# National Small Business Week

**May 12th-16th 2014**

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U.S. Small Business Administration

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50th ANNIVERSARY
SCORE

## Honoring America's Entrepreneurs

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# We See Our Success in the Faces of those We Serve.

At SCORE, we're incredibly proud of the role we've played in the lives of more than 10 million existing and aspiring small business owners over the past 50 years. Because of our knowledgeable and experienced volunteers – and with the support of the SBA – SCORE clients have contributed to our communities and economy while achieving their dreams of small business success.

Help us help 10 million more people reach their goals!

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U.S. Small Business Administration
Washington, DC

Dear Friends,

This March, I took my oath as the new SBA Administrator. I feel blessed to work on behalf of small businesses and entrepreneurs like you. I know you've risked so much to start and grow your small business, because I've stood in your shoes. When I started my first business almost 20 years ago, I experienced many of the same challenges that you face today. On any given day, I could be called upon to be my company's human resources director, CFO, or chief sales officer, all while competing against larger firms in competitive markets. I know you multitask your way through similar days to grow your business and provide good jobs for your employees.

Every year since 1963, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation announcing National Small Business Week to recognize and support small business owners. This week, America celebrates you.

We've had an incredible week already with successful events in San Francisco, Kansas City and Boston. In each of these cities, we provided opportunities for small business leaders to learn about resources available to help them access capital, counseling, contracting opportunities, and disaster aid. Our nation's economic comeback story was written by entrepreneurs like you, who've worked so hard to create two out of every three new jobs in this country. I'm especially proud of the more than 100 National Small Business Week 2014 Award Winners for all of their accomplishments.

At the SBA, we're working to create the next great American success story. SBA lending has helped launch businesses on a path to the Fortune 500, companies like Apple and Fed Ex. We helped launch an iconic American ice cream brand, Ben and Jerry's. We even helped five small businesses partner with NASA to launch the Mars rover, Curiosity, which is exploring the surface of the planet as we speak. We're striving to make SBA an agency that's as innovative as the small businesses we serve.

I hope you will take advantage of today's opportunity here in the nation's capital to learn about the wealth of SBA resources available to support you. Thank you for all that you do.

With gratitude,

Maria Contreras-Sweet

Administrator

U.S. Small Business Administration

# Microsoft congratulates the National Small Business Award Winners of 2014!

We applaud you and all of the 28 million small businesses across America that help drive our economy every day.

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## Lars Åkerlund

**Phoenix Award for Outstanding Small Business Disaster Recovery**

***CEO/Owner***

***Pachanga, Inc., d/b/a FIKA***

*450 Washington Street*

*New York, NY 10013*

FIKA, which means coffee break in Swedish, was the name Lars Åkerlund gave to each of the five specialty coffee and chocolate cafes he opened in New York starting in 2006. He was preparing for the New York Chocolate show when Hurricane Sandy nearly destroyed the location in Manhattan, and a new location under construction in Tribeca in October 2012. Flood water poured into the basement and rose up to four feet on the first floor, destroying all the equipment and thousands of dollars of specially made delights for the chocolate show. Years of hard work was ruined in a matter of minutes, leaving Lars with uninsured losses in excess of half a million dollars.

Lars received an SBA disaster loan, and started the rebuilding process with the support of local customers and caring neighbors. Aside from the enjoyment of the Swedish coffee and cuisine, customers appreciate that Åkerlund uses local vendors and American made products to support his neighbors and small business community. In mid-February, Lars was able to open the new chocolate factory in Tribeca, and in April the Manhattan location reopened. They also were able to increase their staff from 28 before Sandy hit, to 40 employees in April 2013.

"SBA Disaster Assistance saved us!" said Åkerlund. "I was so impressed by SBA. Everyone was so incredible. I knew there were a lot of people in need and that SBA must have been overwhelmed, but I got help from SBA all along the way. It was amazing."

2014 Phoenix Award Winners

## Deidre Ebrey

**Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions To Disaster Recovery by a Public Official**

***Director of Economic Development & Marketing***

***City of Moore, OK***

*301 N. Broadway*

*Moore, OK 73160*

On May 20, 2013, an EF5 tornado with 200 mph winds destroyed entire neighborhoods in the Oklahoma City suburb of Moore. Once she found out her family were safe, Deidre Ebrey, the city's Director of Economic Development and Marketing camped out city hall and became a central figure in the town's recovery from this terrible disaster.

She coordinated with the State of Oklahoma and the City, working with local officials to make decisions on debris removal, traffic control, commercial and residential damage assessments, and the health and welfare of the citizens of Moore.

She organized the visit from President Barack Obama and DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, working with the advance teams to make sure the event was successful. With unwavering confidence and calmness, she became a visible and outspoken advocate for the community's recovery, completing huge tasks like helping the school district secure a $500,000 grant to support the rebuilding efforts.

Always keeping an eye on the big picture, Deidre made sure information about SBA disaster loan assistance for homeowners, renters and business owners was included with utility bills mailed to Moore residents. She also worked tirelessly with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other state and federal agencies to support funding for the city's recovery efforts. Because of her long term relationships with business owners and community leaders, the Moore Medical Center was able to restore emergency patient care services on the site of the original hospital within six months of the tornado.

Born and raised in Moore, Deidre lives in the city with her husband Jon and their two daughters, Allison and Meredith.

## Gianna P. Cerbone-Teoli

**Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions To Disaster Recovery by a Volunteer**

***Manducatis Rustica VIG***

*46-33 Vernon Boulevard*
*Long Island City, NY 11101*

"Manducatis" is Latin for "come and eat." Gianna Cerbone-Teoli grew up in an Italian family where part of the genetic makeup involved cooking delicious food and running your own businesses. Following in her father's footsteps, in 2008 Gianna opened her own restaurant Manducatis Rustica in Long Island City, New York. She immersed herself in the community and became known to the locals as "Mama." In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Gianna's restaurant basement was flooded, and she lost all her catering supplies and equipment.

Amazingly, friends from the local church, firefighters and neighbors descended on her place and helped her clean up. Once the restaurant was scrubbed and patched up enough to re-open, "Mama" reached out to help those who were struggling. Gianna started cooking meals for families in the Rockaways who experienced devastating losses after Sandy. Messages of hope and encouragement were attached to the food packages. Collection boxes were placed outside the restaurant so those in need could get donated blankets, clothes and a fresh, home-cooked Italian meal. She also contacted state and local officials to find out what resources were available for businesses, and organized meetings at the restaurant where locals could connect to disaster recovery assistance.

Although "Mama's" business and her husband's business were significantly impacted, her greatest efforts were to assist her neighbors in need. Gianna says "you just have to get up and start all over again while helping others as you can."

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## Alabama 2014 Small Business Persons

### Harvey A. Nix, CEO

***Proventix Systems, Inc.***

*4518 Valleydale Road, Suite 201*
*Birmingham, AL 35242*

Harvey Nix founded Proventix in 2007. His goal was to develop and produce an automated communication system to monitor and report hand hygiene compliance events, reinforce change at the point of behavior, and create opportunities for multiple efficiencies within a healthcare facility.

Proventix developed a tag that recognizes when a person who is being monitored performs a cleansing activity (like washing their hands). Several independent studies have shown that this approach can be highly effective in improving hand-washing practices, reducing healthcare-associated infections, decreasing the patient's length of stay, and cutting healthcare costs.

Since its inception, Proventix has grown steadily and deliberately, going from two full-time employees then to 23 and three part-timers now. By February 2015 the company projects that it will have 56 full-time employees. It also grew from one client in 2009 to 42 clients in 11 states, currently.

In pursuing this success, Harvey sought and obtained assistance from the Greater Birmingham Development Center.

Harvey is not only a dedicated businessman focused on success, but also a committed member of the community, where his contributions include, but are not limited to sponsoring events to benefit breast cancer patients at the Princeton Baptist Breast Care Center and collecting toys at Christmas to donate to Toys for Tots.

## Alaska 2014 Small Business Persons

### Ginna and John Baldiviez, Owners

***House of Bread Anchorage***

*8130 Old Seward Highway*
*Anchorage AK 99518*

Since 1990, Ginna and John Baldiviez have made their mark on the Alaska economy. It started with John and his partners opening Ditomaso's, a local produce wholesaler; then with John and Ginna operating The Mangy Moose Bed and Breakfast. They also promoted healthy eating by creating The Alaska Carrot Company, the first local produce production facility. Today they continue their journey offering more healthy options at the House of Bread Anchorage.

Three years ago, Ginna and John opened House of Bread Anchorage, one of eight bakery/café stores associated with the House of Bread franchise based out of San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Key to their success in the business world has been proactive education and surrounding themselves with experts. Early on, John and Ginna invested their time and energy taking numerous classes through the Alaska Small Business Development Center. The Profit Mastery classes helped provide a strong foundation for healthy and sustainable growth of their businesses.

Now with three years under their belt, they have succeeded in making a name for themselves. From a new start up in 2010 to gross sales of almost a million dollars in 2013, House of Bread Anchorage has proven it has what it takes to succeed. "Our goal was to become part of the community," John said. "And I think that is something that we made happen with the support of our loyal customers."

Ginna and John are actively involved in the community, from mentoring high school students to donating food and other items to a multitude of schools and organizations.

## Cynthia Miracle Reed, President and CEO

***MIRACORP***
*6624 East Baseline Road, Suite 101*
*Mesa, Arizona 85206*

Cynthia Miracle Reed completed her U.S. Army service in 1989 and took a job with Vector Research, a Michigan-based company, where she applied her military experience to a variety of projects, including supporting economic analysis simulations for various Department of Defense offices.

The birth of her daughter in 1998 compelled Cynthia to pursue a better work-life balance. Her know-how became the foundation of MIRACORP, a small consulting firm started in 1999 in a bedroom converted into an office.

Offering management and general and medical administrative services, MIRACORP provides customers a myriad of services including accounting and finances, personnel support, environmental compliance, warehouse management, medical records management, education and training, and competitive analysis, just to name a few.

In 2008, Cynthia received SBA 8(a) certification and has since guided MIRACORP to an 850 percent growth in revenues. Today, Cynthia's one-person consulting business occupies a 6,000 square-foot, company-owned office building and boasts 122 employees.

MIRACORP has a presence in Washington, DC, Virginia, New Hampshire, Vermont, Florida, Texas, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, California, and Washington State, and a record of serving federal agencies including the Departments of Energy, Air Force and Agriculture, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security.

Cynthia's community service includes helping the Sunshine Angels, which supports children living within the Arizona Child Protective Services system; monthly donations of car seats to the Veteran Moms & Babies Program and chairs to the MANA House, which offers transitional housing for homeless male veterans trying to get back on their feet.



## Paul Arthur Reesnes, President
## John Michael Gueringer, Secretary

***Custom Aircraft Cabinets***
*5510 Landers Road*
*North Little Rock, AR 72117*

Custom Aircraft Cabinets (CAC), a specialized woodworking and upholstery manufacturer, got its start in 1989 in Mike Gueringer's garage when they discovered this niche market for custom built aircraft cabinets. They provide services for private, corporate and head-of-state aircraft companies across the globe. As their reputation spread, they steadily began to grow.

In 1999, CAC obtained an SBA 7(a) guaranteed loan for $272,000 in 1999 to fund their growth. In 2012, as the company kept growing, CAC bought an existing building and additional equipment with an SBA504 loan, and made it into a 146,000 square-foot state-of-the-art facility. At their grand opening, Governor Mike Beebe called the expansion "another success story for a homegrown company that is now ready to double its workforce and continue to thrive. Aerospace has consistently been one of the state's top exports, and CAC has found its niche for prosperity in this important Arkansas industry."

The facility has done what they intended – allowing them to diversify their clientele base and operate more efficiently. They added over 150 jobs – now totaling approximately 290 employees – as a result of the expansion with hourly wages ranging from $15 to $20 which is significant in Arkansas.

CAC's contribution to the community is expressed in the Governor's remark through their expansion and the impact on the community and state as a whole. Exports from Arkansas have grown by 36% and CAC and the aerospace industry are playing a leading role.

## California 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Ricardo Robles, President
### Pablo "Rene" Robles, Vice President/Operations
### Jackie Robles, Secretary/General Manager

***Anita's Mexican Food Corp.***
*3454 Mike Daley Drive*
*San Bernardino, CA 92407*

Anita's Mexican Food Corp. is a minority-owned wholesale food manufacturer and co-packer. The company's origins date back to 1958 as a flour tortilla manufacturer when family patriarch Mauro Robles founded a series of businesses now known as Anita's. Mauro came from Mexico, earned citizenship and sought to create new products that respected Old World tastes and traditions. Today, all five siblings are owners of the company while three children run the day-to-day operations.

Anita's operates major flour and corn based food manufacturing operations. They offer branded, private label, and contracted products and services for retailers and co-package customers. They make over 1,000 different SKUs and own 8 trademarks. With customers across the globe, they are contributing to the nation's export activity. On a slow day, more than 1.5 million tortillas emerge from the plant in East Los Angeles. Combined with the plant in San Bernardino, both plants produce and package chips by the ton. Anita's provides organic, non-GMO, and gluten-free designation, just to name a few. These designations play an important role in the ever-competitive food business.

The SBA is proud to have played a role in Anita's Mexican Food Corp.'s success. In 2012, to support a dramatic expansion in operations, SBA facilitated the purchase of real estate and equipment through an SBA 504 loan. Company revenue has grown over 100% the last three years and the SBA 504 loan has helped the company create jobs, with the employee count growing from 230 to 359 people.

Anita's and its owners are involved in their communities, with time, energy and resources. The Knights of Columbus, Adopt-A-Family, and the Leukemia Lymphoma Society are just a few of the organizations that have been helped by the Robles family.

## Colorado 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Jan Erickson, Founder and Owner

***Janska LLC***
*2255 Reliable Circle*
*Colorado Springs, CO 80906*

The common thread in Jan Erickson's life has been providing comfort and giving service to others. Along the way, she has shown dogged persistence, has had a dose of good luck... and received lots of help.

As a young girl, Jan often tagged along with her dad as he visited church members who no longer could get out and about. After visiting with a woman whose deteriorating physical condition prevented her from dressing in the beautiful things in her closet, Jan, by now a lay minister, came up with the idea of designing a jacket that would keep the woman warm and give her back a sense of style. That original idea evolved into what today is Janska, Clothing that Comforts, a fast-rising and popular women's fashion label found in more than 900 specialty gift and clothing boutiques and 10 catalogs in the U.S. and Canada.

For help and inspiration in leading Janska, Jan and the Janksa team worked closely with consultants from the Small Business Development Center and SCORE mentors.

Jan's community involvement has included volunteering at First Congressional Church, on the Board of Directors at Silver Key Senior Services, and at Pikes Peak Hospice. Janska provides financial support to many local and national non-profits and in-kind donations to support Kid Power, Go Red for Women, Dignity U Wear, Colorado Springs Therapeutic Riding, Doherty Band and The Children's Literacy Center, to name a few.

## Connecticut 2014 Small Business Persons

### Hitesh "Max" Kothari, CEO
### Parag Mehta, COO
***Express Countertops, Kitchen & Flooring LLC***
*3080 Main Street*
*Hartford, CT 06120*

Tenacity has kept Express Kitchens as a top employer with a big impact on the economic development of the north end of Hartford, Conn., a section of the city that faces chronic unemployment.

Express Kitchens has been in business since 2002 and is the result of planned and determined growth of Star Hardware Store, which Hitesh, "Max" Kothari and partner Parag Mehta of Rajkot, India, purchased in 1989.

In 1999 the store had four employees, but thanks to an SBA-guaranteed $100,000 loan, it expanded its inventory and hired four more workers. The company's ability to supply cabinets that satisfy every taste, lifestyle, and budget makes the transition from old, outdated kitchens to a brand new one easy and affordable and has been the key to the sustained success of the business.

Max and Parag perceived a need and a market for a business that could offer custom made kitchens at a reasonable cost, and provide consumers in the north end of Hartford with an alternative to big box stores such as Home Depot and Lowe's in offering such products.

In 2002 Max prepared the business plan for Express Kitchens and opened the business in a 50,000 square-foot facility that same year. He renovated the dilapidated facility to suit his purpose; started with four employees and had income of $350,000 the first year. He has since expanded operations to a second 50,000 square-foot facility next door to the original facility.

By 2013, the business had grown to 85 employees, 40 percent of whom are residents of the north end in Hartford. In 2014 the gross income is currently at $14,000,000 and the plans are to hire at least 14 to 15 employees during 2014. Today the company has seven retail stores in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The plans are to open two more in 2015 with an anticipation of revenue to exceed $18 million in 2014.

## Delaware 2014 Small Business Persons

### Marian R. Young, President
### Mark A. Lannan, Principal
***BrightFields, Inc.***
*801 Industrial Street, Suite 1*
*Wilmington, DE 19801*

Inspired by a desire to revitalize environmentally impacted and economically disadvantaged areas, BrightFields founded its full-service environmental consulting and remediation services firm in the city's historic Brandywine River banks in Wilmington, Delaware in 2003. The firm is a woman-owned business which has grown to a 40-person company that solves environmental challenges for its clients and its community.

BrightFields built a strong reputation for offering: environmental assessments, soil and groundwater investigation and remediation, brownfield redevelopment, asbestos and lead surveys, underground storage tank removals and hazardous materials cleanup.

While the Great Recession spurred economic upheaval worldwide, BrightFields leveraged its strong financial position using the strategic advice received from SCORE, to defy the odds and emerge from the Great Recession stronger than ever. BrightFields' SCORE-guided survival strategy included: a company-wide cost reduction effort; an all-hands marketing effort to broaden the client base, new services and expansion of its geographic footprint.

In 2008, the SBA named BrightFields as the Delaware Small Business Persons of the Year and it ranked number 64 on ZweigWhite Hot Firms list, for the fastest-growing architecture, engineering and environmental consulting firms in the U.S. and Canada. It is on track to surpass its previous record sales in 2015.

## District of Columbia 2014 | Small Business Persons

### LaKeshia Grant, CEO

***Virtual Enterprise Architect LLC***

*1200 G Street, NW, Suite 800*
*Washington, D.C. 20005*

LaKeshia Grant worked for several high-profile tech firms before starting her own company. She saw an Information Technology customer support need—the requirement for a consistent approach to delivery of IT capabilities—that wasn't being fulfilled by the big firms.

In 2007 she used $11,000 of her personal savings and started Virtual Enterprise Architects (VEA), a company that provides IT Architecture-related services—which includes business, data, software, infrastructure and security services—to public and private clients. Initially running the company out of her home, LaKeshia got her first subcontact with General Dynamics three months after opening.

Within three years VEA had become an 8(a) firm with a staff of 20. LaKeshia took advantage of the 8(a) business development training, acquiring the skills to successfully manage contracts from private firms to federal agencies such as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USIS), a branch of the Department of Homeland Security. Their work for USIS included capturing millions of immigration records, providing a road map to decrease processing times.

In 2013, VEA was ranked the 15th fastest growing IT services company in the U.S. by Inc. magazine, number one in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, and 195th overall. From 2010 to 2013 VEA enjoyed a 2,000 percent sales growth.

LaKeshia gives back to the community by mentoring veteran entrepreneurs, volunteering at her alma mater Morgan State University's MBA program, and supporting the Family and Youth Outreach Center, a Washington D.C. a food pantry.

## Florida 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Amir A. Varshovi, Ph.D, President

***GreenTechnologies LLC***

*4051 NW 43rd Street*
*Gainesville, FL 32635*

Dr. Amir A Varshovi emigrated from Iran when he was 18 years old in search of the American dream. He worked several jobs to support himself and pay for his college education. Dr. Varshovi's experience while still a student, as a research scientist and a researcher conducting efficacy research on commercial fertilizers, and their impact on the environment, compelled him to start GreenTechnologies in his garage in 1999. He now has a 25-acre manufacturing facility in Gainesville, FL and is in the process of building a 23-acre manufacturing facility in Lakeland, FL.

Since forming GreenTechnologies Dr. Varshovi has developed processes and patents for the production of environmentally sound and agronomically superior fertilizer products utilizing sustainable and renewable nutrients from the water treatment process. GreenTechnologies' focus is on extracting and recycling nutrients from the water treatment process, and developing slow release fertilizers that are environmentally conscious.

With the help of the SBA and the Small Business Development Center at the University of North Florida, Dr. Varshovi has grown GreenTechnologies from one employee to ten employees. He also hires disadvantaged members of the community including homeless persons through a local shelter, to fill larger orders. Sales have grown from $100,000 a year to more than $2 million, due in part to exporting.

GreenTechnologies received technical assistance on exporting through the SBDC. Dr. Varshovi also participated in SBA's three-year pilot State Trade and Export Promotion Program (STEP), a trade and export initiative authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. The company developed and branded the Greenedge® line of slow release fertilizers, for landscaping, agriculture, golf courses, and sports fields.

## Jusak Yang Bernhard, President
## Jeffrey Allen Manley, Vice President

***TailsSpin***
*4501 Habersham Street*
*Savannah, GA 31405*

TailsSpin, a retail pet supply business founded by owners Jusak Yang Bernhard and Jeffrey Allen Manley opened its first location in the Historic District of Savannah, Georgia in 2007, with only 800 square feet of retail space, one employee and one sale of an $0.89 can of Coke. Since then, TailsSpin has built a loyal following, offering its customers quality natural pet foods, a wide selection of pet accessories, and top-notch customer service. The business has grown rapidly, with sales for 2013 totaling seven times more than the sales in 2008, the business's first full year. TailsSpin has received local, national and international awards.

TailsSpin thrives by supporting the surrounding communities, which consist of pet rescue agencies, pet welfare organizations, schools, and other non-profit national and local organizations. While the economy has been a major challenge for TailsSpin, Jusak and Jeff have met this challenge by focusing on outstanding customer service and the affordability of food for their customers.

In 2013, the company began working to expand its product line through exploring its own lines of treats, toys, and pet accessories by working with local artists and entrepreneurs. TailsSpin expects to begin selling these products in mid-2014.



## Thomas Shieh, MD, FACOG, Owner

***Dr. Shieh's Clinic***
*643 Chalan San Antonio, Suite 108*
*Tamuning, GU 96913*

Dr. Thomas Shieh grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii and graduated from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, on a military naval scholarship. He further received his clinical ob-gyn residency training at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, at the Kapiolani' Medical Center for Women and Children.

After completing his active duty service as a Lt. Commander at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam, he decided to stay in the Territory because he wanted to help advance the health care for the people of Guam. He opened Dr. Shieh's Clinic in 1999 and has been advancing women's health ever since.

Dr. Shieh's Clinic has evolved into a state-of-the-art medical facility for women's health in Guam. Its services range from obstetrics to gynecology and diagnosis and treatment of gynecological diseases.

The office covers more than 4,000 square feet (it had only 700 when first opened), has cared for more than 10,000 patients and delivered over 4,000 babies, including the "Millennial baby", the first baby born in the U.S. in the 21st Century.

In addition to his medical service, Dr. Shieh is very much involved in helping the community not only in times of natural disasters but also helping in bone marrow drives and health care fairs, among others.

## David Erdman, President & CEO

***PacRim Marketing Group/PRTech***

*1585 Kapiolani Blvd, Suite 888*
*Honolulu, HI 96814*

PacRim Marketing Group is a global marketing and communications firm specializing in increasing business' share and spend of the Asian International Traveler market. PacRim has integrated a product mix of communications to embrace traditional public relations, advertising and media as well as the latest social media and search engine optimization in multiple Asian languages.

President & CEO Dave Erdman founded the company 24 years ago to bridge the gap in cultural understanding and gain market entry for companies in Hawaii and the U.S. wanting to do business in Japan and other Pacific Rim nations such as China, Taiwan and Korea. Started as a two person marketing firm in 1990, PacRim has since expanded into a group of related companies that include PRTech and PacRim Marketing Tokyo.

PRTech, the online platform created in 2004 to facilitate marketing and sales in Asian languages for hospitality and retail clients, develops custom multilingual software and websites using the latest technologies and setting industry standards, creating skilled jobs, helping U.S. businesses attract and capture a larger share of the coveted travel market in Japan, China and Korea.

During the last decade, Dave navigated his companies through changes in the global marketplace and economy by preparing for the increase of online and social media by Asian travelers, redefining their niche market strategies by focusing on the customer needs, bringing in specialists who are native speakers, and developing new online marketing tools and solutions.

Together, the companies generate millions in annual revenue, much through international sales, and now employ 46 marketing and PR professionals in Hawaii, North American and Asia.

Throughout the Asia Pacific region, Dave is a well-known industry expert, trusted advisor and advocate for Hawaii's largest economic sector, travel and tourism. Dave serves on the board for the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Japanese Cultural Center, Better Business Bureau, Rotary Club of Honolulu and Retail Merchants Hawaii.

## Idaho 2014 | Small Business Persons

## Gary Multanen, CEO/Owner
## Susan, Megan and Jay Multanen, Owners

***Best Bath Systems***

*723 Garber Street*
*Caldwell, ID 83605*

After working for Component Structures, Inc. for nine years, Gary Multanen and a group of investors purchased the company in 1981. Gary and his wife, Susan, bought the company two years later and he is now the CEO. Initially, the company focused on manufacturing bathing products for the modular home industry and custom fabrication services. Although the firm was profitable, Gary was not satisfied. Against the advice of a host of advisors, Gary chose to focus solely on bathing products.

Around this same time, Gary helped his aging mother with renovating her home, so she could remain safely in it. Gary realized there was a significant gap in the market for bathing systems to accommodate the needs of seniors, and in 1995, began developing a line of safe, accessible bathing units for home remodels. These multi-piece showers, designed to be installed in one day, simplify the construction process for contractors and homeowners.

Best Bath received SBA-backed loans and business development counseling from the Idaho Small Business Development Center which aided in its growth. Although Best Bath's revenue decreased slightly during the recession, it expanded its dealer network and the investment paid off with an increase in revenues, employees and dealers.

## Elizabeth Colón, President and Founder

***Metaphrasis Language & Cultural Solutions LLC***

*1147 W. Ohio, Suite 306*

*Chicago, IL 60642*

Elizabeth Colon made it her mission to provide equal access to culturally diverse communities by eliminating disparities and language barriers. Born to parents who were Limited English Proficient (LEP), Elizabeth soon realized that even those citizens of Puerto Rican descent had many language similar issues of those who migrated to the great melting pot, the U.S. As a result, Elizabeth started Metaphrasis Language and Cultural Solutions LLC.

Since opening its doors in 2007, Metaphrasis has grown from one full time employee and 14 interpreters to 6 full time employees with just under 200 certified interpreters/translators.

By diversifying from on-site interpreting/translation, and taking advantage of other revenue streams such as ASL and telephonic interpreting, transcription services, customized certification, multimedia, and other educational programs,

As evidenced by its financials, the company was able to sustain its growth by disproportionately limiting its expenses, but increasing its sales, gross profits margin, its assets, and net worth. By taking advantage of SCORE's many entrepreneurial services, Elizabeth continues to aggressively invest in her company to finance its astonishing growth.

Passionate about education, Elizabeth created an interpreter training program where people can turn existing language skills can be fine-tuned and used in medical interpreting jobs. Through this program, many trainees were able to pursue new career opportunities. Some students are even awarded scholarships to Metaphrasis.

Elizabeth volunteers within industry related organizations such as Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI) and The National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCHIC) with the goal of enhancing the language profession field.

To catch up on her many adventures, you can read about her amazing exploits featured in Chicago Hospital News, Negocios Hoy, La Raza Chicago, Daily Herald, and Hispanic Executive Magazine.



## Michael E. Suth, CEO

***Hoosier Spring Co., Inc.***

*4604 S. Burnett Drive*

*South Bend, IN 46614*

Hoosier Spring Company, Inc. is a family-owned business and a leading manufacturer of compression springs, specializing in the manufacture, heat treatment and inspection of precision springs and wire forms for top aerospace, military, nuclear (Navy and commercial), and industrial companies around the world. Now in its third generation of family ownership, Hoosier Spring has grown from seven employees working out of its founder's garage in 1954 to 88 employees (many of whom are direct family or married to family).

Mike Suth grew up helping his father run the business, but faced his biggest challenge when his father died in 1990, and suddenly found himself at the helm of the company at a competitive crossroad. With the business almost exclusively tied to the automotive industry, he developed a strategy to diversify the client base and branch out into new applications.

After being in business for nearly 60 years, the company now provides aerospace and nuclear applications for companies around the world. Today, Hoosier Spring products can be found in almost anything that flies. The company has several Fortune 500 clients, clients that date back more than 30 years and its sales have grown from $6 million to almost $13 million.

## Mary Patricia Connell, President and CEO

***Air Control, Inc.***
*80 14th Ave. North*
*Clinton, IA 52732*

Counseling from an Iowa Small Business Development Center may have helped save Mary Connell's third generation family business. Mary is president and CEO of Air Control, Inc. (ACI), a family-owned business started by her father, Vern Witt, in 1956. Mary worked for her father at ACI after high school and eventually sought help from the Iowa SBDC with the company's first business plan and received counseling after the loss of its biggest customer threatened its existence.

The company specializes in heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC) work for residential, commercial and industrial sectors, and operates two metal fabrication shops. ACI designs and creates specifications for various industrial systems and installs dust collection systems. It also manufactures tanks, transfers ducts, and numerous items for the food and grain industry and builds and installs steel fabrications and handling equipment.

Mary, her brother, and her son, formally acquired ACI in the 1980s. Under Mary's leadership, ACI has grown from $1 million in revenues to more than $8 million and has expanded its product line into five major divisions run by 40 employees. Mary also won successful contracting bids to supply fabricated products to several Air Forces bases. She's currently applying for 8(a) certification.



## Abdallah "Alex" Harb, Owner

***Ribbit Computer LLC***
*921 E Douglas Ave.*
*Wichita, KS 67202*

Abdallah "Alex" Harb came to the United States nearly 14 years ago hoping to get a college degree and eventually land a job. Knowing little English, Alex paid his way through college by waiting tables, and selling pocket knives on eBay. Perseverance and overcoming obstacles, he says, was nothing new in his life having grown-up amid turmoil in his native Lebanon. "It gives you the survivor mentality," says Harb, 33.

With his degree in hand and filled with determination, Harb started Ribbit Computer LLC in December 2004 at its main location, in Wichita. Ribbit is a wireless devices retailer that is the only one licensed locally to install and service Microsoft's Windows Professional for businesses.

Alex used a 7(a) SBA loan for $427,000 and four smaller Express Loans, from 2006-2012, to finance the equipment, inventory, staffing and operating expenses. "The SBA loans really helped," Alex says. Ribbit Computer increased its staff from 40 to 48 in 2011 with gross sales over $4.6 million, and now has 55 employees across five retail and computer repair stores in Wichita.

Among Alex's contribution to the community, Ribbit donated 5% of its Christmas sales, over $14,000, for the Wichita Police K-9 unit. Again in 2013, Alex donated a Ring Central phone system for the Wichita Police Homeless Outreach Team (H.O.T.). The system helped the H.O.T. answer calls, text messages, and 6,890 voicemails and was successful in finding permanent housing for over 100 homeless individuals in the Wichita area.

## Kentucky 2014 Small Business Persons

### Tommy Ray Cornett, President

***Bleed Blue Tattoo & Piercing, Inc.***
*527 South Upper Street*
*Lexington, KY 40508*

Art has always been a passion of Tommy Ray Cornett's, as demonstrated by his temporary tattoos on his elementary school classmates or sketching while stationed in Germany during his U.S. Army career. Tommy began his tattooing career while attending the University of Cincinnati, where he majored in Design.

In 2008, he opened Bleed Blue Tattoo & Piercing, Inc. in central Kentucky, with another artist and partner, a piercer, and Tommy's future spouse, Jessica. The name, Bleed Blue, reflects its passion for the University of Kentucky's (UK) "Big Blue Nation." Besides offering tattoos and piercings, Bleed Blue is changing the stereotypes surrounding tattoos and body piercings and educating the public about the industry's safety standards. Bleed Blue boasts former UK basketball players now in the NBA, Ultimate Fighting Championship® (UFC) fighters, and famous musicians such as Kentucky's own Montgomery Gentry Band as clients.

While profitable, Tommy faced financial challenges for almost five years because local banks did not want to finance a tattoo business. The Bluegrass SBDC helped Tommy develop a professional business plan and financial projections over a five-month period, which helped Tommy secure an angel investor. The company has won numerous regional and national awards for its artistry.

## Louisiana 2014 Small Business Persons

### Keith A. DuRousseau, President & Owner

***Keiland Construction LLC***
*600 Bayou Pines East, Suite G*
*Lake Charles, LA 70607*

While doing construction work for general building contractors, Keith DuRousseau decided to become a part-time real estate agent. It was when he managed several real estate transactions that Keith realized he wanted to start his own construction firm.

He and his wife sold their home, rented a room in his brother's home, and began saving money to start a company.

Keith founded Keiland Construction LLC in 2007 with a staff of two. Despite his limited resources, Keith began designing and building small homes, using his real estate expertise to market and sell what he built. Until the residential real estate market crash of 2008, the company focused on residential and multi-family housing developments. The sudden shift in focus from residential real estate to commercial and industrial projects was challenging, and Keith started to research what was needed to begin pursuing projects outside of the private sector.

Keith received a certification in SBA's 8(a) business development program in October 2009. The certification opened the door to contracts with several federal, state and local government agencies. The company's continued success is credited to the assistance Keith has received from SBA's Louisiana District Office, the Louisiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center at University of Louisiana Lafayette, the Louisiana SBDC, and the Southwest Louisiana SCORE chapter.

Keiland Construction now has 24 employees. The company is financially strong, with an average annual revenue growth of 450%.

## Maine 2014 Small Business Persons

### Mary Allen Lindeman & Alan Spear, Owners

***Coffee By Design/A.D. Beane LLC***

*One Diamond Street*
*Portland, ME 04101*

Coffee By Design started as a single coffee house in Portland, Maine in 1994 owned by a husband and wife team, with one part-time employee. Since then the business has grown to four retail locations with a staff of 51, along with a micro roaster.

The company saw its first expansion in 1997 with a $57,400 SBA loan. In 2013, an SBA 504 loan allowed them to grow the business with $2.5 million that was used to purchase and build a place for their roasting facility, a small retail area and a training room for their wholesale customers, as well as office space. This project also allowed the company to add nine additional jobs.

They have been recognized in both local and national publications having been named by Zagat's as one of the Top 10 Coolest Independent Coffee Houses in the U.S. The wholesale business enjoyed a steady annual growth of 18% until 2012, when the rate of growth increased to 25%.

The company has maintained its civic minded approach to business. In 2012 the company gave $6,000 in grants to Yes Art Works, The Telling Room, and the Lewiston Auburn Film Festival's student film contest. In 2011 they donated $5,000 to a school for children with learning disabilities in Jardin, Colombia for the construction of a new kitchen.

## Maryland 2014 Small Business Persons

### Stephanie Novak Hau, President/CEO

***Chesapeake Environmental Management, Inc.***

*42 North Main Street*
*Bel Air, MD 21014*

Growing up in Baltimore, Stephanie Novak Hau was raised in a home where great emphasis was placed on education. While on an environmental science field trip with her fifth-grade class, Stephanie was bitten by a tick and developed Lyme Disease. The illness went undiagnosed and untreated until she was 27 years old.

Despite the short-term memory loss associated with the disease and her family's financial struggles, Stephanie put herself through college, earning a Master's Degree in Geology, and a Doctorate. While working part-time with an environmental consulting firm, Stephanie discovered her entrepreneurial side and never looked back.

In 1993, with no business experience, a mortgage, and student-loan debt of over $60,000, Stephanie and her husband Joe founded Chesapeake Environmental Management, Inc. (CEM). The full-service consulting firm works to solve their clients' environmental challenges by carefully considering the complex inter-relationships of geology, hydrology and the ecology.

The company has grown to a firm with 55 employees and annual revenues in excess of $4 million. Stephanie has relied on the Maryland SBDC for advice on growing her company. She also received four SBA loans to help with equipment purchases and the renovation of a historic building which now serves as the company's headquarters.

Stephanie is passionate about sharing her good fortune. In 2013 CEM donated more than $85,000 to local charities, including the United Way, Habitat for Humanity and various children's charities.

## Massachusetts 2014 Small Business Persons

### Valerie Bono, Owner/VP National Sales
### Maria Malloy, Owner/VP Finances & HR
### Eric Bresciani, President
### Edwin Bresciani, Production Manager

***Golden Cannoli Shells Company Inc.***
*99 Crescent Avenue*
*Chelsea, MA 02150*

In 1970 after working at various bakeries in Boston's North End, cousins Francesco Bono and Angelo Bresciani secured a storefront and started their first bakery in Arlington, Mass. Success followed for the Argentine immigrants, and soon they were able to open a second bakery. Instead of paying a vendor, the pair decided to start making their own cannoli shells and fillings to supply their bakeries. That's how Golden Cannoli came to be.

Golden Cannoli has received national recognition for their handmade cannoli and fillings. The company's second generation owners, Valerie, Maria, Eric and Edwin in 2009 received an SBA Express Loan and used the funds for equipment upgrades. In 2013 they used an SBA 504 loan to buy a 30,000 square-foot manufacturing facility. Maria joined the SBA's Emerging Leaders Initiative/e200 program in Boston in 2013 to develop a growth plan for the business. Each owner now works with a SCORE counselor to develop strategies to manage and restructure the business to run at maximum productivity.

With its continued growth and development –38 percent in 2013—Golden Cannoli increased its staff from 12 in 2012 to its current 41 full-time employees. The increase in sales is the result of staff training and new product development.

Golden Cannoli makes charitable contributions to the local school, Little Sisters of the Poor, the Greater Boston Food Bank and the Women's Hospital for Cancer Research.

## Michigan 2014 Small Business Persons

### Michael Nevins, President & CEO

***Full Spectrum Solutions, Inc.***
*2021 Wellworth Avenue*
*Jackson, MI 49203*

When his wife battled with Seasonal Affective Disorder after the couple relocated to Michigan from Chicago, Michael Nevis replaced their office fluorescents with full spectrum lighting. The improvement was swift, and Michael started researching the need for balanced and healthy lighting in work and learning environments of people who spend the majority of their day indoors.

Michael started Full Spectrum Solutions, Inc. in 1997 and steadily transitioned from residential products to energy-efficient lighting solutions for commercial and industrial applications.

By working with renowned research partners and testing facilities, including the California Lighting Technology Center at UC Davis, Full Spectrum Solutions, Inc. now offers more than 200 lighting solutions.

The company is the leading manufacturer of therapeutic residential home and office products in addition to energy-efficient commercial lighting solutions for roadway, parking structure, facility and area lighting applications.

Michael is committed to creating economic opportunities in his home state of Michigan as well as on the national level. The company receives purchase orders from all market segments such as educational, municipalities, every branch of the U.S. Military, and federal and state agencies.

## Minnesota 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Scott Warzecha, President/Founder

***Netgain***

*720 W. Saint Germain Street*
*Saint Cloud, MN 56301*

Netgain is a healthcare information technology provider to physician practices and rural hospitals. The company's dedicated cloud and private cloud offerings allow organizations of all sizes to experience cloud computing benefits without compromising control or security.

Scott Warzecha started Netgain in 2000 with the goal of providing hosting services for a small group of local clients. Today they have more than 200 clients in 35 states, and a staff of 95 working in three locations.

In 2009, Netgain received an SBA 7(a) loan for $860,000 to purchase equipment and cover operating expenses. The company later received another 7(a) loan for $1 million, which was used for equipment and working capital.

In 2011, Netgain was put in jeopardy when the basic service they provide locked up and clients lost access to their software and computer service. Patients had to be rescheduled, staff went home, and physicians lost money.

Scott addressed this critical problem by hiring three account managers, establishing a Client Advisory Group, measuring client satisfaction by initiating the NetPromoter score as the primary indicator, and communicating with clients through a newsletter.

Netgain has been growing at a 25 percent increase annually for the past eight years. In 2000 the company had seven employees and $345,000 in revenue. By 2013, Netgain's income reached $3.3 million.

The company annually donates five percent of profits to charity, and encourages community involvement among their employees.

## Mississippi 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Bhupender "Bruce" Ramesh Patel, CEO

***Fusion Hospitality***

*3189 McCullough Blvd*
*Belden, MS 38826*

After attending University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Bruce Patel moved to Columbus, MS in 1999 to work in a family-owned hotel. For three years he worked hard at cleaning and setting toilets, doing small repairs, and handling property maintenance. He paid attention to aspects of hotel management and customer service. In 2003 his family helped him buy a 115-room hotel and he spent the next three years renovating the property and improving the occupancy rate.

In 2003 Bruce's family helped him purchased the former 115 room Quality Inn in Tupelo, Mississippi—an old, tired property in a great location. He spent the next three years slowly improving and renovating the property, steadily driving the occupancy and increasing revenue. Bruce sold the property in 2007 and decided to build his first hotel from ground-up.

During the construction phase Bruce was treated for cancer. His fierce determination allowed him to recover in time for the 2008 opening of the new Comfort Suites in Tupelo. Bruce received two SBA 504 loans, which helped him develop new hotel properties.

During the next five years the entrepreneur opened six more hotels in North Mississippi. He's currently overseeing construction for three new hotels, while planning the development for three more hotels in the area.

Also a philanthropist, Bruce contributes to the Tupelo Public School District, the local Boys & Girls Club, and the youth soccer league.

## Missouri 2014 Small Business Persons

### Nilson L. Goes, Ph.D., President/CEO

***Infinite Energy Construction, Inc.***

*13625 Oak Street*
*Kansas City, MO 64145*

Nilson Goes immigrated to the U.S. from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1987 to pursue a doctorate degree in electrical engineering. Nine years later he founded Infinite Energy Construction. The company was initially funded with lines of credit secured by personal assets.

The company's growth spurt started when Nilson entered SBA's 8(a) Business Development program in 2009.

In 2010 Infinite Energy secured a 7(a) CapLine loan for $780,000 from Metcalf Bank that bankrolled a $40 million federal contract at Whiteman Air Force Base. At that point he was able to add six more employees to his staff to handle the additional work. The loan and the federal contract, Nilson said, helped his business grow. Because of the company's excellent work, numerous federal and state contracts were being awarded.

The new contracts have led to steady growth in sales. The company saw revenue increase from $5.4 million in 2010 to $14.9 million in 2012. Nilson now has a staff of 40, and they expect to graduate from SBA's 8(a) Program in January 2018.

Nilson has overcome several setbacks to the growth of this business. After the 9/11 attacks, federal construction contracts outside the Washington, D.C. metro became scarce. He cut costs and laid off employees to keep his company open. For 18 months, he sacrificed his own paycheck. Eventually he won contracts that not only kept his business alive, but allowed it to grow.

The company supports local charities that include Heartland Hoops Youth Development, as well as funding scholarships through the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City.

## Montana 2014 Small Business Persons

### Randy Hafer, Owner
### Janna Sue Hafer, CFO/Co-Owner

***High Plains Architects***

*2720 Minnesota Ave*
*Billings, MT 59101*

With a lifelong passion for architecture and a strong belief that it can change the world for the better, Randy Hafer always knew he wanted to do more than design buildings. After working as an architect in Chicago, Randy returned to his hometown of Billings in 1999. That year he and his wife Janna, along with three employees, opened High Plains Architects.

One of their first projects was the renovation of a downtown warehouse built in 1918. That warehouse became High Plains' home base, and the building is now listed in The National Register of Historic Places.

High Plains first year in business generated $40,000 in gross sales in 1999. They have grown annually, and in 2012 they ended the year with $650,000 in gross sales.

The company has taken advantage of four SBA 7(a) loans, and received assistance from the Billings SBDC. The firm has also carefully expanded to nine employees during years when Montana's economy has experienced high unemployment and stagnant business growth.

Since that first warehouse project, High Plains has developed more than 12 projects, including the first building in Montana to receive a Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

## Nebraska 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Douglas Garwood, President and CEO

***Garwood Enterprises, Inc.***
***d/b/a Cardinal Farms***
*1212 Dakota Avenue*
*Dakota City, NE 68731*

Garwood Enterprises is a family-owned business that has flourished for more than 150 years and through six generations in the food production business. The business began as a traditional row crop operation in 1868 by the family of Douglas Garwood's wife. Douglas became a partner in 1975 and bought out the company in 1999.

Today, the farm includes nearly 1,200 acres of row crops, and the business is also involved in specialized hauling of paunch manure for Tyson, Inc. To further diversify and add income, the company added a fresh fish production facility last year.

SBA's Small Business Development Center in Wayne, Neb. assisted with the operations changes of the business. The SBDC center director helped the business develop its financial projections and develop an SBA 504 loan application. In November 2013, the loan was approved for $362,000 to help construct the new fish production facility.

The business has had multi-generational staying power and has grown from three to six full-time employees, with another six hired seasonally. Douglas expects to increase hiring for the fish production plant.

## Nevada 2014 | Small Business Persons

### Jarrod Lopiccolo, Season Lopiccolo and Michael Thomas, Owners / Partners

***Noble Studios***
*50 W. Liberty Street, Suite 800*
*Reno, NV 89501*

Started in 2003 as a two-person web and marketing company, Noble Studios has become one of the region's fastest growing tech companies. The company's creative edge is fostered by its founders, Season and Jarrod Lopiccolo. In 2010, Jarrod was named SBA's Nevada Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Jarrod and Season, together with their partner Michael Thomas, have been at the helm of the company's success.

The partners created a business focused on the digital space, specializing in web, mobile and social media. Noble Studios has grown from a home-based business into an 8,650 square-foot office space where they are leading the charge to position downtown as a tech hub. In 2014, the partners plan to grow the staff by 10%. Although the company has tripled its staff size in the past three years, it continues to operate without a single investor.

The company has a remarkable group of 38 driven and innovative minds that include entrepreneurs, strategists, creative designers, developers and account managers. The multi-million dollar tech company has a roster of clients that includes global brands like Asics, Autodesk, Barnes & Noble, Cisco, Farmers Insurance, Ford, HTC, Wildfire by Google, Verizon and Paramount Pictures.

## Chris Licata, President

***Blake's Turkey Farm LLC***
***d/b/a Blake's All Natural Foods***
*178 Silk Farm Road*
*Concord, NH 03301*

In 1929, Clara Blake began farming 25 acres in Concord, New Hampshire. By 1945, Clara's son Roy established Blake's Turkey Farm, producing fresh-dressed turkeys.

In 1970, Roy's son Charlie found himself with some extra turkey meat in the farm's kitchen and decided to experiment with his grandmother's recipe for turkey pot pie. He baked 12 pies, loaded them in the back of his Chevy van and drove to the farmer's market at St. John's Church. The pies sold out in 20 minutes and Charlie realized that he was on to something. Forty-four years later the 4th generation at Blake's is still using great-grandma Clara's heirloom recipes to nourish body and soul of happy customers throughout the U.S.

Under the direction of Chris Licata, Charlie's son-in-law, Blake's is excelling in new sales channels. Since joining the company in 2006, Chris has taken Blake's from a New England-only brand to national recognition, selling products in 46 states and growing sales from $1.4 million to $8.7 million in 2014. While experiencing exponential sales growth, the number of employees increased from 12 to 54, with many of the employees coming from the local Bhutanese community. This growth, which was not without challenges, was financed in part by three SBA-guaranteed loans.

Chris is personally involved in the community, and under his leadership Blake's contributes to many local businesses and causes such as The Special Olympics, The Friendly Kitchen, The American Legion, Concord Police Department and Hopkinton Youth Sports Association.



## Kiran K. Gill, President

***PARS Environmental, Inc.***
*500 Horizon Drive, Suite 540*
*Robbinsville, NJ 08691*

Kiran Gill had no idea she would go from being a summer intern at her father's company to becoming its owner, but that's exactly what happened. The NYU graduate was just in her mid-20s when she purchased the company from her father in 2003.

Kiran took a company with just six employees and annual revenues of $500,000 and turned it into one of the most recognized environmental engineering firms in the state of New Jersey.

Under Kiran's direction, PARS Environmental, Inc. has grown to 50 employees with annual sales of $13 million – approximately 50 percent revenue growth per year for the last nine years. From the onset, Kiran's vision for PARS Environmental has been focused on developing innovative technologies for environmental applications and building the company into a consulting firm that would specialize in tackling and solving tough environmental problems.

With assistance from the SBA's New Jersey District Office, the company became an SBA 8(a) certified business with the federal government. PARS was able to secure millions in federal contracts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Air Force.

## Michele (Shelly) Herbst, President and CEO

***Marron and Associates, Inc.***
*7511 Fourth St. N.W.*
*Albuquerque, NM 87107*

Shelly Herbst's parents, Ken and Carol Marron started Marron and Associates in the garage of their home in the late 1980s. In 1993, Shelly came to work for them as Marketing Director and became President and CEO in 2002 when her mother retired from the company.

Marron and Associates provides comprehensive environmental consulting services, specializing in scientifically sound biological, cultural and environmental investigations. In its 23 year history, the company has grown from five to nearly 20 employees. Its sales volume increased from $1.2 million in 2010 to $2.0 million in 2013.

With the knowledge Shelly gained as 2011 Emerging Leaders (formerly e-200) Initiative graduate, Marron chose to grow through a planned and logical growth strategy. Shelly also sought the advisement of SBA's resource partners SCORE and the Small Business Development Center. She recently developed and implemented a Quality Assurance/Quality Control program to improve on the company's internal processes and procedures.



## Michael Allen, President

***Z-AXIS, Inc.***
*1916 State Route 96*
*Phelps, N.Y. 14532*

Z-AXIS, Inc. provides quality design, prototyping and manufacturing services for complex electronic products and electromechanical assemblies. Founded in 1989 to offer a unique line of rugged video display monitors, the company diversified in the late 1990s into contract electronics design and manufacturing services. In 2006, after six years of downward sales and financial losses, the company's founder retired and Michael Allen took over as President.

Michael transformed the company as technology evolved and market demand for the company's core competency dwindled. Over a five year period, Michael repurposed the assets and staff of

Z-AXIS, Inc., developed a new product line and entered the contract manufacturing market. As a result of Michael's entrepreneurial spirit and vision for the company, Z-AXIS, Inc. remains in Phleps, N.Y., preserving 73 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs), with the promise of 10 new FTEs to be created in the next three years.

Over the past several months, First Niagara Bank has worked with Michael to structure a financing package that allowed him to purchase the stock and assets of Z-AXIS, Inc. from Video Display Corp. Integral to the financing was the proactive assistance of the SBA in supporting traditional bank financing through the 7(a) loan guaranty program, 504 program and SBA Express.

## Andrew Kratz, Joel Graybeal, Managing Partners

***Triangle Rock Club***
*102 Pheasant Wood Court*
*Morrisville, NC 27560*

You might say that Andrew Kratz and Joel Graybeal have always aimed for the top. The former Marine and ex-mortgage banker both have a passion for rock climbing. Andrew opened the Triangle Rock Club (TRC), an indoor rock climbing gym, in 2007. His friend Joel was a client, and became a managing partner in 2012.

The owners attribute their success to a focus on staff development and the customer experience. TRC has grown from 21 employees in 2010 to staff of over 50. Revenues have steadily increased from $330,000 in 2009 to over $1.5 million in 2013.

The SBA has assisted them in their climb to success with funding through the 504 and 7(a) loan programs.

In July 2009, TRC purchased their first location in Morrisville with the help of a $775,000 loan through Self-Help Ventures Fund and Vantage South Bank.

In 2013 they closed on a construction loan through SunTrust Bank. The Morrisville expansion project will fund construction of an additional building, adding add 17,000 square feet of climbing terrain to the existing 9,000 square feet in the original facility. Once complete, the Morrisville facility will be the largest climbing gym in five states.

In January 2014 TRC closed on a third 504 loan for $2.4 million, and used those funds to purchase their second facility in North Raleigh.



## Dean Atchison, Owner and Chief Executive Officer

***Spectrum Aeromed***
*1815 23rd Avenue North*
*Fargo, ND 58102*

Spectrum Aeromed spent 16 years trying to establish itself in the air ambulance market but ended up struggling financially and facing bankruptcy. That's when Dean Atchison decided to acquire the company in mid-2007, with high hopes to improve their design and manufacturing of customized air ambulance medical interiors.

Dean wanted to move the company from selling fairly basic systems to begin creating "solutions" for the customer, so he reached out to the SBA's North Dakota Small Business Development Center for assistance with budgeting, contracting and exporting.

Since the first full year of Dean's ownership, sales have increased an impressive 164%. During this same period, the number of units sold has more than tripled. In 2008 the business was moved from rural Minnesota to North Dakota to use a state-of-the-art facility at the Fargo airport and also to take advantage of the workforce pool. Over the past six years the company has added nine full-time and five part-time employees for a current total of 26 full-time employees and 7 part-time employees.

## Michelle Therese Kerr, President & Chairperson

***Oxford Consulting Group***

*385 County Line Road West, Suite 210*
*Westerville, Ohio 43082*

As chairperson and president of Oxford Consulting Group, Inc., Michelle Kerr leads the daily business operations and oversees the company's growth strategy and development initiatives. Since co-founding the company in 1998, Michelle has been responsible for all aspects of the business.

Through her more than 15 years of IT consulting and management experience, Michelle has supported more than 60 Fortune 2000 organizations develop and execute on global IT strategies.

In 2004, she led and successfully completed the sale of Oxford's QAD integration practice to QAD, Inc., (QADI), a $290 million global provider of enterprise software and services. As part of the sale, Michelle set up and managed a global business unit for QAD concentrating on the European market as well as leveraging the Oxford Consulting Group acquisition.

Michelle has been recognized as one of the "Forty under Forty" leaders to watch by Business First and has consistently been ranked in the Smart Business Magazine Power 100, Central Ohio leaders who make things happen. In 2010, she received the inaugural CVS Caremark Good Samaritan Award during the 2010 Pillar Awards for Community Service and was honored as a WELD 2010 "Woman You Should Know."



## William Larry Mocha, CEO

***APSCO, Inc.***

*8178 E. 44th Street*
*Tulsa, OK 74145*

APSCO has evolved from a tiny company created in 1964 by Larry Mocha's father William, to become an industry leader with sales of more than $10 million and a staff of 58 employees.

After college, Larry joined APSCO, a firm that manufactures pneumatic control systems for the truck equipment industry. In 1984 Larry became CEO after his father passed away. The firm saw slow, yet continued growth as Larry and his team were able to anticipate technology trends and develop cutting-edge equipment. Five U.S. patents have been issued to APSCO for the company's design of new products for the industry.

The company's growth through the 1990s and beyond was fueled by an investment in research and development, and an SBA 7a loan approved in 1990. Adversity came in the form of several economic recessions. In the aftermath of the downturn in 2006, Larry hired a strategic planner to help the company redefine their goals and action plans. By year's end, the company had tripled its sales to $9.7 million.

Larry is a small business advocate, serving on the boards of several local, regional and national small business organizations. He has testified before the U.S. House of Representatives, and is a former chair of SBA's Region IV Regulatory Fairness Board. Larry regularly appears on CNBC as a small business expert, and is a member of the network's "Small Business Council."

## William (Billy) Charles Taylor, CEO
## Brook Ann Harvey-Taylor, President

***Pacifica***
*3135 NW Industrial Street*
*Portland, OR 97210*

Born with an entrepreneurial spirit, Billy Taylor got his start working for his grandparents on one of the first commercial marionberry farms in the world. Brook Taylor's fascination with the magical world of scents began when, as a teen, she picked up a copy of author Tom Robbins' novel Jitterbug Perfume.

Billy's entrepreneurial spirit and Brook's creative vision joined forces. The duo borrowed a little money from family and started making candles in 1997. By 2008, Pacifica had reached $12 million in sales, but a change in distribution channels brought about a downturn that forced Billy and Brook to seek financing to reposition the brand and keep ownership of the firm.

Through a $150,000 express line of credit and a $1.18 million SBA 7(a) loan in 2011, followed by a $500,000 CAPline in 2013, Billy and Brook secured the money they needed without compromising their ownership or vision.

A bold change in the line of products from home fragrances to beauty and perfume products has Pacifica on a growth path to more than double revenue over a five-year span, ending in 2014. Since 2010, Pacifica has consistently added employees each year, ending 2013 with 110 employees and a 33% increase in sales over 2012.



## Michael Cherock, PE, RCDD, LEED AP, President and Owner

***AE Works***
*6587 Hamilton Avenue*
*Pittsburgh, PA 15206*

A former U.S. Navy nuclear-trained power-plant operator, Michael Cherock applied the belief system he learned at the Navy – everything in the world, including business, is about people, teamwork, culture and camaraderie – to fulfilling his dream of business ownership.

Michael started AE Works in his basement with the help of three SBA Patriot Express Loans totaling $227,200. Today, the company is a full-service architectural-engineering firm that not only increased sales by 140 percent and employment by 180 percent, but added two satellite offices complimenting its main headquarters in Pittsburgh's bustling and diverse East End.

While Michael's "people-first" philosophy helped him design an award-winning firm, as lauded by the Pittsburgh Business Times as one of the area's "Best Places to Work", he also understands the importance of donating both time and monetary resources to the community leading his team in projects engineered to help strengthen the neighborhood.

Michael has lent his "people first" attitude to a number of organizations, most notably, The Carnegie Science Center, Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, The City of Pittsburgh Mayoral Transition Team and Holy Family Institute, an organization that provides alternative learning environments and career training to families in need of support and counseling.

## Eniel Torres, President

***Productos La Finca, Inc.***

*Ave. Quillinchini #61, Zona Industrial Machuchal*
*Sabana Grande, PR 00637*

Success through hard work and dedication has always been one of Eniel Torres's greatest motivators. From being honored as San Germán Student of the Year in 1989 to being invited to the Nobel Prize Awards Ceremony in Sweden that same year for his achievements in Science, Eniel has always excelled.

After graduating first in 1995 from the University of Puerto Rico's Mayagüez Campus with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and in 1999 from the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico's School of Law (Cum Laude), he established Productos La Finca, Inc., a food manufacturing company. Since then, he has developed more than 100 products that are sold in stores such as Kmart, Walmart, Sam's and Walgreens in several states. The company also exports to the East Caribbean from Virgin Islands to Barbados and the Dominican Republic.

On his way to achieving this success, Eniel received counseling from SBTDC San German Regional Center and the Puerto Rico Small Business & Technology Development Centers.

Since year 2010, Productos La Finca revenues have increased by 102%. Net income increased 396% from the year 2010. Productos La Finca increased its workforce by 108% during the last three years to meet the increase in sales during that time.

Besides working as President of Productos La Finca, Inc. and as a lawyer, Eniel serves as vice president of the "Atleticos de San German" (San German's Professional Basketball Team) Board of Directors.



## Lisa Mattiello, Owner

***Pranzi Catering & Events***

*996 Chalkstone Avenue*
*Providence, RI 02908*

Lisa Mattiello was able to use her culinary skills and create her dream business Pranzi Catering & Events. Soon after graduating, she began working in the industry at various local businesses and franchises. Lisa decided she wanted to do things her way and within five years built a strong business.

Lisa was able to fully see her dream come to reality with SBA financing which helped her to expand to three locations and ultimately increase her employee base to 45 full-time staff members and over 100 part-time employees for events. Pranzi has also seen a dramatic growth in sales over the years, with sales increasing almost 20 percent each of the past three years alone.

Lisa and her company are no strangers to giving back to the communities where they live and work. Pranzi is a Community Partner to Child & Family, an organization helping children and families in need, by providing food as well as monetary donations to those in need.

Lisa Mattiello and Pranzi Catering & Events are on the path to continued growth and success in an industry that is extremely competitive and difficult to thrive in.

## Nancy Porter Ogburn, President and Founder

***Tomato Palms, LLC***
*1108-E Lykes Lane*
*Irmo, SC 29063*

In September 2008—motivated by a story of a homeless man collecting aluminum cans to save cash for rent money—Nancy Ogburn asked local businesses to donate their cans to raise money to help house the homeless. The positive response, however, pointed to a broader recycling problem and need among the businesses for other recyclable items too, like paper and plastic. Nancy found her calling to start a company that would help businesses, help the environment, and help the homeless.

That calling led Nancy to the South Carolina Department of Commerce, where she discovered the state's businesses lacked recycling options. Using information gathered from the Department of Commerce, other organizations and SCORE, Nancy wrote a business plan. In October 2008, Nancy launched Tomato Palms out of her home. She developed an innovative system to make recycling as simple and as cost effective as possible for businesses.

Tomato Palms has achieved growth in all facets of business, all while remaining debt free. Sales have increased annually since its inception and it now has six full-time employees.

Today, Tomato Palms serves 121 clients in four counties. To date, the company has saved more than 1.4 million pounds of waste from the landfill.



## Ryan J. McFarland, Founder/President/CEO

***Strider Sports International, Inc.***
*2221 N. Plaza Drive*
*Rapid City, SD 57702*

Ryan McFarland, inventor of the STRIDER No-Pedal Balance Bike, developed this bike for his two-year-old son when he discovered the traditional pedal bicycles and tricycles were simply too big, too heavy and unsafe for his little boy. It was Ryan's mission to build a light weight bike that his son could ride without injury or fear. Ryan did not intend to start a company but several parents inquired about the bike after seeing Ryan and his wife walking while their son "strided" along on Ryan's invention. The entrepreneur in Ryan knew he was on to something and Strider Sports International, Inc. was formed January 9, 2007, with Ryan's longtime friend and fellow motorcycle enthusiast, and the very first person who turned him on to the joy of riding on two wheels – his father.

The original STRIDER ST-1 Model was born in 2007 in Rapid City, and weighed less than seven pounds. Today the company continues to design efficient, no-pedal balance bikes that encourage 18 month to 13 year-old children to learn balancing, riding and to explore on two wheels. While there are currently two different sized models and seven co-branded models (Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, KTM, Cobra, Ducati and Harley-Davidson), Strider Sports International, Inc. continues to expand its product offerings.

STRIDER bikes are designed, marketed and managed at the World Headquarters in Rapid City and are distributed across the United States and in over 70 countries throughout the world, with over 695,000 units sold to date. Since 2007, Strider Sports, International, Inc. has grown from three to 32 employees and from zero to over $10 million in annual gross sales. In February 2014, the company relocated to their new location increasing from a 2,500 square foot office to 26,000 square feet.

Ryan McFarland and Strider Sports International, Inc. proudly support local, regional, state and national organizations, charities and non-profits including the United Way of the Black Hills, Feeding South Dakota, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and many more. In 2013 alone, Strider Sports International, Inc. generously donated over $30,000 in products and for 2014, the company has committed to donate a portion of every STRIDER bike sold worldwide to charity, including Special Olympics. Strider Sports International, Inc. has also created an event of STRIDER Bike Adventure Zones, Regional Races, National Races and even a World Championship race. The STRIDER World Championship weekend is an international celebration that includes a variety of family-oriented events and outings.

## Tennessee 2014 Small Business Persons

### Tracy Solomon, President and CEO

***TEVET LLC***

*1113 Tusculum Blvd., Suite 108*

*Greeneville, TN 37745*

Tracy Solomon launched TEVET LLC in his basement in 2003. Shortly thereafter, he obtained a $250,000 SBA Patriot Express loan and since has taken his company to a value of $88 million and employees in six states.

TEVET is a value-add, customer-centric reseller providing electronic test and measurement products to the federal government, including all branches of the armed forces and leading prime contractors.

Tracy's company has been certified as a Service Disabled Veteran-owned small business by the Veterans Administration and also received certification from the SBA as a HUBZone business.

Much of Tracy's technical know-how was obtained while working for big-name companies like Alcatel-Lucent and Hewlett Packard, but also during his military service. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1990 during the first Gulf War and was trained as an Aviation Electronics Technician.

Tracy has a strong belief in supporting local young people so he actively supports the ROTC program at Greenville High School. He also donates monthly to the Wounded Warrior Project and makes other contributions to his community.

## Texas 2014 Small Business Persons

### Gregory R. Hudson, Owner/Chief Executive Officer

***Genesis Concepts & Consultants (GC&C)***

*1777 NE Loop 410 Suite 1009*

*San Antonio, TX 78217*

Gregory Hudson founded Genesis Concepts & Consultants (GC&C), an 8(a)-certified and Service Disabled Veteran Owned small business in 2002. GC&C provides corporate advisory, strategic and program management services to the government. Its other division, Set Ready Go Athletics (SRG) uses product innovation and inspired services to transform the fitness industry. GC&C received an SBA-backed loan in January 2005.

The company's greatest challenge was requesting a waiver of Sole Source Selection through the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program. During the 8(a) transition period, the company established itself as a trusted source with the strengths of a large company and leanness of a small business. As a result, the SBA issued a waiver to GC&C for direct source selection, the first waiver of its kind for a small business in San Antonio.

From humble beginnings in San Antonio, Texas, the company is now a global presence with customers in multiple states and mobile support teams in Europe and the Middle East. Initially, the company had only two employees, but it now has 70 employees and 70 percent of them are veterans. GC&C piloted the first San Antonio Military Medical Summit for small business integrating the SBA, Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration.

## Sandeep Sharma, President & CEO

***Global Consulting International***

*270 East 100 South*

*Salt Lake City, UT 84111*

Starting a dream business in his home basement in 2005, Sandeep Sharma never would have imagined that his firm, Global Consulting International (GCI), would expand beyond his two employees.

Thanks to the Utah Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), Sandeep entered SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program which eventually helped him take his firm to the next level and secure multiple government contracts. Today, GCI has grown to 130 employees and specializes in helping government, commercial and non-profit clients solve complex problems in Information Technology, Healthcare Staffing, Intelligence, Aviation, Logistics and Engineering.

Sandeep believes in giving back; that's why he strives to offer the best health coverage the company can afford to its employees. Sandeep strongly believes that addressing the human condition is more than a business. He states, "It's better to take a little less profit and take care of your employees, who are really your extended family." Sandeep's company has been a great contributor to the community and has established a foundation to assist needy children.

Despite his personal and professional success, Sandeep remains a humble man driven to succeed in life through his own set of standards, which are focused on doing well by others, and doing good to others. SBA is pleased to recognize Sandeep Sharma as the 2014 Utah Small Business Person of the Year.



## Bill Cherry, President and Brewmaster
## Jeff Nieblum, Co-founder

***Switchback Brewery Co.***

*160 Flynn Ave.*

*Burlington, VT 05406*

Bill Cherry and Jeff Nieblum have seen their business Switchback Brewery Co. (SBC) take off. They never realized their art of brewing would lead to sustainable and lasting growth. Their secret to success was to focus all resources to produce just one beer and sell it only in kegs. This allowed them to focus on product quality.

Since 2002, SBC beer has been gaining popularity. To catch up with product demand, Bill and Jeff expanded the facility and hired more staff. Thanks to SBA financing they were able to expand the facility from 5,000 to 20,000 square foot state-of- the-art facility and create 18 new jobs. The brewery has also expanded distribution into upstate New York, New Hampshire and Maine.

With financial success the company has increased its involvement in the community including large food shelf fund raising, support for activities such as the bicycling causeway and ferry, and environmental cleanup efforts. The employee benefits continually increase as well, with an exceptional health care program, retirement savings matches, and profit sharing.

## Virginia 2014 Small Business Persons

### Kevin L. Knight, President and CEO

***Knight Solutions***

*208 South King Street Suite 104*

*Leesburg, VA 20175*

An Army training accident injured Kevin Knight's eyes by detaching his retinas, which forced him to retire from the military, forever changing his career path. During Kevin's healing process, he received clear insight on what he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

With mentoring from the Fairfax County Small Business Development Center and a $50,000 Patriot Express loan, he started Knight Solutions, a 8(a)-certified and service-disabled veteran-owned Virginia-based small business with mostly veteran employees in 2005. Knight Solutions provides renovation, operation and facility maintenance at national cemeteries throughout the US. The firm's 2012 revenue was $16.3 million, a spike of 1,400 percent in three years.

Before starting his business in 2005, Kevin contacted the Department of Veterans Affairs and learned there were more than 100 national cemeteries that needed help. He saw an opportunity to build a business servicing those cemeteries.

While Knight Solutions initially started out just doing landscaping, Kevin's vision was to take veterans who have seen action, bring them home and give them a sense of ownership and responsibility. Some of the wounded warriors get closure by working in cemeteries. By hiring vets, Knight Solutions gives them a new mission that gives them satisfaction.

## Washington 2014 Small Business Persons

### Fred Schule, President
### Paul Clark, Vice President

***Cobalt Enterprises, Inc.***

*Granite Falls, WA 98252*

Fred and Paul developed a great business partnership when they teamed up their expertise to manage and grow Cobalt Enterprises, Inc.—a manufacturer of precision-machined parts for the aerospace, defense, commercial and medical sectors.

During 2007 and 2008, Cobalt faced its share of challenges and as a result Fred and Paul realigned the company manufacturing capabilities to the aerospace and defense sectors. They eventually sought SBA financing assistance which helped them to expand and build a new facility. Last year, Fred and Paul built on their success by reaching international markets with SBA export financing.

Today, Cobalt has more than 70 employees and maintains a reputation for a highly skilled workforce and quick-turnaround on orders. As Granite Falls' largest employer, Cobalt volunteers a great deal of time in the community and has established a youth mentoring program. SBA is pleased to recognize Fred and Paul as the 2014 Washington Small Business Persons of the Year.

## Kenneth H. Allman II, Founder/CEO/President

***PracticeLink.com***
*415 2nd Ave*
*-and-*
*MountainPlex Properties*
*211 Ballengee*
*Hinton, WV 25951*

When Kenneth H. Allman created PracticeLink.com in 1994, online physician recruitment was a new idea. Kenneth's business model allows physicians to take charge of their job search and for hospitals to pay one low fee to attract several interested candidates.

PraticeLink has grown to 29 employees and connects more than 5,000 hospitals, healthcare groups and medical practices each year with the physicians and advanced practitioners they need.

Kenneth also created additional jobs and added further services for his community by creating MountainPlex Properties LLC, which employs 26 people. Under the MountainPlex Properties umbrella, Kenneth has established a market, inn, conference center, townhomes, theater and radio station.

Through the PracticeLink Community Development Fund and MountainPlex, Kenneth hosts benefit concerts, provides financial assistance to local charities and preserves historic buildings in the area.



## Thomas Jagemann, President
## Ralph Hardt, CEO

***Jagemann Stamping Company***
*5757 West Custer Street*
*Manitowoc, WI*

Thomas Jagemann and Ralph Hardt turned a third generation stamping company, Jagemann Stamping, into a worldwide leading manufacturer of metal stampings for the automotive, consumer, industrial and defense markets.

Founded in 1946, Thomas and Ralph sought to preserve the longevity of this firm with the 504 refinance program which resulted in hiring 100 skilled employees. Thomas and Ralph also developed a plan for product diversity that included a fine-blanking metal business and acquiring a precision plastics molding company.

Jagemann succeeds by consistently staying ahead of their customer's needs and their own ability to respond to those needs. They invested in state-of-the- art equipment and a facility that can be adapted for specific manufacturing needs.

Jagemann's service to the community is remarkable. They give back to the community in a variety of ways including civic organizations and supporting scholarships for their employee base that includes continuing education programs for their employees. In addition, they partner with the technical colleges to offer "work to hire" programs and also provide classroom education to support its technical needs. The company's programs are state certified apprenticeship programs.

## Jennifer C. Merrill, President

***Merrill, Inc.***
*P.O. Box 20519*
*Cheyenne, WY 82003*

Jeni Merrill founded Merrill, Inc. in 1991 but kept her day job for many years to pay the bills, and worked her business at night.

For nearly 15 years Jeni's construction company grew very slowly. During the last six years, the firm's growth exploded. Jeni took several major steps over a two-year period beginning in 2007 that collectively propelled her business forward. First, she began to work full time in her business and earned her Class A General Contractors License. Second, she applied to participate in the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program. Third, she began strategically growing her firm's bonding capacity with the SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program.

Today, Jeni employs a year-round workforce of 26 people and has secured countless contracting opportunities. Jeni attributes her success to the many talented people who are part of the Merrill, Inc. team. She also knows first-hand that the SBA's programs create real opportunities for small businesses. The success she has enjoyed allows her to create jobs and provide subcontracting opportunities.

Merrill, Inc. makes numerous contributions to the community including the Cheyenne Animal Shelter, Comea Homeless Shelter, CASA, The Wyoming Children's Society, Needs, Inc., Black Dog Animal Rescue and several of the local area high school rodeo clubs and youth groups.

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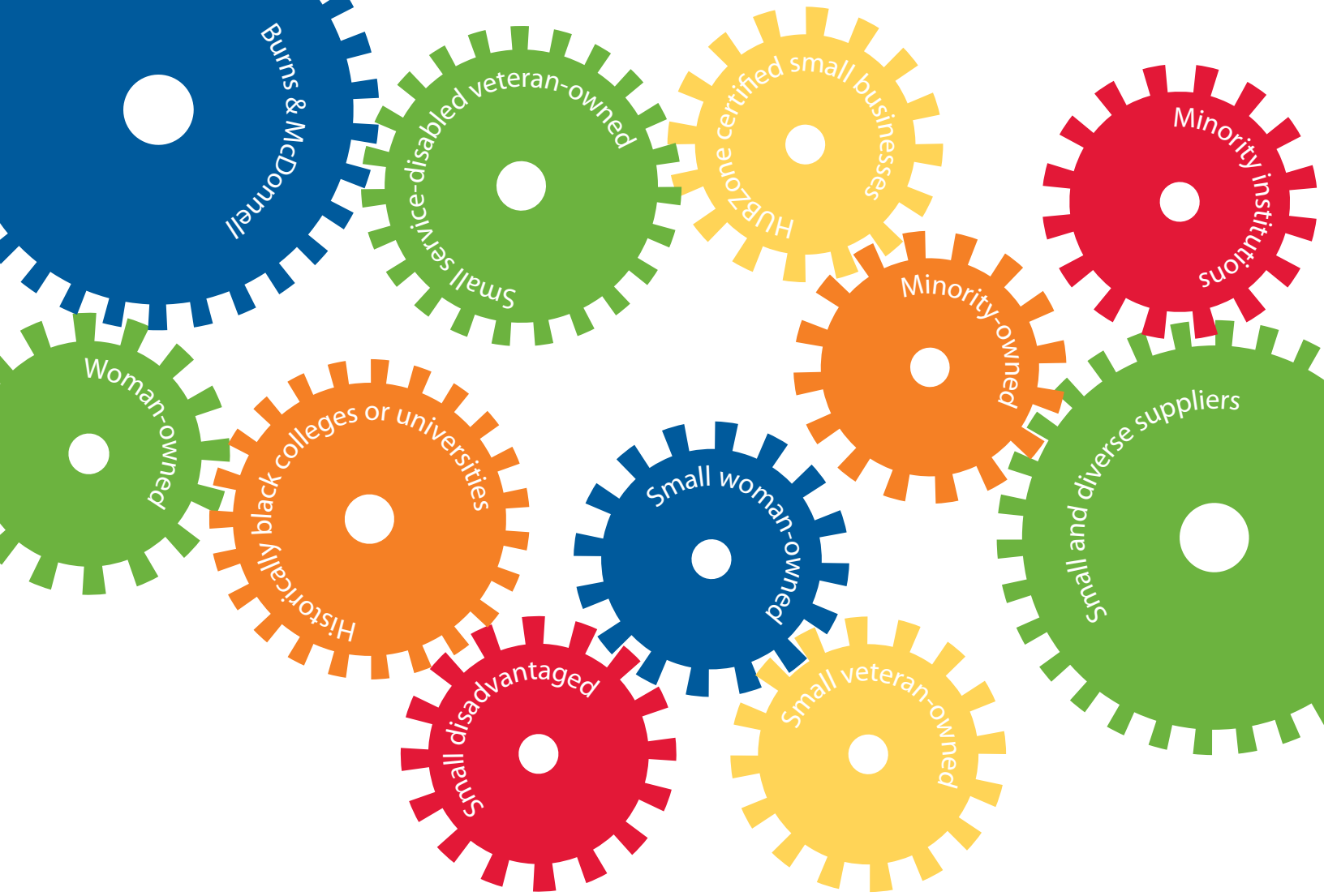


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**Charles Eaton, Director of Corporate Diversity**
***Hensel Phelps Construction Company***
*420 Sixth Avenue*
*Greeley, CO 80631*

Hensel Phelps Construction Company (Hensel Phelps), established in 1937, is one of the nation's largest construction companies that builds commercial, institutional, industrial, defense, and other specialty projects through both competitive and negotiated methods. Hensel Phelps has significantly surpassed its subcontracting goals by $2 million more than its initial goal and finalized small business subcontracts worth more than $86 million. It has awarded 70% of its subcontracts to small businesses averaging $1.5 billion annually for the past 4 years.

The company develops unique programs to help maximize small business participation on every project. Hensel Phelps's history of success has helped develop relationships with thousands of diverse subcontractors. It is committed to the long-term development and mainstreaming of local businesses and traditional socio-economic groups in all areas of the nation's economy.

The company boasts its own Mentor-Protégé program and has entered into formal mentor-protégé agreements with minority, women-owned businesses and 8(a)-certified small businesses. It has also assisted with more than $100 million in first-time small business subcontractor/vendor bonding assistance through its Hansel Phelps bond assistance program.

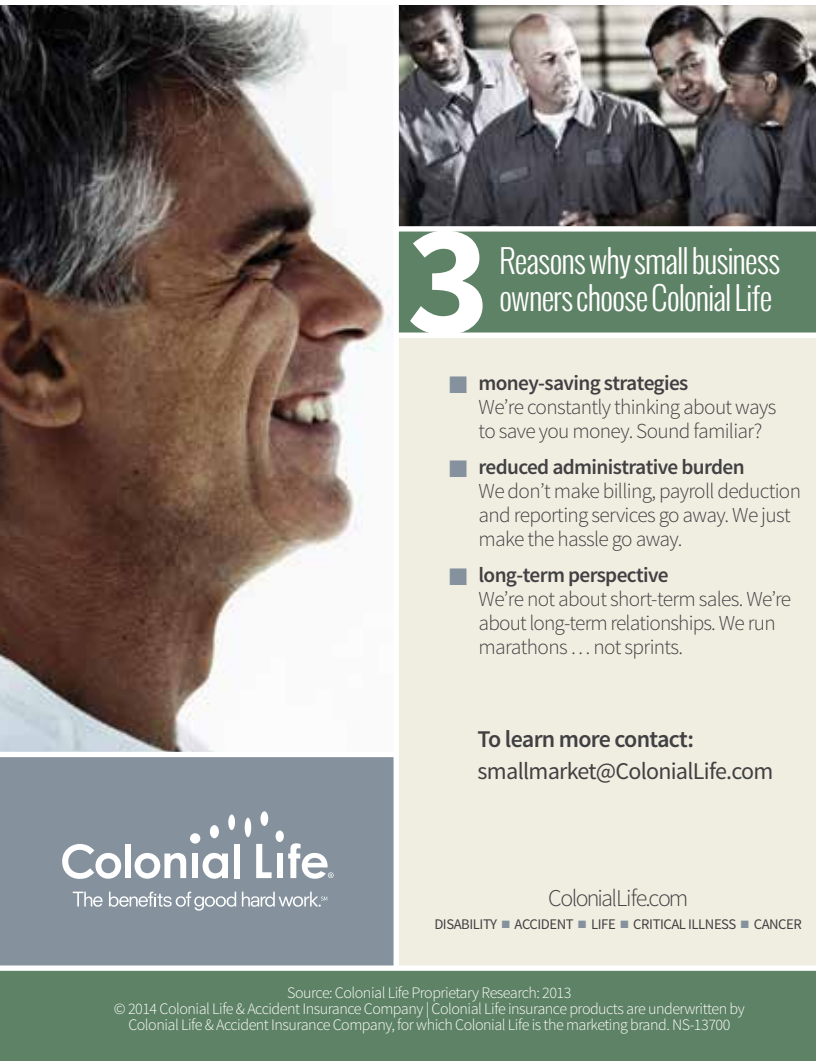
In 2012, Hensel Phelps received the National Diversity Excellence Award – Associated Builders & Contractors and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence in Construction in 2009.

**Abhijit (Nannu) Nobis, P.E., LSP, Chief Executive Officer**
***Nobis Engineering, Inc.***
*18 Chenell Drive*
*Concord, NH 03301*

Nannu Nobis founded Nobis Engineering, Inc., an employee-owned firm and graduate of SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, in 1988 out of a spare bedroom in his home to meet the demand for high-value integrated engineering and consulting services. Nannu developed a multi-disciplinary consulting firm with offices in Concord, New Hampshire; Lowell, Massachusetts; White River Junction, Vermont; and Iselin, New Jersey to provide diversified services to its clients. With proven expertise and established industry relationships, Nobis Engineering delivers a full range of geotechnical, environmental, and civil engineering services.

While in SBA's 8(a) program, Nannu grew its share of federal work through small set-aside opportunities from federal agencies, working as a subcontractor to large businesses and by winning 8(a) set-aside competitions. In addition to pursuing federal work, Nobis Engineering expanded the company's base of municipal, state agency and commercial clients.

In 2004, Nobis Engineering strategically positioned itself to compete for a $100 million remedial action contract that was scheduled to be advertised to small businesses in 2006 by the EPA. After a stringent competition, Nobis Engineering was awarded a 10-year, $100 million on-call environmental services contract with EPA in September 2006. To date, Nobis Engineering has secured 67 task orders, valued at more than $43,000,000.

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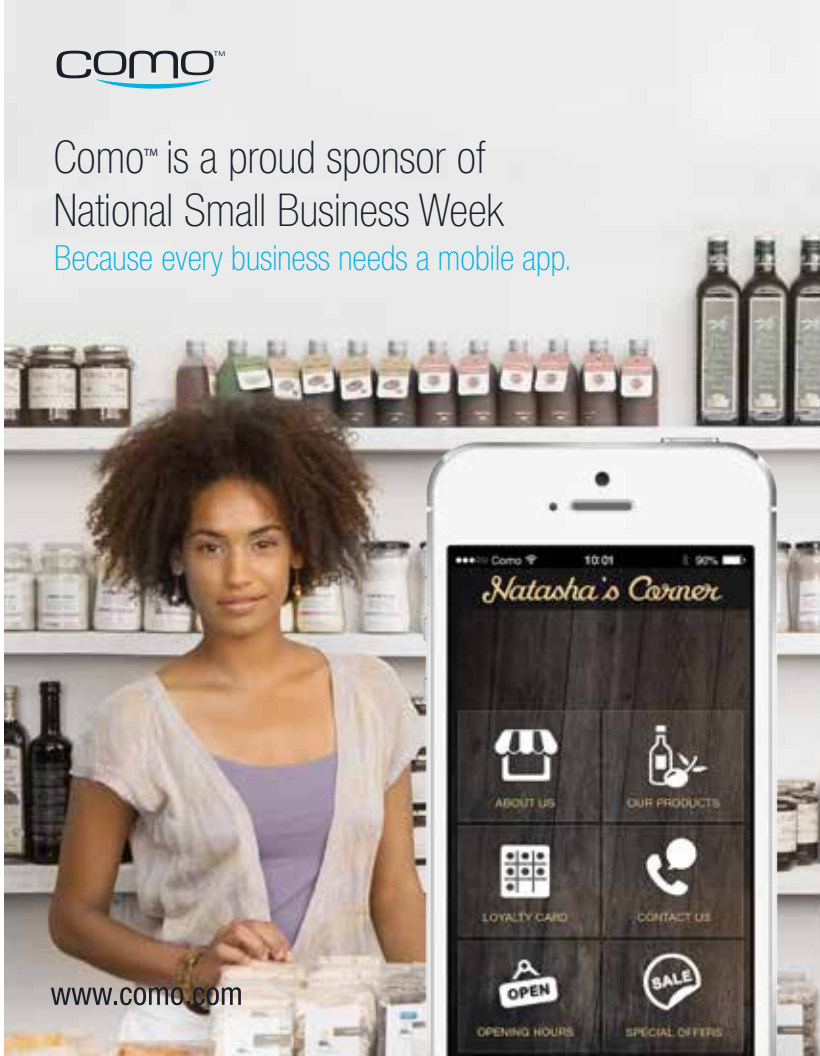
**Dennis Wright, Chair**
**Carl Woodard, District Director**
***Orange County SCORE***
*200 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 700*
*Santa Ana, CA 92701*

The Orange County SCORE chapter is the 2014 National SCORE Chapter of the Year. This chapter consistently serves the highest number of clients of all the 320+ SCORE chapters across the nation. But it succeeds in much more than volume alone - a culture of innovation is the hallmark of this chapter, driving continual expansion and improvement in services, bringing more and more clients into their educational and mentoring services. By focusing on their client feedback survey results Orange County SCORE identified the meaningful metrics they sought to improve and developed a strategy for making these changes a reality. The chapter saw huge improvements in both client survey results and volunteer engagement survey results through the following initiatives: restructuring of leadership positions, strategic partnerships with Chambers of Commerce and libraries, focusing on local awareness and client attraction, innovating their use of technology including social media efforts, engaging volunteers and providing volunteer recognition.

Chapter Chair Dennis Wright was instrumental in the Orange County chapter's pioneering of the innovative CEO Forum program. These forums consist of monthly half-day collaborative meetings of small business owners that are facilitated by SCORE mentors. SCORE Orange County hosted seven of these events in 2013 and, with Dennis Wright's guidance, the concept has now been successfully replicated in a number of other SCORE chapters, including Minneapolis and San Diego.



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**Brent Peacock, Director**
***Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) at Gulf Coast State College***
*5230 West U.S. Highway 98*
*Panama City, FL 32401*

To get a sense of Brent Peacock's commitment to helping veteran small business owners, take a look at the numbers. In 2013 Brent and his team at the Gulf Coast State College Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) provided small business counseling, training, finance and contracting assistance to 2,026 veterans. Of those, 174 were women 317 were service disabled veterans, and 112 were National Guard and reservists.

Under Brent's leadership since 2010, the VBOC has established an outstanding reputation for giving veterans the tools to capitalize on their already sharp skills, enabling them to build a foundation for successful entrepreneurship. Serving veterans in the Southern states, the Gulf Coast State College VBOC staff has assisted in securing nearly $6 million in capital investments for their veteran clients. Brent and the team have been instrumental in helping veteran small business owners acquire 31 prime contracts and 14 subcontracts totaling $274 million.

Brent also took the lead in implementing the SBA/Syracuse University partnered "Boots to Business" entrepreneurship training program at various military installations for veterans transitioning back to civilian life and small business ownership. He also did numerous training workshops for V-WISE (Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship), a program aimed at helping women veterans start and grow their businesses.

Before becoming a business counselor, Brent taught broadcast journalism at Gulf Coast Community College. A former a news anchor for NPR's Morning Edition, Brent has interviewed President Bill Clinton and Sen. Bob Dole.

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**Alicia Overby, President**
***Baby Elephant Ears, Inc.***
*34897 Quincy Drive, N.E.*
*Cambridge, MN 55008*

Mom, Wife, Sister, Entrepreneur, "Boss Lady" and Runner are just some of her many titles; Alicia Overby is the founder and creator of Baby Elephant Ears, a small firm specialized in manufacturing, marketing and exporting supportive pillows and other comfort accessories for babies.

Alicia first had the idea for the product in 2008, out of sheer necessity. In about 9 months, Baby Elephant Ears was launched and began fulfilling orders. Five years later, the company is selling its products at more than 850 locations in the U.S. and over a dozen countries.

Transitioning from home-based to thriving international business was not easy, but Alicia's commitment and hard work, coupled with SBDC assistance and two SBA loans, have paid handsomely. Baby Elephant Ears also benefited from the SBA STEP pilot program, which offers grants to states to promote export activities.

From a business that was originally financed with a loan against Alicia's husband's 401K, today Baby Elephant Ears boasts sales of more than $1.3 million annually.

Alicia's commitment is not only to growing a thriving business; both as an entrepreneur and an individual, she is heavily involved in sharing with other businesses and the community at large. Baby Elephant Ears "pays it forward" by mentoring several other business owners. The company also donates products lo several local charities and has donated 500 pieces to a local Missions Trip to Guatemala over the past two years.

Personally, Alicia volunteers for her daughters' Girl Scout Troops, the Cambridge-Isanti Hockey Association and the local schools, and is active in her church's youth programs.

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**Denise Garcia Van Wyngaardt, Owner/President/Chief Executive Officer**
***Indigo IT LLC***
*1902 Campus Commons Drive, Suite 420*
*Reston, VA 20191*

Indigo IT LLC, established in 2001, is a woman-owned and 8(a)-certified IT firm. Ms. Garcia Van Wyngaardt, Indigo's CEO, is among a small number of women leading successful federal and defense contracting firms and an even smaller number of Latina CEOs leading multi-million dollar firms.

Indigo has a staff of 83 employees, and revenues in excess of $12 million. It provides solutions to complex IT challenges including: cloud computing, cyber and IT security solutions, service operation and enterprise intelligence solutions. The company supports the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service and other Defense and federal civilian customers.

Indigo IT LLC has been recognized for its performance on several federal contracts. Specifically, Indigo IT LLC's exceptional performance on the Department of Defense Enterprise Email migration contract resulted in DISA being recognized as one of the best examples of a successful enterprise services cloud offering, increasing the customer base requesting DISA's services for migration. Recently, Indigo provided smooth email migration support to the Yokota Air Base in Japan and US Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in Honolulu.

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**Patrick J. Cobler, President**
***Vtech Engineering Corporation***
*10 New England Business Center, Suite 311*
*Andover, MA 01810*

Vtech Engineering Corporation (Vtech), established in 1994, is a small, commercial engineering firm which provides engineering services for electronics, firmware, and integration support to industrial, consumer, and sponsored R&D clients ranging from start-ups to the Fortune 500 Vtech's revenues have increased 60% since 2010, a 17% growth rate.

Vtech has been providing commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products and engineering services to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Lincoln Laboratory (MIT LL) on various programs since 2002. Vtech was instrumental in the integration and ultimate success of a recent MIT LL board level integration program for which Vtech supplied engineering services, as well as a key technology enabling COTS component – ARC-2 High Power Pulse Generator. The ARC-2 delivers controlled energy pulses through an external electrical gap in order to generate high power plasma events.

Vtech provides solutions in the form of products and services to both federal and commercial customers. The company develops advanced analog circuitry, power electronics, embedded digital signal processing (DSP) solutions, and computer interfaces for electronic systems and assemblies. The company has developed new products and instrumentation solutions for areas that include oil and gas exploration, robotics, and UAV compatible instrumentation. Four Vtech-designed assemblies are currently orbiting the earth.

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## 2014 Small Business Investment Company

### Loren Schlachet, Managing Partner-Fund Manager

***The Riverside Company***
*45 Rockefeller Center*
*630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400*
*New York, NY 10111*

Founded in 1988, the Riverside Company is one of the largest and oldest global private equity firms investing in companies with enterprise values less than $250 million. Riverside's objective is to nurture companies and build them into more effective enterprises through time-tested management techniques, organic growth and add-on acquisitions.

Loren Schlachet, Managing Partner, joined Riverside in 2000 and founded Riverside Micro-Cap Fund (RMCF) in 2005. Loren leads RMCF's investing and operating teams in the acquisition, growth and sale of portfolio companies. Riverside has invested in more than 330 transactions since its inception and its international portfolio includes more than 70 companies. RMCF's second vintage, RMCF II, pairs investors commitments with Small Business Administration funds through the Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) program. RMCF II is a top-performing fund, and its investments in 27 American companies to date have helped those companies increase revenues and earnings. The recently launched RMCF III is following in the successful SBIC footsteps of RMCF II, and has already made one investment.

Riverside manages more than $4.6 billion in assets and employs more than 200 people on four continents worldwide. The company's presence can be felt spanning from New York City to Brussels, Belgium.

Riverside lent its private equity experience to various industries including: business services, consumer brands, education & training, energy & sustainability, franchisors, healthcare, software & IT and specialty manufacturing & distribution. The company is dedicated to helping small companies flourish, and has developed internal and external tools to facilitate growth. The Riverside Toolkit provides small businesses key assistance with sales, marketing, pricing optimization, lean manufacturing and sourcing.

## 2014 Women's Business Center of Excellence

### S. Briles Johnson, Director

***The Women's Business Center of North Carolina***
*114 W. Parrish St.*
*Durham, NC 27701*

The Women's Business Center of North Carolina is a model WBC that has provided outstanding business services designed to promote economic self-sufficiency for all women of North Carolina through entrepreneurship. The center, a partnership between the N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development and the SBA, has committed itself to increasing the number and the success rate of women-owned small businesses.

In 2013, the center counseled more than 350 clients and provided training to more than 4,300 participants. During the same period, the center's clients created or retained more than 400 jobs, received contract awards of over $4.2 million, received capital and credit totaling more than $1.8 million and had annual sales over $49 million.

Under the direction of S. Briles Johnson, the center has helped to ensure the business and economic success of the clients served through the counseling, training and resources it provides.

Briles is responsible for the continued growth, education, certification, training and advocacy of women entrepreneurs across the state. As a Certified Global Business Professional, which offers clients global business management, marketing, supply chain management and trade finance assistance, Briles has been able to provide extensive business knowledge and expertise to the clients she serves.

Since 2000, this high achieving center has helped area businesses to grow and diversify the marketplace. The center's dynamic services includes customized one-on-one assistance, training, knowledge, networks and solutions that help to create diverse, globally competitive companies that positively impact the local economy.

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**Cliff Paredes, Center Director**
***International Trade Center, Small Business Development Center***
*501 W Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.*
*San Antonio, TX, 78207*

One of the largest and the most successful trade assistance organizations in the State of Texas, the International Trade Center Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a specialty center of the South-West Texas Border SBDC Network. . Established under a grant from SBA in 1992 by the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Institute for Economic Development, the center provides businesses with trade consulting services, cutting-edge market research and innovation training programs that deliver results. Over its first decade of operations, the International Trade Center SBDC honed its craft to become an efficient, economic impact creating SBDC.

In 2003, the center launched the International SBDC Expansion Initiative and began advising foreign governments under the U.S. Agency for International Development's Mexico Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships Initiative. Following the success of that initial partnership between UTSA and the Universal Autónoma de Guadalajara, the center has to date trained more than 1,300 business assistance professionals from all over Mexico. As result of this project, 120 Mexican SBDCs have formed and the Mexican Association of SBDCs was organized.

Building on its success in Mexico, the International SBDC has expanded its efforts at developing SBDC networks abroad to include Central America (El Salvador) , the Caribbean, South American (Colombia, Peru), and Northern Africa (Tunisia).

The center continues to build on its past successes. From developing the best staff resources and professional development initiatives to continued program growth, the International Trade Center SBDC is poised for even greater impact in the future.

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