



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA Honors Top Lenders of 7(a), 504, and Export Loans; Inner City Lenders, at National Small Business Week

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Small Business Administration today recognized the performance, commitment and support to small business of the top SBA lenders in the nation. Six banks and two small business finance corporations were honored for their outstanding achievements in helping small business with their financing needs.

The awards are part of the celebration of National Small Business Week 2008, an annual event sponsored and hosted by the SBA to honor the nation's top small entrepreneurs, lenders and other advocates of small business. Criteria for the lender awards include loan volume as well as demonstrated commitment to small business and community development by recipients. This year, National Small Business Week runs from April 21 – 25 with events in Washington, D.C. and New York City.

“As small business goes, so goes the economy, and one vital component of small business success is the ability to secure financing,” said SBA Administrator Steve Preston. “These lending institutions we recognize today have shown outstanding leadership in their commitment to and support of small businesses in their communities. We are proud of our partnership, and pleased to present them with these well-deserved awards.”

The eight lending institutions come from Arizona, California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Texas and Utah, and were honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration during an event at The Westin New York at Times Square in New York City, as part of the celebration of National Small Business Week 2008.

National Small Business Week honors State Small Business Persons of the Year from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico, and recognizes businesses recovering from natural disasters, people who have helped others recover from natural disasters, small business lenders, small business contractors and contracting officers, and advocates for small businesses.

The awards to lenders were presented by SBA Administrator Steve Preston at an event sponsored by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City. The *7(a) Loan Lender of the Year* was split into two sub-categories: *Large lender* for banks with an SBA loan portfolio of \$100 million plus, and *small lender* for a portfolio of less than \$100 million.

A new category of lender award was added this year to recognize banks that have excelled in their lending to inner city businesses. The *Inner City Leadership Award* for largest loan volume to inner city businesses went to Wells Fargo of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Pacific City Bank of Los Angeles, California, won the *Inner City Leadership Award* for highest percentage of inner city loans to SBA portfolio.

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The honorees are:

7(a) Lender of the Year Award

Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year – Ms. Min Jung Kim, President and Chief Executive Officer, **Nara Bank and Nara Bancorp**, 3731 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1000, Los Angeles, California 90010, (213) 427-6350.

Small 7(a) Lender of the Year – Tim Romano, President, **First National Bank of Arizona, National Association**, 17600 N Perimeter Dr., Scottsdale, Arizona, 85255, 480-458-3031.

504 Lender of the Year Award

Large 504 Lender of the Year – Steve Suite, Chief Administrative Officer, **Mountain West Small Business Finance**, 2595 East 3300 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84109, (801) 412-3772.

Small 504 Lender of the Year – Maria Gooch-Smith, Executive Director, **South Eastern Economic Development Corporation**, 80 Dean Street, Taunton, Massachusetts 02780 508-822-1020.

Export Lender of the Year Award - Mark Edwards, President SBA Group, **BB&T**, 5901-C Peachtree Dunwoody Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30328, (770) 901-3284.

Award to Domestic Bank doing the most domestic loans to exporters - Larry Conley, Senior Vice President, **JP Morgan Chase Bank**, 811 Rusk Street, 18th Floor, Houston, TX 77002, (713) 483-1043.

Leadership in Inner City Lending Awards – Tom Burke, Executive Vice President, **Wells Fargo**, 1455 West Lake Street, Suite 306, N9388-030, Minneapolis, MN 55408, 612-667-2753.

Jung Chan Chang, President & Chief Executive Officer, **Pacific City Bank**, 3701 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 402, Los Angeles, CA 90010, (213) 210-2010.

For additional information on Small Business Week 2008, including a full schedule of events and information on all award winners, visit <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/>.

Editor's note: All Award Winners Are listed on the Web at
<http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/awards/>

The U.S. Small Business Administration thanks the following cosponsors of National Small Business Week and related events: Sam's Club, Administaff, Raytheon, IBM, Chevron, The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Cisco, Lockheed Martin, Salesforce, Lowe's, Banco Popular, Minority Business Development Agency, General Service Administration, MyBizHomepage, Dun & Bradstreet, National Association of Development Companies, Direct Selling Education Foundation, Association of Small Business Development Centers, National Small Business Association, Federal Allies Institute, SCORE, Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, National Federation of Independent Businesses, Consumer Energy Alliance, and FedSources.

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