



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Christopher Lorenzana
714-560-7453
christopher.lorenzana@sba.gov

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION NAMES NANCY RUSSELL FINANCIAL SERVICES CHAMPION OF THE YEAR



SANTA ANA, CA – Nancy Russell, Vice President and Regional Sales Manager at Comerica Bank in Costa Mesa, and a resident of Yorba Linda has been named **Financial Services Champion of the Year** by the Santa Ana District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Her selection was announced by District Director J. Adalberto Quijada who said, “Nancy Russell’s leadership and dedication to SBA lending and small business is a remarkable example of an advocate who uses her skills and talents to make a difference.” Russell was co-nominated for this award by Peggy Bradshaw, Executive VP of Comerica Bank and Leila Mozaffari,

Director of the Orange County County Small Business Development Center.

Russell’s career in SBA lending spans over 20 years and is marked by her contributions to Comerica Bank and several community organizations. Russell has been the voice of small business at Comerica by making sure the bank keeps the perspective of the small business owner in mind. For Nancy, the financial industry is not just about providing loans; in addition to providing access to capital, she provides financial education, is an advocate for entrepreneurs and volunteers her time and expertise to help diverse groups of people and community organizations. She serves on the advisory board of the Orange County Small Business Development Center, Inland Empire Small Business Development Center and the Regional Lead SBDC. She has also been a guest lecturer at California State University Fullerton, her alma mater, at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

In her role as an advocate, Nancy has been at the right place at the right time. Keeping the interest of the small business owner in mind, she knew exactly what to do on May 12, 2006, when Congressman Don Manzullo, House Small Business Committee Chair at the time, introduced legislation to reauthorize SBA

programs for four years and increase the maximum guaranties and loan amounts. After being disappointed at the lack of awareness and activity from individuals in a position to speak out in support of this reauthorization, Nancy was instrumental in persuading the LA Times to write a “Special to the Times” article which successfully raised the issue to a higher level of consciousness in the business community and stressed the ever increasing importance of SBA lending and entrepreneurship.

For over ten years, Nancy has been the liaison between the Small Business Week committee and Junior Achievement of Orange County to administer the annual Small Business Week Poster contest to the fourth grade classes of John Adams Elementary School in Santa Ana. This program teaches fourth grade students about entrepreneurship, our free enterprise system, and how it could make a difference in their lives.

Her community involvement and leadership in the financial literacy and access to capital arena are well received and appreciated in the community. The independent judging committee that selects awardees read letters of support from numerous business and community leaders voicing their support of Nancy’s nomination. Her colleagues at Comerica Bank say, “Nancy’s enthusiasm is contagious and she is the unofficial cheerleader of SBA loan programs at our bank.”

Nancy Russell and other small business owners & champions will be honored at the **45th Annual Small Business Week Awards** on September 25, 2008 at the Hilton Anaheim. For more information, please contact Christopher Lorenzana at 714.560.7453 or christopher.lorenzana@sba.gov .