



News Release

ORANGE COUNTY/INLAND
EMPIRE DISTRICT OFFICE

Release Date: September 23, 2020

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Release Number: OCIE-20-13

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Kusum Kavia, Co-Founder and President of Combustion Associates, Inc. Selected as 2020 Small Business Exporter of the Year

Business style focuses on strategy and opportunities

SANTA ANA, Calif. – The U.S. Small Business Administration, Orange County / Inland Empire District Office is pleased to announce Kusum Kavia, Co-Founder and President of Combustion Associates, Inc. (CAI) as the 2020 Small Business Exporter of the Year. Kavia was nominated by Mukund Kavia, Chairman and CEO of CAI. The business is located in Corona, Calif.

Cofounded by Kusum and Mukund Kavia in 1991, CAI provides cutting edge engineering and advanced manufacturing solutions to the energy and process industries; a power generating company with multifaceted specialties. CAI has two key product lines; power generation systems, including their signature brand Spirit™ and process systems. In the Power Division, CAI specializes in modular and stationery containerized power generation systems that operate continuously and that are cost effective and energy efficient. In the Process Division, CAI provides skid-mounted automated process equipment for various industries and applications. CAI has a core staff of 18 employees, however that number can increase to over 100 people for special projects. CAI's products are engineered, manufactured, and tested at its facility in Corona, Calif.

Kusum Kavia is behind the company's successful ventures in exporting their products around the world. CAI generates 48% of its sales from exports. This did not come overnight, but through Kavia's laser focused strategy, she established export opportunities in numerous markets abroad, including Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America, Canada, and China.

As CAI's entrepreneurial leader, Kavia developed meaningful relationships with U.S. government agencies and various state agencies to leverage their programs and services, including those of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Small Business Administration. CAI has taken advantage these federal resources, tapping into various programs to access capital, engage in government contracting, and secure bonds.

The energy and process industry requires flexibility and adaptability to the market challenges where Kavia has become respected and well-known for her expertise on exporting where she is often sought out to share her

knowledge. She has consulted for the Sub-Saharan Africa Advisory Committee of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) and is frequently invited as a keynote speaker to small business events. Currently, Kavia is a member of California Governor Gavin Newsom's State Entrepreneurial Task Force. This body serves as a working group to share ideas and solutions to propel California's next generation of innovative entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses, and to ensure that California startups and firms have access to resources to grow or scale. Under Kavia's leadership, CAI received the President's "E" Award for Export Service in 2011, awarded to a firm or organization that has made significant contributions to the increase of American exports, and the "E" Star Award for Exports in 2016 which affords continuing recognition of noteworthy export promotion efforts. In 2014, Kavia's leadership was praised by President Obama at the U.S. Africa Leaders Summit.

The SBA Orange County / Inland Empire District is honored to recognize Kusum Kavia as our 2020 Small Business Exporter of the Year.

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About the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 and is a Cabinet-level agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses, and recover from disasters. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, the SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. To learn more about SBA, visit www.sba.gov.

About the Orange County / Inland Empire District Office

The Orange County / Inland Empire District Office, under the leadership and vision of J. Adalberto Quijada, District Director, is responsible for the delivery of SBA programs and services in the Southern California counties of Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino. Located in Santa Ana near John Wayne Airport, the office and its staff facilitate understanding and access to SBA loan programs; coordinate and conduct hundreds of training sessions and special events annually such as matchmaking forums and loan workshops; and manage a portfolio of nearly 100 businesses enrolled in the agency's 8(a) business development program.