



U.S. Small Business Administration

News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SBA Names 2004 Montana Minority Small Business Advocate

HELENA, MT – Craig Smith, Technical Advisor at Fort Peck Community College Enterprise Community and Tribal Business Information Center, has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2004 Montana Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year. Smith will be recognized at SBA's annual Small Business Week awards ceremony on May 7, 2004, at Missoula's Doubletree Inn, along with a cast of outstanding small business owners and advocates from across the state.

Craig Smith has been a true asset to the residents of the Fort Peck Reservation and surrounding area. He has been involved with economic development for many years and helping many Native American's reach their dream of owning and operating their own small business. Smith was instrumental in establishing the Emerging Native American Business Lending Fund (ENABL), which was a cooperative effort between Fort Belknap and Fort Peck Reservations, and Independence Bank. This loan and technical assistance program was designed to enhance opportunities for Native American business owners to receive funding to start or grow businesses on the reservations. He also administers the micro loan fund from Fort Peck Community College.

Smith's efforts to advance the interests of Native American business owners is evident by his serving on the boards of directors of various organizations (past and present) including: Missouri Valley Development; Great Northern Development Corporation; Looking Eagle Manufacturing; Silverwolf Casino; Fort Peck Community College; Montana's Microbusiness Finance Advisory Council; Governor's Council for Montana's Future; and Montana's Tourism Advisory Council. Smith graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Business Administration and is currently pursuing his Masters in Business Administration in American Indian Entrepreneurship through Gonzaga University.

Smith was nominated by Jay Boysun of the Small Business Development Center in Wolf Point. Other award winners being honored include: William Woody of Nightingale Nursing Services, Inc. of Missoula – Montana Small Business Person of the Year; Jack Morgenstern of Century Companies, Inc. of Lewistown – First Runner-up Small Business Person of the Year; Jennifer Keck of Big Sky Travel Nurses, Inc. in Conrad – Woman owned Business of the Year; Frederick "Rick" Larson of Employee Benefit management Services, Inc. – Entrepreneurial Success Award; Ryan Deskins of R&R Pressure Washing of East Helena – SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Kim Wild of TowHaul Corporation, dba Smith Equipment USA of Belgrade – National Small Business Exporter of the Year; Mandi Luce-Heinle and Sarah Ann Hamlen of Innovative Marketing Solutions, LLC of Hathaway – Main Street Business of the Year; Jerry Sullivan of Flint Creek Valley Bank in Philipsburg – Financial Services Advocate of the Year;

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Sheryle Shandy of Billings Food Bank & Montana Harvest Kitchens/Montana Harvest Gift Boutique in Billings – Home-Based Business Advocate of the Year; Flathead Business Journal of Kalispell – Small Business Journalist of the Year; Joe Fletcher of the Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center – Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year; and Joy Ott of Wells Fargo Bank Montana, N.A. in Billings – Women in Business Advocate of the Year.

For more information on SBA programs and services, contact the Montana SBA District office at (406) 441-1081 or log onto www.sba.gov/mt.

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