VI Businesses Featured During Small Business Week

Despite tough economic times, businesses in the Virgin Islands faced challenges and survived. Some of those businesses were featured during VI Small Business Week, observed June 1 through 5. Sponsored by the Small Business Development (SBDC), the University of the Virgin Islands and the U.S. Small Business Administration, the week included seminars and business boot camps.

The week’s highlight was the Small Business Annual Awards ceremonies on St. Thomas and St. Croix. The St. Croix ceremony was held on June 4, at Gertrude’s Restaurant in conjunction with The Rotary Club of St. Croix-Mid Isle. The St. Thomas ceremony was held on June 5, at the UVI Administration and Conference Center in conjunction with a St. Thomas/St. John Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Reception. Awards were given in several categories, including the Small Business Person of the Year.

SBDC and SBA 2009 Awards

St. Croix SBDC Awards
- Small Business Person of the Year: Maxine Hart, A Touch of Max Beauty Salon
- Entrepreneurial Success: Dr. Anthony D. Ricketts and Dr. Emmanuel O. Delano, Flagstar, LLC (healthcare)
- Nascent Business of the Year “Emerging Woman Entrepreneur” Award: Annie Day Henry, Ladiday Enterprises, LLC (clothing manufacturing)
- Youth Entrepreneurial Advocate: Ruth Williams, St. Croix Educational Complex High School

St. Thomas SBDC Awards
- Small Business Person of the Year: Ashley L. Allen, Sr., Smooth Kreationz (graphic arts/tinting)
- Woman-Owned Business: Michelle Joshua, New Horizon Clothing
- Small Business Advocate of the Year: José Penn, The Penn’s Corporation, (real estate and car rentals)
- Entrepreneurs of the Year: Alisonia Griffith and Julie Merrillfield, A&J Enterprises LLC, DBA Commercial Water Services
- Nascent Business of the Year: Karen Bowry, The Mail Hub
- Small Business Development Center Contributor of the Year: FirstBank Virgin Islands

Special Awards
- LaVerne E. Ragster, Ph.D., President, University of the Virgin Islands
- Carl Christensen, Small Business Administration Project Officer for the USVI

Innovative Youth Business Concept Competition
- 1st Place - Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, Mentors: St. Clair Potter and Wendy-Ann Díaz
- 2nd Place - Charlotte Amalie High School, Mentors: Adlyn Williams and Vandel Percival
- 3rd Place - Tutu Church of God Academy, Mentors: Ishma Liverpool and Kenrick O. Bukle

USVI US Small Business Administration (SBA) Awards
- SBA Bank of the Year: FirstBank Virgin Islands
- SBA St. Croix Small Business Person of the Year: Neil L. Bruan, N.R. Electric
- SBA St. Thomas Small Business Person of the Year: Howard Bowring, Caribbean Food Service, Inc.
UVI Professor to Spend Months Researching in the Pacific

UVI biologist and professor Dr. Nasseer Idrisi was chosen to participate as the HBCU Educator at Sea on the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP), Expedition 324 – the Shatsky Rise Formation in the Pacific Ocean. IODP is an international research program that explores the history and structure of the earth as recorded in seafloor sediments and rocks. The expedition will begin in Yokohama, Japan on Sept. 4 and end in Townsville, Australia on Nov. 4.

According to its website, IODP builds upon the earliest successes of the Deep Sea Drilling Project and the Ocean Drilling Program, which revolutionized the view of earth history and global processes through ocean basin exploration. IODP represents the latest generation of these successful scientific ocean-drilling initiatives and seeks to expand the reach of these previous programs by forming a collaborative union between the United States, Japan, and the European Union.

“I am excited about this opportunity, and I hope to be able to further education in science in the USVI and other HBCU’s,” Dr. Idrisi said.

UVI, WTJX and Ag. Dept. to Partner for TV Series

When the VI Public Television System, WTJX Channel 12, pitched the idea of a local gardening show to the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service (CES), it was an opportunity for CES to continue its mission. CES teamed up with WTJX Channel 12 and the VI Agriculture Department to launch “Home Grown” – a 30 minute television series that will show different types of gardening and techniques. The outreach project and television program is designed to address several critical issues, including the extremely high cost and poor quality of fresh vegetables imported into the Virgin Islands, a desire to encourage healthy eating habits, and an effort to help Virgin Islands’ residents save money by producing some of what they consume.

Virgin Islands residents with an interest in growing their own fresh foods, were invited to apply for the chance to participate in “Home Grown.” The selection process is currently underway. Carlos Robles, acting district supervisor of CES, said that gardens selected for participation on the series will demonstrate gardening in a variety of growing conditions in the territory. It will also show three gardening categories – container gardening, raised bed/boxed gardening and open space gardening.

The overall idea of the program is to disseminate general information about gardening and growing food in the territory, Robles said. But the series will also make specific recommendations for growing in particular areas and under particular conditions. “As you watch you may not see your particular growing environment at that time, but you will over the period of the 13 to 16 weeks of the program,” Robles said. Viewers will get to see “an array of gardening techniques and types,” he said.

Taping for the show is scheduled to begin in September with the series airing in January 2010.

dateline: UVI is a production of the UVI Public Relations Office. Contact us by telephone at 340-693-1056 or by fax at 340-693-1055.

dateline: UVI
2 John Brewer’s Bay
St. Thomas, VI 00802