning for Knowledge*—Doris is a tireless advocate and mentor for women entrepreneurs in the Greater Peoria, Illinois area. Doris has dedicated her life to improving the chances of business success for women business owners. Doris' boundless energy and devotion to women makes her a household name in the area of business mentorship.

**SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year—Jacob Elster and Taylor Mork of Crop to Cup--** Crop to Cup introduces modern methods for the sourcing and selling of ethical coffee, Crop to Cup Coffee imports coffee using technologies that help coffee farmers and cover lovers to connect over their common cup. The company established these supply-lines, and then engages in the sales and marketing of specialty coffee to wholesale roasters, retailers and distributors.

**Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Small Business of the Year—Colleen Kramer of Evergreen Supply Company**—Evergreen Supply Company is a 23 year old woman – owned electrical supply company that provides lighting and electrical supplies to electrical contractors involved in this area's largest construction projects. This home based business that was started by Colleen's mother has now grown into a 20,000 square foot warehouse facility boasting over \$15 million dollars in sales employing over 35 people. Under her leadership, Colleen continues to provide the service that has made this company a mainstay on the Southside of Chicago.

*Editor's Note: To schedule an interview with award winners or SBA officials, please contact Carol Wilkerson at (312) 353-7327/(224) 330-5659 [carol.wilkerson@sba.gov](mailto:carol.wilkerson@sba.gov) -or- Mark Ferguson at (312) 353-5430, [mark.ferguson@sba.gov](mailto:mark.ferguson@sba.gov).*