



NEWS RELEASE

SBA Buffalo District Office, 540 Niagara Center, 130 S. Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202

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Watts Architecture & Engineering, P.C. Wins 2010 National 8(a) Graduate Firm of the Year

Buffalo District Recognized for 3rd Consecutive Year

(Buffalo, NY) – This year, Edward O. Watts, president of Watts Architecture & Engineering, P.C., was named today as *8(a) Graduate Firm of the Year* during the 28th Anniversary of the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference in Washington, D.C., announced U.S. Small Business Administration's District Director Franklin J. Sciortino. This is the third consecutive year the Buffalo district has received National recognition.

"To be recognized represents an excellent opportunity for Buffalo to showcase and recognize some of our best and brightest successful minority entrepreneurs," said Sciortino. "I am also humbled and proud to mention our previous 2008 and 2009 national graduate firms Rand & Jones Enterprises Company Inc. and SLR Contracting & Service Company, Inc."

The award-winning Buffalo firm is a full service architecture, engineering and environmental services consulting firm located at 95 Perry Street. Watts established his company in 1986 as a sole proprietorship and today employs more than 90 full-time employees. The firm is certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) with the state of New York and a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) with the New York State Department of Transportation. Watts is also a graduate of SBA's 8(a) Business Development program – a business development program that provides management and technical assistance, and assistance in identifying federal contracting opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

In addition to the economic burden of expansion, Watts experienced several obstacles with physical working space and had to relocate into downtown Buffalo in order to accommodate current and future needs. Watts operates in a very unique business environment, one that works to meet client's objectives by providing creative, practical, and cost effective solutions to their architecture and engineering needs. "I am grateful to the SBA and especially to the Buffalo office for their support and guidance," said Watts.

"I am pleased that the SBA has played a role in Mr. Watts' growth and prosperity," said Franklin J. Sciortino, director of the SBA Buffalo District Office. "Watts Architecture & Engineering, P.C. is a successful small business that has created jobs and is making a contribution to the state's economy."

This year's MED Week event—"*Strategies for Growth and Competitiveness in the Global Economy*"—focused on exporting and doing business with countries such as China, India, Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Latin America, with MBDA introducing an International Trade Day on August 24, which was held on the eve of the conference.

"Ed Watts competed against a list of impressive nominees from every state and territory in the U.S.," said SBA Region II Administrator Jorge Silva-Puras. "Watts represents the commitment, inspiration, and the professionalism that are characteristics of a successful entrepreneur. These are all qualities that make Ed Watts the National 8(a) Graduate Firm of the Year Award winner for SBA's Region II."

Ed Watts attended and received his award at the National MED Week conference held August 25-27 in Washington, D.C. Watts will be presented with his local award at the Region II Buffalo District Advisory Council meeting held in October.

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Shandra Roberson Wins 2010 Region II

SBA Minority Enterprise Development Week Award

Buffalo, NY. – Shandra Roberson, president of S&W Contracting of Western New York, Inc. was selected the SBA's Buffalo District Office and Region II Office Minority Small Business Person of the Year winner. Roberson competed against nominees from SBA's Region II offices which include New York, NY, New Jersey, Syracuse, NY, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

S & W of WNY Inc. is an active participant in SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program and is a general construction and janitorial service firm headquartered in Buffalo, New York. The business has grown from 3 to 20 full-time employees since its inception in 1999.

"Ms. Roberson's personal business story clearly demonstrates how hard work, tenacity and taking advantage of federal assistance can lead to personal success and positive outcomes in the community," said SBA Region II Administrator Jorge Silva-Puras.

The company has worked for more than 10 years with federal and private sector clients and with no formal education or training, started the firm shortly after her high school graduation. With the support of her family, Roberson propelled S & W Construction from its beginnings in apartment unit rehab work to major commercial and government contracts.

A dedication to sourcing and mentoring other area minority suppliers and subcontractors, Roberson supports various organizations such as Roswell Park Cancer Foundation, Jerry Lewis MDA, and Anti-Drunk Driving programs.

Roberson will receive her award during the month of October, at the SBA Region II Buffalo District Advisory Council meeting. This year's MED Week event is a collaboration with the Minority Business Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the SBA, with an emphasis on helping minority small business expand their operations and establish a presence in the global marketplace through exporting.