



NEWS RELEASE

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It's a Sweep! Two Women-Owned Firms and DOD Official Take Top Honors for National Minority Small Business Person of the Year, 8(a) Graduate of the Year and the Administrator's Leadership Award

Administrator Barreto Unveils New 8(a) Electronic Application

WASHINGTON – Two women-owned, minority-owned businesses and a Department of Defense official were recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration for their superior business achievements and outstanding commitment to federal procurement during the 22nd National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week celebration in Washington, D.C., SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto announced today.

The SBA Administrator also unveiled the new 8(a) electronic application which will allow small businesses to apply for 8(a) Business Development and Small Disadvantaged Business certification directly from the SBA's Web site, substantially reducing the time and cost burdens imposed on small businesses applying for certification.

"Minority businesses account for 15 percent of America's small businesses and employ more than 4.5 million people to help fuel the nation's economy," Barreto said. "Today it is my pleasure to recognize Belinda A. Davis of DGR Associates, Clarisa F. Howard of bd Systems, and Tracey Pinson, the director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for the Office of the Secretary of the Army for their entrepreneurial achievements and tremendous contributions to the nation's economy and growth of minority businesses."

"The newly launched 8(a) on-line application will allow small businesses to apply for 8(a) and SDB certification directly from the SBA's Web site, and ensure more small businesses are able to successfully compete for federal contracting opportunities," continued Administrator Barreto.

The application was developed by an 8(a) firm, Simplicity, Inc. in conjunction with the SBA's Office of Government Contracting and Business Development. It employs decision logic to screen applications allowing the SBA to review and process applications more efficiently and provide improved customer service. It is an on-line application that requires no downloading or software plug-ins, and it integrates with the Central Contractor Registration database, a database that small businesses must be registered in to do business with the federal government. A demonstration of the application was given during yesterday's Business Expo.

The winner of the *National 8(a) Minority Small Business of the Year Award* is **Ms. Belinda A. Davis, president of DGR Associates, Inc. of Belton, MO.** **Ms. Clarisa F. Howard, president of bd Systems, Inc. of Torrance, CA** is the recipient of the 8(a) *Graduate of the Year Award*. **Tracey L. Pinson, director for Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization,**

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Office of the Secretary of the Army is the winner of the *Administrator's Leadership Award*. The *Administrator's Leadership Award* recognizes the recipient for her tireless efforts and unwavering commitment on behalf of the nation's minority small business community.

Two of the three top award recipients were participants in the SBA's 8(a) Program – a program that provides management and technical assistance, networking and federal contracting opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

National Minority Small Business Person of the Year

Ms. Belinda A. Davis, President

DGR Associates

DGR is a woman-owned, minority business with a vast area of expertise which includes maintenance of more than 11,000 military family housing units, roof repair, plumbing, painting and snow removal. Since becoming 8(a) certified in 1997, Davis said, "We have demonstrated our capabilities effectively with the toughest customer of all, the United States government. Our experience is unequalled in the industry and our customers have experienced the best in business."

National 8(a) Graduate of the Year

Ms. Clarisa F. Howard, President/CEO

bd Systems, Inc.

Although no longer in the 8(a) program, Howard has demonstrated that she is an accomplished business leader by expanding from a three-person business in 1981, to more than 346 employees in 2004. Howard has successfully transformed bd Systems, Inc., from a systems engineering firm to a broad-based high-tech company, providing technical services, management information systems and application software for government and the private sector. Headquartered in Torrance, Calif., bd Systems has operations in 20 locations, including the District of Columbia, and is a key subcontractor to several of the largest defense contractors, including Lockheed-Martin and Boeing. Howard has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the AT&T *Entrepreneur of the Year*, the Black Women, Incorporated *Pinnacle Award for Entrepreneurial Achievement* and the SBA *Entrepreneurial Success Award*. Howard credits the SBA and the SBA's Los Angeles District Office for major contributions to her success.

Administrator's Leadership Award

Tracey L. Pinson, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) for Office of the Secretary of the Army

Tracey Pinson has served as the director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization since May 1995. As director of the OSDBU, Pinson advises the Secretary of the Army and senior Army officials on all small business procurement issues and is responsible for the implementation of the federal procurement programs designed to assist small businesses, particularly small disadvantaged

businesses and women-owned businesses. She also manages the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Institutions program and develops policies and initiatives to encourage their participation in Army funded programs. As the top female in the Army's procurement field, Pinson oversees the Army's Mentor-Protégé program.

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The awards were part of this week's MED Week Conference at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The SBA's Office of Government Contracting and Business Development took part in the event with the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency. The conference features workshops, seminars, award ceremonies, a business expo and a *Meet Your White House* breakfast session with senior Bush Administration officials.

At Friday's closing award ceremony and gala, Kwame Jackson, first-runner up in NBC's "The Apprentice" reality show, will accept an entrepreneurship award for his achievements during the competition for the coveted executive position of one of Donald Trump's successful companies. Another special award will be given to the plaintiffs in the historic *Brown vs. Board of Education case* during the closing award ceremony and gala.

For more information, contact the MED Week 2004 office at 1-877-MEDWEEK or visit the Web site at www.medweek.gov

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