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## **MBDA Announces 2017 National MED WEEK Award Winners**

*A salute to excellence in the minority business community*

**WASHINGTON, DC (October 23, 2017)** — The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) today announced the 2017 National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Award winners. This year the Agency honored 15 minority business enterprises (MBEs), businesses leaders and advocates for their leadership, commitment and excellence in advancing the interests and the economic achievements of the minority business community.

For more than 30 years, MBDA has observed National MED Week by convening award winners, key business leaders, influencers, MBEs and advocates during a week-long celebration. MBDA will once again lead the annual observance by hosting special MED Week programming and events during the 2017 National Minority Supplier Development Council Conference and Business Opportunity Exchange (NMSDC) Oct. 22-25 in Detroit.

“MBDA is delighted to celebrate such a prestigious group of innovators, advocates and business leaders for their extraordinary efforts in contributing to the economic success of the minority business community and the U.S. economy. Your entrepreneurial spirit symbolizes the best of America. We salute your accomplishments and the many years of hard work that you’ve dedicated to achieving your success,” said MBDA Acting National Director Christopher Garcia.

Since 1983, every U.S. president has issued a Presidential Proclamation designating National Minority Enterprise Development Week to recognize the contributions of the minority business community to the U.S. economy. This year, President Donald J. Trump proclaimed the 2017 National MED Week as Oct. 22-28.

### **The following are the 2017 National Minority Enterprise Development Week Award Winners:**

**Abe Venable Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement** recognizes an individual who has played an integral role in the creative, technical or professional progress of minority business development over the course of their life. This year’s award recipient is Carmen Castillo, President and CEO of SDI International Corp. SDI International is one of the largest certified diverse and woman-owned procurement outsourcing organizations in the world. Throughout her career, Castillo has worked diligently with local, regional and global non-governmental and trade organizations like the National Minority Supplier Development Council, Women’s Business Enterprise National Council,

the International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge, the International Trade Center, and the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to facilitate the growth and development of the minority supply base.

**Ronald H. Brown Leadership Award**, inspired by the late U.S. Secretary of Commerce, recognizes an individual who has shown exceptional leadership and achieved significant success in supporting diversity in the public or private sector. This year's award recipient is Dr. Frederick W. McKinney, Managing Director of Minority Business Programs for Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. McKinney has invested his career in helping minorities achieve economic self-sufficiency through inclusion in the national economy. He is also a long-time advocate for minority supplier development and corporate supplier diversity.

### **Champions of Minority Business Development:**

**Advocate of the Year Award** is being presented to Chiling Tong, President and CEO of the National Asian Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ACE). ACE was founded in 2012 to promote and advocate on behalf of the 2 million API-owned firms, which generate over than \$500B in annual revenue.

**Distinguished Supplier Diversity Award** is being presented to the California Water Service (Cal Water). Cal Water is the largest investor-owned American water utility west of the Mississippi River and the third largest in the country. Formed in 1926, the San Jose-based company serves more than 477,900 customers through 28 Customer and Operations Centers throughout the state. Since Program Manager Jose Espinoza assumed the supplier diversity program manager position in 2014, Cal Water has consistently exceeded the 21.5% supplier diversity goal by including diverse supplier proposals for every competitive sourcing proposal.

**The Access to Capital Award** is being presented is being presented to Erin Andrew, Managing Director of Live Oak Bank in Wilmington, NC. Live Oak Bank is a nation-wide bank that provides financial solutions to small businesses. Andrew is a results-driven management, finance, project management, and implementation expert who enjoys identifying solutions to pending public policy and process management challenges.

### **Minority-Owned Firms:**

**Minority Construction Firm of the Year** is being presented to Trice Construction Company. Founded in 1967 in Chicago, Illinois, Trice Construction Company built a strong reputation for safety, performance and exceptional customer service in the concrete construction industry. Trice is a recognized leader in concrete construction with a specialization in electric and gas utilities, commercial markets, and the public sector.

**Minority Export Firm of the Year** is being presented to Natural Vitamins Laboratory. With 25 years of experience in supplying natural health products to industry partners worldwide, NVL is operates from a 95,000-sq. ft. facility in Opa Locka, Fla. that is equipped with a manufacturing practices system and fully automated packaging machinery that allows precision and error minimization, resulting in high speed production.

**Minority Manufacturing Firm of the Year** is being presented to Vista Color. Since 1968, Vista Color has been a trendsetter in the graphic arts industry. With its past deeply rooted in high quality printing, Vista Color has evolved into an industry leader specializing in folding cartons. They serve many diverse industries, including pharmaceutical, food, and private label.

**Minority Energy Firm of the Year** is being presented to Polymer Technologies and Services, Inc. PTS works with plastic industry individuals to transform their throwaway scrap plastic into valuable raw material. PTS has a proven track record of providing long-term solutions in automotive, home care, and lawn care product lines.

**Minority Technology Firm of the Year** is being presented to J&F Alliance Group. J&F Alliance Group is an IT company that specializes in customized augmented reality, virtual reality, and mixed reality applications for military services and the Department of Defense. The company provides users with applications that increase safety awareness, work performance, comprehension, collaboration, and more.

**Minority Health Products and Services Firm of the Year** is being presented to Vysnova Partners, Inc. Since 2012, Vysnova Partners, Inc. has teamed with federal agencies to develop and implement global public health initiatives. Because of their operating capabilities, they are currently supporting federal client programs in more than 15 countries to provide payroll, tax, and human resource operations.

**Minority Marketing and Communications Firm of the Year** is being presented to CF Creative. CF Creative offers business consultancy and demand generation solutions that enable their clients to increase productivity, expand global footprints, and optimize performance.

**Minority Professional Services Firm of the Year** is being presented to Pivotal Practices Consulting LLC. Pivotal supports organizational leaders in developing and implementing breakthrough talent leadership solutions that lead to fully engaged and inclusive workplaces.

**MBDA Minority Business Enterprise of the Year** is being presented to Parrish McDonald's Restaurants Ltd. The company operates 23 restaurants with 1,088 employees with net sales of more than \$63 million. The Dallas Business Journal ranks the organization the 9th-largest minority owned business in North Texas.

## **Special Recognition**

**Veteran-Owned Minority Firm of the Year** is being presented to a minority veteran-owned enterprise with impressive business performance demonstrated by growth and job creation, and a commitment to social responsibility and community involvement. Indatatech was co-founded by Bede Ramcharan, a retired Army colonel with over 22 years of global operation and leadership experience in peacetime and combat. Indatatech has over 15 years in operation and continued service supporting the Warfighter, and the company's employee base is comprised of almost all military veterans. Under Ramcharan's leadership, Indatatech was named the Top 2015 Fast Track Company in San Antonio, Texas with revenue Under \$10 Million by the San Antonio Business Journal.

The 2017 MED Week winners will be recognized by MBDA Acting National Director Christopher Garcia during the NMSDC Power Breakfast today in Detroit.

***About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)***

MBDA, [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov), is the only Federal agency solely dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 47 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that provide greater access to capital, contracts and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda)

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