

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

September 22–24, 2020

2020 Award Winners



U.S. Small Business
Administration



2020 Alabama Small Business Person of the Year



Sridhara Gutti, *Founder and President* **Essnova Solutions, Inc.**, Birmingham, AL

Sridhara Gutti is Founder and President of Essnova Solutions, a HUBZone-certified firm specializing in IT, full life cycle software development, administrative support, project, and program management, geospatial environmental, healthcare solutions and staffing. Sridhara started Essnova as a home-based business and has grown the business to 25 employees with more than \$3 million in revenues.

Sridhara credits SBA's Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama district offices, Mississippi district office, and Procurement Technical Assistance Center for "providing the education and the guidance necessary to navigate the federal sector."

The counseling that Sridhara received compelled him to apply for certification in SBA's HUBZone and 8(a) Business Development Programs.

Essnova received its first federal contract in 2017 and is assisting several civilian and Department of Defense agencies with promoting health and quality of life, acquiring software and hardware products, training and facilitating Army recruitment, and providing healthcare services to the U.S. Armed Forces. Sridhara has also participated in SBA's highly successful Emerging Leaders program for business leaders and was named Top-40-Under-40 by the Birmingham Business Journal in 2015. Sridhara Gutti said, "Simply put, without SBA's timely assistance, Essnova would not be what it is today, a thriving diversified small business. We are immensely grateful to the SBA."

2020 Alaska Small Business Person of the Year



Christy NaMee Eriksen, *Owner* **The Kindred Post, LLC**, Juneau, AK

Christy NaMee Eriksen is a multidisciplinary poet, teaching artist, and organizer whose work is grounded in social justice and community engagement. Christy received start up assistance and counseling from the Alaska Small Business Development Center to open Kindred Post, LLC, a post office rooted in art, community, and social justice in 2014. Christy opened The Kindred Post to provide her fellow community members with a post office and gift shop while adding a unique gathering place for engagement in the heart of downtown Juneau. Its gift shop supports more than 150 diverse artists by purchasing their work, sharing their story with customers, and mentoring emerging artists.

Christy is passionate about the power of art to tell stories, bring people together, and activate positive social change. She has received awards for both art and activism and is a co-founder of Woosh Kinnaadeiyi (a community-based organization empowering voices) and World in Progress (arts-based racial justice training), and leads poetry workshops for all ages. Today, the Kindred Post has been hosting pop-up events in the gift shop, and in doing so, brings another avenue of fun and an opportunity to connect. It frequently partners with neighboring businesses, art, media, and nonprofit organizations.

2020 Arizona Small Business Person of the Year



Peter Van Bogaert, *President*
PVB Fabrications, Tucson, AZ

Pete Van Bogaert started PVB Fabrications as a small minority-owned, one employee metal fabrications business in 2003. As the business grew so did its products which today include custom heavy steel fabrication and production of large steel components for commercial and government clients in the transportation, utility, energy, and mining industries.

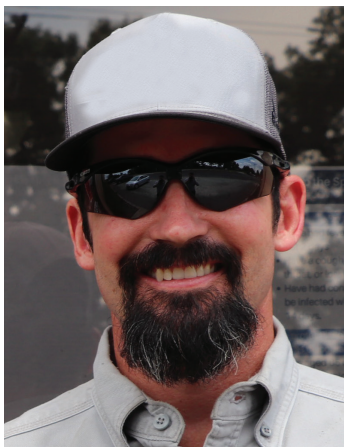
Revenues plateaued during the recession, causing a contraction in the mining industry which was a large part of PVB's business.

Pete turned to the Pima Community College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Tucson for assistance.

Center counselors helped him streamline his financial and management processes, diversify products, and focus on profitability. He became 8(a) certified and expanded operations into the federal sector where contracting boomed in part due to PVB's unique ability to manufacture products directly on-site, saving clients time and money.

With SBDC's help, Pete received \$2 million in loans to fund expansion. Today, the operation has 375 employees, revenues of \$60 million, and plans to expand operations onto a new \$1.5 million 10-acre site where construction of a 30,000 square-foot facility is expected to create 160 jobs over the next five years.

2020 Arkansas Small Business Person of the Year



Travis D. Bird, *Owner/CE*
Arkansas Elite Welding Academy, LLC, Quitman, AR

Travis Bird started Arkansas Elite Welding Academy in 2016 to provide adult learners the opportunity to learn a high demand trade and compete for top welding jobs across the nation. Travis has worked on building educational accreditation and has helped knock down the biggest barriers to student success: financing the cost of education. Travis helps provide scholarships and financing assistance through the Arkansas Rural Endowment Fund, Veterans Administration GI Bill, VA Vocational Rehab, and Arkansas Rehabilitative Service financing. After consulting with his local Small Business Development Center, Travis qualified for an SBA-backed 7(a) loan from US Bank to purchase his property, building, and perform needed renovations. Travis doubled the number

of welding booths, upgraded prep space, and added office space. This expansion helps the academy prepare a rural workforce through rigorous training, meeting the demands of a growing economy. In 2019, the academy graduated 76 welders.

Travis and his staff often donates food and household supplies to support over 400 veterans who are receiving care for post-traumatic stress disorder. As a job maker Travis employs 11 with projections to add four positions this year and has maintained a 98% job placement rate with his students earning an average of \$2,800 weekly in the field.

2020 California Small Business Person of the Year



Alice Chun Kao, *CEO/Cofounder*

Sender One Climbing, Santa Ana, CA

Sender One Climbing is an indoor climbing gym based in Orange County with locations in Santa Ana and Los Angeles. New locations are planned for Playa Vista and Westwood. CEO Alice Kao cofounded the company in 2013 with her husband, COO Wes Shih, and President Wes Chu. The company used SBA-backed financing for the first two locations. They hope to continue the partnership with the future locations. Having climbed together since 2011, the owners found in each other a shared experience, a desire for self-discovery, and the wish to connect with others. This became their core purpose with Sender One. They noticed people came to climb, but they returned to learn about themselves and become part of the community. To set itself apart, Sender One offers a family-friendly venue with a gym, bouldering area, yoga and fitness studio, and a

kid-friendly climbing center. The company has increased employees from 25 to 150 and hope to add an additional 50 positions by late 2020. Sender One's mission is to offer opportunities for self-discovery and a social atmosphere.

Sender One was chosen by USA Climbing to host the 2020 Pan-American Continental Championships as a qualifying event for the 2020 Olympic games in Tokyo, where sport climbing will make its Olympic debut.

2020 Colorado Small Business Person of the Year



David Levesque, *Owner/Founder* •

Henry Rusch, *Co-owner/Founder*

Launch Pad Brewery, Aurora, CO

The concept for Launch Pad Brewery began in 2014 with a pumpkin beer that David Levesque brewed for friends. They liked it so much, David, an Air Force veteran, started working on his business plan the next day. His best friend Henry Rusch, an Air Force veteran and reservist, joined him and Launch Pad Brewery was born. The brewery and tap house serves Aurora, Centennial, and South Denver. Launch Pad has military themed brews and décor.

David and Henry receive business guidance from the Aurora/South Metro SBDC. The brewery started up and grew thanks to SBA-backed financing, which included a \$140,000 loan through the Colorado Enterprise Fund and a \$520,000 7(a) loan from Independent Bank. They also secured a \$60,000 loan through the city of Aurora. This year, Launch Pad increased its square footage from 2,500 to 5,800, going from an occupancy of 84 to 184. Launch Pad also expanded distribution to over 45 local bars/tap houses.

Launch Pad supports its community by hosting a small business educational event in conjunction with the SBA, Small Business Development Center, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and the Veterans Outreach Center. The business hosts the annual kickoff for the SBA Veteran Small Business Week.

2020 Connecticut Small Business Person of the Year



Matthew Thomas Beaudoin, *President & CEO* **Mystic Knotwork**, Mystic, CT

The Beaudoin family has been the source for nautical knots throughout New England since 1957. Mystic Knotwork is the source for the original sailor bracelet, as well as accessories for the home and special events. The business started with Matt's grandfather Alton Beaudoin, who founded Beaudoin's Rope Locker. At the age of seven, Matt started learning about the business, eventually apprenticing with his grandfather for over 15 years. Matt received a degree in engineering and then worked in the corporate world. He returned to his roots in 2009, relaunching the business as Mystic Knotwork. Today the business employs 14 and has used SBA assistance through the Southeastern CT SCORE Chapter, as well as the local Small Business Development Center. Matt is also receiving assistance with federal contracting from the local Procurement Technical Assistance Center.

Procurement Technical Assistance Center.

The artistry continues to evolve through Matt, his wife, Jill, and their daughter Christa. Martha Stewart, host of the 2014 American Made Summit, chose Mystic Knotwork as one of four heritage artisans from over 6,000 others. They are part of the local community and are woven into the tapestry of Mystic. They pride themselves on saying "All knots tied right here in Connecticut are from American cord."

2020 Delaware Small Business Person of the Year



Chris Burkhard, *President* **Placers**, Newark, DE

Chris Burkhard, a fourth-generation entrepreneur, is a sought-after business coach to mid-market businesses throughout the region. Chris has run Placers, a provider of workforce solutions, since 2001. Starting in a single 600-square-foot office, Placers now occupies over 6,200 square feet. He recently opened a new office in Milford, and he's on track to open a third in late 2020. Placers has grown from \$9 million to over \$17 million in gross sales in the last three years, with a staff of about 30. This includes a roster of about 300 temporary associates. All of this business growth has occurred despite the challenges, including an office fire and subsequent flooding.

Chris is a youth soccer coach and sits on several community boards, including the local YMCA, New Castle County Chamber, and Junior Achievement. He's a founding board member of the Chamber Business Incubator. He founded Placers Cares, which strives to serve the needs of children and help adults improve their careers. Placers Cares sponsors Preston's March, which provides adaptive bikes to differently abled children. Placers's annual Crush Run attracts 850 runners and generates over \$100,000 in charitable giving. Chris and his company have been recognized as one of the INC 5000 and as one of the fastest-growing companies in Delaware.

2020 District of Columbia Small Business Person of the Year



Christi Venable, *LPC, CEO/Therapist*

SMILE Therapy Services, LLC, Washington, D.C.

Following her work experience in the school and community mental health systems, Christi Venable, a D.C. native and the first in her family to graduate from college, discovered a clear need for access to high-quality mental health services among people with fewer means. Ms. Venable founded SMILE Therapy Services, LLC, an 8(a)-certified company to help youth and adults who may struggle with mental health, individual and family trauma in 2011.

Christi has made it her mission to provide exceptional mental health services to everyone in need – regardless of ability to pay. SMILE Therapy services received financial advice from SCORE on applying for grants, which helped her to win several grants, and she received government contracting assistance from an SBA Business Opportunity Specialist. SMILE has full-time therapists located in partner schools and it runs a social emotional summer camp every summer for youth ages six to 12 at the Boys and Girls Club. It also participates in outreach efforts to educate the community on the importance of mental health. Today, SMILE offers social, emotional and behavioral mental health services through direct therapy, educational workshops and mental health trainings.

Christi is a member of the D.C. Mental Health Counselors Association.

2020 Florida Small Business Person of the Year



Ryan Carter, *Executive Vice President*

Scotlynn USA Division Inc., Fort Myers, FL

Scotlynn USA Division Inc., founded by Ryan Carter, his brother Brad, and Scott Briddle in 2010, started up in a 900-square-foot office. By 2012 they needed to expand to 12,000 square feet. Following years of successful growth, thanks to assistance from the Small Business Development Center at Florida Gulf Coast University, Ryan increased annual revenue from about \$4.5 million to nearly \$200 million in 2019. Today, the company has eight offices in the U.S., about 450 drivers and trucks, and over 1,000 employees. Ryan is redesigning Scotlynn's Fort Myers headquarters, planning a move from its 25,000-square-foot location to a 60,000-square-foot building that will house 460 employees. He forecasts a return in sales of over \$192 million annually.

As a community steward and recognized leader in his industry, Ryan serves on a variety of community boards. He volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Friends of Foster Children, and Habitat for Humanity. He also assists at Valerie's House and Lee Health's mental health services. He leads the community outreach efforts for his company and asks all employees to volunteer within their communities, resulting in over 2,500 hours contributed annually by employees.

2020 Georgia Small Business Person of the Year



Kraig Torres, *Founder and President*

Hop City Craft Beer & Wine, Atlanta, GA

Kraig Torres founded Hop City Craft Beer & Wine after selling a collision repair business during the throes of a recession in 2009, and when craft beers were wildly popular, but largely unavailable. It took 32 different pitch meetings until he received a yes from a lender that provided an SBA-backed loan for his first location. Kraig opened the store with only four employees and operated it just six days a week because alcohol sales were prohibited on Sunday. Today, Hop City has grown to five locations, with full bars and full-service restaurants with more than \$8.9 million in revenues.

Kraig is a leader in the beer industry in more ways than one. When the state said he could not sell growlers in his first store, he lobbied and was instrumental in changing that law in Georgia. When Alabama told Kraig that he could not sell home brewing supplies and confiscated his inventory, Kraig again effectively helped to change that law.

2020 Guam Small Business Person of the Year



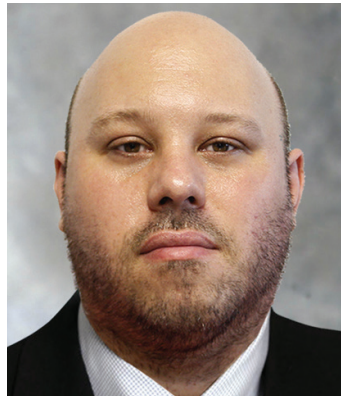
Susan Biolchino, *President* **Jessie Rosario**, *VP/Sales*

Christopher Biolchino, *VP/Operations*

Graphic Center Inc., Tamuning, Guam

Graphic Center Inc. (GCI), started in 1992, is Guam's largest locally-owned printing company. The company has grown from eight to 44 employees and from 8,000 to 21,000 square feet of printing facilities strategically located in Tamuning.

GCI leverages efficiency of scale to meet the urgent demands of any high-volume printing job. With a relentless commitment to 100% on-time delivery, the team at GCI satisfy their clients' critical turnarounds while exceeding their expectations for quality. Susan, Jessie, and Christopher built their clientele and success by delivering miracles on time – especially crunch time. GCI is not only one of the most trusted names in the print industry, they are known for their unwavering commitment to environmentally-friendly, ecologically sound print practices. They strive to reduce waste, increasing energy efficiency with every job that they complete, and creatively achieve clients' goals while doing their part to preserve the planet's resources. GCI supports nonprofit organizations by sponsoring and supporting them with their printing needs, often in the form of in-kind donations. Susan and GCI are members of the Guam Chamber of Commerce, among other organizations.



2020 Hawaii Small Business Person of the Year



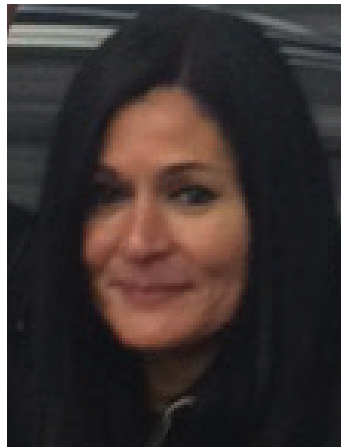
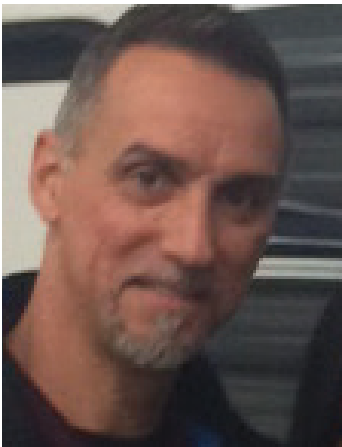
Christine Lanning, *MSIS, PSP, President*

Integrated Security Technologies, Inc., Waipahu, HI

Christine Lanning is President of Integrated Security Technologies (IST), a woman-owned, small disadvantaged, 8(a)-certified, low-voltage electrical contractor and elite team of security system integrators. Founded more than 20 years ago, IST's mission is "Leading Hawaii to a Safer Place." It is a nationally recognized provider of electronic security systems that protect the nation's strategic and economic interests by providing solutions to the Department of Defense, Hawaii's public sector agencies and local businesses. IST has now grown to an estimated \$7.5 million in revenues.

Christine secured a 504 SBA-backed loan to expand the business to the U.S. mainland, Guam, Saipan and Kwajalein, establishing IST as a key player in the Hawaii Pacific territory. Christine received the "ASIS Woman of the Year" award in 2014 and became the first woman elected to the Board of Directors for PSA Security Network, the U.S.'s largest electronic security cooperative in 2015. Christine is a champion for culture building and leadership and believes in *Ho'ohui* which means creating connections and building bridges together. This philosophy led to IST being named *Top 250 Businesses* in 2019 and *Hawaii's Best Places to Work* by *Hawaii Business Magazine* since 2013 and *Best Workplaces* by *Pacific Business News* in 2019.

2020 Idaho Small Business Person of the Year



John and Carina DeHoff, *Owners*
Leisureland RV Center, LLC,
Boise, ID

Leisureland RV Center, LLC is a family-owned and operated business founded by John and Carina DeHoff, who are passionate about all things RV. Restoring Carina's 1979 RV taught them about the RV culture and industry and encouraged them to take the leap into entrepreneurship as a pre-owned dealership and later to a dealership with a selection of new RVs. The DeHoffs travel across the country to purchase the best new and pre-owned RVs at auctions and touring manufacturing

facilities. They have a full-service, on-site repair and maintenance facility and skilled industry technicians to provide personalized care to customers.

The DeHoffs launched the business with only \$23,000 startup capital and have grown the business to more than \$7 million in sales and 21 employees. John DeHoff is a disabled veteran with 25 years of military experience. His military experience led him to participate in SBA's Boots to Business Program. For their first two years in business, the DeHoffs didn't take a paycheck. They received guidance from SCORE and participated in SBA's Emerging Leaders Program which helped them scale up their company. John regularly shares his expertise with entrepreneurs at SBA and SCORE events and mentors potential U.S. Air Force recruits in Boise.

2020 Illinois Small Business Person of the Year



Molly Meyer, *Founder & CEO*
Omni Ecosystems, Chicago, IL

With hands-on construction experience gained working as a carpenter and green roof installer in Germany, Molly Meyer has redefined the American green roof industry as the CEO of Omni Ecosystems. Founded in 2009, the Chicago company provides innovative solutions to environmental challenges by designing, constructing, and managing working landscapes. Her client list includes Harvard Business School, McDonald's, and the Indiana Pacers. Omni invented a new type of soil with a higher capacity for storm-water management, which allows the company to build lighter green roof systems that require less structural capacity. Omni employs 24, and in the last three years, annual revenue has increased by over 50% year over year. Molly has received business guidance from the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Greater Southwest Development Corp. SBA assistance has set Omni up for future growth. After outgrowing

three other locations, the company will transition from renter to property owner in a 50,000-square-foot building on Chicago's South Side, in an Opportunity Zone. The property is being financed with an SBA-guaranteed 504 Certified Development Company loan. The new headquarters will meet the company's needs for office and research space, as well as showcase their products and services on a green roof.

2020 Indiana Small Business Person of the Year



Sherri Davis, *President/CEO*
Paragon Force Inc., Bloomfield, IN

Sherri Davis founded Paragon Force Inc., a full-service construction management and general contracting firm serving clients working at Crane Naval Station, in 2009. The company specializes in commercial and institutional construction for federal and state government agencies, while also managing projects for customers in the private sector.

When starting, Sherri recognized that she needed capital. She consulted with business advisors at the Bloomington SCORE chapter who helped her analyze her funding options and put together a comprehensive business plan. She continued working with SBA contracting experts and resource partners at the Indiana Small Business Development Center and Procurement Technical Assistance Center to become more marketable. Sherri ultimately received her Woman-Owned Small Business designation,

participated in government contracting trade shows and matchmaking events, and became HUBZone certified.

The networking and counseling paid off. Total sales grew from \$1.9 million in 2017 to \$8 million in 2019. Paragon has grown from two employees to 80 in just 10 years.

Sherri volunteers at a local assisted living campus every week and supports—with time and money—local schools and youth organizations such as STEM, LEGO Masters, and various youth sports teams. She is also a member of AUSA, the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, and Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

2020 Iowa Small Business Person of the Year



Sabetha Mumm, *Owner* **Dance Vision**, Johnston, Iowa

A lifelong dancer, Sabetha always knew she wanted to share her love of dance with others. She initially followed the “safe” career path, while always taking dance classes to feed her soul. During her first year of law school, however, Sabetha could no longer deny her entrepreneurial dream.

Sabetha opened Dance Vision in 2003 with the help of an SBA-backed loan. Over the years, she has grown the business from a rented 2,500 square-foot space to a custom-designed, 12,000 square-foot facility featuring five studios that she built with the help of an SBA 504 loan in 2016. The new space features workstations for the students to study between dance classes, a healthy food bar to promote wellness, and security cameras in all five studios so parents can watch classes from the lobby area.

Dance Vision has grown considerably since the new facility opened, going from 290 students to over 400, some of whom drive from over 40 miles away. Sabetha currently employs 28 full and part-time employees, many of whom are former students. The studio also supports several competition teams, with more than 140 students participating in national showcases.

2020 Kansas Small Business Person of the Year



Amie Tripp-Bristol, *President & CEO* **HMC Performance Coatings**, Tonganoxie, KS

HMC Performance Coatings, founded seven years ago by Amie Tripp-Bristol, provides powder coating services. This type of finishing is applied as a dry powder with a media blasting, which removes debris from the surface, preparing it for painting or other finishes. As one of a few women in a mostly male industry, Amie managed to grow her company rapidly. Starting in a 3,600-square-foot space, she secured a \$1.8 million SBA-backed loan. She added machinery and increased her manufacturing space to over 18,000 square feet. HMC sales doubled from \$687,000 in 2016 to \$1.2 million in 2018. She then increased her employee roster from 10 to 23. As the orders poured in, the company struggled with hiring and cash flow to fund payroll. Since 2013, Amie has sought business assistance from the Kansas Small Business Development Center at Johnson County Community College. She learned how to shore up the company's

backroom operations. The SBDC also helped her exceed annual revenue goals, increase employment, and develop a continuous improvement mindset. Amie works with her local high school to create a real-world work experience. She mentors the seniors and has hired two graduates to work at HMC.

2020 Kentucky Small Business Person of the Year



Mavis Linnemann-Clark, *Owner/Founder*
The Delish Dish, LLC and Made by Mavis,
Covington, KY

After earning a Catering and Personal Chef certificate, Mavis Linnemann-Clark opened The Delish Dish, her own catering company, in 2012.

Within two years, Mavis needed help managing the company's explosive growth. She reached out to Rebecca Volpe at the Northern Kentucky University Small Business Development Center (SBDC). In addition to the 155 hours of training she put in at the SBDC, she also received mentoring from the local SCORE Chapter. The small business counseling helped Mavis better manage the company's rapid growth in revenue, increase in employees, and the abundance of catering events. They also helped her

develop a strategic plan which resulted in new product lines and an increased profit margin. With financial analysis and guidance from the SBDC and SCORE, The Delish Dish was able to even out cash flow for the business, which has increased threefold over a four-year period. When Mavis had to relocate in 2016, she negotiated a long-term lease of an incubator kitchen and manages the kitchen with help from the SBDC. The Delish Dish grew from one employee in 2012—Mavis—to the current 19 employees.

The Delish Dish donates meals to two local homeless kitchens, and Mavis and her team volunteer annually for the Keep Covington Beautiful campaign and the Great American Clean-Up Day.

2020 Louisiana Small Business Person of the Year



James J. Moore, *Managing Partner*
Expert Maintenance and Construction Services,
LLC, Prairieville, LA

James Moore founded Expert Maintenance and Construction Services, LLC (EMCS) in 2005 in Prairieville, Louisiana with just two employees. The firm provides janitorial and general maintenance services. In its first year, EMCS had revenues of \$20,000, then expanded its capacity and capability to incorporate construction services. EMCS's reputation for completing projects on time and within budget has helped it grow to 85 employees and revenues of \$16 million.

Expert Maintenance and Construction Services is 8(a) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certified. EMCS has performed numerous contracts with federal, state, and local agencies in addition to private entities, and has completed projects in multiple states including Louisiana, South Carolina, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas with offices in all five states.

James is a member of the Ascension Fair Association, a community organization that provides services such as mentoring underprivileged children and projects for low income, elderly and handicapped individuals to make their homes more accessible. He is active with the Fatherhood Initiative Program that is near and dear to his heart. James has donated countless hours of personal time and resources to this program which involves fathers and children in the Head Start Education Program. He is also a board member of the Ascension Credit Union where he diligently voices his fight to provide funding for small businesses.

2020 Maine Small Business Person of the Year



Nathaniel Pierce, *President*
Aaron Anker, *Vice-President*
Bountiful Berry Inc.,
dba GrandyOats, Hiram, ME

There are few images of Maine more striking than that of a small farm growing wholesome produce for its customers. Nat Pierce knew this, and in 1996 he decided to capitalize on this image by purchasing GrandyOats and merging it with his bakery, Bountiful Berry. In 2000, Aaron Anker joined the company after working in sales and marketing for similar businesses. By 2002,

they had enough growth to seek out additional space. Nat and Aaron settled on a converted dairy barn in Brownfield that allowed them to scale up to 6,000 square feet of industrial space. The larger space allowed GrandyOats to expand both production and employment, increasing opportunities for those seeking jobs in rural Maine, eventually reaching 18 employees and over \$3 million in sales. GrandyOats soon outgrew this larger space and moved to an old school-house in Hiram. With the increased capacity, new employees, and investments in energy efficiency financed by an SBA-backed loan through Bangor Savings Bank, GrandyOats was able to grow to 35 employees. Its products are sold in grocery stores, online, and other e-commerce platforms. GrandyOats has actively supported environmental organizations, trail groups, and educational outreach since it was founded in 1979.

2020 Maryland Small Business Person of the Year



Anton C. Bizzell, *MD, Chief Executive Officer*
The Bizzell Group, LLC, Lanham, MD

Dr. Anton Bizzell led efforts to reduce the impact of prescription opiates and alcoholism while at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration after completing his residency at Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

After working at a consulting firm, in 2010 he established The Bizzell Group. The company, along with a cadre of 15 experts, provides health services solutions, research, communication and outreach support, technical assistance, and training, to provide customized, innovative solutions that will help communities nationwide develop healthy and secure environments.

The Bizzell Group is 8(a) certified, and their clients include the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Defense, Energy, Transportation, and the United States Agency for International Development, among others.

In 2018 and 2019, the Washington Business Journal ranked The Bizzell Group among the area's fastest-growing companies. In 2017, The Bizzell Group was recognized by Inc. Magazine as the third-fastest growing Black-owned business in the nation. Sales increased from \$8.4 million in 2016 to \$16.5 million in 2018.

The company has grown from a small space in Dr. Bizzell's basement to two offices in suburban Maryland, an office in Atlanta, Georgia, a staff of 100 working in nine U.S. states, and two employees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2020 Massachusetts Small Business Person of the Year



Brian Geisel, CEO
Geisel Software, Worcester, MA

Brian Geisel began a career writing software full time and later discovered his passion for helping others solve problems, which led him to start Geisel Software out of a 200 square-foot studio in 2011.

In 2016, Brian began scaling his company by hiring a full-time developer and a salesperson. After a period of stagnant growth, the company began taking on larger projects and new clients, since then growing to 16 employees and increasing revenues over 300 percent during the last three years.

In 2018, Brian participated in the SBA Emerging Leaders training, completing the program and implementing several business development strategies soon after. He started a relationship with the local Procurement Technical Assistance Center and the Small Business Development Center, and later prepared several Small Business Innovation Research proposals. Brian has also taken out SBA loans to grow the business and hire more employees.

Geisel Software has landed contracts with the U.S. Army, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Air Force, and NASA.

2020 Michigan Small Business Person of the Year



Nathan D. McFadden, President & Owner
Elevated Technologies Inc. (ETI), Grand Rapids, MI

U.S. Marine Corps veteran Nathan McFadden purchased Elevator Service Inc. in 2017, with help from an SBA-guaranteed loan through Huntington Bank.

Working with an SBA-funded Veterans Business Outreach Center and a Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Nathan laid the foundation for ETI's growth through contracting and certifying as a service-disabled veteran-owned small business.

A 32-year-old company, ETI now provides maintenance, installation, and modernization for elevator systems in 25 states to clients that include the U.S. Department of Defense, the Department of Treasury, and auto manufacturers including Tesla and Ford.

From 2017 to 2018, ETI's revenue grew by 52%, and the number of employees increased from 13 to 47. Nathan attributes much of this expansion to technology investments, process advancements, and continually improving their marketing strategies.

One-third of ETI's employees are veterans. Nathan is particularly proud of making improvements to elevators at more than 20 Veterans Administration hospitals that were in a significant state of disrepair.

2020 Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year



Paula Trendera, *CEO & Founder*

Curly Girlz Candy Inc., Owatonna, MN

Paula Trendera, CEO and founder of Curly Girlz Candy Inc., took a childhood love and took it to the next level. As a young adult, Paula started making homemade candy with guidance from her neighbor. Through her travels, Paula rediscovered the art of chocolate making, in particular, artisan chocolates from Europe. Paula launched her online storefront in 2011 to sell candies and chocolates for the holidays. In 2014, she was able to quit her full-time job and open her first retail space in Medford. In 2017, Curly Girlz moved to downtown Owatonna with a larger production facility and a small retail location. Over the next few years, she discovered the growing need for high quality, sugar-free candy options so she began experimenting with alternative sweeteners. In July 2019, Curly Girlz Candy transitioned to selling only sugar-free candies online. Along this

journey, Paula received small business counseling from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation of Owatonna. Curly Girlz also received an SBA microloan, which helped the company expand and provide five new jobs in her rural community. Paula serves with her local faith community, 4-H program, and FFA organization.

2020 Mississippi Small Business Person of the Year



Vera D. Hall, *Managing Member/Principal*

Innovative Performance Construction Co. LLC., Fayette, MS

Vera D. Hall, Managing Member and Principal of Innovative Performance Construction, (IPC) LLC, a woman-owned, 8(a) and HUBZone-certified construction firm, probably never imagined that the construction projects that she worked on in her vocational education classes in college and working with her brother painting homes for extra money would lead to a successful business with more than 20 employees. Vera has more than 11 years of construction, construction management, project management, and contracting experience. She started IPC from her kitchen table and now oversees the day to day management of the firm which led to its expansion to a second location in Hinds County, Mississippi.

IPC has received assistance from the SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program and 7(j) Management and Technical Assistance Program under the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program. IPC has gone from having zero federal contracts to receiving one contract per year and now has multiple federal contracts. Vera is a graduate of the SBA's Emerging Leaders Program and has maintained a stellar reputation in the construction industry. Some of IPC's clients include Vera's alma mater, Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, Department of Interior, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Jackson Municipal Airport Authority and East Central Community College.

2020 Missouri Small Business Person of the Year



Kelsey Meyer Raymond, *Cofounder/CEO* **Influence & Co.**, Columbia, MO

Influence & Co. started up in 2011 with three employees and three clients. The company, cofounded by Kelsey Raymond, now has over 80 employees generating over \$7 million in annual revenue. She has published 270 articles, achieved 107,000 social media shares, and has a social reach of 153 million. The content marketing agency has offices in Columbia, St. Louis, and Kansas City, serving national clients, including Fortune 500 companies. Influence & Co. has been ranked in Inc. 5000 three years in a row. Kelsey was named in Forbes: 30 Under 30 in 2016. Kelsey reached a professional goal of buying out her business partner, Brent Beshore, with the help of an SBA-backed \$4.1 million 7(a) loan, financed by the American Bank of Missouri.

Kelsey is president of the Board for Voluntary Action Center in Columbia. She helped create a capital campaign for VAC's 50th anniversary, raising \$500,000 for needy families in Boone County. She serves as a founding organizer of Startup Weekend Columbia, where entrepreneurs pitch ideas and startup their businesses. Kelsey mentors student entrepreneurs through Mizzou's Entrepreneurship Alliance while publishing and teaching content marketing in Mizzou's journalism program. Her goal is to improve the economic landscape throughout Missouri.

2020 Montana Small Business Person of the Year



Keelan & Brianna James, *Co-owners* **Easy Lawn Hydroseeding**, Belgrade, MT

Keelan and Brianna James grew up in Montana and met while attending Montana State University in Bozeman. After they married, the couple decided to raise their family in Belgrade. Keelan's passion for the outdoors inspired the idea of starting an environmental restoration business in 2008. Easy Lawn Hydroseeding provides seeding, erosion control, and land reclamation services

for commercial and residential customers. The company focuses on land restoration after major construction projects, environmental clean up, river and stream restoration. When the business first started, Keelan and Brianna were the only two employees. In the past 12 years, Easy Lawn has expanded to employ 12. By 2016, the company had outgrown its original location. SBA financing made it possible for the owners to purchase property and build a facility. The new location allowed the business to expand its service area to other states, including Wyoming, North and South Dakota.

Keelan and Brianna started a mentoring program to help families struggling with their finances. The program focuses on sound financial practices, helping with real-life implementation. They also provide grants to help families get back on their feet. The couple is focusing their efforts to help homeless teens in their community. This program will provide life skills and solutions to teach self-reliance.

2020 Nebraska Small Business Person of the Year



Rakesh Srivastava, *President & Founder*

Innovative Prosthetics & Orthotics Hastings, NE

Rakesh Srivastava became familiar with prosthetics as a young child in India. When he was 10 years old, his left leg was amputated after an accident. This experience led to a life-long passion for orthotics and prosthetics. After completing his education at the University of Nebraska Kearney, he was certified by the American Board of Certified Prosthetics and Orthotists. Rakesh opened his 600-square-foot clinic with two employees in 2006. Since then, the Hastings clinic has grown to 3,000 square feet. In 2009 and 2011, he opened two additional locations in Omaha and Grand Island. Rakesh received assistance from the Nebraska Business Development Center in Grand Island. He met with NBDC Procurement Technical Assistance Center staff in 2013 to help him pursue government contracts with the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 2015, NBDC's Technology Commercialization Team helped Rakesh obtain a prototype grant. NBDC consultant Sara Bennett worked with Rakesh in 2018 to help him expand his current operations to include 3D print manufacturing of prosthetic devices. Rakesh is invested in his community both in Hastings and in his native India, including helping four companies in India set up prosthetic and orthotic clinics.

2020 Nevada Small Business Person of the Year



Paul Sallach, *President*

All In Aviation, Las Vegas, NV

After years of clients requesting plane rentals and flight instruction, Paul Sallach launched All In Aviation in June 2016. Since then, he and his wife, Lindsay, co-owner and pilot, have managed a growing business of aircraft rental and sales, flight school, and hangar management. Paul, who has a degree in commercial aviation, expanded his Henderson Executive Airport facility with the help of a \$4 million SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan. In the past year, All In Aviation offered demonstration flight experiences in the new SF50 Vision Jet, the world's first personal jet. Paul, also a certified pilot and instructor, has over 10 years experience in aircraft sales and over 6,500 hours of incident-free flying.

Paul and Lindsay volunteer their time at their local church. They also provide live auction donations for free services and display their planes at dozens of charity events. This year, All In Aviation has donated hundreds of service hours and nearly \$15,000 to charitable causes. Organizations they support include Faith Community Lutheran Church, Opportunity Village, and Communities in Schools of Nevada. They also support the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, and Best Buddies.

2020 New Hampshire Small Business Person of the Year



Albert J. Letizio Jr., *President/CEO*

A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing Inc., Windham, NH

Al Letizio Jr. continues a fifth-generation family legacy in the food industry. Al and his wife, Patti, started A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing in 1988. The agency serves a portfolio of leading national and regional food manufacturers. They also support retail supermarket chains, independent retailers, and convenience and club stores. An SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan helped Al and Patti acquire their 7,300-square-foot office building in 2000, financed through Granite State Economic Development Corp. They paid off that loan 10 years early. In 2019, another 504 loan with Haverhill Bank and nominator Richard Hanlon helped Al finance a new 20,000-square-foot facility, nearly tripling his business footprint. Al and Patti also opened a second office in Parlin, New Jersey. The company has grown to about 100 employees with customers in 17 states.

Al serves on the board of directors and as past president of the New England Food Foundation, a nonprofit assisting children in need. He also spent 17 years serving the town of Windham on the school board, the town's board of selectmen, and its economic development committee. In 2000, he helped form the Windham Christmas Association, a nonprofit self-funded organization that provides families in need with practical household food products and supplies for the Christmas season.

2020 New Jersey Small Business Person of the Year



Christopher Finnick, *CEO/Owner*

Mama's Southern Style BBQ 2, LLC, Vauxhall, NJ

Chris Finnick jumped from behind the wheel of driving a delivery truck in 2007 to getting behind the grill of his uncle's southern-style barbecue takeout restaurant. Despite taking over a successful restaurant and having his uncle mentoring him for a year, Chris had to learn everything on the fly and adapt to the pressures of meeting his customers' demands.

Over time, Chris learned the basics of running a successful takeout restaurant. After a decade of operating out of 750 square-foot space, he decided to expand his business and turned to the New Jersey Small Business Development Center at Kean University for help with understanding his business finances and managing the company's operating costs.

With a revised business plan in hand, Chris secured both an SBA Community Advantage Loan for \$75,000 and a Micro-loan of \$15,000 from the Regional Business Assistance Corporation in 2018. He used those loans to buy new equipment and move into a 2,200 square-foot facility.

The added space allowed Chris to offer catering while continuing to serve up his signature southern-style barbecue dishes of chicken, ribs, pulled pork, fried shrimp, and catfish. In just a short time, the SBA assistance has helped Mama's Southern Style BBQ 2 increase its annual sales from \$300,000 in 2016 to \$554,560 in 2018.

2020 New Mexico Small Business Person of the Year



William Goodman, Ph.D., President & CEO

Goodman Technologies LLC, Albuquerque, NM

In 2016, Dr. William Goodman launched Goodman Technologies (GT) LLC a week after being laid off and 30 days after discovering his son required heart surgery. He has authored 48 winning SBIR/STTR grants (Phases I-III) for companies he has worked for, companies he has owned, or for companies that he coaches. Dr. Goodman has worked in Space, Defense, and Aerospace his entire career; he has more than 90 publications and his technologies have flown on four different space missions.

Goodman Technologies LLC is passionate about helping their customers solve their challenges by employing empowered thinking and technical expertise. GT received New Mexico Small Business Assistance Grants from 2017-2019 and was selected for the 2018 TechConnect World Innovation Exposition.

Dr. Goodman is a “Streetwise MBA Certificate” from the U. S. Small Business Administration’s Emerging Leaders Program and his dream is to form a 501(c)(3) to provide eyeglasses to those living in extreme poverty.

Dr. Goodman volunteers time and resources to many organizations. In addition, he has been a volunteer for SBIR Workshops for NM FAST, and he is in the process of creating a 501(c)(3) to provide inexpensive eyeglasses for impoverished people in Third World countries

2020 New York Small Business Person of the Year



Raj Mehta, Chief Executive Officer

Raj Technologies Inc., Commack, NY

When Raj Mehta came to the United States from India in 1978, he knew he had to make money, so he took a minimum-wage job in the Washington, D.C. suburbs before earning a college degree.

In 1986 Raj started his own company, Infosys International in Plainview, NY, now Raj Technologies Inc., with a computer and a determination to succeed.

RTI, a certified minority business enterprise, has been offering IT products and services to equip federal, state, and local governments in the U.S. with modern technologies.

RTI also offers platform integration and network management services for government departments.

For Raj, nothing is more important than upholding superior work ethics. By treating his clients as partners and working closely with them, RTI has earned a reputation as a successful, results-oriented company by its 32-year track record of performance and delivering value to its loyal clients.

Raj produces, hosts and funds a TV show called “Interviews That Matter,” to help the community. His corporate headquarters also serves as the home of LISTnet, helping grow the Long Island Technology ecosystem. Raj also serves and volunteers for many other community and charitable organizations.

2020 North Carolina Small Business Person of the Year



Bill H. Howe, *President*

Apex Instruments Inc., Fuquay-Varina, NC

From its under-capitalized founding in 1988 by Bill Howe, Apex Instruments has grown to 38 employees working in five buildings with a combined blueprint of 40,000 square feet. Apex, which manufactures and distributes emission measurement sampling equipment, has weathered many economic downturns in its history. To stabilize his bottom line, Bill learned how to export from the North Carolina Small Business & Technology Development Center. Apex Instruments now has distributors in over 40 countries and foreign customers in about 100 countries. Apex has also used student engagement programs through the SBTDC to assist with international market research, distribution strategies, and human resource management.

Apex Instruments has been listed five times on the Inc. 500 Magazine list of fastest growing private companies. The business is a recipient of the North Carolina Department of Labor Safety and Health Achievement Recognition award.

Bill often speaks to high school and college students about small business and exporting. He is a supporter of Sound Rivers, an environmental foundation.

2020 North Dakota Small Business Person of the Year



Charissa Rubey, *CEO*

Dakota Micro, Inc., Cayuga, ND

Charissa and Dave Rubey relocated from Southern California to North Dakota in 1994 to take over the family farm. A few years later, Dave suffered a slipped disk in his neck. He wore a neck brace, and not being able to turn his head made operating farm equipment impossible.

Unable to find a camera system that was small, durable, and flexible enough to allow him to operate farm equipment efficiently, Dave decided to use his engineering background to build a camera.

After creating the AgCam system, Dakota Micro Inc. was incorporated in 2002 on a shoestring budget. The company manufactures sturdy camera systems and surveillance equipment for agricultural, public works, and military applications.

The company grew as Dave developed more camera systems. Charissa took advantage of SBA resources – SCORE Mentors, an SBA loan, the Women’s Business Center, and the U.S. Export Assistance Center – to expand the business.

Today the company, still located on the family farm, has grown to include a 10,000 square-foot manufacturing facility that serves a global market with more than 40 dealers on five continents and employs 18 people in their rural community.

2020 Ohio Small Business Person of the Year



John C. Rush, *President & CEO*

CleanTurn International, LLC, Columbus, OH

“A person’s past does not define the future.” U.S. Marine Corps veteran John Rush’s conviction spurred him to create CleanTurn, an enterprise that hires individuals facing barriers to employment due to challenges including homelessness, incarceration, human trafficking and domestic violence.

He integrated a for-profit business structure with social service practices. The Columbus-based business opened in 2012, providing demolition and cleaning services, while operating as a transitional job program.

In 2019, he secured an SBA-guaranteed loan through Ohio Statewide Development Corporation and PNC Bank to expand, bringing revitalization to Franklinton, a historically

disadvantaged area.

Since opening, CleanTurn has provided jobs to more than 900 men and women. The company provides traditional benefits like a 401(k), healthcare and career training as well as supportive services like life skills, financial literacy and legal aid. The local economic impact of the company is estimated to be \$20 million.

“When an individual decides that they want to change their life, it’s a privilege for my business to be able to be a part of that journey,” he said.

2020 Oklahoma Small Business Person of the Year



Lisa Woodward Riley, *President*

Power of Three Investments dba Pinot’s Palette,

Tulsa, OK

Lisa Riley left behind a career in the oil business in 2011—managing overseas cargo ships and inventory for two west coast refineries—to launch in 2012 a Pinot’s Palette franchise in Tulsa. The franchise’s logo encourages the birthday revelers and bachelorette partiers to “Paint. Drink. Have Fun.” A year later she opened another paint party location, and by 2014 Lisa had launched four Tulsa-area Pinot’s Palettes franchises.

The business grew from 24 employees in 2015 to a staff of 40 in 2017. While she was opening her third location, Lisa found out she had breast cancer. She relied on the support of her family, friends, and the Pinot’s Palette staff to help her through the challenges of dealing with cancer treatments while still running a business. She’s currently five years cancer-free.

Lisa serves on the board of “Join in the Cause,” a nonprofit helping first responders and cancer patients. She also serves on advisory boards for the Tulsa Small Business Connection, and Pinot’s Palette Franchise Council.

2020 Oregon Small Business Person of the Year



Sheila Kilpatrick, *Founder/Executive Director* **Discovery Gardens Childcare**, Portland, OR

Discovery Gardens founder Sheila Kilpatrick is driven to provide affordable, safe, and reliable childcare, specializing in early childhood education to low-income families in underserved communities. She is a single mother of four young children, two of whom were born with spina bifida. She pivoted from her career as a medical coder to open in-home childcare. To successfully manage a surge in demand, Sheila sought guidance from her local Small Business Development Center, SCORE chapter, and Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon, a microlender that partners with the SBA. Sheila learned how to chart her growth so she could sustain the business long term. With the help of microloans through MESO, Sheila was able to increase her capacity as well as purchase her own building. What started in a converted upstairs space in a northeast Portland home has grown into an award-winning childcare business with three centers in Portland.

She has recently expanded into Las Vegas, Nevada with two new locations. Discovery Gardens provides childcare for over 600 and employs about 70 dedicated teachers and staff.

2020 Pennsylvania Small Business Person of the Year



Cynthia T. Gallo, *President* **Fiber Business Solutions Group, Inc. dba G-Force** Norristown, PA

Cindy Gallo started her telecommunications-servicing business, Fiber Business Solutions Group, Inc. (dba G-Force) from a home office. A licensed Professional Engineer with a Master's in Civil Engineering from Lehigh University, she quickly adapted to her customers' needs, expanding into engineering and construction. Gallo employs 25 people in 4,000 square feet of office space, with two warehouse locations.

The 2009 recession brought dramatic revenue loss. To ensure stability and avoid employee layoffs, Gallo reached out to the SBA for guidance on diversifying her client base. With assistance from the SBA's Eastern Pennsylvania District Office and SBA resource partners SCORE, Lehigh University Small Business Development Center, Women's Business Enterprise Center East, the SBA's Emerging Leaders training program, as well as her status as a certified economically and socially disadvantaged woman-owned small business, she's landed over \$25M in federal contracts.

Cindy epitomizes the idea that small businesses are active members of their community. She volunteers at her local women's shelter with single mothers in need of emotional support and financial assistance to help them regain their footing and ensure their children achieve their potential.

2020 Puerto Rico Small Business Person of the Year



Marisol Otero, *President*
ProAssets Inc., Guaynabo, PR 00965

In 2006 Marisol Otero founded ProAssets Inc., an integrated services firm specialized in Direct Placements and Human Resources Consulting. Since then, the company's business solutions have extended to the entire island, to the U.S. Mainland, and to other Caribbean and Latin American regions.

ProAssets offers professional placement services in all industries. In 2010 the company created two divisions: ProTalents, which offers temporary and leased workforce management services, and ProAssets, which offers regular placement Human Resources solutions. That same year, the company received its first SBA-guaranteed loan under the SBAExpress program and in 2018 it received an SBA CAPLine for working capital. Shortly after, ProTalents was managing 800 temporary employees.

Due to its continued growth throughout the years, ProAssets has relocated from a 600 m. facility in San Juan to a 2, 950 m. facility in Guaynabo. As the business continues to grow it has more space, and in 2019 it leased an additional 823 m. to relocate its internal accounting, sales, and marketing departments.

The company has more than 75 active clients in both the private and public sectors, providing services in such areas as Professional Search, Selection and Research; Professional Leased Contractors; Temporary Workforce Management Program; Candidates for the Assessment Program; Individual; Interview Coaching; and Human Resources General Consulting.

2020 Rhode Island Small Business Person of the Year



Harmony Oschefski & Cedar Hwang, *Co-owners*
The Bodhi Spa, Newport, RI

Rhode Island-born sisters Harmony Oschefski and Cedar Hwang focus on whole-body wellness at their hydrotherapy day spa. The Bodhi Spa offers massage, esthetics, body treatment, and Roman-style thermal baths. Before opening their small business in 2015, Harmony studied human kinetics and worked in functional nutrition. Cedar ended her sailing career as captain of the Heritage, a classic America's Cup yacht. Harmony and Cedar consulted with a SCORE mentor to

review their business plan and financial projections. They secured an SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan to purchase and renovate their Newport location. After about two years in business, the Bodhi Spa grew from seven to 21 employees, serving nearly 10,000 unique customers. With success coming so quickly, Harmony and Cedar found themselves rushing to keep up with growth. Harmony received executive training in the SBA Emerging Leaders program, which helped her prepare for continued growth. Harmony and Cedar started to expand the brand in 2019, securing two more SBA-backed loans to open a second location in Providence. They currently employ over 30 with about \$2 million in annual sales.

2020 South Carolina Small Business Person of the Year



Furman E. Burgess, *President/Owner* **Diversified Systems Inc.**, Greenville, SC

Furman “Eddie” Burgess was fixing motors and building houses at a young age, following after his contractor father. Eddie wired his first house at the age of 13. A last-minute electrician job at Alexco led to full time employment there. Eddie climbed the ranks and left his job as Alexco’s vice president in 1988 to pursue his entrepreneurial dream. Diversified Systems Inc. designs, builds, and installs customized and standard machinery, serving the textile, film, aerospace, automotive, and medical industries, exporting to six continents. In 2008, Eddie rounded out his portfolio by purchasing his former employer. Eddie met his working capital needs with a \$1.5 million SBA-backed line of credit. With the Appalachian Development Corp., he qualified for a \$945,000 SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan, which he used to purchase a 100,000-square-foot facility and equipment. In one year, his sales increased 10% so he hired 15 additional employees, bringing his roster to 60.

Eddie works with local contractors to revitalize downtown Greenville. He joined with other businesses to build a lighted feature down Main Street leading to Cancer Survivor’s Park. He served over 20 years as deacon at Monaghan Baptist Church and contributed greatly to its leadership.

2020 South Dakota Small Business Person of the Year



Randy Gruenwald, *President* **Dakota Butcher**, Clark, SD

Dakota Butcher is a meat locker offering custom processing. The family business also smokes most of its own products in one of its three smokehouses and provides a wide variety of deli meats, cheeses, and other products, including its own wine, beer, and liquor brands. Randy Gruenwald purchased Dakota Butcher in 2009. While working his day job, Randy and his wife, Karen, started up with four full-time employees. Randy was able to go full time at his small business in 2015. His son and daughter-in-law joined the business and the company now employs 70.

To help with expansion plans, Randy turned to his local Small Business Development Center. GROW South Dakota, which partners with the SBA, has made 10 loans to Dakota Butcher, including several microloans and an SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan. Through business expansion, like adding a restaurant and bar to the Watertown location, to recovering from a fire in a meat smoker, Randy has managed the business and kept employees working.

Dakota Butcher donates to children’s charities and is a member of the Clark and Watertown chambers of commerce. Randy often speaks at FFA classes, Lakes Area Tech, and area farms’ shows. The company supports professional pheasant and turkey hunts and the PDR Youth Hunt in Clark.

2020 Texas Small Business Person of the Year



Timothy Porter, *Owner*

Appddiction Studio, LLC , San Antonio, TX

In 2009, Timothy Porter, a U.S. Army veteran with a passion for technology and Information Technology, taught himself to develop mobile applications and in 2011, Appddiction Studio, LLC was formed. Timothy received his initial start-up assistance and guidance from the local Procurement Technical Assistance Center and continues to receive support and assistance from the University of Texas at San Antonio Small Business Development Center.

The San Antonio based company is part of the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program and a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business with a national presence. They provide premier and innovative IT transformations by successfully implementing state of the art agile framework and methodologies delivering value. In 2016, the

company received an SBA loan that was repaid in full within two years. From 2017 to 2018, the company experienced a 254% increase in revenue due to the successful procurement of contracts through the DoD for software development and project management.

Appddiction Studio has established itself as the go-to small business for DoD to support new or existing enterprise transformations for DoD clients and was highlighted on the USA Network television channel as one of their USA Character Unite Award winners for developing an award-winning anti-bully mobile application for use in K-12 schools.

2020 Utah Small Business Person of the Year



Joseph & Jen Watson, *Co-owners* **K9 Sport Sack**, Orem, UT

After Joseph and Jen Watson rescued a terrier puppy from a trash bin, that act of kindness started their entrepreneurial journey as well. They soon made a backpack carrier to incorporate Daisy into their busy lives. On bike rides and other family adventures with Daisy, the Watsons were often stopped by pet owners asking where they could buy a similar dog carrier. Joseph and Jen say their unlikely path to business ownership came from a simple desire to fulfill a need. K9 Sport Sack has nine employees and sells its products in over 20 coun-

tries and 500 stores worldwide. The company's 2019 SBA-backed loan helped position them for future growth. The company's "No Dog Left Behind" motto extends beyond its product. A portion of every K9 Sport Sack sale is donated to animal rescues and shelters around the world.

2020 Vermont Small Business Person of the Year



Sean Lawson, *Founding Brewer/CEO*
Karen Lawson, *Chief Creative Officer*
Lawson's Finest Liquids,
Waitsfield, VT

Sean and Karen Lawson, Lawson's Finest Liquids founders and owners, have grown their company from a one-barrel nanobrewery in a neighboring sugarhouse to over 50 employees in a new 25,000-square-foot facility. To fund their expansion, Sean and Karen qualified for two \$3.3 million SBA 504 Certified Development Company loans. Their 31-barrel brewery includes a taproom,

retail store, warehouse, and distribution center. The brewery's specialty maple beers and IPAs have garnered awards at the World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival.

The Sunshine Fund is the heart of the Lawson's Finest Social Impact Program, designed to assist nonprofits supporting the people and environment of Vermont. Because Lawson's provides living wages and benefits, there is no tip obligation. Guests can choose to leave a donation to the organization that has been designated "on tap" via the Sunshine Fund. Taproom guests have donated nearly \$400,000 to over 35 Vermont-based nonprofits.

2020 Virginia Small Business Person of the Year



George L. Nyfeler III, *President*
Nyfeler Associates, Richmond, VA

George Nyfeler started Nyfeler Associates, a small, yet diverse professional land surveying company specializing in robotics, in 2010. During his first year, he used an SBA-backed 7(a) loan to finance working capital. He has since grown the company to 10 employees and \$808,000 in sales in 2018. Last year, the firm went to Antarctica for a project for the National Science Foundation. Other notable survey projects include the U.S. Capitol Dome Restoration, National Gallery of Art stone repairs, Reagan National Airport, NASA Wallops Flight Facility, Fort Bragg, Quantico National Cemetery, a crane-rail alignment survey at a Boeing facility, and extensive work at the State Department's Foreign Affairs Security Training Center.

Nyfeler focuses on cultivating happy and empowered employees and giving back to his community. Having attended West Point as a cadet and serving the 2nd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery of the Colorado Army National Guard, he is involved with the Families of the Wounded Fund Inc. and the West Point Society of Richmond's Wounded Warrior Mentor Program. Nyfeler donates resources toward educational programs, including the Society of American Military Engineers, which aids school robotics program.

2020 Washington Small Business Person of the Year



Olga Sagan, *Owner*
Piroshky Piroshky, Seattle, WA

A Russian immigrant, Olga Sagan arrived in America when she was just 16 years old. Since that time, she has faced numerous challenges and overcome language barriers to navigate a business leadership role, which is not traditionally encouraged for Russian women. In 2006, Olga bought a share of Piroshky Piroshky, a Russian bakery founded in Seattle's historic Pike Place Market. After completing the SBA Emerging Leaders executive education course in 2015, she developed the expertise and found the courage to take over sole ownership of the bakery in 2017. Under Olga's leadership, the bakery has expanded to four locations and a food truck. The Russian pastries are available at the Hyatt Regency and Space Needle Cafe. With help from the SBA, Piroshky Piroshky grew from 38 employees and \$5.6 million annual sales in 2016 to 85 employees and \$8.6

million in sales in 2018. Olga was named a Small Business Hero by the Puget Sound Business Journal. In 2020 she was picked as a finalist for the Women Business Owners of the Year Awards.

Piroshky Piroshky provides charitable support to the Pike Place Market Foundation, the YMCA, and local food banks.

2020 West Virginia Small Business Person of the Year



Kimberly Eastman, *Co-owner*
Brenda Sheldon, *Co-owner*
Hospitality Cleaning Solutions,
Hurricane, WV

Hospitality Cleaning Solutions is a West Virginia-based small business started by Kimberly Eastman and Brenda Sheldon in 2011. The company manages facilities for federal, state, and commercial customers in four states, providing janitorial services, facilities management and maintenance, and security guard licensing. Kim and Brenda met in 2006 as soccer moms. As the season pro-

gressed, so did their friendship. The two stay-at-home moms looked for ways to earn income while their children were in school. They found success early on with large hotel chains. The hotel industry soon changed its business model and began outsourcing cleaning labor. Hospitality Cleaning Solutions turned to the SBA and the West Virginia Small Business Development Center for business counseling. Their SBDC adviser led them to other SBA services, such as the Emerging Leaders program. They also took a Federal Acquisition Management Class at their local Procurement Technical Assistance Center. They were also assisted by their SBA district office, local Women's Business Center, and SCORE chapter. Since starting with government contracting, their business has doubled.

Kim and Brenda give 10% of their gross revenue back to local ministries, missionaries, and orphanages around the world.

2020 Wisconsin Small Business Person of the Year



Mark Becker, *Cofounder/COO*
Jeff Peterson, *Cofounder/CEO*
Geneva Supply, Delavan, WI

Jeff Peterson and Mark Becker started doing business with Amazon in 2007. They soon realized that it encompassed a set of rules that few manufacturers wanted to figure out. To embrace the opportunity, they founded Geneva Supply in 2009. The company provides logistics, packaging, brand, and e-commerce marketing for manufacturers selling on Amazon. Starting with one GE appliance water filter, Mark and Jeff have since completed over 200 projects with Amazon. Geneva Supply

has expanded to three U.S. locations with more planned. Mark and Jeff purchased their Delavan warehouse using an SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan with Wisconsin Business Development. By 2019, they passed the 100-employee mark. They also direct Biz Tank, a career exploration program for local high school students.

2020 Wyoming Small Business Person of the Year



Brady Lewis, *President/CEO*, **Jack Fritz**, *Director of Operations*
Shawn Higley, **Chad Reed**, **Greg Reid**, **Murray Schroeder**, **Darrin Tromble**,
Branch Managers. WWC Engineering, Sheridan, WY

WWC Engineering has served the Rocky Mountain region since 1980, specializing in civil/site, environmental, and land development services. WWC employs over 90 working on design, permitting, and construction. WWC has steadily added jobs, diversified in a changing market, and supported Wyoming's economy, contributing to many community projects. The company has worked with the SBA to better compete for government contracts. Since 2019, WWC has received business counseling and market analysis from Wyoming SBDC Network Regional Director Susan Jerke, including market research used to develop the company's corporate strategic plan.

2020 8(a) Graduate of the Year



Cy A. Oatridge, CEO

Oatridge Security Group, Inc., Tacoma, WA

Cy A. Oatridge is CEO of Oatridge Security Group, Inc. (OSG), a graduate of SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, which provides protective service programs that meet and exceed commercial and government requirements. OSG offers armed and unarmed security officers, executive protection, fire alarm systems, electronic security, and consulting services. It is established as a small business leader in the protective security services industry in the greater Northwest area and beyond. OSG operated out of an office space that was less than 250 square feet for six years of its tenure in the 8(a) Program. Now, OSG has more than 115 employees and \$10 million in revenues.

OSG recently acquired drone defense systems to integrate it with its current security services and offer it to new clients. The defense system is the only defense system in North America that does not interfere with Bluetooth or WiFi signals. OSG has also submitted proposals for the Super Bowl, Rose Bowl, and Orange Bowl. The company participated in the SBA Mentor-Protege program with Evergreen Fire and Security and was able to secure many government contracts. As a result of this program, OSG was able to expand business operations to Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Colorado, and California.

2020 Small Business Subcontractor of the Year



Monica Lee Rommel, Chief Executive Officer

Specialty Materials Inc. (SMI), Lowell, MA

Monica Rommel is an innovator and entrepreneur with 35 years of leadership in materials science related to the use of composites in advanced aerospace applications. Rommel is the Chief Executive Officer for Specialty Material Inc., a woman-owned small business specializing in composite fiber and prepreg products since 1971. Rommel purchased SMI with her company Global Materials in 2019. SMI is the only remaining source of continuous boron fiber in the world. Its materials are primarily used to reinforce advanced composite materials. SMI's products support several industries including: aerospace, aviation and sporting equipment, with improved structural integrity and controlled thermal expansion. It is a volume producer of Chemical Vapor Deposition based Boron and Silicon Carbide fibers.

SMI partnered with L3Harris to develop industry changing technology for the aerospace industry. It also supported L3Harris and its government customer through engineering support and analysis. The company has been a strategic supplier to L3Harris for over two decades. SMI's material is used in L3Harris's electro-optical payloads to allow for earth, space observation and studies. L3Harris also uses SMI's prepreg material to advance solutions for its customers and to offer new technology that can significantly reduce the weight of the payload saving fuel on missions.

2020 Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year



Diana Lewis Jackson, *President and CEO*
Action Facilities Management, Inc. (AFM)
Morgantown, WV

Diana Lewis Jackson is President and CEO of Action Facilities Management, Inc. (AFM), a minority-owned, woman-owned certified small business specializing in government and commercial facilities management. AFM supports clients in 11 states and Washington, D.C., with more than 300 employees. It provides a full spectrum of integrated facilities management, infrastructure, and security support services with core competencies in facility operations and maintenance, construction, administrative support services, and emergency management.

AFM is a graduate of the SBA's 8(a) Program and was the SBA's 8(a) Graduate of the Year in 2016 and 2013 West Virginia Small Business Person of the Year. Diana received 7(j) training and assistance with learning how to market to the federal government. She credits the 8(a) Program with the launch of AFM into the procurement arena. Diana also received assistance from the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Small Business Development Center, SCORE and the Women's Business Center on how to do business with the federal government. AFM also participates in SBA's All Small Mentor Protégé Program. Since 2016, AFM has doubled its revenues and works with more than 30 subcontractors. Some of AFM's clients include the Department of State, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Defense Logistics Agency.

2020 Small Business Exporter of the Year



Nick Nicholas, *Owner and Technical Director*
Genesis Water Technologies, Inc. Maitland, FL

In 2005, Nick Nicholas joined Genesis Water Technologies, Inc. (GWT) as a sales associate. After obtaining his MBA, he worked his way up the company chain, eventually becoming its owner. Under his leadership, the company's revenues grew over 100% in 2019 and GWT started to tackle the water supply issues with sustainable water treatment systems. Nicholas is passionate about educating the world on the impact that polluted water has on the world.

The company began exporting in 2009 to Saudi Arabia. Ten years later, export represents 40% of the company's total sales and supports the workforce of 100 employees. GWT received a State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant for \$2,500, which provided a roadmap for the international expansion of GWT. Nicholas knew that GWT had to implement an aggressive marketing campaign before it could win business in a foreign market. GWT launched a digital marketing campaign to include translating its website into 24 local dialects and invested in search engine optimization tools to increase traffic to its website.

The company now uses its expertise and solutions to serve municipalities and industrial clients in 43 countries, fulfilling its mission of providing water and wastewater reuse solutions to communities around the world. GWT believes it can make a difference in the world's access to safe and clean water.

2020 Veterans Business Outreach Center Excellence in Service



Veterans Business Outreach Center at Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC **Tamara Bryant, Director**

The Veterans Business Outreach Center at Fayetteville State University provides veterans, active duty, and military spouses with the tools needed to establish and grow their businesses, generate profits, and become essential contributors to the North Carolina economy. The VBOC conducted 43 Boots to Business and Boots to Business Reboot classes with 672 participants across four military installations. It also organized 60 seminars and training sessions for over 1,550 participants focused on critical business topics. The center assists clients with business plans, loan package preparation, marketing, and financial literacy. In 2019, VBOC counselors assisted over 730 clients and contributed to the creation of 92 jobs. Thanks to a strong partnership with local

lenders, the center helped clients access over \$1.2 million in startup and expansion capital. The VBOC launched the Veteran Entrepreneurship Program at Fayetteville State University. The partnership provides mentors for veterans and military spouses to improve the business startup success rate. Over 100 veterans have participated so far. Also in collaboration with FSU, the center expanded its online resources, offering REAL Entrepreneurship, an online entrepreneurship series, for 245 participants. The center also held 14 small business webinars for 339 attendees

2020 Women's Business Center of Excellence Award



Women's Business Center, Southeastern CT, Women's Business Development Council, New London, CT **Laura Stetler, Project Director**

Project Director Since 2018, the Southeastern Connecticut Women's Business Center, based in New London, has served the southeast part of Connecticut, including New London and Middlesex Counties, with programs and services for aspiring, emerging and established entrepreneurs.

The Women's Business Development Council (WBDC), a not-for-profit providing the training, education and borrowing power necessary for women to launch and grow their own businesses, is host to the Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO)

Women's Business Centers (WBCs). The WBC program was founded to foster the growth of women-owned businesses by providing access to education, training, mentoring, business development and financing opportunities to women throughout the United States and its territories.

SBA Women's Business Centers are a national network of more than 100 offices that offer counseling, training, networking, workshops, technical assistance, and mentoring to women entrepreneurs on a wide variety of business topics.

2020 SCORE National Chapter of the Year



SCORE Greater Seattle, Seattle, WA

Krista Fuller, *Chapter Chair 2020*

Thomas Hughes, *Chapter Chair 2019*

SCORE Greater Seattle provides business mentoring and education to underserved, highly diversified communities. The chapter has opened four branches and now supports seven counties in Washington. SCORE Greater Seattle regularly assists other chapters with tools and advice on growing, improving, and managing their chapters. SCORE Greater Seattle has also modernized its volunteer base, bringing working executives

into the organization as subject matter experts, workshop presenters, and mentors. The group promotes a culture of diversity and inclusion, growing from 18% women and minorities to over 35% in three years. Under the leadership of Chapter Chair Krista Fuller, the chapter has grown with directors and executive committee members who demonstrate a strong client ethos and shared leadership model.

2020 Small Business Development Center Excellence and Innovation Award



University of Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center

Raymond Vargo, *Director*

Pittsburgh, PA

The Small Business Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh helps grow the economy of western Pennsylvania by educating entrepreneurs and providing the tools necessary to build successful businesses. Established in 1979, the center draws on a diverse base to provide clients a comprehensive range of business services at every stage of development. The SBDC Launch My Business workshop provides small business startup advice to entrepreneurs in coal-impacted communities, opening the door to a small business pivot. The center's Problem Solvers-Decision Makers course

allows entrepreneurs to share ideas and formulate solutions to growth issues. The UPMC Essentials for Success and Doing Business with Pitt programs were so popular, they've been expanded into other Pennsylvania communities and beyond. These programs help make important connections between small businesses and the University of Pittsburgh and its University of Pittsburgh Medical Center network.

Director Raymond Vargo provides strategic business and financial advice to help companies expand their profits, explore new markets, and overcome business challenges. Since opening the Washington County Outreach Office of the University of Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center in 1995, Raymond has grown it to become one of the most successful outreach offices in the Pennsylvania SBDC system.

2020 Small Business Investment Company of the Year



Spell Capital Mezzanine SBIC Partners II, L.P **William Spell**, *President*, Minneapolis, MN

Spell Capital Partners, LLC, is an established manager of private equity and mezzanine capital based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Founded in 1988, Spell Capital has over 30 years of successful industry experience. The principals of Spell Capital Partners are widely regarded as accomplished, experienced professionals with diverse backgrounds and successful investment track records. Currently, the firm manages over \$1.0 billion of capital (AUM) and have finished investing our fifth private equity buyout fund, Spell Capital Partners Fund V, and are now investing Spell Family Office capital in new control equity deals. Additionally, they are investing their second mezzanine fund, Spell Capital Mezzanine Partners II.

Spell Capital Mezzanine, an SBA licensed SBIC, provides subordinated debt and non-control equity to businesses in a variety of industries across the United States. They finance leveraged acquisitions backed by lower middle-market private equity sponsors, management and family driven ownership transitions, add-on acquisitions, recapitalizations, and growth initiatives.

2020 Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence— Research & Development



Mr. C. Scott Anderson, *Assistant Director for Operations* *Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lincoln Laboratory* *(MIT LL), Lexington, MA*

Mr. C. Scott Anderson is the Director for Operations for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lincoln Laboratory (MITLL), which operates as a federally funded research development center on behalf of the Department of Defense. The laboratory conducts research and development pertinent to national security for DOD, the military, and other federal agencies where national security is mission-critical. It focuses its research on space systems and technology, air, missile, and maritime defense; communication systems; cybersecurity and information sciences; intelligence; surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and technology; advanced technology; tactical systems, homeland protection, and air traffic control. The laboratory subcontracts more than \$500 million

annually with 40-50 percent going to small businesses.

In FY 2019, MIT LL awarded 43.6 percent in subcontracts to small businesses totaling \$264.7 million. Service-Disabled Veteran-owned small businesses received .81 percent of subcontracting dollars totaling \$5 million, small disadvantaged businesses received 3.5 percent in subcontracting dollars totaling \$21.5 million, women-owned small businesses received 22.2 percent in subcontracting dollars totaling \$134.6 million, and HUBZone-owned businesses received .3 percent in subcontracting dollars totaling \$1.6 million. MIT LL presented at four SBA roadshow forums and advised more than 50 small businesses during individual interactions on collaboration opportunities with it.

2020 Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence—Services



Carla Elena Undurruga, *Sector Manager & Small Business Liaison Officer*

Northrup Grumman Systems Corp. Global Supplier Diversity Programs, McLean, VA

Northrup Grumman Technology Services delivers full life-cycle solutions and services supporting mission-critical networks and systems in six areas, including sustainability and modernization in aircraft, electronics, and software, strategic missile systems support, secure infrastructure and cyber operations support and training support services. Carla Elena Undurruga believes that meeting and exceeding the company's subcontracting plan helps their customers achieve their small business goals. Some of its clients include the U.S. Department of Defense, federal, civilian, and health agencies,

and international defense communities.

In 2018-2019, Northrup Grumman Technology Services awarded 51% in subcontracts to small businesses, totaling \$655.6 million in contract dollars, and 6.7% in subcontracts awarded to small disadvantaged businesses, totaling \$112.19 million. Northrup Grumman also awarded 9.2% in subcontracts to woman-owned businesses, totaling \$118.3 million, and 5.2% in subcontracts to HUBZone small businesses, totaling \$66.3 million. It also awarded 5.5% in subcontracts to service-disabled veteran-owned businesses totaling \$70.5 million.

2020 Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official



Deborah A. Lieberman, *Montgomery County Commissioner, Dayton, OH*

The tornadoes that devastated much of Montgomery County on May 27, 2019 left behind over 4,500 damaged buildings and 80,000 residents without power. After touring the disaster area, Montgomery County Commissioner Deborah Lieberman met with the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center team to determine where to allocate resources to speed up recovery operations. Pre-disaster planning paid off. In 2015, the county established a multi-agency digital emergency radio system. The communications system allowed first responders and public health and safety departments to contact each other quickly despite the extensive power outage. She knew that many residents did not have Wi-Fi access, so she coordinated the creation of an informational disaster recovery flyer that would be delivered to homes.

She talked to residents who would not leave their damaged homes because they were scared of looters; she made sure they received the help they needed. She also worked with other county commissioners to waive reconstruction fees for homes and businesses.

As the recovery continued, Deborah shifted her focus to expanding the county's long-term recovery operations in response to future disasters. She worked with FEMA to form the Montgomery County Long Term Recovery Committee. This group encourages investment in individual and community recovery while promoting disaster preparedness programs.

2020 Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Volunteer



Phillip Thomas Mendiola-Long **San Jose, Tinian, MP**

Phillip Mendiola-Long's small business, Tinian Fuel Services, was one of only two gas stations on the island of Tinian before Super Typhoon Yutu hit. The Oct. 24-25, 2018 storm damaged over 3,000 homes, including Phillip's. With all his business inventory gone and his gas pumps ripped from their foundations, Phillip still focused on serving his community. Phillip and his staff built an extension line into the underground gas tank, which allowed the team to hand pump fuel for emergency vehicles. Within a week, they repaired two gas pumps. First responders, law enforcement officials, and municipal workers could refuel their generators and vehicles. Phillip helped distribute generators donated by a local charity and organized a safety training. He reached out to Guam business contacts to coordinate the shipment of food, water, tents, and other survival necessities. Using social media, Phillip collected donations from across the country, raising \$15,000 for island residents. He used his office as a daily supply distribution center. He drove to Tinian's hardest-hit areas delivering relief goods to those in need.

2020 Phoenix Award for Outstanding Small Business Disaster Recovery



Terry & Hope Bourque, *President & Vice President* **TLR Homes, Vidor, TX**

Terry and Hope Bourque's hurricane recovery story is a tale of tenacity. Their entire inventory of mobile homes was destroyed by flooding from Hurricane Harvey in August 2017. They lost 28 new mobile homes staged for sale, as well as their office and storage buildings. With damages assessed at \$2 million, Terry and Hope realized they needed a plan to restart the business while also reducing the loan amount they needed to cover their losses. The SBA would not get the small business owners locked into financing they could not then comfortably repay in the aftermath of a disaster. The couple negotiated with their existing lender and restructured their credit line. They adjusted their marketing and sales strategy to save money, using new technology to reach a larger clientele. By early 2018, sales were growing and TLR Homes showed a steady profit increase. Terry and Hope saved more by relocating their business office and getting new credit terms. Because of their own initiative to restructure and cut costs, the business was in recovery and ready for a higher loan amount. In mid 2018, TLR Homes qualified for a \$1 million SBA disaster assistance loan, which Terry and Hope used to purchase more mobile homes, moving the business forward to greater long-term recovery and success.