



2010

Northwest Indiana Entrepreneurial Excellence Awards



Getting Started

WHAT ARE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS?

For over sixteen years, Northwest Indiana has been conducting an awards process to recognize the achievements of many outstanding entrepreneurs and small business owners in our region. The awards are sponsored by the NWI Small Business Development Center and a large number of leading businesses in our region.

WHAT ARE THE AWARD CATEGORIES?

The category list with descriptions is attached.

WHEN ARE THE AWARDS GIVEN?

At the Entrepreneurial Excellence Award Luncheon each year. This year's event is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 19, 2010**. This event has been put on in the region for many years, and in the past, we have had nearly 500 people at the luncheon. Many of Northwest Indiana's top business leaders attend this premier event. Both the award recipient and the nominator are recognized at the luncheon.

WHO SHOULD MAKE A NOMINATION?

People like you! Individuals such as attorneys, accountants, bankers, financial advisors, insurance agents, executives, vendors, customers and employees can make nominations. Organizations such as chambers of commerce, professional groups, trade organizations, and clubs may also submit a nomination. Nominations are often written and submitted by two or three people who join together to split the workload and collect the necessary information. The nominee often appreciates that more than one person is making an effort to nominate him or her.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE NOMINATED?

A nomination may be submitted for any individual or partners whose business is classified as a small business under the guidelines of the U.S. Small Business Administration (stated in the awards criteria section of this kit) and is located in the seven county area of Northwest Indiana (Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Starke, Jasper, Pulaski, and Newton). 98% of all businesses in Northwest Indiana are classified as small business. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one award category.

WHO WINS THESE AWARDS?

Local people who have excelled in their business. These individuals have performed in outstanding ways in one of the categories. Historically, we have bestowed awards on nearly 100 individuals at the local level and over 25% of them have been recognized for higher awards.

HOW DO YOU ASK SOMEONE IF HE OR SHE WANTS TO BE NOMINATED?

It is recommended that anyone nominating an individual should consult with the nominee and solicit assistance from the nominee and his or her accountant, attorney, banker or other professional advisors as well as key staff employed by the nominee.

HOW DO I DO THIS?

Suggest that a meeting or lunch be scheduled to review the information that is required in the nomination package. You might want to suggest that the best way to nominate is through a "team approach" and involve the banker, accountant, attorney etc. At this meeting carefully review all the criteria within the given category.

WHO WRITES THE NOMINATION?

The nominator usually puts the nomination package together using the guidelines and formats in this document (see section 2). It is important to follow the criteria since scoring is based on these factors. A sample nomination package can be acquired by calling the SBDC office at 219-644-3513.

WHO MAKES THE DECISION ON THE AWARDS?

The Awards Selection Panel is comprised of individuals from the banking, accounting, legal, business and economic development communities. Each committee member completes a scoring sheet by assigning a numerical value to each criterion within the specific nomination category. Finalists are selected based on a ranking of the compiled scores.

IS THIS PROCESS CONFIDENTIAL?

The Entrepreneurial Excellence Awards Committee has gone to great lengths to insure that the information contained in the submitted nomination packages remains confidential. The members of the Awards

Selection Panel are the only people that see the information.

The process is as follows:

1. Nomination packages are submitted to the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) office at 9800 Connecticut Drive, Crown Point 46307.
2. These packages are sorted and each member of the Awards Selection Panel arranges to pick up a set of all nominations. Prior to releasing the nomination packages, the SBDC has each committee member sign a "NON-DISCLOSURE FORM".
3. Incomplete packets are not submitted to the committee.
4. Each panel member is given a week to independently review the nomination packages and evaluate each nominee.
5. The Panel meets to discuss and submit their final scoring sheets for each candidate within the six Award Categories. At this meeting all nomination packages are returned.

The SBDC destroys all copies when the process is complete.

It should be noted that in the fourteen years of conducting this awards process, there has **never** been a breach of confidentiality.

DO WE HAVE TO SUPPLY FINANCIAL INFORMATION?

Yes, financial information is necessary for evaluating the strength and growth of a business. However, you only need to provide company financial information in a summary format.

If an individual becomes a finalist, complete financial statements for the previous three years must be provided in order for the winner to continue to compete at higher levels of state and national competitions. The summary financial information requirements are shown in a form supplied in Section 2 of the nomination kit.

WHAT IF I NEED HELP?

Call the Small Business Development Center at 219-644-3513 and request assistance. Someone from the SBDC or the Nomination's Committee will contact you.

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A NOMINATION?

All nomination packages must be postmarked and mailed to the Small Business Development Center, 9800 Connecticut Drive, Crown Point, IN 46307 or delivered to the SBDC office. The deadline is **August 2, 2010**. The Entrepreneurial Excellence Awards are organized by the SBDC in conjunction with our business community.

The Nomination Package can be also downloaded from the SBDC website,

www.nwisbdc.org

The Nomination Package

Nominations must be typewritten on **one side** of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery and collated. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be addressed specifically (see guidelines for each category). Incomplete nomination packages, such as those lacking financial statements, will not be considered. A complete nomination package will include in the following order:

1. Page One: the following information
 - The Award for which the nomination is being made
 - The nominee's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address (if applicable)
 - The nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address (if applicable)
 - If any SBA assistance was received include a statement about this (e.g., Received a 7(a) loan, or Received business counseling from SBDC)
 - One-paragraph description of the nominee's business
2. SBA Form 3300 Award Nomination Form. For "team" nominations, a form is required for each team member.
3. Photographs: Two original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photos of the nominee; or e-mail a digital photo to sbdc@calumet.purdue.edu – at least 300 dpi or ppi; photocopies are not acceptable. Four to five additional photos of the nominee's company, employees at work.
4. A nomination letter which includes a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award (not to exceed four pages).
5. A brief biography of the nominee (not to exceed one page).
6. If applicable, a business profile detailing what the company sells (not to exceed one page).
7. Evaluation criteria responses answered in paragraph form for each level of criteria specific to that award. (See guidelines)
8. If applicable, the nominee's business financial statements for the last three years — including balance sheets, profit- and-loss statements and financial reports (not to exceed 12 pages, on 8 1/2" x 11" paper).
9. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination which includes community service and involvement(not to exceed 10 pages).
10. A SBA Form 2137 - Small Business Week Consent for Disclosure of Information

SUBMIT NOMINATIONS BY AUGUST 2, 2010

Small Business Person of the Year Criteria

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

Any individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business may be nominated. Partners who jointly own and operate a small business may be nominated as a “team,” so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four. A nominee for Small Business Person of the Year must own or operate a business defined as “small” under the applicable SBA size standards. Individuals who have received the small business person award at the state level within the past five years are not eligible. While receipt of SBA assistance is not required, it is preferred. Consult your nearest SBDC district office for assistance.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the Small Business Person of the Year award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

1. Staying power — a substantiated history as an established business; including:
 - Number of years in business.
 - Sustained expansion, addition of territories, growth in square footage occupied.
 - Steady growth in net worth as evidenced by total assets less total liabilities on fiscal year end annual balance sheets over three years.
2. Growth in number of employees — a benchmark to judge the impact of the business on the job market.
 - Sustained over a minimum of three years.
 - Increase over the three years must be in excesses of growth in Gross National Product.
3. Increase in sales and/or unit volume — an indication of continued growth over the last three years.
 - Consistent growth in net income as evidenced by fiscal year annual profit-and-loss statements for a minimum of three years.
4. Current and past financial performance — financial reports substantiate an improved financial position of the business.
 - Profit-and-loss statements for the last three years, reflecting sustained upward growth.
 - Balance sheets for the last three years, showing consistent increase in net worth and/or partners’ return.
5. Innovativeness of product or service offered — an illustration of the creativity and imagination of the nominee.
 - Specific description of uniqueness of product or service.
 - Explanation of how product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition.
6. Response to adversity — examples of problems faced in the nominee’s business and the methods used to solve them, including:
 - Specific description of financial, physical, legal or other crisis.
 - Substantiation of the threat to the continuity of the business.
 - Defined actions taken by the nominee to resolve the crisis.
7. Contributions to community-oriented projects — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources, including:
 - Listing of specific contributions of money, time, or resources to charitable causes.
 - Membership in councils, boards and clubs providing support and services to the community.

Entrepreneurial Success Award Criteria

Individuals meeting the following two criteria may be nominated: They must own and operate businesses initially launched as small businesses according to SBA size standards and subsequently developed into large businesses; and they must have received SBA assistance to help the businesses grow.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the SBA Entrepreneurial Success award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

1. Staying power — a substantiated history as an established business; including:
 - Number of years in business.
 - Sustained expansion, addition of territories, growth in square footage occupied.
 - Steady growth in net worth as evidenced by total assets less total liabilities on fiscal year end annual balance sheets over three years.
2. Growth in number of employees — a benchmark to judge the impact of the business on the job market.
 - Sustained over a minimum of three years.
 - Increase over the three years must be in excesses of growth in Gross National Product.
 - Increase in sales and/or unit volume — an indication of continued growth over the last three years.
 - Consistent growth in net income as evidenced by fiscal year annual profit-and-loss statements for a minimum of three years.
3. Current and past financial performance — financial reports substantiate an improved financial position of the business.
 - Profit-and-loss statements for the last three years, reflecting sustained upward growth.
 - Balance sheets for the last three years, showing consistent increase in net worth and/or partners' return.
4. SBA Assistance – documentation of the type(s) and amount(s) of SBA assistance received by the business and the year(s) in which they were received.
5. Innovativeness of product or service offered — an illustration of the creativity and imagination of the nominee.
 - Specific description of uniqueness of product or service.
 - Explanation of how product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition.
6. Response to adversity — examples of problems faced in the nominee's business and the methods used to solve them, including:
 - a. Specific description of financial, physical, legal or other crisis.
 - b. Substantiation of the threat to the continuity of the business.
 - c. Defined actions taken by the nominee to resolve the crisis.
 - d. Contributions to community-oriented projects — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources, including:
 - Listing of specific contributions of money, time, or resources to charitable causes.
 - Membership in councils, boards and clubs providing support and services to the community.

Additional Awards Criteria

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

To be nominated and receive one of these awards, the small business nominee must fit within the category of the award.

Small Business Advocate of the Year: Individual who has fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of small business. Individual must be for the advancement of small business in NWI.

Small Business Exporter of the Year: Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations.

1. Increased sales, profits and/or growth of employment because of exporting.
2. Creative overseas marketing strategies.
3. Effective solutions to export-related problems.
4. Demonstrated encouragement of other small businesses to export.
5. Volunteer assistance to other small businesses entering the export market.
6. Cooperation with other businesses in the creation of export trading companies and/or introduction of unique trading relationships, products or services.
7. A description of the products exported and markets served

Young Entrepreneur of the Year: A young entrepreneur, the individual must serve as a majority owner and operate or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business with a three year track record, and who will not have reached the age of 30 by June 1, 2011.

1. Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
2. Increased employment opportunities created by the nominee's business.
3. Development and/or utilization of innovative or creative business methods.
4. Demonstrated entrepreneurial potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.

Minority Small Business Person of the Year: To be considered candidate must be a minority under [CFR, Title 13, Part 124](#), the individual must serve as a majority owner and operate or bear principal responsibility for operating a minority owned small business with a three-year record of accomplishment.

1. Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits, including current and past financial position
2. Increased employment opportunities/growth in employees.
3. Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
4. Innovativeness and response to adversity
5. Other accomplishments demonstrating the nominee's merit as an effective advocate for minority small business interests.

Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year: Any family-owned and operated business which has been passed on from one generation to another may be nominated. The owner must also serve as a majority owner and operator or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business with at least a 15-year track record.

1. Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
2. Increased employment opportunities for family members and non-family members for the nominee's business.
3. Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
4. Voluntary efforts to strengthen family-owned businesses within the community.

Financial Services Champion of the Year: Individuals who assist small businesses through advocacy efforts to increase the usefulness and availability of accounting or financial services for small businesses may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be small business owners.

1. Outside of regular business duties, the amount and quality of assistance given small businesses to obtain financing.
2. Advocacy for changes in the financial services industry to assist small companies.
3. Encouragement of the flow of investment capital to small ventures.
4. Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small firms
5. Other significant contributions through the advocacy efforts of the financial services or accounting industries to advance small business interests.

Home-Based Business Champion of the Year: Individuals who have experienced the rewards and difficulties of owning a home-based business and have volunteered to improve the climate for these businesses may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be current small business owners. Nominees must also be residents of and employed in the United States or its territories and will be subject to background checks. Small businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws.

1. Volunteer time and energy to improve the conditions for home-based businesses
2. Engage in entrepreneurial training, policy development efforts, or financial or business planning specifically tailored for home-based businesses.
3. Demonstrated interest in home-based businesses by an owner or former owner.
4. Measurable accomplishments in advancing home-based businesses, such as adoption of public policy or expansion of a program.

Small Business Journalist of the Year: Journalists representing television, radio, electronic or print media who report and champion small business issues may be nominated.

1. Concerted efforts to increase public understanding of the importance of small business contributions to the economy.
2. Contribution of news and feature stories, editorials, columns and commentary that highlight and analyze small business issues.
3. Voluntary community service aimed at enhancing small business opportunity and growth.
4. Other achievements that exemplify the nominee's media efforts to improve the understanding of the role of small business in the U.S. economy.

Minority Small Business Champion of the Year: Individuals who have fulfilled a commitment to support minority entrepreneurship may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be small business owners. Note that individuals may be nominated for only one award category. Nominees must also be residents of and employed in the United States or its territories and will be subject to background checks. Small businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws.

1. Volunteer efforts beyond business/professional responsibilities to advance minority small business interests within the community, state and/or nation.
2. Demonstrated efforts to improve conditions in the minority small business community as a whole, not solely for individual personal advancement.
3. Voluntary provision of professional services to the minority small business community in a legal, legislative, managerial or financial capacity.
4. Demonstrated accomplishments in advising minority small business groups of opportunities within the overall business community.
5. Other accomplishments demonstrating the nominee's merit as an effective advocate for minority small business interests.

Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year: Individuals who have fulfilled a commitment to advancing small business opportunities for veterans of the U.S. armed forces may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be veterans.

1. Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small businesses.
2. Evidence of increased business opportunities for veterans as a result of the nominee's actions.
3. Advisory activities to improve awareness of small business opportunities among veterans' groups.
4. Advocacy of special consideration for veteran-owned small businesses in government policymaking.
5. Demonstrated success in obtaining support within the community for the establishment of veteran-owned small businesses.
6. Other accomplishments demonstrating the nominee's effective advocacy of veteran-owned small businesses.

Women in Business Champion of the Year: Individuals who have fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of women's business ownership may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be small business owners.

1. Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small businesses.
2. Efforts to increase business and financial opportunities for women.
3. Legal, financial or managerial assistance provided to enhance women's business ownership.
4. Voluntary efforts to strengthen the role of women business owners within the community.
5. Advocacy of the women-owned business community as a whole, not solely for individual personal advancement.
6. Other accomplishments demonstrating effectiveness in improving the environment for the creation and expansion of businesses owned and operated by women.