



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

# Press Release

## New Hampshire District Office

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### U.S. Small Business Administration Announces the 2019 Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year



#### Joshua D'Agnese of The Village Gun Store

**CONCORD, NH** – The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) New Hampshire Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year is awarded to Joshua D'Agnese, owner of The Village Gun Store in Whitefield. Joshua, who was born and raised in the Lakes Region, decided to enlist in the United States Army after high school. His service included two deployments to Iraq and one in Afghanistan serving over 12 years in the Infantry,

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most of which was with the Prestigious '10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division's' Reconnaissance Unit, until he accepted an early retirement due to service-connected disabilities. Being a native of NH, he decided to settle back here and moved to Dalton with his young family. Joshua was in the process of making the transition to civilian life when he learned that The Village Gun Store was for sale. Looking for resources, he reached out to the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center (NH-SBDC) and connected with business advisor Stewart Gates. With the help of NH-SBDC, Joshua began the lengthy process of purchasing an established business. In 2015, he was able to secure financing with a SBA Guaranteed Community Advantage Loan with Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC). For over forty years, The Village Gun Store has been a staple in northern NH with a loyal following that spreads across New England. Joshua remains focused and committed to offering superior customer service and competitive pricing that carries on the tradition that the store founders intended.

Growing up as the son of a gun dealer, he was familiar with the firearm industry. Building on these experiences, D'Agnese has combined old and new ways of doing business. Over the past five years, he and his wife have maintained The Village Gun Store's inventory, improved displays, added new products, and grown their on-line sales. The business remains focused on selling firearms and accessories to the local community including hunters, target shooters, law enforcement officers, military personnel, collectors, and those seeking personal protection. Looking ahead, D'Agnese is optimistic that The Village Gun Store will continue to thrive. He intends to keep making improvements and adding services like issuing hunting, fishing, and snowmobile licenses.

Stewart Gates states, "Serving in the armed forces can sometimes make for a difficult transition into business ownership. There were many obstacles to overcome. However, because the store has proven to be an asset to the local economy, resources were pooled to ensure the sale would be a success. Due to this collaboration and support, a returning US Army Veteran and his family have successfully transitioned into the private sector and he is able to live out his American dream in the North Country."

Joshua and his wife, Nicole, reside in Dalton with their three small children. When he is not behind the counter, you can find him volunteering as a Cub Scout leader or on the safety committee at the local school. He also provides prizes and donations to his local VFW and American Legion and sells discounted firearms to the local law enforcement agency.

Commenting on the announcement SBA District Director Greta Johannsson said, "It is an honor to celebrate the success and service each year of a Veteran Business Owner who has shown commitment and determination.

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Joshua is a perfect example of that and we are proud to honor him and thank him for his continued service to both our country and local economy.”

Award winners will be honored at an annual small business week celebration sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration – NH District Office and the NH Banker’s Association that will be held on Tuesday evening, May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Derryfield Country Club in Manchester. Visit [nhbankers.com](http://nhbankers.com) for more information and online registration.

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