



News Release

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Hispanic Businesses Recognized at National Small Business Week

Oklahoma Firm Wins Top Award; 11 More Acknowledged

WASHINGTON – The growing strength and contributions of Hispanic-owned businesses to the national economy were in display at National Small Business Week as 12 companies whose owners are of Hispanic background were recognized during the annual event sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration, including one who was named National Small Business Person of the Year.

Businesses receiving the awards are a cross section of the American industry, from cleaning services to construction to high-tech science and engineering support, and represent states and territories from Alabama to Connecticut, and Puerto Rico to New Mexico.

The National Small Business Person of the Year Award went to Jeanna Sellmeyer, an Oklahoma native of Venezuelan descent. The awards were presented during the celebration of National Small Business Week, May 17 -19 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington D.C., to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of American small businesses.

“Hispanic-owned small businesses make important contributions to the American economy. We salute the many Hispanic-owned firms among our winners, and are pleased to present them with these awards in recognition of their entrepreneurial spirit and hard-won success,” said SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills. “We applaud that in the midst of a difficult economic period, these businesses have continued to grow and preserve or create jobs in their communities.”

According to the Census Bureau, in the United States there are more than 1.6 million Hispanic-owned businesses; they employ more than 1.5 million people and generate more than \$220 billion in gross receipts.

The Hispanic award winners at National Small Business Week were:

National Small Business Person of the Year – Jeanna Sellmeyer, CEO, ASSET Group, Inc. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

National Prime Contractor of the Year – A. R. (Rey) Almodóvar, co-founder and CEO, Intuitive Research and Technology Corp. of Huntsville, Alabama.

Prime Contractor of the Year, Region VI – Ricardo and Renee Araiza, founders, R-con Construction, Inc. of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Prime Contractor of the Year, Region VII – Michael Zambrana, president and CEO, Pangea Group of St. Louis, Missouri.

Sub-contractor of the Year, Region I – Lorenzo J. Cabrera, owner, Cabrera Services of East Hartford, Connecticut.

State Small Business Person of the Year, Kentucky – Thomas E. Masterson, president, T.E.M. Electric, Inc. of Louisville, Kentucky.

State Small Business Person of the Year, North Carolina - Lisa Anne Piñeiro, president, Technical Services, Inc. of Durham, North Carolina.

State Small Business Person of the Year, New Mexico – Michele E. Justice, president & CEO, Personnel Security Consultants, Inc. of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

State Small Business Person of the Year, New York – Teresa Ward, owner and president, Teresa's Family Cleaning of Rocky Point, New York.

State Small Business Person of the Year, Pennsylvania – Paul de la Torre, chairman, and **Edward de la Torre**, president, De La Torre Orthotics and Prosthetics of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Small Business Person of the Year, Puerto Rico – Edward Feliciano, president, KCS Cleaning & Staffing Solutions Corp. of Carolina, Puerto Rico.

Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery – Juan Carlos Yépez, president, and **Luis Enrique Yépez, Jr.**, vice president, Mainstream Global, Inc. of Lawrence, Massachusetts.

For additional details on Small Business Week 2009, including information on all award winners, visit <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/>.

The U.S. Small Business Administration thanks the cosponsors of National Small Business Week and related events: SCORE, Sam's Club, Symantec Corporation, Ford, Raytheon, Administaff, Visa, Sage, IBM, HP, Trend Micro, Lockheed Martin, Verio, Moran Media Group, D&B, Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC), National Association of Development Companies (NADCO), National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders (NAGGL), National Small Business Association (NSBA), Small Business Entrepreneurship Council (SBEC), Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), and National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE)

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