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Website: www.mbda.gov
Fax: (202) 482-5117

Contact: MBDA Public Affairs
Phone: (202) 482-0491
Email: public_affairs@mbda.gov

MBDA Announces 2012 National Minority Enterprise Development Awards for Outstanding Leadership and Achievement in Minority Business Sector

Agency Will Honor 12 Business Leaders, Minority Business Advocates and Companies at the MED Week Conference

WASHINGTON (November 29, 2012) — The U.S. Commerce Department's Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) today announced the 2012 National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week award winners. This year's awards recognize the outstanding contributions of 12 private sector, non-profit entities and leaders in the categories of lifetime achievement, leadership, access to capital, exporting and manufacturing that have had a major impact in the growth of minority business enterprises. The winners will be honored on December 6, 2012, during the 30th Anniversary MED Week Conference.

The winners include a U.S. Congressman, presidents of manufacturing and service companies, leaders of non-profit training and advocacy groups, and successful private-sector manufacturing, exporting and finance concerns, all of whom have contributed significantly to minority business development, job creation and economic growth throughout the country.

"Through effective advocacy, entrepreneurial success and economic impact, the individuals and firms selected for these honors have shown exemplary commitment to the minority business sector," said David A. Hinson, MBDA National Director. "They are pillars in their communities who help to create jobs and keep our nation competitive in the global economy. MBDA and the U.S. Department of Commerce are pleased to pay tribute to these outstanding leaders and firms and the entrepreneurial spirit they embody and promote."

Here is the list of the 2012 National Minority Enterprise Development Award Winners:

- ❖ **Abe Venable Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement** honors individuals who have played an integral role in the creative, technical or professional progress of minority business development over a sustained period of time:
 - **The Honorable Silvestre Reyes, U.S. House of Representatives (TX-16)**
Congressman Silvestre Reyes represents the people of El Paso, Texas, in the U.S. House of Representatives. Since first serving in the Army in 1966, he has dedicated four decades of his life to public service. Among his many accomplishments, Congressman Reyes has been a driving force of El Paso's economic growth, supporting and leading key initiatives that bring billions of dollars in contracting opportunities to local small and minority-owned businesses.
 - **Alka Dhillon, Founder and CEO, Technalink (McLean, VA)**
Recognized as one of the leading female CEOs in the Washington, DC, area, Ms. Dhillon is known for her irrepressible entrepreneurial spirit with a passion for giving

back to the community. She is a strong supporter and champion of growing young entrepreneurs through education and is actively involved with various associations that focus on advancing future generations in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers.

- **Andrea L. Harris, Co-Founder and President, North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development (Raleigh, NC)**

The Institute is a statewide nonprofit organization representing the interests of underdeveloped and underutilized sectors of the state's economic base. Under the visionary leadership of Ms. Harris, the organization has positively impacted minority- and women-owned business development and increased access to executive and financial education and training for minority entrepreneurs. For over 40 years Ms. Harris has played an integral role in the professional progress of minority business development and has led the organization since 1988.

- **Deborah Scott Thomas, President and CEO, Data Solutions & Technology, Inc. (Lanham, MD)**

Deborah Scott Thomas is a retired colonel from the U.S. Air Force Reserve, having served her country for three decades. After retiring from military service, Ms. Thomas worked for Fortune 100 and small businesses and in 1994 she founded Data Solutions & Technology, Inc., a full-spectrum professional services firm in information technology, management and operations. She is a dedicated mentor and advocate of promoting minority student growth in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields of study through active work with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- **Andrew Wells, President, Wells Technology (Bemidji, MN)**

Wells Technology is a leading precision metal manufacturing firm that over the years has grown to become a multi-million dollar enterprise. Using his professional success to do significant good in the community, Mr. Wells founded Wells Academy in 2006, a non-profit industrial training school for Native Americans with a paid apprenticeship program that encourages positive life values and provides marketable job skills to Native Americans.

❖ **Ronald H. Brown Leadership 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. Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown.

- **Dr. Louis B. Lynn, President, ENVIRO AgScience, Inc. (Columbia, SC)**

Dr. Lynn established ENVIRO AgScience in 1985. Some 27 years later, the small residential landscaping company has grown into the largest African American-owned landscape and construction firm in South Carolina. Dr. Lynn is a staunch believer in paying one's "civic rent" and has used his professional success as a springboard to affect positive change within the African-American and minority business communities of South Carolina.

❖ **National Minority Business Firm of the Year Awards** recognize minority firms engaged in exporting and manufacturing that have achieved significant success in those sectors, demonstrated by increased global and domestic market penetration, number of jobs created,

and overall economic impact. All of this year's award winners reported annual revenues in excess of \$15 million and a strong employee base of local community members.

- **Minority Export Firm of the Year -- D.W. Morgan Company, Inc. (Pleasanton, CA)**
A recognized innovator in the supply chain and logistics industry, D.W. Morgan Company has built one of the nation's fastest-growing supply consulting, logistics and transportation management firms by emphasizing superior customer service and cutting-edge technology.
 - **Minority Export Firm of the Year -- MarkMaster, Inc. (Tampa, FL)**
A premier vertically integrated manufacturer of custom and stock identity solutions, MarkMaster is the only global solutions provider in the industry with facilities in the U.S. as well as strategic fulfillment partners in Europe, South America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.
 - **Minority Manufacturers of the Year -- 7Delta Inc. (Columbia, MD)**
A leading provider of innovative information technology solutions to defense and federal agencies, 7Delta provides custom system design and development services through the creation of mission-critical software systems.
 - **Minority Manufacturers of the Year -- LSL Industries, Inc. (Chicago, IL)**
Established in 1985, LSL Industries is a medical supplies manufacturer that specializes in surgical and medical instruments and materials as well as disposable kits for hospitals and distributors.
- ❖ **Access to Capital Award** recognizes individuals or organizations demonstrating outstanding leadership in the financial community overall and a commitment to creating an environment for minority business growth by providing working or investment capital to minority businesses.
- **Accion (New Mexico • Arizona • Colorado)**
Accion is a non-profit organization that increases access to business credit, makes loans and provides training to enable entrepreneurs to realize their dreams and to be catalysts for positive economic and social change. Accion is the highest-volume micro-lending Community Development Financial Institution in annual loans in its three-state region. From January through September of 2011, an estimated 936 jobs were supported by Accion borrowers.
 - **Economic Development Bank for Puerto Rico (EDBPR)**
Since its creation, the EDBPR has provided development and financing opportunities for small and medium sized local enterprises. EDBPR continues to strengthen Puerto Rico's economy through community reinvestment and encouraging projects that increase exports and the competitiveness of local companies in foreign markets. From 2011-2012, as a result of direct loans to minority entrepreneurs, business owners reported 1,362 jobs created and 2,498 jobs retained.

About the Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference:

Recognized as the nation's premier event for minority entrepreneurs and business owners, the National MED Week Conference attracts minority businesses of all sizes from all industry sectors across the country. The conference is hosted by the Minority Business Development Agency and supported by corporate partners. Media partners playing a significant role in promoting the conference include: Hispanic Network Magazine, MBE Connect, Professional Woman's Magazine, The Black EOE Journal, and U.S. Veterans Magazine.

About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, promotes the growth and global competitiveness of the minority business community, making them better equipped to create jobs, impact local economies, and compete successfully in domestic and global marketplaces. With a nationwide network of 41 business centers and a rich portfolio of strategic partners, MBDA assists minority entrepreneurs and business owners with consulting services, contract and financing opportunities, bonding and certification services, building business-to-business alliances and executive training.