



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: September 1, 2006
Release Number: 06-52

Contact: Tiffani Clements (202) 401-0035
Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news/

Hispanic-Owned Firm Named Minority Small Business of the Year During 24th National Minority Enterprise Development Week

African-American Firm and DOD Official Also Receive High Honors by the SBA for Their Accomplishments

WASHINGTON – U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Steven C. Preston today recognized a Florida-based Hispanic-owned defense contractor as Minority Small Business Person of the Year during the 24th National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Jose A. Diaz, president of DEI Services Corporation of Winter Park, Florida, received top honors for his superior business achievements.

Also recognized by Administrator Preston was William L. Byles Sr., president of Byles Janitorial of Nashville, a Tennessee-based African-American janitorial company. Mr. Byles was the recipient of the 8(a) *Graduate of the Year Award*.

Frank Ramos, director for the Office of Small Business Programs, Office of the Secretary of Defense for the U.S. Department of Defense, received the *Administrator's Leadership Award*. Administrator Preston recognized him for his tireless efforts and unwavering commitment on behalf of the nation's minority small business community.

"Today, it is my pleasure to recognize these individuals for their achievements," said SBA Administrator Steven C. Preston. "Jose, William and Frank, each in their own way, have demonstrated impressive leadership and critical skill in what they do. Collectively, they are contributing to this nation's entrepreneurship, our economy and the small business community and I offer my sincere congratulations."

The award presentation caps off a week-long recognition of minority entrepreneurship. Coinciding with the one year anniversary since the devastation caused by last year's hurricanes, MED Week featured workshops designed to help small businesses gain access to contracting opportunities and take advantage of tax incentives in the Gulf Coast.

Messrs. Diaz and Byles' companies were participants in the SBA's 8(a) Program – a business development program that provides management and technical assistance, and assistance in identifying federal contracting opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

-- more --

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON THE WINNERS

National Minority Small Business Person of the Year

Jose A. Diaz, President

DEI Services Corporation

DEI is an 8(a)-certified minority business that is rapidly gaining recognition as a premier provider of simulation and training devices to military customers. The company's capabilities encompass a vast range of skills required to successfully develop, deploy, and support state-of-the-art training systems for the modern war fighter. DEI's full-scale products include both operational and maintenance training systems required to support fixed-wing aircraft, rotorcraft and ground combat vehicles. Initially started with credit cards and only two people, DEI now employs 80 employees and generates \$12 to \$15 million in revenues per year.

National 8(a) Graduate of the Year

William L. Byles Sr.

Byles Janitorial

After serving in Operation Desert Storm and being honorably discharged from the U.S. Army, William Byles worked as a full-time truck driver and a part-time janitor at two local cleaning companies. Those experiences inspired him to start his own janitorial company, Byles Janitorial. Byles invested in several cleaning franchises and successfully bid on and won 21 private sector contracts, generating approximately \$22,000 per month in profit, all while maintaining his full-time truck driver position. Later, Byles applied to the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, quit his truck driver position and devoted all of his energy to Byles Janitorial and making the most of his 8(a) certification. Today, Byles is a successful graduate of the 8(a) Program.

Administrator's Leadership Award

Frank Ramos, director for the Office of Small Business Programs

for the Office of Secretary of Defense of the U.S. Department of Defense

Frank Ramos, a former political appointee under President George H.W. Bush, served as the associate deputy administrator for Management and Administration and the assistant deputy administrator for the office formerly known as the Minority Small Business Certification and Capital Development at the SBA. Appointed by President George W. Bush in 2001, Ramos now serves as the principal small business policy adviser to the Secretary of Defense. During his tenure, Ramos' policies and program initiatives have resulted in record DOD small business acquisitions in FY03 amounting to \$42 billion in prime contract awards and \$32 billion in subcontract awards that supported the military in the war against terrorism. In FY05, DOD awarded \$53.8 billion of its contracts or about 24.6 percent to small businesses.

For more information, contact the MED Week 2006 office at 1-877-MEDWEEK or visit the Web site at www.medweek.gov or SBA's Web page at <http://www.sba.gov/medweek2006>.

###