

News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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Top Lenders of 7(a), 504 and Export Loans Honored by SBA at National Small Business Week

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Four banks, two small business finance corporations and a surety bond company today received top SBA honors for their outstanding small business lending performance and commitment to assisting small business with their financing needs.

The seven institutions come from California, Connecticut, Illinois, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Utah, and Wisconsin, and were honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration during a reception on Monday at the State Department as part of ***Small Business Week 2007***.

The event, which this year runs from April 23-24, 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.

“One of the biggest challenges small businesses face in their pursuit of success is timely, affordable access to capital,” said Administrator Preston. “We are proud to honor these financial institutions for the outstanding support they have shown small businesses in their communities. It is only fitting that we present them with this award in recognition of their excellence as we look forward to our continued partnership working on behalf of small business.”

The awards to lenders were presented by SBA Administrator Steven C. Preston. 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. The *Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year Award* went to Associated Bank N.A. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The *Small 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year Award* winner was Webster Bank N.A. of Waterbury, Connecticut.

Also honored were two Certified Development Companies, or 504 Lenders. The *Large 504 Loan Lender of the Year* was CDC Small Business Finance Corporation of San Diego, California. The *Small 504 Loan Lender of the Year Award* went to Asheville-Buncombe Development Corporation of Weaverville, North Carolina. The *Surety Bond Lender of the Year Award* was presented to CNA Surety/Western Surety Company of Chicago, Illinois.

As exports are playing a vital role in the growth of the American economy, the SBA honored two export lenders this year with its *Export Lender of the Year Award*. The winners in this category are Zions First National Bank of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Sovereign Bank of Boston, Massachusetts.

The honorees are:

7(a) Lender of the Year Award

Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year – Paul Beideman, Chairman of the Board, Associated Bank N.A.

410 E. Kilbourne Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202, (920) 491-7000

Small 7(a) Lender of the Year – Robert Polito Jr., Senior Vice President, Webster Bank N.A.

145 Bank Street, Waterbury, CT 06702, (860) 612-5433

504 Lender of the Year Award

Large 504 Lender of the Year – Kurt Chilcott, CEO & President, CDC Small Business Finance Corp., 2448 Historic Decatur Rd., San Diego, CA 92106, (619) 291-3594

Small 504 Lender of the Year – Robert Kendrick, CEO & President, Asheville-Buncombe Development Corp., 347 Barnardsville Highway, Weaverville, NC 28787, (828) 645-0439

Export Lender of the Year Award

A. Scott Anderson, President & CEO, Zions First National Bank, One Main Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, (801) 524-4839

James M. Hanlon, Vice President, Sovereign Bank, New England SBA Government Lending Dept. 75 State Street, Boston, MA 02109, (617) 346-7434.

Surety Bond Lender of the Year Award

Susan White, Small Specialty Assistant/PSB Coordinator; Thomas Hayes, AVP & Territorial Underwriting Officer, CNA Surety/Western Surety, 333 South Wabash Ave, 41st Floor Chicago, IL. 60604, (713) 513-6309, susan.white@cnasurety.com

For additional information on Small Business Week 2007, including a full schedule of events and information on all award winners, go online to www.sba.gov/sbw.

Small Business Week 2007 is cosponsored by the following organizations: SCORE, Sam's Club, IBM, BAE Systems, MasterCard, Raytheon, Orbitz, National Association for the Self-Employed, National Association of Small Business Investment Companies, Association of Small Business Development Centers, Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, National Association of Women Business Owners, Women Impacting Public Policy, Lowes, and National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders.

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