



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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Success Story- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

A Woman-Owned Construction Business Dominates the Industry

Sorrento, Fla. - Donna Robinson was ready to become a strong leader in a typically male dominated field of construction after 14 years of construction experience. Ms. Robinson created The Custom Contracting Corporation (The CCC) in March 2000 and has grown the company three-fold since its incorporation. She started with 3 corporate officers; today has 12 employees and plans to have a staff of fifty by mid-2005.

Prior to incorporation, Ms. Robinson owned an exotic animal business, raising exotic animals for educational purposes. During this time, she was pouring her own concrete slabs for the animals and building their habitats. When Ms. Robinson decided it was time to go into construction for herself, she decided to obtain hands on experience in the construction field as a laborer. With this experience under her belt, she was able to obtain her Florida State certified building contractors license. Ms. Robinson started her small business from her dining room and her first job was to build a residential home in Lake County.

After talking to other contractors, including women-owned contractors, she learned about the government contracting market. The first opportunity presented to The CCC was an open bid for new construction of racquetball courts for the City of Eustis. To saturate both the government and commercial markets, Ms. Robinson hired Linda Nofziger as the Director of Business Development. Ms. Robinson knows, even today, how important it is to invest in business development, and this investment is showing great returns.

Donna Robinson attended a workshop in Orlando to learn more about the aspects of government contracting in February 2003. This is where The CCC was first introduced to the Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program. The CCC was accepted into the SBA's 8(a) Program within 45 days of application in April 2003. After a great deal of marketing, The CCC was awarded (2) sole source 8(a) contracts within its first year of acceptance. The 8(a) Program opened a whole new door of opportunity for this devoted team. With the increase in work, The CCC grew its team and moved into their new office location in Sorrento, FL.

The SBA's new and improved 8(a) Program has become an essential program for helping socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs, such as Ms. Robinson, gain access to the economic mainstream of American society. SBA has helped thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs over the years to gain a foothold in government contracting. Participation is divided into two phases over nine years: a four-year developmental stage and a five-year transition stage. In

Fiscal Year 2003, more than 7,500 firms participated in the 8(a) Program and were awarded over \$10 billion in Federal contracts. For more information on the 8(a) Program, please visit <http://www.sba.gov/businessop/programs/8a.html> or contact the SBA North Florida District office at (904) 443-1900.

Ms. Robinson and The CCC have benefited from the 8(a) program as well as from their extensive marketing. They have taken full advantage of the SBA's BusinessMatchmaking Program that occurred in Orlando and have a great deal of contacts and potential contracts. The BusinessMatchmaking Program allowed small businesses to sit at the table with purchasing officers from very large corporations or government agencies. (For upcoming BusinessMatchmaking opportunities, please visit www.businessmatchmaking.com.)

Ms. Robinson has been through many personal struggles, including succeeding in a "man's industry." Through her personal dedication, the dedication of her family and the dedication of her incredible team at The CCC, Ms. Robinson has only begun her climb to success.

Donna Robinson and The Custom Contracting Corporation may be reached at 25541 State Road 46, Suite 3, Sorrento, FL 32776, (352) 383-3003.

For more information on SBA's Programs & Services, please contact the SBA North Florida District Office at (904) 443-1900 or www.sba.gov/fl/north.

A Photograph of Donna Robinson and her staff available upon request. Please contact lola.kress@sba.gov.

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