



NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

April 30 - May 6, 2023

2023 State Small Business Person of the Year Award Winners

<i>Alabama</i>	2	<i>Montana</i>	15
<i>Alaska</i>	2	<i>Nebraska</i>	15
<i>Arizona</i>	3	<i>Nevada</i>	16
<i>Arkansas</i>	3	<i>New Hampshire</i>	16
<i>California</i>	4	<i>New Jersey</i>	17
<i>Colorado</i>	4	<i>New Mexico</i>	17
<i>Connecticut</i>	5	<i>New York</i>	18
<i>Delaware</i>	5	<i>North Carolina</i>	18
<i>Washington, DC</i>	6	<i>North Dakota</i>	19
<i>Florida</i>	6	<i>Ohio</i>	19
<i>Georgia</i>	7	<i>Oklahoma</i>	20
<i>Hawaii</i>	7	<i>Oregon</i>	20
<i>Idaho</i>	8	<i>Pennsylvania</i>	21
<i>Illinois</i>	8	<i>Puerto Rico</i>	21
<i>Indiana</i>	9	<i>Rhode Island</i>	22
<i>Iowa</i>	9	<i>South Carolina</i>	22
<i>Kansas</i>	10	<i>South Dakota</i>	23
<i>Kentucky</i>	10	<i>Tennessee</i>	23
<i>Louisiana</i>	11	<i>Texas</i>	24
<i>Maine</i>	11	<i>Utah</i>	24
<i>Maryland</i>	12	<i>Vermont</i>	25
<i>Massachusetts</i>	12	<i>Virginia</i>	25
<i>Michigan</i>	13	<i>Washington</i>	26
<i>Minnesota</i>	13	<i>West Virginia</i>	26
<i>Mississippi</i>	14	<i>Wisconsin</i>	27
<i>Missouri</i>	14	<i>Wyoming</i>	27

Alabama Small Business Person of the Year

Daryl Thomas, Owner

Thomas Accounting & Income Tax Service, LLC, Selma, AL

From an early age, Daryl was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, calling his ability to walk and speak into question; however, after successful physical and speech therapy, he was able to not only overcome his physical challenges but also excel in academics, receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in Commerce and Business Administration from the University of Alabama.

After several years of accounting employment through various local government offices, churches, and medical facilities, Daryl Thomas started his own business out of his home in 2009. By 2015, he moved his business from his home to its current location in Selma, Alabama.

Like many small businesses, the Pandemic strained the business, but Daryl was able to take advantage of SBA's COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL) and keep his business operating. Daryl and his three full-time employees are providing accounting and tax services for local small businesses, churches, and nearly 400 individuals during tax season.

Alaska Small Business Persons of the Year

Amie & John Sommer, Owners

Tutka, LLC Wasilla, AK

In 1999, Amie and her sister, a couple of entrepreneurial young women in the State of Alaska, started a company known as Professional Services and Safety Instruments (dba PSI Environmental), which initially provided gas detection instrument service/rentals and environmental services.

As the company grew and expanded, ownership changed from Amie and her sister to Amie and her husband, John Sommer. With the change of ownership came a new name, Tutka, LLC and a new direction. The couple expanded the company into heavy civil construction.

Tutka, LLC, a union and non-union workforce, ranges from 15 – 35 employees depending on the projects, and year-round employs 12 full-time individuals. Tutka, LLC's three-year revenue average is over \$10.5 million, though they experienced a significant dip during the pandemic.

Their philosophy to grow slowly and steadily organically played an instrumental role in keeping their doors open.

Tutka, LLC credits its \$2 million COVID-19 EIDL to maintain its cash flow and workforce and grow its business by purchasing equipment. Tutka, LLC is a strong community supporter contributing over \$12,000 annually toward charitable causes.

Arizona Small Business Person of the Year

Jonathan Woodruff, President & CEO

ORSA Technologies, LLC Scottsdale, AZ

Jonathan Woodruff is CEO of ORSA Technologies, LLC, an SVDOB and 8(a) defense contractor which started in 2012 and has received EIDL and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans during the pandemic.

The firm, with 65 employees and \$6.2 million in revenues, and two locations in Arizona, provides information technology management services to the Department of Defense, including testing services, engineering, communications, and supply and logistics support. ORSA supports telemedicine firms as well.

Community is essential to Woodie, who contributes to the Make-a-Wish foundation, the Arizona Boy and Girls Clubs of Arizona, the Tucson Conquistadores Foundation, and the Huachucans Charity. He has participated in 7(j) training and continues to receive support from the Arizona District Contract team, which includes FAR training, proposal writing, and Government Lead Generation.

Arkansas Small Business Person of the Year

Sean Beavers, Member

Graylee Construction and Demolition, LLC Austin, AR

Sean Beavers is best known for his ability to overcome obstacles. He was born with a disability that limits his mobility but has never allowed his disabilities to define him or create roadblocks to his goals. After managing multi-million-dollar contracts in heavy civil construction management and observing the working conditions, Sean founded Graylee Construction and Demolition, LLC, in 2016; building projects and a company that treats their employees fairly and enriches their lives.

Like most small businesses, Graylee had humble beginnings with few employees, smaller projects, and no equipment or physical location. The SBA has been instrumental in helping Graylee navigate federal contracting in the 8(a) Program, utilizing assistance from Arkansas' Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), now APEX Accelerators (APEX), receiving pandemic assistance, and graduating from the Emerging Leaders Program to help facilitate growth.

Each year they have grown and tackled larger prime projects, boasting ten employees and sales of over \$2 million in 2021.

California Small Business Persons of the Year

Jared Malapit, Erik Wright, and Karl Vaillancourt, Principals

Precision Construction Services San Luis Obispo, CA

While it's endlessly rewarding to build and contribute to a community, construction is also an industry slow to change and adopt new ideas. Jared, Karl, and Erik wanted to create a different kind of culture; one built on trust, collaboration, and challenging conventional answers.

That approach is an essential factor in their success: Precision is now the fastest-growing construction company in California, with projects ranging from the first rocket-landing facility on the West Coast at Vandenberg Space Force Base to all facilities for the 880-acre Pismo Preserve open space area, to a 125,000-square-foot wine storage facility in Paso Robles.

But as significantly, Precision is changing the construction experience by creating a stronger, more supportive environment for its employees, clients, and community. The company has employed 44 since its establishment in 2013 and has SBA 8a Certification.

Colorado Small Business Person of the Year

Amy Carnrick, President & CEO

Foster Plumbing Denver, CO

Foster Plumbing is a veteran and women-owned commercial plumbing company based in Denver, CO. The business specializes in solving all plumbing needs, from diagnostics and repairs to full construction projects in the Denver metropolitan area - including projects with Denver Public Schools and Red Rocks Amphitheater. Inc.

Founded in 1996, the previous owners built the business over 21 years into a highly successful venture. However, after acquiring Foster in 2018, Ms. Carnrick has grown the company to the next level by exceeding all growth projections forecast at the time of the acquisition despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the business's explosive growth, Foster Plumbing has increased its staff from 7 and five trucks to 25 employees and 15 trucks. Since purchasing the company, Carnrick has utilized the SBA's 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program, 504 programs, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) assistance, a Paycheck Protection Program loan, and a COVID-19 EIDL loan. Amy Carnrick is a leader in every aspect of the word and utilizes her unique experience to build a thriving business and provide more job opportunities for women in the construction field.

Connecticut Small Business Person of the Year

Dennis Nash, President & CEO

Control Station, Inc.
Manchester, CT

Dennis Nash, President & CEO of Control Station, is a forward-thinking strategist who has positioned Control Station as an emerging leader in industrial process analytics and optimization. Mr. Nash was appointed President of Control Station in 2004 and transitioned the company from a hobby business into a Control Station licenses solutions to half of the manufacturers listed in the Fortune 500. It currently supports facilities located in over 70 countries. In 2018 Dennis was the Connecticut SBA Exporter of the Year. He has successfully built a multi-million-dollar software business that currently employs fifteen full-time staff.

Like most businesses, Dennis and his associates had business disruption during the pandemic however Dennis credits SBA's COVID-19 EIDL relief and Paycheck Protection Program for his success in maintaining his staff and being able to pivot quickly by establishing new work remote policies.

Delaware Small Business Persons of the Year

Jonathan & Monika Urquhart, Owner & General Manager ***Andreas Janke, Master Baker***

Bavarian Bakery and Deli
Dover, DE

With a vision to offer the broadest selection of authentic German baked goods, partners John and Monika Urquhart and Andreas (Andy) Janke opened the Bavarian Bakery in 2016. The bakery is a 1st generation family and veteran-owned business located in the capital city of Dover, Delaware.

Owner John Urquhart was a second lieutenant in the United States Army. During his ten years of service, he served in many troop leadership roles. When his commission ended, he began a civilian career as a manufacturing manager for Honeywell, later joining GE and Sabre Corporation. Monika, his wife and general manager, has over 30 years of experience working with large retail, grocery, and specialty food operations. Third partner and Master Baker, Andy, started as a Bakers Apprentice at age 16 in Giessen, Germany, and completed advanced pastry training in Regensburg and Neu Stadt, Bavaria.

During the pandemic, the Bavarian Bakery and Deli was fortunate to receive support from the SBA to help maintain critical staffing levels and retain specialized skilled employees. The SBA's PPP and EIDL funding was vital in helping the business remain stable and viable during the pandemic. Had it not been for the SBA support, the company would not enjoy its current level of success and its commitment to positively impacting the local community.

Washington, DC Small Business Persons of the Year

Lonye Ford & Arlene Wube, CEO & President/COO

Arlo Solutions

Washington, DC

Lonye serves as CEO, and Arlene is President & COO of Arlo, a technology solutions company providing intelligence, cybersecurity, and program management solutions to the government.

The knowledge to run Arlo stems from the capabilities of its founders. Lonye is known for her leadership skills, strong work ethic, and technical expertise. She's a proven leader and expert in cybersecurity. Arlene is known for her strong business acumen, which has allowed Arlo to compete in the federal market. She's a "natural" at strategic analysis, successfully developing a procurement strategy to attain a more significant market share by positioning Arlo through small business certifications, partnerships, and contracting vehicles, including SBA 8(a), VA Cohort, and the GSA (General Services Administration) Multiple Award Schedules (MAS).

Together, Lonye and Arlene are a dynamic duo. They're two women of color working in a male-dominated industry, fearlessly tackling challenges while pursuing contracts independently.

Florida Small Business Persons of the Year

Karina Doracio & Luis Contreras, President & CEO

AmePower

Miami, FL

Founded in 2002, AmePower has grown to be a prominent Florida technology and manufacturing company. AmePower began its journey as a company dedicated to the worldwide distribution of electronic components.

They are a manufacturer specializing in high-quality power electronic components for mass transportation, freight, mining, and industrial uses. The company was founded by Karina Doracio and Luis Contreras. They were assisted along the way by the SBA with two PPP loans in 2020 and 2021. In addition, SBA's resource partner, the Florida Small Business Development Center, helped coach them while they grew their company.

Karina is an ambitious, hands-on, and solutions-oriented leader, committed to always going further with an unwavering dedication to creating technologically advanced solutions. Karina's journey began in Argentina, her home country. Luis Contreras is a seasoned executive with over 30 years of experience in the technical and business development fields. Luis is a Venezuelan-born engineer. He had experienced success even before the start of his business career, receiving scholarships from Venezuelan Government and graduating in the top two percent (2%) of engineering schools.

Georgia Small Business Person of the Year

Ken Taunton, President & CEO

The Royster Group, Inc.

Atlanta, GA

Ken Taunton is the President & CEO of The Royster Group, Inc., a certified minority-owned business enterprise founded in 2001, providing executive search and professional staffing services in the private and public sectors. Ken has grown his company from a one-person operation to a firm with 80 employees.

In 2008, Ken was part of the SBA's inaugural Emerging Leaders program called "e200," which focused on developing business executives poised for growth. The program helped him navigate the Great Recession and pivot from declining commercial business to securing federal contracts. He's also an SBA 8(a) graduate and secured a few of the first federal contracts under the program. The Royster Group's revenues in 2008 were \$2 million; today, its revenues are over \$20 million.

Ken is passionate about the education and workforce development of underserved youth and volunteers with organizations that help provide equitable opportunities, such as Sheltering Arms.

Hawaii Small Business Person of the Year

Jonathan Montalbo, President

Aloha Termite & Pest Control

Kapolei, HI

After graduating high school, Jonathan started working in the pest control industry for his uncle's company, working his way up to be a general manager and acquiring the company 20 years later!

Before that, in 2006, he started Aloha Termite & Pest Control, with only four employees. They were the only company providing tent fumigation service on the island.

Today, he proudly services the entire state and with brick-and-mortar locations on each island, provides jobs for the community, now employing over 110 people.

By providing the best service possible, building trust and relationships with their customers, and with the assistance of PPP, Jonathan was able to keep everyone employed during COVID-19.

Over the years, he has done work for non-profits and other organizations at no cost, is a drop-off location for Toys for Tots and offers discounts to those who donate. He also gives time and money to local sports teams.

Idaho Small Business Person of the Year

Taveesak “Dang” Chanthasuthisombut, Owner

Dang’s Thai Cuisine & Sushi Bar

Hailey, ID

Dang Chanthasuthisombut brought his passion for Thai culture and food to the U.S., where he opened restaurants in various locations. In 2012, he opened his first Idaho restaurant in Ketchum and a few years later, with the help of an SBA loan, he expanded with a second location in Hailey.

Like many businesses, Dang’s restaurants suffered during the pandemic. Combatting a loss in revenue, Dang credits SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program for his ability to remain open and maintain his staff. Not only was Dang able to keep all his employees, but the loan also helped him make a full recovery and proceed to have his best year ever.

Along with being an accomplished entrepreneur, Dang is also an active community member. He is a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club and donates to numerous causes and fundraisers. While being a successful business owner, he has never lost his kindness, humility, or focus on people.

Illinois Small Business Person of the Year

Kathleen McShane, Owner/Founder/Director

Begin Within Therapy Services, PC

Chicago, IL

Kathleen McShane is a licensed clinical professional counselor and certified clinical trauma professional. After working in community mental health for 16 years, she founded Begin Within Therapy Services to meet a need for trauma-informed and attachment-focused mental health care on the south side of Chicago.

Starting in February 2015 with one part-time employee in a single-room office, Kathleen scaled her practice to four locations with 30 employees booking 20,000 appointments annually for therapy, psychological testing, and medication management. Although COVID-19 stunted company growth, Kathleen pivoted her practice to virtual services, increasing sales from \$625M in 2019 to \$1.5MM in 2021 with the aid of a 2020 SBA PPP loan. She also provided therapy to many weary essential workers—doctors, nurses, first responders, and therapists offering them additional support by way of special debriefing groups.

Today the company routinely offers financial assistance to local nonprofits that treat domestic violence and substance abuse to name a few.

Indiana Small Business Person of the Year

Haskell D. Portee, CEO

Professional Management Enterprises Indianapolis, IN

Professional Management Enterprises (PME) CEO Haskell D. Portee founded his Indianapolis-based company in 2006 after retiring from the U.S. Army. PME is a Minority Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) certified professional services firm offering customizable business solutions to 40+ clients across the nation, employing more than 350 people.

In 2022, Portee won the SBA Great Lakes Region and Indiana 8(a) Graduate of the Year. He has also participated in the SBA 7(j) Training and Emerging Leaders programs, used an SBA-backed loan to expand, and is active with the Indiana PTAC, Indiana SBDC, and SCORE.

Portee actively serves on community boards and as a member of multiple civic organizations such as the American Cancer Society, 100 Black Men, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc, Job Ready Veterans, Alternative Inc. Battered Women's Shelter, and more. Portee was recognized by President Biden with the distinguished 2022 President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award, celebrating his commitment to serving others.

Iowa Small Business Person of the Year

Aaron Warner, CEO

ProCircular, Inc. Coralville, IA

Aaron Warner has led ProCircular, Inc. from a 2016 start-up to being on the Inc. 5000 List in 2022. ProCircular clients range from mid-sized to Fortune 500 in cybersecurity analysis, testing, governance, risk management, and compliance.

Annual revenue growth of 60% changed abruptly in 2020 when the pandemic required a shift from complex onsite servicing to developing remote solutions. The SBA's PPP, COVID-19 EIDL, and SBDC programs were vital to weathering COVID-19. ProCircular has continued to grow since, adding two more offices, increasing staff from 35 to 69, and increasing paid internships from seven to 19.

Aaron has established an education trust for under-resourced students and invested \$300,000 to recruit and develop technology talent. He was named the Corridor Business Journal's 2022 "Entrepreneur of the Year." He also volunteers his expertise with the Technology Association of Iowa, Iowa City Area Development Group, MidWestOne Bank, Junior Achievement, and Rotary International.

Kansas Small Business Person of the Year

Jordan Michael Harris, Owner, Chief Visionary Officer

Harris Dream Clean, LLC

Wichita, KS

Jordan Harris was born and raised in Wichita, KS. After earning his Bachelor of Business Administration at Wichita State University, he began managing a maintenance crew at a large aerospace large aerospace manufacturer.

After three years, Jordan suddenly lost his job the day before his wife gave birth to their first child. In 2015, Jordan used \$45 of his unemployment check to purchase a vacuum cleaner, which he took door to door, seeking an opportunity to clean. Eventually, he landed one account and used that recommendation to gain more business. Shortly after, Jordan asked his brother, Lance, to become his business partner.

Harris wanted to grow the business further via government contracting and, with some guidance from the Wichita District Office, became a certified SBA 8(a) contractor in 2021. Today, Jordan manages over 80 employees across 80 locations.

Kentucky Small Business Person of the Year

David Dafoe, Founder & CEO

Flavorman

Louisville, KY

Flavorman was founded in 1992 recognizing the need for technical innovation in the beverage industry. The company specializes in beverage development and provides custom beverages for its clients. The company has created over 78,000 beverage formulations throughout a 30-year history.

David Dafoe began his business in his home, where flavors were created in the kitchen. Today, the company occupies the entire block of South 8th Street in a 79,000-square-foot beverage campus in Louisville. Flavorman has had consistent growth in the workforce, with revenue and net profit. The business grew to nearly \$5 million in revenue in 2021 with 66 employees.

Recognizing and overcoming the economic and business challenges has been very difficult for David. The business has had several challenges such as losing 80% of the revenue with one client, David diagnosed with Multiple Scleroses, and COVID-19. Despite the challenges, the company has learned to pivot, refocus, and prevail.

The company has received SBA loans (504 and 7A) to build the business and considers the SBA as a key to success of his company.

Louisiana Small Business Person of the Year

Karen Williams, Owner & President

NOLA Steele Fabrication & Erection, LLC Harvey, LA

Karen Williams began NOLA Steele Fabrication & Erection, LLC (NOLA Steel) in 2014 with a dream of becoming a leader in the Steel Fabrication and Erection Industry. She launched the company from one of the rooms in her home with two employees. Karen's first project, a \$300 contract repairing a steel door frame, eventually yielded an additional project of \$80k from the same customer.

Since then, NOLA Steel has become a premiere contractor in Southern Louisiana. Today, NOLA Steel has ten employees and \$1,500,000 in revenue, providing structural steel fabrication, erection, miscellaneous steel, ornamental iron, repair welding, steel supplier, and limited steel demolition. Karen has been able to leverage the benefit of 8(a) Program participation and DBE Certifications. The company has won significant projects with the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport and the Army Corp of Engineers.

In 2020, NOLA Steel experienced labor challenges. Karen leaned on her participation with local associations, pivoted her operating method, and began utilizing subcontractors to fulfill the job scopes, allowing for continued operations with zero interruptions. Karen also grew the company, adding more capacity for additional opportunities.

Maine Small Business Person of the Year

Carolyn Delaney, Founder

Journey Magazine Portland, ME

Carolyn Delaney started Journey Magazine in March 2018 after spending years working in IT and experiencing the process of recovery. Her goal was to reach individuals and family members with resources that can reduce the stigma of addiction and aid in the recovery process.

Along her entrepreneurial journey, Carolyn had help from SBA through a microloan and counseling from SBA resource partner CEI Women's Business Center. With this assistance, Carolyn built a national audience for her magazine, growing circulation to 30,000 a year, and increasing revenues to nearly \$200,000 a year.

Outside of her business, Carolyn advocates for policies to improve outcomes for those in recovery, particularly on employment issues. The impact of resources like Journey Magazine is enormous, as mental health issues and opioids can devastate communities. Carolyn is honored to be named Maine's Small Business Person of the year due to her dedication and the positive impact her company has made.

Maryland Small Business Person of the Year

Lois Gamerman, CEO

Soft Stuff Distributors, Inc.

Jessup, MD

Lois Gamerman has grown Soft Stuff Distributors into one of the largest independently owned specialty food distributors in America. Starting in 1990 by distributing soft serve ice cream from the family sunroom, Soft Stuff now occupies a 33,000-square-foot warehouse and has over 50 employees. Product lines include soups, desserts, baked goods, kosher foods, plus locally sourced & specialty items.

When the pandemic prompted an 85% loss in sales as Gamerman's customers in the hospitality industry shuttered, she turned to SBA's PPP and COVID-19 EIDL for capital to keep the doors open, retain employees and retool operations. New product lines and a direct-to-consumer online sales platform were part of her recipe for success. Sales soared, and the company is on pace to exceed pre-pandemic sales by 4%.

Gamerman gives back to the community through food and monetary donations, mentoring, and job training programs. She also serves on numerous boards and committees, both local and national in scope.

Massachusetts Small Business Persons of the Year

Kelly & Jim Sullivan, Vice President & President

Millennium Press

Agawam, MA

Kelly and Jim Sullivan started Millennium Press out of a one-car garage back in 1989.

Their first big equipment purchase, a 2-color printing press – which went a long way to building the foundation to their business. By the mid-90s, the operation outgrew the garage and the Sullivans purchased an existing printing company and the building at 570 Silver Street in Agawam, MA.

By the early 2000s, Millennium Press needed even more space for more printing capacity to satisfy demand. The Sullivans added another 15,000 sq. ft., while also purchasing brand new equipment to keep building. Millennium Press consistently grew and was profitable for nearly 20 years.

Then in 2008, when the global financial crisis hit – facing near closure – the SBA stepped in to provide a lifeline. The 504 program helped the Sullivans refinance their debt in 2009.

In March of 2020, the company was approved to refinance its building with a traditional commercial loan at a lower fixed rate, but the pandemic swept over all progress made. The SBA again came to the aid of Millennium Press with covid relief including: EIDL, PPP and 504 debt relief programs.

Michigan Small Business Person of the Year

Todd Lotzer, CEO

Prime Packing Solutions

Livonia, MI

In 2019, Todd Lotzer took his business expertise as a consultant and acquired Michigan Packaging Solutions. Prime Packaging Solutions (Prime) was created and rebranded as a packaging design and distribution company that serves the automotive, glassware, food, retail, health, and medical industries. With one employee, the company started in Livonia, MI. After sales and customer growth increased significantly, they opened a second location in Louisville, KY.

Todd and his team have thrived through receiving an SBA Paychex Protection Program, SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) strike, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the automotive chip shortage; Prime grew by more than 40%. They are now exporting to Canada and exploring opportunities to expand in Mexico.

Todd contributes his time and money throughout his community to further enrich schools and other nonprofit entities. During COVID-19, he provided free design packaging materials to ensure medical equipment and supplies would be available to patients in a timely and clean environment.

Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year

Abdirahman Kahin, CEO & Owner

Afro Deli & Grill

St. Paul, MN

Abdirahman Kahin is the CEO & Owner of Afro Deli & Grill, a fast-casual restaurant concept of African fusion cuisine with four locations across the Twin Cities. Abdirahman immigrated to the U.S. in 1996. In 2014, after attending community college and working at a media company, he realized his dream was to open a restaurant focused on healthy, fresh, accessible African food.

The pandemic forced a new location to close, but the business pivoted to grab-n-go products. It now supplies eight stores in the Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport (MSP) along with fifteen other stores across the metro. Afro Deli also secured a contract and partnered with Meals on Wheels and Minnesota Central Kitchen to provide home-delivered meals to vulnerable community members.

Since its inception, Afro Deli has utilized numerous SBA loan programs like the 7a Express and SBA pandemic relief. Abdirahman is a committed community member serving on several boards and is passionate about furthering food security and anti-hunger efforts.

Mississippi Small Business Person of the Year

Nick Wallace, Owner & Chef

Nick Wallace Culinary Jackson, MS

Mississippi-born and raised, Nicholas (Nick) credits his grandmothers, Queen Morris, and Lennel Donald, for sparking his love of culinary arts. From a young age, they could see that Nick belonged in the kitchen with his natural talent and passion for cooking. His love and skills in the culinary arts has grown as he's merged his family farm origins with French-learned techniques to create his modern and unique Mississippi cuisine.

Nick has remained focused on the beauty of food, as nature is one of his biggest inspirations. He has served as an executive chef for some of the country's most prestigious museums and hotels, allowing him to flourish as a leader and innovator in the culinary arts.

After opening Nick Wallace Culinary LLC, Nick was voted Best Chef in Jackson for the last four years and has remained on the list of Best Chefs in America. Known for redefining the southern culinary experience, Nick has participated in "50 Chefs-50 States" [Flavored Nation] in Chattanooga, TN. He has also presented five Mississippi-themed dinners in New York for the James Beard Foundation.

Nick has had his fair share of challenges, like most during the pandemic, and because of those challenges, Nick received the SBA COVID-19 EIDL Loan and the SBA Restaurant Revitalization Fund. Although Nick's business has had its ups and downs, he continues striving to grow as a chef and as a business.

Missouri Small Business Person of the Year

Luis Allan Arias, CEO

Compass Roofing, LLC Kansas City, MO

In 1994, Luis Allan Arias came to the U.S. from Costa Rica with a strong entrepreneurial mind and work ethic that he learned from working on his family's farm in Costa Rica. In 2012, Allan started Compass Roofing, LLC in Kansas City, MO.

Compass Roofing is SBA 8(a) certified business that performs commercial roof installations, foundation waterproofing, general contracting, provides roll-off containers, and more. Compass Roofing also worked on the newly built Kansas City International Airport, the largest construction project in Kansas City's history. For Allan, nothing is more important than upholding a superior work ethic. Compass has earned a reputation for its commitment to excellence and to creating innovative and flexible solutions for its clients.

Like most businesses, Compass suffered during the pandemic and combatted a significant loss in revenue. Allan credits SBA's COVID-19 EIDL and PPP relief programs to maintain his staff and revenues. Today, the company has 25 employees with revenues of \$3.6 million.

Neli & Dimitar Nikolov, Owners

The Corral Burger and Lodge Gardiner, MT

The Corral Burger and Lodge is the oldest standing business in Gardiner, the only year-round access to Yellowstone National Park (YNP).

Neli and Dimitar Nikolov bought The Corral in 2015. In 2017, USA Today voted The Corral, The Best ELK Burger. The Nikolovs use local elk, buffalo, grass-fed beef, and produce.

They grew their employees from 15 to 40 during peak season, but tragedy struck in June 2022. Historic flooding closed the YNP entrance and stopped tourism traffic, which is the revenue lifeline for local businesses. The Nikolovs had to reduce staffing and minimize expenses. Fortunately, the Gardiner entrance re-opened four months later, and tourists returned.

The Nikolovs are active in their local chamber, and donate to community causes, including Snoopy Preschool, and Gardiner Schools. As clients of Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) & Woman's Business Centers (WBC), they received COVID Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans.

Nebraska Small Business Person of the Year

Rachel Daly, Owner, PharmD, RP

Innovative Rx Kearney, NE

Rachel Daly owns Innovative Rx, a compounding pharmacy in Kearney, NE.

Rachel opened the business in September 2019 using an SBA 7(A) loan and consulting services from SBA's resource partner the Nebraska Small Business Development Center. She is passionate about providing specialized medications to meet her patients' needs.

Shortly after the pharmacy opened, COVID-19 profoundly affected the business. Rachel quickly adapted and began making bulk sanitizer to sell just over cost to her customers and the community. Rachel used the PPP program in 2020 to help stay afloat during the pandemic.

As the pandemic eased in 2021, Rachel returned to providing compounded medications. Her business quickly grew, adding six employees in 2021 and four more in 2022. With continued growth, Rachel plans to expand into an adjoining commercial site this year.

Rachel is active in her children's school and often participates in industry and community events. She also partners with the S.A.F.E. Center to provide gifts for participating families in need.

Nevada Small Business Person of the Year

Juanny Romero, CEO

Mothership Coffee Roasters Las Vegas NV

Juanny Romero is the CEO of Mothership Coffee, the largest and longest-running first woman and minority-owned chain of independent cafes in Las Vegas.

Opening her first cafe in the Great Recession of 2008, she grew her business with grit and ingenuity, serving as its first barista, learning online marketing, and providing exceptional customer service. Today, she manages 53 employees and has three cafes, with two more planned in 2023. SBA's Emerging Leaders program and SCORE mentorship gave her the tools necessary to combat the "Great Resignation," rising inflation, and supply chain issues.

During COVID-19, she maintained her business's profitability, kept prices the same, increased staff wages, donated coffee to a homeless field hospital, created a charity coffee bag program to benefit first responders, and started a coffee bartering program featured on national news outlets. Juanny believes in giving back to others; she buys coffee beans through the Café Femenino Foundation, a woman coffee farming cooperative, and donates to female programs in coffee-producing countries. She also supports dozens of local community charities.

New Hampshire Small Business Persons of the Year

Nancy and John Wilbur, CEO & President

Wilbur Technical Services Mont Vernon, NH

Nancy and John began Wilbur Technical Services as a home-based business in 2004 providing air quality monitoring solutions throughout New England with just 2 employees and under \$50K in revenues.

As of 2023, Wilbur Technical Services, LLC (WTS) have grown to a team of 14 with almost \$5MM in sales supporting customers all over the world. Wilbur's contributions have enabled the Department of State to monitor, track, report, and share air quality data with government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and the general public.

During the pandemic, Wilbur utilized the PPP to retain their existing employees and had to pivot their operations due to travel restrictions. WTS retained a professional videographer to make training materials to allow them to meet its installation and in-person training obligations by remote methods using videos and around-the-clock classes at their facilities. Recent growth includes the design and fabrication of customized mobile units for universities, state agencies, and international customers.

They support research at Northeastern University in support of The Clean Air, Smart City, and Digital Earth Research Lab.

New Jersey Small Business Person of the Year

Lauren Borawski, COO

Child's Play Challenge Courses

Scotch Plains, NJ

Lauren Borawski's arts and management skills provided the background for Child's Play Challenge Courses, which opened in 2015. She oversees operational activities and strategic marketing plans as the Chief Operating Officer. Lauren designs programs that employ 20 part-time personnel with her husband, Matt, and her daughter.

SBDC Kean University was instrumental in helping Child's Play Challenge Courses as they explored sales growth ideas such as equipment rentals, leases, and staying current by updating course components. Kean SBDC helped Lauren obtain a PPP loan, an EIDL (25K), and several NJ State grants through NJEDA.

Child's Play belongs to the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce and participates in the Women's Franchising Network Committee in Philadelphia, New York, and New Jersey. They have been a member of the NJBIA and the planning committee for the Rockin' 4 Autism event.

New Mexico Small Business Person of the Year

Chauling "Lynn" Armijo, Owner/President

Four Winds Mechanical HTC/AC, Inc.

Albuquerque, NM

Founded in 1997, Four Winds Mechanical HTC/AC Inc. is a women-owned, service-disabled veteran, HUBZone, and 8a small business located in New Mexico.

Lynn's ownership began in 2013 when her father retired. The company had negative working capital, \$1.2M in revenue, past-due payments, and limited bonding. She worked tenaciously to find new customers to be profitable. She collaborated with SBDC and PTAC and joined the SBA 8(a) and HUBZone programs, realizing the great benefits. In 2019, she purchased her building with a 7a loan, creating equity. In 2020, she built two COVID-19 relief hospitals to help fight the pandemic and provide financial stability. Four Winds now has over \$10M in revenue, doubled its employees to 26, and works in NM, CO, AZ, TX, OK, NV, and CA.

Armijo serves her community by donating to the Children's Cancer Center, acting on her church's board, and donating labor to local non-profits. She is an Iraq War Veteran honorably discharged from the United States Air Force National Guard.

New York Small Business Person of the Year

Joshua Schmieder, President

JOSH Landscape Co.
Honeoye Falls, NY

Joshua Schmieder is the owner of Josh Landscape Co., a landscape design-build and commercial landscape maintenance company serving New York's Finger Lakes region.

Joshua started his entrepreneurial journey at the age of 10, earning spending money during his summers mowing lawns. By his 18th birthday, he officially launched JOSH Landscape Co. and never looked back. In its 20 years, the business has grown to over \$11 million in sales, with two locations and a workforce of 150 people.

JOSH Landscape Co. utilized a variety of SBA financial programs to grow its operations. The business has been on a steadily upward track with SBA Express Lines of Credit, Term Loans for expansion, and a 504 Loan to purchase its headquarters. Most recently, the company utilized SBA's Paycheck Protection Program to support its employees during the pandemic.

Active in the community, Joshua and JOSH Landscape Co. frequently donate labor and materials to support a variety of projects.

North Carolina Small Business Person of the Year

Michael McWhorter, CEO

Mojotone
Burgaw, NC

Michael McWhorter started Mojotone in 2000 as a mail-order guitar part business with two employees in a small warehouse. Finding a vast need among musicians, he expanded Mojotone's line to include manufacturing and custom design. With over 70 employees, a 46k sq ft warehouse, and over \$6.5m in sales, Mojotone prides itself as a top-five U.S. retailer in acoustic retail markets.

The NC Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) helped Michael with leadership and financial training to improve his profitability and export outreach. SBTDC also provided a student MBA team through UNC Wilmington to analyze the Japanese market, develop a marketing plan, and much more.

McWhorter cares about his employees and the community. Hurricane Florence caused damage to Mojotone and its employees' homes. All employees continued to receive paychecks during the business's temporary closure. McWhorter and Mojotone are very involved in the local community and volunteer to Pender Alliance for Teen Health, Communities in School, United Way, Boy Scouts among others.

North Dakota Small Business Persons of the Year

Matthew & Jesse Faul, President & Vice President

Red E, LLC

Fargo, ND

Matthew and Jesse Faul are the owners of Red E, an engineering services and manufacturing support company in Fargo, North Dakota. Matt formed Red E in 2012, operating as a sole proprietor in shared office space. In 2015, his twin brother Jesse, a mechanical engineer, joined the firm.

The brothers encountered a significant challenge in 2015 due to non-payment by their most extensive account. Putting their engineering expertise and farm experience to work, they began designing and manufacturing after-market solutions for agricultural equipment. Financed partly by an SBA-guaranteed loan, this addition to their business model helped them get back on track.

In recent years, revenues from domestic sales and exports worldwide have significantly increased. Today, the company employs 25 people and operates in 23,000 sq. ft. space with expansion plans.

Matt and Jesse are active in industry organizations and volunteer their time and resources to their local church and charities to assist those in need.

Ohio Small Business Person of the Year

Jeanna Hondel, President & Founder

Ascension Construction Solutions

Columbus, OH

In 2017, Jeanna Hondel decided it was time to use her understanding of the nuances and challenges inherent in construction management to begin her own business. Soon thereafter, Jeanna found Ascension Construction Solutions (ACS) as a woman-owned, certified minority business enterprise.

ACS has doubled in gross revenue and employees every year. In 2020, due to the nature of its work, ACS was deemed essential and continued to thrive. Ascension Construction Solutions added 11 team members to its employee roster.

Jeanna received assistance with various resources from the SBA Women's Business Center, and during the pandemic, she secured an EIDL loan. During her free time, Jeanna enjoys spending time with her family and sharing the success of ACS through donations to charities she supports.

Oklahoma Small Business Person of the Year

Mike Bausch, Owner

Andolini's Worldwide Tulsa, OK

Mike Bausch owns Andolini's Pizzeria, which has been named one of the "Top 10 Pizzerias in America." Andolini's was founded in 2004 when Mike left the Marine Corps due to type 1 juvenile diabetes. Having the disease while building a business has been challenging, but the skills that the USMC provided have spurred Andolini's growth.

Bausch credits his success story in part to SBA-guaranteed veteran loans. Andolini's has grown to five pizzerias, two gelaterias, two food hall concepts, a food truck, and a fine dining restaurant, Prossimo. The company employs 271 people.

Mike is a Certified Master Pizzaiolo. He also authored the Amazon #1 Best Seller *Un sliced: How to Stay Whole in the Pizzeria Industry*.

Andolini's partners with "City Lights Tulsa" each year because donations directly clothe the homeless with no middleman. Bausch mentors businesses in the Kitchen 66 Lobeck Taylor Foundation and 36° North incubator. Mike is also the President & founder of the Cherry Street Community Board, helping to advise and develop historic Cherry Street in Tulsa.

Oregon Small Business Person of the Year

Lisa Schroeder, Executive Chef/Owner

Mother's Bistro & Bar Portland, OR

Lisa Schroeder is the executive chef and owner of Mother's Bistro & Bar, serving home cooked foods made from scratch from mothers around the world in Portland, Oregon.

In 1992, while juggling a marketing and catering career and raising her daughter, Lisa realized there was no place that served the kind of food she would make if she had the time. Since opening its doors in 2000, Mother's has become a fixture of Portland's food scene and has gone from a 125 seat restaurant to 225 with more than 100 employees.

When COVID-19 hit, SBA COVID Relief programs provided a lifeline to ensure Mother's was able to welcome back its customers when it re-opened in June 2021. Since reopening, Mother's continues to recover from the effects of COVID-19 and is rebuilding for a brighter future.

Lisa is an active member of the community, participating in numerous charities and causes. She is a frequent keynote speaker at fundraising events, mentors food service workers, and speaks at high school career events.

Pennsylvania Small Business Person of the Year

Melinda Nearhoof, Owner

Annie's Flooring and Commercial Services Meadville, PA

Melinda Nearhoof has been flooring residences, businesses, and school systems throughout Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio since 2018. Growing from just her to employing 24, Annie's Flooring and Commercial Services works with commercial and residential sectors, offering sales and installation complemented by janitorial and maintenance amenities.

She used the Gannon University Small Business Development Center to implement a marketing plan. The student soon became a master, increasing employment and sales by an incredible 2,300% and 332%, respectively. When the pandemic halted showroom foot traffic, Nearhoof enhanced her janitorial division, creating a new revenue stream.

Nearhoof is now focusing on expanding her showroom, product lines, employee betterment, and community involvement. She's instituted health care and bonuses and is adding a 401(k) plan. From around the corner to around the globe, Nearhoof donates flooring and funds to worthy causes.

Puerto Rico Small Business Person of the Year

Carlos E. Bonilla-Colon, President

DUI, Inc. Guayama, PR

Carlos E. Bonilla-Colon is the owner of DUI, Inc., a company dedicated to disinfection and commercial laundry services for pharmaceutical and medical device facilities.

In 2002, Carlos identified a business opportunity for disinfection services in central Puerto Rico, an area with a high concentration of pharmaceutical industries. Later, he relocated to a larger building with more than 22,000 square feet, which allowed him to expand his washing and cleaning rooms, recruit 28 employees, and increase his services to other industries.

Carlos faced the challenges of the pandemic and used PPP loans and COVID-19 EIDL to cover operating expenses and the high demand for business disinfection services. Carlos also received a CAPLine for his commercial laundry service, a 7(a) loan that helped to purchase new equipment and make facility improvements, and an SBA Express loan for working capital.

Carlos frequently donates products and textiles to the elderly and nursing homes.

Rhode Island Small Business Person of the Year

Craig Pickell, President & CEO

Bullard Abrasives, Inc.
Lincoln, RI

Craig Pickell is the President & CEO of Bullard Abrasives, Inc., a manufacturer of high-performance abrasive accessories for portable power tools. In business for over 95 years, Bullard has been a pillar of the Rhode Island manufacturing community, making products that cut, grind, profile, and surface prep all types of metal. From shipbuilding to pipeline construction, automotive to aircraft, Bullard products are being used around the world.

Headquartered in Lincoln, RI, Bullard utilized the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) during the pandemic to keep its doors open and employees paid. Fully recovered now, Bullard has continued to expand its customer base, both domestically and globally, through various strategic partnerships. The company's ISO 9001: 2015 certification assures customers are receiving the highest quality products by adhering to a rigorous quality management system.

Mr. Pickell is a well-respected businessmen in the state, and has received accolades for his charitable work.

South Carolina Small Business Person of the Year

Jennifer Megliore, CEO

ArtWare, Inc.
Hilton Head Island, SC

Jennifer Megliore is the owner of ArtWare, Inc. in Hilton Head, South Carolina, which focuses on American Crafts and local artists from Hilton Head.

In 2000, Jennifer started her business with the help of SCORE counseling on her start-up. In 2020 the pandemic brought Jennifer back to SCORE for coaching through the SBA Loan process to receive a successful EIDL loan and PPP funding. The loans allowed Jennifer to retain all six employees and increase sales when the pandemic forced stores to close.

Jennifer is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Women's Association of Hilton Head Island. Jennifer annually supports 38 local groups with annual gift certificates and gift donations to their fund-raisers and silent auctions.

Denise Cotter & Michelle Marino, Co-CEOs

Houndstooth House, LLC

Sioux Falls, SD

Founded by Denise Cotter and Michelle Marino in 2005, Houndstooth House, LLC provides a wide variety of design services, from inspiration to installation, for residential and commercial clients. Denise and Michelle started with residential jobs for people they knew personally and soon developed relationships with contractors and vendors transforming spaces in Sioux Falls, surrounding areas, and across the country.

Houndstooth House has received two SBA 504 loans to purchase new buildings and add retail space. The Houndstooth House team has grown to four full-time employees and four part-time employees and is working on 51 projects involving new builds, residential updates, remodels, and commercial buildings.

Tennessee Small Business Person of the Year

Dr. Jonathan Scott Huitink, Pediatrician & President

Mary Kathryn Oliver, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner & Owner

Compass Pediatrics

Gallatin, TN

Dr. Jonathan Scott Huitink received a Health Professions Scholarship from the U.S. Army and earned his medical degree from the University of Arkansas College of Medical Sciences. He began his military medical career and pediatric residency training with the San Antonio Military Pediatric Center affiliated hospitals. He is Board Certified in Pediatrics and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Huitink joined forces with Mary Kathryn, a nurse practitioner, to create a one-of-a-kind pediatric practice in which they have great pride. In 2018, they visited the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) at Volunteer State Community College to get professional business advice and lay out a plan. Soon after, a plan and funding were in place, and in August 2019, Compass Pediatrics was born!

Dr. Huitink serves on the Cumberland Pediatric Foundation Education Committee and as a physician liaison in Sumner County Schools in Tennessee.

Brandi Harleaux, CEO

South Post Oak Recycling Center Houston, TX

Brandi Harleaux is the CEO and second-generation owner of South Post Oak Recycling Center (SPORC). SPORC specializes in sourcing recycled metal material by providing first-class service solutions to customers who generate metal as a byproduct of their operations, production, or manufacturing cycle. The business also exports secondary metal/recyclables to international markets, including Mexico and several countries in Asia.

Over the last ten years, South Post Oak Recycling Center has had assistance, guidance, and support from several SBA programs, including SCORE, PTAC, SBDC & SBA funding. SCORE and SBDC were instrumental in guiding the business strategy development, marketing strategy, and growth plan. Most recently, South Post Oak Recycling Center received funding through the Paycheck Protection Program during the early phases of the pandemic.

Utah Small Business Person of the Year

David B. Mineer Jr., CEO

Construction Monitor, LLC Cedar City, UT

David Mineer purchased the family-owned business in 2014 from his father, Dave Sr. His father started Construction Monitor in 1989 to provide timely building permit information to builders, subcontractors, and suppliers.

David's creativity and entrepreneurial skills helped him rapidly expand the business to meet the needs of a growing customer base. What started as a one-employee business in rural Utah quickly grew to 42 employees that provide services in over 2,800 jurisdictions in the United States. When David took the CEO role, he sought help from the Small Business Development Center and SCORE mentors. Over the last ten years, David has continued to work with the SBDC counselors, who also helped him obtain much-needed support during COVID through the PPP and COVID-EIDL loan.

Construction Monitor supports its rural community in many ways, including offering opportunities to high school students, internship contributions for SUU, and small businesses.

Vermont Small Business Persons of the Year

Christopher and Cortney Keene, Owners & Co-Directors

Keene Perspectives

White River Junction, VT

Christopher and Cortney Keene are the owners of Keene Perspectives, a clinic-based business model providing early intensive behavioral intervention, education, and social groups for children with Autism and other developmental disorders. They also offer parent training, school workshops, and consultation.

Cortney taught special education and consulted with Vermont schools for 13 years, and Chris has Ph.D. from Dartmouth College, majoring in behavioral neuroscience. The couple dreamed of opening a clinic where they could draw from their combined experience and knowledge to provide individualized intervention for children in need. The couple opened Keene Perspectives in 2018 with the assistance of the Vermont Small Business Development Center.

Since 2019, revenue has exceeded \$1 million annually, with 29 employees. The business has had a variety of SBA assistance, including the Vermont SBDC, a 7a startup loan, Paycheck Protection Program loans, and graduating from Emerging Leaders in 2021.

Both Cortney and Christopher are appointed advisors for the Vermont Secretary of State and members of the Council of Autism Service Providers.

Virginia Small Business Person of the Year

Sharon Hamer, Co-founder/President

Akiak Technology

Alexandria, VA

Sharon Hamer, Co-founder and President of Akiak Technology, is the first indigenous woman President of the first tribally owned SBA 8(a) certified company in western Alaska.

Sharon is Yup'ik and an enrolled member of the Akiak Native Community, a federally recognized Tribe. She retired after 31 years of federal service to provide a better economic future for her Tribe by starting and growing tribal businesses. Sharon grew her first Tribal 8(a) company, Akiak Technology LLC, from negative revenue in 2019 and 2020 to \$1.7M in sales in 2021. Akiak Technology LLC is accelerating revenue growth in 2022 with its first 8(a) prime contract award for \$22.8M over two years.

Sharon is the Co-founder and President of tribally owned Akiak Facility Systems LLC, currently in the SBA approval process for 8(a) certification. She is a Member of the Akiak Holdings LLC Board of Directors and co-founded the tribal non-profit Yukon-Kuskokwim Tribal Broadband Consortium consisting of 17 Tribal Nations.

Jennifer Weddermann, Owner, Architect

Weddermann Architecture, PLLC
Tacoma, WA

Jennifer Weddermann is the owner and principal architect of Weddermann Architecture in Tacoma, WA.

Jennifer launched Weddermann Architecture in 2010 out of a 500-square-foot office with the help of two part-time assistants. In 2015, Jennifer began working with an advisor at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). While working with the SBDC, Jennifer has grown Weddermann Architecture into a team of 8 employees and secured an SBA 7(a) loan to purchase a 3000-square-foot building for the company headquarters.

With a focus on sustainable building design, Jennifer has developed a diverse portfolio of residential, commercial, and community-based projects, including affordable housing units, public rail stations, and public art installations. Jennifer volunteers as a youth mentor, sharing her expertise in architecture, welding, and metal artwork to offer guidance and advice to teens interested in pursuing post-high school educations, apprenticeships, and careers.

West Virginia Small Business Persons of the Year

Anthony & Heather Wheeler, President & Vice President/Secretary

Paris Signs
Huntington, WV

Anthony and Heather Wheeler are co-owners of Paris Signs, a sign company dedicated to offering creative solutions to customers, located in Huntington, WV. Anthony had a passion for painting but needed to learn how to start a business. In 1991, he connected with a SCORE counselor who assisted him in creating a Sole Proprietorship.

The company has seen consistent growth since its inception, with its best in 2019. However, in 2020, the business was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and an ice storm, damaging their facility and delivery vehicles.

SBA's COVID-19 EIDL relief program helped the business through the tough time. In 2022, they saw a 50% increase in sales and have grown to 31 employees. Due to the significant growth, they recently purchased an additional location.

Paris Signs contributes to nonprofit organizations associated with children, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Hoop for Children, and the Ronald McDonald House.

Wisconsin Small Business Persons of the Year

Steven, Peggi, & Chuck Potter, President & Founders

Arctic Compressor LLC Superior, WI

Peggi and Chuck Potter founded Northshore Compressor in 1986 to distribute specialized air compressors which deliver critical air to firefighters. They began manufacturing in 2008, moved those operations from Minnesota to Wisconsin in 2018, and created a new company, Arctic Compressor. Their son, Steven Potter, now leads Arctic as its president.

In late 2017, Steve teamed with advisors from the SBDC at UW-Superior and SCORE in Brainerd, MN, meeting monthly to identify growth opportunities, with dramatic results: Arctic's sales territory has expanded nearly nationwide. Sales doubled between 2019 and 2021, and net worth increased even more. Employment nearly tripled by 2023 to 28 employees. Its plant has grown from 8,000 to 13,000 square feet, moving to a 22,000-square-foot facility in 2023.

Steve has also implemented employee profit-sharing. A PPP loan helped address pandemic challenges when onsite work moved to video and phone calls.

Wyoming Small Business Persons of the Year

Rachel Kalenberg & Ariane Jimison, Owners

Pizza Carrello Gillette, WY

Pizza Carrello LLC is a full-service wood-fired restaurant and bar serving Gillette and the surrounding area. Pizza Carrello first began as a meager homemade food cart in 2011. In 2015, the business moved into a small space inside a local brewery. Today, Pizza Carrello owns and occupies a 7,000-square-foot building with 140 seats.

They have a long history of working with the SBA during their 11-year journey as a company. Ariane and Rachel's first met with the SBA in September 2011. In 2016, they worked with their bank and the SBA to procure a 7(a) Loan to help open their first full-service restaurant operation.

During the pandemic, Pizza Carrello received disaster assistance (PPP) in 2020 and 2021 to help keep their employees working. In May 2021, they were able to get help from the RRF. In 2021, Pizza Carrello secured a 504 loan to purchase the building they moved into five years earlier.

As members of the LGBT community, Ariane and Rachel work to support equality for all. Pizza Carrello collaborates with its local PFLAG chapter and supports many local charities.