



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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Top Lenders of 7(a), 504 and Export Loans Honored by SBA; Surety Bond Lender Also Recognized

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Seven banks and other lending institutions from California, Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, Texas, and Rhode Island were honored today for their outstanding small business lending practices by the U.S. Small Business Administration, during an evening reception at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., as part of the ***Small Business Week 2006***.

The event, which this year runs from April 12-13, 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 Hector V. Barreto. The *7(a) Loan Lender of the Year* was split into two sub-categories: *large lender* for banks with an outstanding 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 Center Bank of Los Angeles, California. The *Small 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year Award* winner was The Legacy Bank of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Also honored were two –large and small- Certified Development Companies, or 504 Lenders. The *Large 504 Loan Lender of the Year* was the Florida Business Development Corporation of Orlando, Florida. The *Small 504 Loan Lender of the Year Award* went to the Rappahannock Economic Development Corporation of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

As exports are playing an increasing role in growing the American economy, so is export lending. Two export lenders honored by the SBA with its *Export Lender of the Year Award* this year were Innovative Bank of Oakland, California, and Citizens Financial Group of Warwick, Rhode Island. Finally, as a first time entry this year, the SBA is recognizing a Surety Bond Lender. The *Surety Bond Lender of the Year Award* winner is the Western Surety Company of Houston, Texas, a subsidiary of CNA Surety Companies, a firm that provides for a full range of bonding needs in all 50 states.

“As any small business owner will tell you, financing is the bread and butter of any successful small business,” said Barreto. “But it is not only money and terms, as important those are, it is the support you get from your financial institution, and these honorees have been outstanding in their

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dealings with their small business customers in their communities. We are proud of our partnership with them in helping small businesses to succeed and to present them with these awards in recognition of their excellence.”

The honorees are:

7(a) Loan Lender of the Year Award Winners

Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year

Jason K. Kim
Senior Vice President & Manager
Center Bank
3435 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1910
(213) 427-6080 phone
(213) 637-9622 fax
jasonk@centerbank.com

Small 7(a) Lender of the Year

Dayne Eyer
Director of Government Lending
The Legacy Bank
P.O. Box 60947
Harrisburg, PA 17106-0947
(717) 441-3400, phone
(717) 441-3410 fax
DEyer@thelegacybank.com

504 Lender of the Year Award Winners

Large 504 Lender of the Year

Emmanuel J. Manos, Executive Director
Eduardo Gesio, Executive VP for South
Florida
Florida Business Development Corporation
7021 Grand National Drive, Suite 100
Orlando, FL 32819
(561) 433-0233 phone
(561) 433-8545 fax
many@fbdc.net

Small 504 Lender of the Year

Rob Burke
Executive Director
Rappahannock Economic Development
Corporation
P.O. Box 863
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
(540) 373-2897 phone
(540) 899-4808
rburke@radco504.org

2006 Export Lender of the Year Award Winners

Young Won

Executive Vice President & Chief Credit
Officer
Innovative Bank
360 14th Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510-899-6800 ext. 6373
yhwon@innovativebank.com
510-899-6894
Email placorte@innovativebank.com when
emailing Young

Gary Heidel

National Director, Small Business
Government Program Services
Citizens Financial Group
RJE 310 480 Jefferson Blvd.
Warwick, RI 02886
401-468-6127
gary.heidel@citizensbank.com

2006 Surety Bond Lender of the Year Award Winner

Susan White and Doug Hinkle

Western Insurance Company - Subsidiary of The CNA Surety Companies

5151 San Felipe, Suite 1800

Houston, Texas 77056

Phone # 713 513-6309

Fax # 713 513-6296

Susan.White@cnaSurety.com

Doug.Hinkle@cnaSurety.com

For additional information on Small Business Week 2006, including a full schedule of events and information on all award winners, go online to www.sba.gov/sbw.

Small Business Week 2006 is co-sponsored by the following organizations: Sam's Club, Intel, Microsoft, SCORE, Raytheon, the Kauffman Foundation, Nationwide, IBM, Verizon Communications, Johnson & Johnson, BAE Systems, KBR, Cisco Systems, Fiducial, Aetna, Administaff and Symantec.

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For more information about SBA's programs for small businesses, Visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

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