



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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Rhode Island's *Salute to Small Business*

Providence, RI – On May 5, 2017, the Rhode Island District Office celebrated the annual *Salute to Small Business*. 18 winners over 13 distinct award categories were honored for their business excellence. The event was held at the Alpine Country Club in Cranston and is celebrated every year during National Small Business Week.

Since 1963, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation announcing National Small Business Week, which recognizes the critical contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners.

More than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and they create about two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. each year.

As part of National Small Business Week, the U.S. Small Business Administration takes the opportunity to highlight the impact of outstanding entrepreneurs, small business owners, and others from all 50 states and U.S. territories. Every day, they're working to grow small businesses, create 21st century jobs, drive innovation, and increase America's global competitiveness.

Please congratulate these well-deserved winners for 2017 Rhode Island Small Business Awards. They are outstanding examples of small business excellence in the Ocean State.



Small Business Person of the Year

Gary Palardy, President/CEO

Blue Moon Industries

Providence



Small Business Exporter of the Year

Kevin Redmond, CEO
Joan Redmond, Controller
Peter Kaczmarek, President/COO
Mearthane Products Corporation
Cranston



Rhode Island & New England Microenterprise of the Year

Ann Kaiser, CEO
ProjectEngin, LLC
Barrington



Minority-Owned Small Business of the Year

Armando Nieves, President
Armando & Sons Meat Market Group
Providence & Pawtucket



Veteran-Owned Small Business of the Year

Matthew Tortora, CEO/Co-Founder
Crave Food Services Corporation
North Kingstown



Woman-Owned Small Business of the Year

Kelly Mendell, President
MIKEL, Inc.
Middletown



Home-Based Small Business of the Year

Rachyl Medina Travis, Co-Owner
Jaklyn Travis Randall, Co-Owner
Lillian Medina Travis, Co-Owner
The Travis Family Farm
Scituate



**Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned
Small Business of the Year**

Roberta A Degraide, President
Denise Armstrong-Florio, Vice President
Design Fabricators, Inc.
Cranston



Financial Services Champion

Laura A. Stack, Vice President/Sr. Commercial Lender
Freedom National Bank
Smithfield



Entrepreneurial Success Award

Jeffrey Nelson, President/Owner
Brassworks Fine Home Details
Providence



Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Aaron Horowitz, President/CEO
Sproutel Inc.
Providence



**Joseph G.E. Knight Award for Entrepreneurial
Excellence**

Susan Lataille, Owner
DiscoverYou Events
North Smithfield

Winners not photographed: Rhode Island District Director Award, Mark Cousineau,
President of Community Investment Corporation.

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