

# *News Release*

## **PRESS OFFICE**

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### ***U.S. Small Business Administration Alaska District Selects 2009 Financial Services Champion and Emerging Business of the Year***

**HEALY ALASKA:** Teri Simmons, Healy Branch Manager and commercial loan officer for First National Bank Alaska, was selected as the *2009 SBA Alaska Financial Services Champion of the Year*. Additionally, he was also honored with the Region 10 award consisting of Alaska, Idaho and Washington. This award recognizes individuals who work to increase the usefulness and availability of accounting or financial services for small businesses.

In 2006, Teri Simmons began her biggest bank project yet: opening First National's Healy Branch. Healy is a town of about 1,000 people, located at the gates of Denali National Park. She began by building relationships with Healy residents and businesses. Then she presented the Healy Branch idea to the First National Board of Directors. Her determination and dedication to meeting the banking needs of Healy residents and small businesses alike led the way to the successful opening of the branch in March 2008. Today, Simmons is the Healy Branch Manager and demonstrates her commitment to residents and business owners by continuously building and enhancing relationships with them so she can better understand their specific banking needs.

Along with all the effort it takes to run the day-to-day branch operations, maintain customer relationships and spend time with her family, Simmons still finds time to volunteer in her community. She is involved with Junior Achievement, which teaches young people about entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and preparation for the real world. Simmons has also offered a seminar on fraud prevention for local Healy-area businesses. Simmons enjoys playing for the Healy Coal Queens, a local women's hockey team and volunteering for local sporting events.

"Teri Simmons exemplifies what it means to be a financial services champion. She has advocated for small businesses since she began her career at First National Bank Alaska nearly five years ago," says nominator and SVP for First National Bank, Bill Renfrew. Today, as Healy Branch Manager, she passionately continues her efforts to improve the small businesses in her community. Teri is motivated by the success of businesses she has helped. She's assertive and determined to continually reach out in the Healy community, and she's driven to assist her customers in building their dreams.

**ANCHORAGE ALASKA:** Green Earth Land Works, owned by Christina and Jeremiah Eneix, was selected as the *2009 SBA Alaska Emerging Business of the Year*.

Green Earth Landworks is an Alaskan owned and operated business specializing in landscape construction. “Our goal is to provide Alaskans with inspiring outdoor environments, while preserving the lush natural habitat Alaska is known for.”

In the seven years that GEL has been in operation, it’s grown substantially, not just in products and services, but in employees and revenues. What started out as a two-person business has grown into one with a full-time staff of 11, with 35-50 additional seasonal workers. On top of hard work, Eneixes are passionate about their business. They truly care about improving their community and the environment through the work they do. That’s why their motto is “imagine things as they could be and then make that a practical reality.”

”The Eneixes’ commitment to growing a successful small business while positively impacting their community and environment makes them the strongest candidate for the 2009 Emerging Small Business Team of the Year Award” Nominator Brendyn Shiflea, First National Banks Alaska.

The US Small Business Administration’s Emerging Business Award recognizes a developing and outstanding business with at least a three year track record, under 25 employees, under \$2.5 million in sales and less than 10 years in business

For more information about Small Business Week go to: <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com>.