

**TOM EAVES OF WARNER ROBINS SELECTED
GEORGIA'S SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**



Eaves Accepts Award from Terri Denison

SBA Georgia District Director Terri Denison presented 2005 Small Business Awards to seven outstanding Georgians at a recent luncheon in Atlanta.

Tom Eaves of Warner Robins captured the Small Business Person of the Year Award after growing his Star Software Systems Corporation to annual sales of \$5 million in just six years.

Accepting other awards were Amanda D. Rodriguez, Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Emmett David Hart Jr., Family-Owned Small Business of the Year; Charles H. Green, Financial Services Champion of the Year; C. Vance Leavy, Small Business Journalist of the Year; Patricia Harris, Women in Business Champion of the Year; and Win C. Roshell, Minority Small Business Champion of the Year.

“This year’s awards are reflective of the strength and diversity of Georgia’s small business community,” said Denison. “We have much to celebrate.”

Eaves, President and CEO of Star Software Systems, has focused his company on several product

areas including information technology, software engineering, government contracting and a new web-based school management system.

Raised in Union Hill, Louisiana, Eaves started Star Software Systems in Lafayette but moved his corporate offices to Warner Robins, Georgia in 2000. Star Software had an office initially in Georgia Tech’s Advanced Technology Development Center in Warner Robins, home to the Air Force’s huge Air Logistics Center.

In 2002, Eaves moved his company to a downtown bank building that he purchased from the City of Warner Robins. A year later, Eaves secured an SBA 504 Economic Development Loan to fund a 15,000 square-foot Technology Building behind his current headquarters office. The new facility opens in June with about 100 new employees expected to be added to the current payroll of 75 over the next year and a half.

Before he obtained his 504 Loan, Eaves worked with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Macon on his company’s financial projection and a business plan that was used in acquiring his 504 loan with Security Bank of Houston County and the Development Corporation of Middle Georgia, an SBA Certified Development Company.

Looking to the future, Eaves’ firm is teaming with a large

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SBA Hispanic Taskforce Meets To Develop Action Plan for Agency

The U.S. Small Business Administration has held the second meeting of its new Hispanic Taskforce. The group, made up of community leaders and business owners, is working on an effective outreach strategy for the agency to use in serving the Latino banking and business community in Georgia. The next Taskforce meeting will be on June 16th at the Mexican-American Business Chamber in Atlanta.

The Taskforce is patterned after one organized two year ago that was charged with reviewing past efforts by the agency to serve the African American business community and to recommend new strategies for more effective SBA programs for this segment of small business.

Member of the Taskforce are coming from business, government, economic development agencies as well as political and faith-based organizations. The Task Force is expected to hold about six meetings.

“Hopefully we will have an action plan by the end of this year,” said Regional Administrator Nuby Fowler of the goal for the Hispanic Taskforce.



Sara Gonzalez, President of the Georgia Hispanic Chamber (center) listens to a point being made at a luncheon meeting of the SBA's Hispanic Taskforce

At its last meeting, the Taskforce discussed five challenges facing the SBA and its work with Hispanics. These covered Resource Management, Cultural Issues, Marketing, Access to Capital and Changing the SBA Culture.

The Future of the SBA Looks Very Bright Indeed



By SBA Regional Administrator Nuby J. Fowler

There is an old anecdote about the first successful launch of an American steam ship. As the story goes, an old farmer stood on the river bank watching the festivities, with arms crossed and skeptical expression he exclaimed, “they’ll never get her going – she’ll never work.” As the huge paddle wheel began to turn, steam rising from the boat’s great chimney, the man’s expression never changed. He never flinched as he watched the boat make its way down river. It was a landmark day for modern transportation and the beginning of a new industrial era in America. But this man’s only retort was, “they’ll never get her stopped.”

Resistance to progress is not new, nor is it uncommon. Unhappily, those who remain mired in the past very often find themselves on the riverbank as the world moves on by.

I am committed to the belief that we are only limited by our ability to see the possibilities before us. It has scarcely been a generation since it was commonly believed that women and minorities were not suited for business nor elected office. Remember just a decade ago when many economic “experts” predicted the Dow Jones Industrial Average would never reach 10,000? Likewise, those who believed that SBA had reached its full market potential just a few years ago have seen the phenomenal growth in the agency’s economic impact, which for now at least seems limitless. In each case, forward thinkers won the day over the naysayers.

Unquestionably, we are being challenged like never before as we work toward achieving what sometimes seem to be very ambitious goals. As with so many opportunities in life, we have a choice of letting the circumstances frustrate our efforts or we move beyond the emotion and commit our energy to developing new and innovative strategies for helping America’s small businesses succeed.

When you consider the distance we have traveled in just a few short years, it is clear that our combined efforts are paying off. Truly the sky is the limit. Thanks to the combined efforts of a very capable SBA staff, along with our dedicated lending and technical assistance partners, the future of SBA is very bright indeed.

SBA Helps 24-Hour Pet Clinic Start Operations

If your pet receives emergency, late-night care by a veterinarian in south Atlanta, chances are it will be at the Union City Veterinary Medical Center on Shannon Parkway. The facility, operated by Drs. Ed Mitchell and Hannah Guishard, opened four years ago with the help of an SBA guaranteed 504 Development Loan and a revolving loan from the Economic Development Corporation of Fulton County.

The Veterinary Medical Center and Emergency Clinic is an African American owned business and one of the few 24-hour emergency clinics for pets and other animals in south Atlanta.

Dr. Mitchell recalled that he and his partner shopped for the best loan possible. "After we learned about the 504 Loan Program, we felt it was the best opportunity to get the financing we needed," said Mitchell from his clinic located behind Shannon Mall in Union City.

US Bank, a private sector lender, provided a loan of \$313,830 to the clinic as part of the 504 Loan package processed by Georgia Certified Development Corporation, an SBA certified development company (CDC). The CDC's 40 percent share of the loan came from a 100 percent SBA-guaranteed debenture. The 504 loan was used to purchase the land and to build a 3,427 square-foot facility to house the veterinary medical center.

In addition to their 504 Loan, the clinic partners took



Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Guishard Check a Feline Patient

several small business courses at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at nearby Clayton College in Morrow, Georgia.

Regional Regulatory Fairness Hearing set for Mobile on May 26

Jo-Bar Manufacturing Corporation had done business with the federal government for more than 40 years. Several years ago the company was awarded a contract with the U.S. Army to produce gear clusters for the Bradley fighting vehicle. The Bedford, Ohio company was in the midst of production when a Department of Defense safety inspector visited them. The report that followed the site visit charged Jo-Bar with providing defective products to the DOD, and they shut the plant down without giving Jo-Bar president Alga Masley the necessary time to make corrective actions.

Masley attended a Regulatory Fairness Hearing hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of the National Ombudsman, where he testified that he had responded to the DOD with a plan and dates for action. After receiving Masley's statement and reviewing the circumstances, the Defense Contracting Management Agency reversed their action and allowed Jo-Bar to resume operations.

Since 1996, SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman (ONO) has served as a voice for small business owners facing conflicts with the federal agencies whose regulations they must follow in order to survive. Its mission is to assist small businesses facing unfair or excessive federal enforcement actions while fostering a more small-business friendly regulatory environment.

SBA Senior Advisor to the National Ombudsman Peter Sorum, and members of SBA's Region IV Regulatory Fairness Board, and representatives of federal regulatory agencies will comment about unfair practices or cumbersome policies imposed by federal agencies. Those wishing to testify should contact L.D. Ralph before the hearing at (205) 290-7101, extension 237, or by e-mail at lafero.ralph@sba.gov.

Small businesses owners, community leaders and representatives of trade organizations in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, North Carolina or Kentucky, who have a complaint about excessive enforcement activity by federal regulatory agencies, can voice those concerns during a Regulatory Fairness hearing on May 26 in Mobile, Alabama, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The hearing will be held at the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, 451 Government Street, in the McGowin Room.

SBA Presents Seven 2005 Small Business Awards

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prime contractor on the Design Engineering Support Program II, a federal contract worth an estimated \$1.9 billion over five years.

The Family-Owned Small Business Award went to Mountville Mills Inc., of LaGrange and its management team led by Emmett David Hart Jr., President. Joining Hart for the award were his two sisters, Susan H. Ekkebus, Treasurer and CEO and Sherry C. Hart, Corporate Secretary. Columbus.

Mountville Mills also received the SBA Southeast Regional Award as the Family-Owned Small Business of the Year.

Emmett Hart Sr., and his wife Nancy were among the first seven employees of Mountville Mills in 1963. Today, the family-owned business has a 300,000 square-foot plant and more than 350 employ-

Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Amanda D. Rodriguez, who started her full-service pet care business as a recent graduate of the University of Georgia, was selected the 2005 Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Her business, Pawtropolis Inc., offers a full range of pet care services from its innovative cage-free “doggie daycare” to bathing and grooming facilities.

Before she started her company in 2001, Rodriguez took a workshop on starting a business at the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Athens. Looking for start-up financing, Rodriguez went to Bank of America which liked her concept for a pet care business. The bank approved an SBA guaranteed loan of \$41,000 to help the young entrepreneur start her business.

Financial Services Champion

Champion Award winner Green is Vice President and Regional Manager of Sunrise Bank of Atlanta. His award was based on his solid record in assisting small businesses obtain financing. Starting in the early 1990's, Green has helped secure more than \$100 million in SBA guaranteed loans for various banking clients.

In 2003, Green was part of a steering committee that formed the Georgia Lenders Quality Circle, a trade association of SBA participating lenders in Georgia. Last September he became Chairman of the group that has hosted the SBA Awards Luncheon for the past two years.

Minority Small Business Champion

The Minority Small Business Champion, Win Roshell is founder and CEO of the AFTER FIVE Professional Networking Association in Macon.

Established in 2000, the purpose of AFTER FIVE is to bring awareness of business opportunities to the African



SBA District Holds Congressional Briefing

District Director Terri Denison, center, hosted a May 12th briefing for staffs of Congressional offices located in Georgia. U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, along with Congressmen Lynn Westmoreland and John Barrow are members, respectively, of the Senate and House Small Business Committees.

American community, to provide networking opportunities, and to provide scholarships for educational growth.

AFTER FIVE hosts a Business Networking Forum once a month to give entrepreneurs new information that can help them grow their businesses. AFTER FIVE also works with the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center in Macon to provide seminars and workshops for minority businesses.

Women in Business Champion

Patricia Harris is Georgia's Women in Business Champion for 2005. When most kids were jumping rope, Harris, at age 7, was busy helping in her mother's charm school, answering phones and doing other chores to help out. She would continue helping her mother in other businesses through her teenage years.

After graduating from Ausburg College, Harris worked with the Women's Economic Development Corporation in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1997, actress Jane Fonda recruited Harris to set up a micro enterprise program as part of the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. Later Harris directed the establishment of the Cobb Microenterprise Center, based at the Michael J. Coles College of Business at Kennesaw State University.

Last year, Harris' Cobb Center was approved for an SBA Women's Business Center.

Small Business Journalist of the Year

Journalist and newspaper executive Leavy received both the state and the SBA Southeast Regional Award as the Small Business Journalist of the Year. He is Executive Vice President and Advertising Director of the Brunswick News.

Since he joined the newspaper's management, Leavy has volunteered many hours of service working with the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce and the local Small Business Development Center on programs to help small business owners.



SCORE Membership Meeting

Margot King, host of the “Job Talk” program on WGST 640 Radio in Atlanta, was the guest speaker for the monthly meeting of the Atlanta SCORE Chapter. Ms. King is joined by Tom Clark, left, Chairman of the Atlanta SCORE Chapter, and Fred Abood, past Chairman and currently SCORE Georgia District Director.

District Starts Faith-Based Initiative in Augusta, Georgia

The SBA Georgia Office held its first major workshop under its Faith-based and Community initiative last month at the New Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Augusta. The workshop drew 125 people who received information on starting or expanding a small business.

Since then, the SBA has held similar workshops hosted by the following organizations: the Africariba Micro Enterprise Network in Lithonia; the Devine Faith Ministries International in Jonesboro; and the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Decatur. The next Faith-based workshop is set for May 24 at the New Dynasty Christian Church in Stone Mountain.

Earlier this year, the SBA announced its selection as a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to help non-profit, grassroots organizations learn about and access SBA-backed programs/services. As part of this initiative, all resource partners— including SCORE and the SBDC – have extended their programs to faith-based and other non-profit organizations.

The Center is part of the President’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative, which supports the compassionate efforts of faith-based and secular grassroots organizations to improve their communities.

For more information on the SBA’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative, go to www.sba.gov/fbci, or contact Cathy Williams (404/331-0100, ext. 704) at the Georgia Office. Her email address is catherine.williams@sba.gov.

SIZE STANDARDS HEARING SET FOR ATLANTA IN JUNE

The U.S. Small Business Administration will hold a public hearing in Atlanta on June 9 on small business size standards. Testimony will become part of the administrative record for the SBA to consider in efforts to simplify and restructure size standards in order to make them easier to use.

The Atlanta hearing is one of 11 public hearings being held throughout the country by the SBA in June. It will be held at the downtown Atlanta Fulton County Public Library, 3rd floor Meeting Room, at 1 Margaret Mitchell Square. The hearing will start at 9:30 a.m. and end after all those registered have provided their testimony.

The hearing will also seek views on the possible participation in the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program by businesses, majority-owned by venture capital companies

In March, the SBA published proposed rules to reduce the number of size standards significantly, and base more standards on the number of employees a business has.

Pre-registration is required at least 5 business days prior to the hearing. Please contact the Office of Size Standards in writing at Hearings.sizestandards@sba.gov.

Small Business Training Seminar Coming June 14 to Georgia Office

The SBA is offering a free, one-day Small Business Training Seminar on June 14 for eligible participants including 8(a) and SDB certified firms, firms in HUB-Zones, and businesses operating in areas of high unemployment or low income.

The seminar, being held at the SBA Georgia District Office, will help participants assess the needs of their company; improve business efficiency, avoid legal pitfalls, improve employee production, and craft an action plan to shore up deficiencies the firm may have.

Those attending the seminar will be eligible for a year’s worth of follow-up assistance on any business strategies gained from the program.

SBA is sponsoring the cost of this high impact seminar. It is designed for small business owners who have been in business for at least six years.

To register, please call Strategic & Learning Services Inc., at toll free 1-866-827-3500. To register online, go to <http://www.sls-7j.net>.

Internet-based training sessions will be offered to those firms that can’t come to the live classroom seminar. To register for this training, call SBA at 404/331-0100, est. 504.