



NEWS RELEASE

WYOMING DISTRICT OFFICE

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The Plant Peddlers SBA Family-Owned Small Business of the Year 2006

Casper – The Wyoming District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has named Glenda Santoni and Beth Kudlak, owners of The Plant Peddlers, SBA Family-Owned Small Business of the Year 2006. This award will be presented to them on Monday, May 22nd at the annual Casper Chamber Banquet which will start at 5:30pm at the Parkway Plaza Hotel and Convention Center, Grand Ballrooms in Casper. Steve Despain, District Director, will be presenting Ms Santoni and Ms Kudlak with this award.

This award is given to individuals who own and operate or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business that demonstrates a substantiated history as an established business. Other evaluation criteria includes evidence of success as measured by sales and profits, growth in number of employees, demonstrate potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth, and voluntary efforts to strengthen family-owned businesses within the community.

The Plant Peddlers are a family owned business that started out over 30 years ago. Today the ladies have hundreds of plants in more than sixty places of business, and are so busy that they had to hire two part time ladies to help them. They have added their own greenhouse attached to Beth's home. Between the greenhouse, a sun room and every spare inch of space in the other rooms, Beth has nearly 300 plants in her home.

The ladies initially started by holding plant parties. This turned out to be such a successful business they decided to apply for a business loan. After being turned down by several banks, these two ladies were finally able to get a loan from the bank for \$3,000, if they would be willing to use both of their cars as collateral and in addition, take care of the foliage plants in the bank that had just been installed in two large planters. They worked out a maintenance agreement whereby they would visit the bank once a week to water, fertilize, eradicate any insect pests and keep the plants healthy.

Once word got out, they started getting calls from new businesses. Many of the businesses had tried buying plants, only to have them looking dead and lifeless a few weeks later. So today they call the Plant Peddlers. Glenda and Beth go in, look the area over, decide what type and size of plants are needed, furnish them and install them. They guaranty the plants, providing they are allowed, on a contract basis, to also maintain them. The ladies go around once a week, water the plants, trim them, polish the leaves, and if necessary, replace any which are looking sad. They installed plants at the new Wyoming Machinery company and for Roberts Common at Casper College. Their accounts kept growing, so they decided to go with the foliage contracting idea, or "plantscaping" as it is now called.

The President of the United States recognizes contributions of the small business community to the American economy and society by proclamation each year.

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For more information about SBA's programs for small businesses, call 307-261-6500 or TDY 307-261-6527 or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov/wy.

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