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## **Michigan Recognizes Small Business Success at Michigan Celebrates Small Business, May 3rd in Lansing**

MICHIGAN - Michigan Celebrates Small Business (MCSB), the state's premier awards event celebrating small business excellence and the importance of small business success to Michigan's economy, will be held May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Lansing Center.

"Michigan Celebrates Small Business fosters the entrepreneurial spirit in Michigan," said Carol Lopucki, State Director of the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center. "The event is an opportunity to celebrate the success of small business in Michigan by highlighting over 60 small businesses that have helped build Michigan's economy in 2011. Now in its eighth year, we are expecting over 1,000 guests to celebrate this success."

Well-known entrepreneur Ari Weinzweig, Co-founder and CEO of Zingerman's Community of Businesses, a nationally recognized Michigan company for their great food and great experiences for over 500,000 visitors every year, is the keynote speaker.

The evening will consist of light jazz in the opening reception, dinner, awards presentation and a post event reception to allow guests to mingle and congratulate the award winners. For more details on Michigan Celebrates Small Business event and to purchase tickets, visit [www.michigancelebrates.biz](http://www.michigancelebrates.biz).

Six organizations that support and celebrate entrepreneurialism in Michigan came together in 2005 to create Michigan Celebrates Small Business, the state's premier awards ceremony for entrepreneurs and small business leaders. The event's founders are the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center, the Edward Lowe Foundation, the Small Business Association of Michigan and the Greater Lansing Business Monthly.

Underwriters for this year's Michigan Celebrates Small Business event are PNC Bank, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, DTE Energy Foundation, Comcast Business Class, Varnum Law, Michigan Certified Development Corporation, Accident Fund, Michigan Credit Union League, Huntington Bank, Comcast Spotlight, DBI Office Furniture and Dynamic Edge, Inc.

Media partners for Michigan Celebrates Small Business are MiBiz, Crain's Detroit Business, Upper Peninsula Business Today, the Traverse City Business News, the Greater Lansing Business Monthly, Corp! Magazine, MiTechnews.com, WWJ News Radio, Michigan Radio and WCMU Radio and Michigan Business Talk Network.

**About the Winners**

## Michigan 50 Companies to Watch

“Michigan 50 Companies to Watch” is an awards program (list of winners attached) sponsored by the Edward Lowe Foundation and presented by Michigan Celebrates Small Business.

“The 50 companies selected this year give us an inspired view of Michigan’s entrepreneurial landscape,” says Penny Lewandowski, director of entrepreneurship development at the Edward Lowe Foundation. “These are companies with a history of growth and potential as significant drivers of our economy. Some are expanding through the development of innovation while others are creating new markets. They play a role in their communities as job creators and as thoughtful philanthropists.

“As we celebrate these companies this year,” Lewandowski says, “We also recognize the community partners and service providers throughout the state that create an environment in which these companies can thrive. Together, they are the backbone of Michigan’s rich entrepreneurial culture.”

Companies nominated for the “Michigan 50 Companies to Watch” list must be second-stage companies, defined as having 6 to 99 full-time-equivalent employees and generating \$750,000 to \$50 million in annual revenue or working capital from investors or grants. In addition, the companies must be privately held and headquartered in Michigan.

Judges from the banking, economic development, entrepreneurship development and venture capital communities selected the winners. The judges evaluated the nominees’ demonstrated intent and capacity to grow based on one or more of the following:

- Employee or sales growth.
- Exceptional entrepreneurial leadership.
- Sustainable competitive advantage.
- Other notable factors that showcase the company's success.

## U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) of Michigan Small Business Awards

As part of National Small Business Week, the SBA has been recognizing the special impact made by American outstanding entrepreneurs and small business owners since 1963. “The SBA is honored to highlight the impact of the courageous men and women who work every day to grow small businesses, create 21st century jobs, drive innovation, and increase America’s global competitiveness,” said Gerald Moore, SBA Michigan District Director. “Together with our partners, we honor and celebrate the individuals whose inspiration and efforts keep America strong.”

The SBA honors the exceptional small business owners and the champions who support them each year at Michigan Celebrates Small Business. The following winners were selected because of their staying power, financial performance, innovativeness, response to adversity, contributions to their communities, and advocacy for the advancement of small business.

- **Small Business Person of the Year:** John Lowery, Applied Imaging, Grand Rapids
- **Michigan and Midwest Regional Entrepreneurial Success Winner:** William Deary, Great Lakes Caring, Jackson
- **Michigan and Midwest Regional Exporter of the Year:** Laurence S. Slovin, B&P Process Equipment and Systems, LLC, Saginaw

- **Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year:** Jami Moore, JEM Tech Group, Mount Clemens
- **Young Entrepreneur of the Year:** Amber Lynn (Smith) Williams, Power in Motion Gymnastics & Fitness, St. Joseph
- **Michigan, Midwest Regional, and National Financial Services Champion:** Dave Adams, Michigan Credit Union League and Associates, Lansing
- **Michigan, Midwest Regional and National Veteran Small Business Champion:** Keith King, Keith King & Associates, Detroit
- **Minority Small Business Champion:** Donald E. Snider, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Detroit
- **Women in Business Champion:** Margaret Adams, SBA Women's Business Center at Cornerstone Alliance, Benton Harbor
- **Small Business Journalist of the Year:** Larry Eiler, Re:NEW Michigan, Ann Arbor
- **SBTDC Counselor of the Year:** Stan Pruski, Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center, Grand Rapids
- **SCORE Counselor of the Year:** James H. Muir, SCORE, Farmington Hills

For more information on the SBA award winners, please contact the SBA Michigan District Office at (313) 226-6075.

#### Other Awards

**Best Small Business – Main Street USA Award:** Woodward Auto provides one-of-a-kind automotive service and sales for any kind of automotive need (contact owner John Mihelich at 248-334-6400.) To be eligible for this award the small business must be a client of the MI-SBTDC who participated in a substantial amount of MI-SBTDC programs that resulted in a positive impact on the company in areas such as access to capital, development and implementation of a strategic plan and entry into new markets.

**Government Contracting Award:** B&P Manufacturing has been engineering material handling products since 1945 (contact owners Gale and Keith Merchant at 231-306-3828.) To be eligible for this award the small business must be a client of a Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) and received a minimum of one-year assistance to help the business win or come substantially closer to winning a government contract.

**Innovation Award:** Evigia Systems is a leading provider of wireless sensing, identification and tracking solutions targeting military, security, and commercial applications (contact CEO Navid Yazdi at 743-302-1140.) To be eligible for this award, a product or service must have been developed and earned revenue during the past three years and be nominated to the Small Business Association of Michigan.

**Urban Small Business and Entrepreneurship Award:** Proos Manufacturing provides engineering and manufacturing solutions for the automotive, defense and medical supply industries (contact owner Amy Engelsman at 616-293-7653.) To be eligible for this award, the small business must have been located in a designated urban area, be a second-stage business, show evidence of sales outside of Michigan, and demonstrate potential for long-term business success and economic growth.

For more information regarding Michigan Celebrates Small Business contact Jennifer Deamud at the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center, managing partner of Michigan Celebrates Small Business – [deamudj@gvsu.edu](mailto:deamudj@gvsu.edu) or 616-331-7482.