

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SBA Announces Washington 2011 Small Business Awards** *Honoring winners on April 21st - The Museum of Flight, Boeing Field, Seattle*

SEATTLE - The U.S. Small Business Administration's Seattle District Office has named **Anne-Marie Faiola, CEO, Bramble Berry, Inc. of Bellingham, Washington** as **2011 Washington Small Business Person of the Year**. Bramble Berry sells raw materials to soap and toiletry artisans all over the world. From shea butter, to lavender essential oil, to palm oil, Bramble Berry has everything you may need to make a great bar of soap for yourself and family. Bramble Berry was started by Faiola in 1998 with \$15,000 on a credit card and has since then grown into multiple income streams and 3.1 million in profitable revenue. With a popular blog, a separate retail store, and separate manufacturing facility, Bramble Berry continues to expand its reach into the soap and toiletry market.

"Anne-Marie demonstrates the passion and drive needed for successful entrepreneurs. She self-funded her start-up company in her living room and has since then expanded the company to over 3 million in annual revenue. The company is currently debt free (except a warehouse mortgage obtained through the SBA 504 loan program) and has been profitable for 13 straight years," said SBA Seattle District Director Nancy Porzio.

An independent panel of judges selected the winners based on several criteria, including: staying power; business growth; increase in employees; response to adversity; innovation; leadership and contributions to the small business community; and evidence of community-oriented projects. "Anne-Marie exhibited strength in all areas," said SBA Regional Administrator Calvin W. Goings. "As the state winner, Anne-Marie Faiola will compete with 53 other winners from across the country for the National Small Business Person of the Year Award in Washington D.C. I know she will represent the State of Washington well."

The Washington state SBA Small Business Awards' Event - *A Big Night for Small Business* - will be held in Seattle on April 21st at the Museum of Flight, Boeing Field, Seattle WA. In addition to celebrating Faiola's outstanding accomplishments, the award ceremony will honor the following state and regional winners (regional winners competed against state winners in AK, ID, and OR):

- **WA state & Region 10 - Financial Services Champion** - Roland Chaiton, Community Capital Development, Seattle;
- **WA state & Region 10 - Veteran Small Business Champion** - Darrel Bowman, mynetworkcompany.com, Tacoma;
- **WA state & Region 10 - Women in Business Champion**- Laurie Simon, Umbrella, Inc., Kirkland;

Also featured will be state **SBA Champion award winners** who support and advocate on behalf of small businesses and entrepreneurship.

- **WA state - Small Business Exporters of the Year** - Robert Haberman & Bradley Haberman, No. 9 Hay LLC, Ellensburg;
- **WA state - Family-Owned Small Business of the Year** - Andrew J. Olson, A-1 Mobile Lock & Key, Inc., Burlington;
- **WA state - Home-Based Business Champion** - Cosette Gibson-Pfaff, South Sound Regional Business Incubator, Federal Way;
- **WA state - Minority Small Business Champion** - Mike Skinner, StartZone - Highline Community College, DesMoines;

"Our winners remind us that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Washington state," said Porzio, "and we look forward to honoring their success at The Museum of Flight in April".

For information about the Washington State Awards Gala, contact [carol.andersen@sba.gov](mailto:carol.andersen@sba.gov). Information on SBA's National Small Business Week 2011 celebrations in Washington, D.C. can be found at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

