



SEATTLE DISTRICT

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Tacoma Security Company Named 2020 SBA Pacific Northwest Region 8(a) Graduate of the Year

Oatridge Security Group One of 10 Finalists for National 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award 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 Pacific Northwest Region 8(a) Graduate of the Year is Oatridge Security Group (OSG) in Tacoma, WA. OSG was selected among winners from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington and is one of 10 finalists for the SBA National 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award.

The SBA 8(a) Business Development Program is a nine-year government contracting certification to provide a level playing field for small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged people or entities.

Founded in 2003, OSG provides protective armed and unarmed security staff and a wide range of security services to government and commercial entities. To keep costs down and avoid taking on debt, from 2003 to 2017 the business operated out of an office space of about 250 square feet where the three members of upper management directed work. Over that time, OSG was profitable and increased employee count each year.

Today OSG operates out of a larger 1,600 square foot space with an expanded management team including employees who were promoted from within. Thanks to the contracts they won during their time as an SBA certified 8(a) firm, OSG currently employs more than 200 people and expects to finish the current year with more than \$15 million in annual revenue.

The SBA 8(a) Graduate of the Year award recognizes outstanding graduates from the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program who have grown their business through contracts with the federal government.

“It’s an incredible honor for Oatridge Security Group to be recognized by the SBA with this award,” OSG CEO Cy Oatridge said. “Our continued growth and success would not have been possible without the tireless effort of our employees and the mentorship and guidance of the SBA.”

Although OSG saw steady increases to profitability and staff each year since opening in 2003, by 2010 Oatridge knew he wanted to grow the business by competing for government contracts and he needed a way to get his foot in the door.

OSG enrolled in the [SBA 8\(a\) Business Development Program](#) in 2010 with less than a million dollars in revenue. They graduated from the nine-year program in 2019 and ended the year with more than 1000% growth in revenue from 2010; and, more than 100 employees.

OSG also participated in the [SBA Mentor-Protégé Program](#) with Evergreen Fire and Security. Thanks to that partnership, OSG was able to expand business operations to Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Colorado, and California. OSG consistently receives the excellent to satisfactory ratings for each contract they work on. Plus, their client retention rate in 2019 was 95%.

“It’s our honor to recognize Oatridge Security Group as the 8(a) Graduate of the Year,” SBA Seattle District Director Kerrie Hurd said. “They are a perfect example of how an established business can achieve success and growth by using the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program as an accelerator.”

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.

During the pandemic, Oatridge Security has seen an exponential demand for security officers at medical facilities, construction sites, and places of business in the downtown areas of major cities. Oatridge has had to create an entirely new department dedicated to recruiting efforts to keep up with the demand for security. Masks and gloves are now a requirement for all Oatridge employees who are in the field or in the office, along with testing.

“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, Rising Startup of the Year, Veteran-Owned Small Business of the Year, Rural Small Business of the Year and Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

For more information about National Small Business Week, visit www.sba.gov/nsbw.

For more information about the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program, visit www.sba.gov/8a.

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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. The **Seattle District** serves Washington and northern Idaho with office locations in Seattle and Spokane.
