



## SEATTLE DISTRICT

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### **Seattle Digital Stationery Company Owner Named 2020 SBA Seattle District Young Entrepreneur of the Year**

#### **Greenvelope.com Honored as Part of Annual National Small Business Week, Shares Business Journey Before and Through Coronavirus Outbreak**

**SEATTLE** – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 2020 Seattle District Young Entrepreneur of the Year is 30-year-old Greenvelope.com CEO Sam Franklin in Seattle, WA.

Founded in 2008 out of Franklin’s college dorm room at Washington University, Greenvelope.com is a paperless stationery company that offers custom animated digital wedding invitations, birthday cards, holiday cards and all types of event invitations.

During the past 11 years, the paperless stationery company has seen tremendous growth and success, both domestically and internationally. Greenvelope.com went from a one-person startup to a company with 14 full-time employees that serves 5,000 business clients and has more than 700,000 users in 35 countries. In 2016 they added seven new languages to their website to increase international traffic. Franklin has consistently grown the company by 30 to 40% each year since inception.

“When you combine innovation, opportunity and technical talent you have a great recipe for a successful online business,” SBA Seattle District Director Kerrie Hurd said. “Sam Franklin has achieved remarkable success which shows how young entrepreneurs are leading the way when it comes to disrupting existing industries through the use of modern technology.”

The SBA Seattle District Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award recognizes a young entrepreneur that demonstrates staying power and substantiated history as an established business with at least three years of business operation.

The small business awards program is part of National Small Business Week, which is typically held during the first week of May every year since 1963. National Small Business Week award announcements and celebrations were postponed this year due to the Coronavirus outbreak. The 2020 dates for National Small Business Week have yet to be announced.

“I am honored to receive this award and continually be supported by the Seattle entrepreneurial community,” Franklin said. “I was incredibly impressed with how my SBA contacts helped me navigate existing and new financing during these uncertain times. In my experience, they really go the extra mile to do what they can for small businesses.”

After launching Greenvelope.com from his dorm room in 2008, Franklin initially funded his startup costs by delivering pizzas and pressure-washing driveways in his community. He steadily grew his company by one to two new staff each year. Over time, he became weary of the impact rising commercial lease costs could have on his financial bottom-line. Franklin determined that he wanted to purchase an office space.

Because his business was still new and operating in a relatively new industry, traditional business loans were not the right fit for Greenvelope.com.

Thanks to an SBA 504 Guaranteed Loan from Evergreen Business Capital, a specialized type of SBA Guaranteed Loan for commercial property and industrial equipment with low down-payment requirements and long-term fixed-rate terms, Franklin was able to purchase his building space in Belltown, Seattle where his company is now headquartered.

Franklin is passionate about protecting the beautiful Pacific Northwest environment he grew up in and donates a percentage of sales each year to several environmental nonprofits. He also plans regular volunteer outings with his staff to give back their time and talents to the community.

While the event business is one of many that has been hit especially hard by the pandemic, Greenvelope.com has utilized both the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) program and SBA 7(a) Loan program to secure financing to help keep their full team employed and weather the storm.

Within days of the stay-at-home orders, Greenvelope.com’s design team created complimentary postponement announcements to help their existing customers communicate as gracefully as possible. Additionally, they have expanded their card designs and added features to support virtual events.

“National Small Business Week is a time to recognize the impact entrepreneurs and small businesses have on our economy and in our local communities,” SBA Pacific Northwest Regional Administrator Jeremy Field said. “Like many things in 2020, the journeys of this year’s award winners took a turn most didn’t anticipate. However, themes of ingenuity and tenacity remain the same as small business owners continue to inspire us in new and meaningful ways.”

A celebration honoring local SBA winners from Washington and the SBA Seattle District – which serves Washington and northern Idaho – has been postponed due to the pandemic but is slated to be rescheduled once conditions are safe to do so. Other SBA local awards that will be recognized at the celebration include Small Business Person of the Year, Exporter of the Year, 8(a) Graduate of the Year, Veteran-Owned Business of the Year, Rural Small Business of the Year, and the Rising Startup Award.

For more information about National Small Business Week, visit [www.sba.gov/nsbw](http://www.sba.gov/nsbw).

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### **About the U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov). The **Seattle District** serves Washington and northern Idaho with office locations in Seattle and Spokane.

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