

U.S. Small Business Administration



News Release

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SBA Recognizes Top Financial Institutions At National Small Business Week

WASHINGTON – Nine lenders and two investment companies were honored today by the U.S. Small Business Administration in Washington, D.C. for their commitment to delivering vital financial assistance to American small businesses, as part of National Small Business Week.

The awards were presented to institutions from Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Texas, at a breakfast session. SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills delivered the keynote speech. While portfolio performance played a significant role in the recognition, the lenders' continued support of small business during challenging economic times was the major consideration.

“Lenders, venture capitalists are essential partners of both small businesses and the SBA,” said Mills. “By working together over the past year, we’ve supported over \$29 billion to small businesses, which has helped not only *save* but also *create* hundreds of thousands of jobs.”

During National Small Business Week, SBA honors State Small Business Persons of the Year from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico, and recognizes businesses recovering from natural disasters, people who have helped others recover from natural disasters, small business lenders, small business contractors and contracting officers, and advocates for small businesses.

The awards to lenders were presented by Administrator Mills. As in previous years, the *7(a) Loan Lender of the Year* was split into two sub-categories: *Large lender* and *Small lender*. The *Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year Award* went to United Central Bank, of Garland, Texas. The *Small 7(a) Lender of the Year Award* winner was First Financial Bank, of Hamilton, Ohio.

Also honored were two Certified Development Companies, or 504 Lenders, and two Small Business Investment Companies, or SBICs: the CDCs receiving awards were Nebraska Economic Development Corp., of Lincoln, Nebraska, and Dakota Business Finance CDC, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The SBICs recognized were Argosy Capital, of Wayne, Pennsylvania, and Contemporary Health Capital, of Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

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In the *1st Mortgage Lender of the Year* category, the *Large 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year* Award went to BBVA Compass, of Dallas, Texas; Rockland Trust, of Rockland, Massachusetts, received the *Small 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year* Award.

A new award was created this year to honor a Community/Rural Lender that has made a positive impact on its community. The winner of the *Community/Rural Lender of the Year* was American Bank of the North, of Nashwauk, Minnesota.

In keeping with the heightened importance exports are receiving in the nation's economic recovery, SBA this year again recognized two banks for their role in lending to small business exporters. SunTrust Bank, of Atlanta, Georgia, received the *Export Lender of the Year* Award for making the most Export Working Capital loans, while Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., of Minneapolis, Minnesota won the award for making the largest number of domestic loans to exporters.

The honorees are:

7(a) Lender of the Year Awards

Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year – Keith Ward, President & CEO, **United Central Bank**, 4555 W. Walnut Street, Garland, TX 75042, (972) 485-7201. *Small 7(a) Lender of the Year* – Brendan J. Burns, first Vice President of Business Banking/Government Lending, **First Financial Bank**, 300 High Street, Hamilton OH 45011, (513) 867-4855.

504 Lender of the Year Awards

Large 504 Lender of the Year – Scott Sailors, President, **Nebraska Economic Development Corp.** 1610 South 70th Street, Suite 201, Lincoln, NE 68506, (402) 483-4600. *Small 504 Lender of the Year* – Lynne Keller Forbes, Executive Director, South Eastern Council of Governments, South Eastern Development Foundation, **Dakota BUSINESS Finance CDC**, 500 N. Western Ave., Suite 100, Sioux Falls, SD 57104, (605) 367-5390

First Mortgage Lender of the Year Awards

Large 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year – Greg Clarkson, Executive Vice President & SBA Division Manager, **BBVA Compass**, 17218 Preston Rd., Suite 3000, Dallas, TX 75252, (972) 735-3577. *Small 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year* - Gerard F. Nadeau, Executive Vice President for Commercial Banking, **Rockland Trust**, 120 Liberty Street, Rockland, MA 02302, (781) 982-6830.

Community/Rural Lender of the Year Award

Community Lender of the Year - Bryan Rude, CEO & CFO, **American Bank of the North**, 117 Central Avenue, Nashwauk, MN 55769, Ph.: (218) 327-2555.

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Export Lender of the Year Awards

Export Lender of the Year – Susanne Keough, Managing Director & Global Trade Solutions; Valerie Warga, Vice President, Global Trade Solutions, **SunTrust Bank**, 303 Peachtree St., 29th Floor, Atlanta, GA 30308, (404) 813-1030, (404) 813-0455. *Award to the bank with most domestic loans to exporters* - David J. Rader, Executive Vice President SBA Lending, **Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.**, 1455 West Lake Street, Suite 306, Minneapolis, MN 55408, (612) 667-6340.

SBIC of the Year

SBIC of the Year - Kirk B. Griswold, President, **Argosy Capital**, 950 West Valley Road, Suite 2900, Wayne, PA 19087, (610) 971-9685. *SBIC of the Year* - Douglas A. Korey, Managing Director/Partner, **Contemporary Healthcare Capital**, 1040 Broad Street - Suite 103, Shrewsbury, NJ 07702, (732) 578-0533.

For additional information on Small Business Week 2010, including a full schedule of events and information on all award winners, visit <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/>.

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