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## **MBDA Recognizes 2014 National MED Week Award Winners**

**WASHINGTON (July 9, 2014)** — The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) today announced the 2014 National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Award winners – 13 organizations, businesses and individuals who have demonstrated leadership and commitment in advancing the minority business community. MBDA will honor the winners during a special ceremony at the annual MED Week Conference on August 1 in Washington, D.C.

“This year’s MED Week awardees exemplify growth, diversity and transformation, and are true champions for the minority business community,” said Alejandra Y. Castillo, MBDA National Director. “We’re very proud of their tremendous achievements in helping grow the national economy through innovation, job and wealth creation.”

Winners were selected for the following awards: Abe Venable Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement; Ronald H. Brown Leadership Award; Champions of Minority Business Development; and Minority-Owned Firms. The awards are designed to celebrate and recognize outstanding achievements of minority entrepreneurs based on the challenges the business has overcome, total revenues, total jobs created and the economic impact the business has had on their community. MBDA also recognizes individuals and organizations that have demonstrated leadership and commitment in advancing the minority business community.

The following are the 2014 National Minority Enterprise Development Award winners:

- **Abe Venable Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement** is being presented to **Michael A. Grant, President of the National Bankers Association**. This award is granted to an individual who has played an integral role in the creative, technical or professional progress of minority business development over the course of his/her life. Grant has served as president of the National Bankers Association (NBA) since 2008. Under his leadership, the NBA has expanded its advocacy for Minority Depository Institutions (MDI), and Grant has helped increase the group’s sustainability and influence in strategic partnerships.
- **Abe Venable Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement** is being posthumously presented to **Henry T. “Hank” Wilfong, Jr.** Wilfong, Jr. was an advocate for small businesses for over 20 years. In 1987, he founded the National Association of Small and Disadvantaged Business (NASDB), which continues to seek the full involvement of minority-owned high-tech firms in mainstream American business.

- **Ronald H. Brown Leadership Award** is being presented to **Michael K. Robinson, Program Director for Global Supplier Diversity International Business Machines, Corporation (IBM)**. This award recognizes individuals who have shown exceptional leadership and achieved significant success in creating diversity in the public or private sector. The award was inspired by the outstanding leadership of the late U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown. For more than 23 years, Robinson has helped IBM with supplier diversity initiatives through mentoring, development and education in various countries.

#### **Champions of Minority Business Development:**

- **Advocate of the Year Award** is being presented to **Sue Au Allen, Esq., National President and CEO of the U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce (USPAACC)**. This award is presented to an individual or organization that has demonstrated significant accomplishment in advocating minority business enterprise as an economic force in the global economy. Allen has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to promoting small business development at every level within the Asian American business community throughout the United States.
- **Advocate of the Year Award** is being presented to **Lance C. Morgan**. As the CEO for Ho-Chunk, Inc., an economic development corporation for the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Morgan has directed the development of 30 subsidiaries with operations throughout the U.S. and in five foreign countries.
- **Distinguished Supplier Diversity Award** is being presented to **Diane G. Dempsey, Director, Socio-Economic Business Programs, BAE Systems Intelligence & Security**. This award is presented to an individual or organization whose business practices have had a significant impact on the growth and development of minority-owned firms. Dempsey's career spans over 30 years in the procurement, subcontracts and supplier diversity fields. She's become a leader in supplier diversity through her dedication and commitment to supporting organizations that advocate diverse suppliers, and serves as an instrument in bridging the existing gaps in industry related to small business utilization.
- **Access to Capital Award** is being presented to **Ronald Newsome, Director of Stonehenge Capital Company, LLC (Stonehenge)**. This award is presented to an individual or organization who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the financial community by providing working or investment capital to minority-owned businesses. Newsome's dedication in fundraising, deal sourcing, investment evaluations and closing negotiations for community service businesses, have greatly contributed to Stonehenge's ability to help underserved markets that impacted minority job and wealth creation opportunities nationally.
- **Media Award** is being presented to **Armando Guzman, Perspectiva Nacional Anchor, Entravision Communications**. This award is presented to a print, broadcast or radio media organization that has achieved notable success in advancing public awareness of the positive impact of minority-owned businesses on the global economy. For two decades, Guzman has covered the White House, the U.S. Congress and many important news stories in our

nation's capital; his journalistic work has been recognized as a factor in giving Spanish language television news credibility and respect in United States and Latin America.

### **Minority-Owned Firms:**

- **Minority Retail Energy Firm of the Year** is being presented to **Hightower Petroleum Company (HPC)**. This award is presented to a minority-owned firm in the energy industry that has achieved notable success in providing quality products and services that resulted in improvement of the environment, proficiency, and customer satisfaction. Since 1957, the Hightower family has continued to operate as a privately-held corporation in various business endeavors. With foresight and continued innovation, HPC developed a "Virtual Marketplace" throughout the U.S. with the ability to provide gasoline, diesel, biodiesel, ethanol, lubricants, oils, and greases nationally.
- **Minority Manufacturer of the Year** is being presented to **Detroit Manufacturing Systems, LLC (DMS)**. This award is presented to a minority-owned firm that has achieved significant success in employing new and innovative techniques that led to a significant increase in market share, job growth and customer satisfaction. DMS, which currently has more than 700 employees, develops state-of-the-art automotive interior systems. Utilizing the latest technologies, it assembles and manufactures injection molded interior trim components for global automotive brands, all with a firm commitment to quality and efficiency.
- **Minority Manufacturer of the Year** is being presented to **Ruiz Food Products, Inc.** Fred Ruiz cofounded Ruiz Food Products, Inc., with his father Louis in a small warehouse in Tulare, Ca. in 1964. The company is now celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and employs 2,300 people. Ruiz Food Products, Inc., has three manufacturing facilities – in Dinuba, Calif., Tulare, Calif., and Denison, Texas – and recently purchased another facility in Florence County, S.C.
- **Minority Construction Firm of the Year** is being presented to **Venegas Engineering Management & Construction (VEMAC)**. This award is presented to a minority-owned firm that has achieved outstanding success in private or public sector construction projects and has exhibited revenue and job growth over a sustained period of time. In 2008, VEMAC was named the fastest growing Hispanic business in the country by Hispanic Business Magazine. VEMAC substantially increased its sales, staff and contracting base, specifically seeing a sales increase from \$691,000 in 2003, the year it was founded, to nearly \$45 million in 2013.
- **Minority Exporter of the Year** is being presented to **Universal Companies, LLC**. This award is presented to a minority-owned company that has achieved outstanding success in penetrating domestic and global markets. Universal Companies, LLC, currently manages production across five cities in China and two cities in India.

For more information on the 2014 MED Week Award winners and ceremony, visit <http://medweek.mbda.gov>.



***About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)***

MBDA, [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov), is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 45 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that build size, scale and capacity through access to capital, contracts and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda).

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