

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

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Helping small businesses
start, grow and succeed.



Your Small Business Resource

Meet Charran Fisher—The New England 2011 Minority Small Business Person of the Year



Lonnie Daniels, AMBE, Charran Fisher and Bob Nelson, SBA

Charran Fisher has been selected as the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2011 New England and Massachusetts Minority Small Business Person of the Year.

This award is presented annually to a minority individual who owns and operates a small business concern. Nominations are evaluated using the following criteria: (1) A successful three-year track record in business; (2) Satisfactory financial condition; (3) Obstacles or adversities which the firm had to overcome; (4) Unique and special attributes of the firm; (5) Participation in charitable local community projects.

In business since 1988, Fisher Contracting Corporation is a family owned minority business enterprise focused on providing turnkey specialty contracting services. Fisher Contracting works in a variety of business sectors from interior commercial demolition and construction clean-ups to bridge demolition and environmental remediation.

Charran took an interest in the demolition work her husband Edward G. Fisher was doing with his father and set out to learn everything she could about the business. In 1998, Charran took over as president and works closely with her husband, now senior vice president of the company.

Fisher Contracting is committed to contributing to the community. Every year the company donates to youth and adult basketball programs at the YMCA of Central Massachusetts and the Worcester Jewish Community Center. Fisher Contracting is also dedicated to providing jobs for the minority communities in Worcester. About 90% of the company's workforce are from minority backgrounds and most live in urban areas.

Charran was honored for her achievements at the 29th Annual MED Week Conference held in Washington, DC September 27-30, 2011.

Strategic Solutions Group—Boston SCORE's 2011 Small Business of the Year

On September 12, 2011, Strategic Solutions Group of Boston was named the Boston SCORE: Counselors to America's Small Business 2011 Small Business of the Year. This award was presented to John Schaeffer and Jennifer Graves, co-presidents of SSG, at SCORE Boston's annual luncheon in Needham.

The Business of the Year award is presented annually to companies that sought the assistance of SCORE in the start-up stage and have continued the mentoring relationship throughout the growth of the business.

Established in 2003, Strategic Solutions Group (SSG) provides expertise in IT Project Management and System Implementation, with a focus on public health and public safety. SSG has seen continued growth in recent years. Since 2008 the company has grown from 3 to 36 team members with revenues increasing by 500%. In a difficult economic environment, SSG has proven to provide value driven IT and management consulting services to healthcare, public health and public safety organizations.



John Schaeffer, Jennifer Graves, and Paul Waldek, SCORE

INSIDE THE MASSACHUSETTS SBA

THE SBA MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT OFFICE WELCOMES NEW HIRE, MICHELLE GENOVESE

Michelle Genovese, lender relations specialist, is the newest team member to join the Massachusetts District Office. After 10 years at local banks in the Western New York area, she joined the US Small Business Administration Office of Disaster Assistance in 1998.

As a supervisory underwriter, she has processed and reviewed thousands of home and business loans. Her other duties, including customer service and field duty brought her to areas destroyed by disasters throughout the country. Her positive attitude and dedication allowed her to help these victims by aiding, assisting and educating the families and businesses on the complex road to recovery.

Her recent move to Boston to join the Massachusetts Office is her favorite achievement so far. She is looking forward to combining all her experience to aid, assist, and educate the bankers of Massachusetts, so they can help the business owners of today and tomorrow.

Michelle can be reached by phone at 617-565-5560 or by email at michelle.genovese@sba.gov.



Over the summer the SBA Massachusetts District Office participated in the Feds Feed Families food drive. Not only was SBA a participant in the drive, but Matt Sisk of the Massachusetts SBA was the local organizer.

The food drive was especially timely because it is over the summer months that many children are left hungry because they are unable to benefit from school nutrition programs.

Food was collected through donation boxes at both the O'Neil Federal building and the JFK Federal Building. Through the efforts of local feds, 1,472 pounds of food was collected for the Greater Boston Food Bank.

The local food drive was part of a much larger effort reaching across the country and benefiting food banks nation wide. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of employees across the country, SBA donated a cumulative total of 29,912 nonperishable food items this year. As a result of this outstanding accomplishment, SBA was nationally recognized as the agency with the most collected food items in the category of Petite Agencies. Thank you, Matt, Massachusetts led the nation in district office food collections!



Matt Sisk with donations.

SPRINGFIELD BRANCH HAPPENINGS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW SPRINGFIELD BRANCH MANAGER!

In June of 2011, Ray Milano of the SBA Massachusetts District Office was named branch manager of SBA's Springfield Branch Office. Ray, with the agency since 1999 is already a familiar face around the Massachusetts small business community. As a business development specialist Ray's responsibilities included veteran and lender outreach, office administration and special initiatives. Ray will continue his work with the Massachusetts veteran community as he takes on the additional duties of being responsible for the effective delivery of SBA's contracting, financial and business development programs in western Massachusetts.

"Ray possesses all the leadership qualities, work experience, and more, that we are looking for in this position," said Massachusetts SBA director, Bob Nelson. "You will not find a more dedicated public servant than Ray Milano. We are very fortunate to have such an outstanding professional that works so tirelessly on behalf of our small businesses and veterans," added Nelson.

Ray can be reached by phone at 413-785-0484 or by email at Raymond.milano@sba.gov. The Springfield Branch Office is located at: One Federal Street, Building 101-R, Springfield, MA 01105.

DISASTER UPDATE—HURRICANE IRENE

Physical Disaster Declaration for the Counties Berkshire and Franklin; and for Economic Injury Only the contiguous counties of Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; contiguous Litchfield County in the State of Connecticut; contiguous Cheshire County in the State of New Hampshire; contiguous counties of Columbia, Dutchess and Rensselaer in the State of New York; and contiguous counties of Bennington and Windham in the State of Vermont.

Application Filing Deadlines:

Physical Damage: November 2, 2011 Economic Injury: June 5, 2012

Whether you rent or own your own home, own your own business, or own a small agricultural cooperative located in a declared disaster area, and are the victim of a disaster, you may be eligible for financial assistance from the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA). For more information go to: <http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/MA%2012799%20Fact%20Sheet%20TS%20Irene%2009-03-11.pdf>



AWARD CATEGORIES

Please check one or more potential categories:

- Small Business Person of the Year:** For developing an outstanding, growing business; innovative product(s), increasing jobs, increasing sales, overcoming adversity, and community contributions.
- Small Business Exporter of the Year:** Significantly increased export sales and profits, encouraging other firms to export, increased jobs through exports, and innovative methods of creating markets.
- SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year:** Owner will not reach 30th birthday by June 1, 2012, three-year evidence of success in sales and profits, increased jobs, innovative products, demonstrated potential.
- Entrepreneurial Success:** Business that started 'small' by SBA standards, then developed into a large business. Business must have received SBA assistance.
- Jeffrey Butland Family Owned Small Business:** A family owned business that has passed from one generation to another and owner has responsibility for operating the business with at least a 15 year track record
- Massachusetts Micro-Enterprise:** For developing an outstanding business with assistance through SBA loan programs or as a client of one of our SBA technical service providers, at least a three year track record, and 5 or fewer employees.

Small Business Champions of the Year: Those who promote small business, including volunteering time and services to small business interests and groups, advocating the cause of small business in the legislative process. Champions may or may not be small business owners.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services Champion | <input type="checkbox"/> Women in Business Champion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran Small Business Champion | <input type="checkbox"/> Minority Small Business Champion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home-Based Business Champion | <input type="checkbox"/> SCORE Chapter of the Year: Recognized for excellence and innovation by providing a variety of training and counseling. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Business Center of Excellence Award: Recognized for its excellence and innovation in assisting women entrepreneurs by providing a variety of training and counseling. | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business Development Center Service Excellence: Creates innovative programs, publications, and advocates for SBA, SBDC and the small business community. |

NOMINEE INFORMATION

I nominate _____ Title _____
 Company/Organization _____ Address _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Nominee's Qualifications for this Award attach short **description on why this business/advocate should be considered:**

When nominating a business owner, please complete the following: Is the company operating profitably _____
 # Years in business _____ # of employees _____ annual sales \$ _____ SIC/NAICS code _____

NOMINATOR'S INFORMATION:

Nominator Name _____ Title _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

Please mail (or fax 202-741-7076) this form to:
Matt Sisk
 U.S. Small Business Administration
 10 Causeway St., Room 265, Tip O'Neill Bldg
 Boston, MA 02222-1093

For more information, please contact Matt Sisk @: 617 565-5569. Self-nominations accepted. This form may be duplicated. **For further consideration, supporting materials will be required.** SBA will contact the nominee with details. Thanks for your support!

Nominations are still being accepted for these awards. Complete packages are not due into the Massachusetts office until November 9, 2011. If you are interested in submitting a package for yourself or a deserving business you know, please call Matt Sisk at 617-565-5569 to indicate your intentions and find out your next steps. To see the complete nomination form go to: <http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/2/3162/news/24161>.