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U.S. Small Business Administration

-- News Release --

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### Top SBA Financial Services Institutions Honored at National Small Business Week

Credit Union and Community Bank among Honorees

WASHINGTON – Ten financial services institutions that focus on assisting small businesses were hailed as important resources for the nation's economic recovery today at the annual National Small Business Week sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration in Washington, D.C.

The honorees include SBA lending, investing and bonding partners that have excelled not only in their performance but also in their continued commitment to and support for small business during a time of economic upheaval and credit shortages. The awards were presented Monday to lenders from Alabama, California, Massachusetts, Missouri, Minnesota, Texas, Utah and Washington.

"Access to capital is the lifeblood of small business, and small business is the driving force of our economy. By keeping their commitments to small business during this rough economic climate, these lenders are playing a critical role in the nation's recovery," said SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills. "We are pleased to recognize their good work and to be a partner with them in helping small businesses grow and succeed."

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. The Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year was split into two sub-categories: Large lender and Credit Union lender. The Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year Award went to BBVA Compass Bank, of Birmingham, Alabama. The Credit Union 7(a) Lender of the Year Award winner was Randolph-Brooks Federal Credit Union, of Live Oak, Texas.

Also honored were two Certified Development Companies, or 504 Lenders: Ameritrust Certified Development Company of Seattle, Washington, and Economic Development Center of St. Charles County in Missouri.

A new category of awards was introduced this year to recognize lenders that have excelled in making first mortgage loans in 504 projects. The Large 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year Award went to Zions First National Bank of Salt Lake City, Utah; The Community Bank, of Brockton, Massachusetts, received the Small 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year Award.

Exports this year proved yet again an important element in the path toward economic recovery, and SBA recognized two banks for their role in lending to small business exporters. World Trade Finance, Inc. was presented with the Export Lender of the Year Award for making the most Export Working Capital loans, while JP Morgan Chase of Houston, Texas won the award for making the largest number of domestic loans to exporters for a second consecutive year.

Also recognized were Gemini Investors III, L.P. of Wellesley, Massachusetts, as the SBIC of the Year, and SureTec Insurance Company of Houston, Texas, as the Surety Bond Company of the Year.

The honorees are:

7(a) Lender of the Year Awards

Large 7(a) Loan Lender of the Year – Greg Clarkson, EVP BBVA Compass Bank, 15 South 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35233, (972) 735-3577. Credit Union 7

(a) Lender of the Year – Kenan Pankau, SBA Program Manager, Randolph- Brooks Federal Credit Union, One Randolph Brooks Parkway, Live Oak, TX 78233, (210) 637-3633.

504 Lender of the Year Awards

504 Lender of the Year – Kim Willis, Director, Ameritrust Certified Development Company, 1420-5th Avenue, Suite 2200, Seattle, WA 98101, (206) 274-5152.

Greg Prestemon, President & CEO; Mark Diliberto, SVP, Small Business Finance, Economic Development Center of St. Charles County, 5988 Mid Rivers Mall Drive, St. Charles, Missouri 63304, (636) 441-6880.

First Mortgage Lender of the Year Awards Large 1st Mortgage Lender of the Year - A. Scott Anderson, Lori Chillingworth, Senior VP & Director of Business Banking, Zions First National Bank, One South Main Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84133, (801) 844-7170. Small

1st Mortgage Lender of the Year - David Curtis, President & CEO, The Community Bank, 1265 Belmont Street, Brockton, MA 02301, (508) 587-3210.

Export Lender of the Year Awards

Export Lender of the Year - Bernd Hermann, President, World Trade Finance, Inc., 515 N. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 91203, (818)-550-0788. Award to the bank with most domestic loans to exporters -- Larry S. Conley, Senior Vice President and Specialty Finance Manager, JP Morgan Chase, 616 FM 1960 West, Floor 1, Houston, Texas 77090-3000, (281) 587-3112.

SBIC of the Year Award

SBIC of the Year - James Goodman, President, Gemini Investors III, L.P., 20 William Street, Suite 250, Wellesley, MA 02481, (781) 237-7001.

Surety Bond Company of the Year Award

Surety Bond Company of the Year - Bill King, President; Bob Cave, Executive

Vice President and Chief Underwriting Officer, SureTec Insurance Company,  
952 Echo Lane, Suite 450, Houston, Texas 77024, (713) 812-0800.

For additional information on Small Business Week 2009, including a full schedule of events and information on all award winners, visit <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/>.

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