



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Title: 'Arizona Companies to Watch' Inaugural 2006 Class Named

Subtitle: There's a New Event In Arizona - Recognizing Economic Drivers

Quote From Governor Janet Napolitano: "I am pleased and proud to congratulate this inaugural group of 50 'Companies to Watch' in Arizona for 2006. These vital businesses are growing, second-stage companies, and are key components of the engine that drives our economy forward. They create new, sustainable jobs each year, and they are innovators that are willing to take significant, but calculated, risks to produce new products and services," said Governor Janet Napolitano. "The 'Companies to Watch' awards encourage us all to see more clearly how successful businesses pursue innovation, interact with their communities and treat their employees.

Knowledge can, in turn, enable our state to nurture second-stage companies, increasing the benefits our citizens can derive from endorsing a dynamic entrepreneurial economy," Napolitano concluded.

When you RECOGNIZE great things in a company what do you LOOK for and how can you make them more VISIBLE for others to SEE?

If you are the Arizona Small Business Association, you: partner with the Edward Lowe Foundation, define a business sector that deserves recognition, gain support from the community and sponsoring partners, venture on a statewide publicity tour to increase nominations and applications, create an evening event to award growing, second-stage companies and gather an audience to pay homage to their hard work, dedication and contribution to economic development.

Fifty companies from Arizona will be honored on June 1 at the debut of Arizona Companies to Watch award program, hosted by the Arizona Small Business Association and conducted by the Edward Lowe Foundation, a not-for-profit operating foundation whose mission is to “champion the entrepreneurial spirit.” Five of those companies will receive additional honors for excellence in specific areas of achievement in business. They will be announced at the event.

"We're especially excited to be working in Arizona, which is a leader in recognizing the value of second-stage entrepreneurs," said Mark Lange, executive director of the Edward Lowe Foundation. "ASBA also understands that celebrating dynamic second-stage companies is the first step in bringing those entrepreneurs together to learn from each other's hard-won experience in growing a company."

Second -stage companies are critical, but often overlooked, drivers of the state's economy. It's time to shine the spotlight on their endeavors and take a closer look at their industries. This is a great opportunity to get an inside perspective – to find out who they are and what they do for Arizona business standards.

The defining characteristics of second-stage enterprises for the Arizona Companies to Watch program are: annual revenue or working capital of between \$1 million and \$100 million, 10 to 100 employees, and the “intent and capacity to grow.” Second-stage companies are past the start-up phase; are generally concerned with issues of growth, not survival and have not yet become large corporations. Such enterprises are important economically because they create a substantial portion of the net new jobs each year.

Beginning in late February, more than 280 companies nominated businesses for the award. Of those nominated, 173 applied. Of those companies 108 were selected by the Edward Lowe Foundation and ASBA for the next round of judging. In early April, 12 appointed judges gathered in a day-long process and selected the final fifty. After a brief due-diligence period, the inaugural group was named.

The following collection of 50 Arizona Companies to Watch for 2006 will be honored at a debut awards banquet on June 1, 2006 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa.

AGM Container Controls, Inc., Tucson

Howard Stewart, President/CEO

AIR Marketing, Tempe

Elaine Ralls, President

AmazingMail.com Inc., Scottsdale

Steve Wilen, CEO

American Janitorial Services, LLC, Scottsdale

Ron Busby, President

AmpliMed Corporation, Tucson

Robert Ashley, Chairman, CEO and President

Arizona Capacitors, LLC, Tucson

Anne Waisman, President

AZ Tech Radiology & Scan4Health, Casa Grande

Rocky Pahwa, Chairman & CEO

Baja Motorsports, Tempe

Richard Godfrey, President, CEO

Benjamin Franklin Plumbing-SE Valley, Gilbert

Linda Stanfield, Owner

Best Block & Pipe, Inc, Yuma

Phil Williams, Owner

BestBill, Phoenix

Daniel Haugland, CEO

Charlevoix Homes, Scottsdale

Michael Roberts, ceo

Construction Lots! Home Improvement Warehouse, Phoenix

Rick Werner, CEO

Creative Interiors, Prescott

Tanya Padgett, President

DBSI Incorporated, Chandler

Debra Dillon, President

Desert Best Distributing, Yuma

Frank Ruiz, Owner

Desert Fleet-Serv, Phoenix

Tom Cooper, C.E.O.

DollarDays, Scottsdale

Marc Joseph, CEO and Co-Founder

Dorn Homes Inc., Green Valley

David Grounds, President & CEO

GAME-Great American Merchandise and Events, Scottsdale

Eric Schechter, President

Great American Title Agency, Inc., Phoenix

Mark Bosco, Chairman

Hoque & Associates, Inc., Phoenix

Enamul Hoque, President

I-ology, Scottsdale

Trish Bear, President, Founder, CEO

Integrated Health Management Services, Phoenix

Betsy Moore, Principal

Interior Expressions Design Showroom, Oro Valleys

Betty Jones, Co-Owner

J2 Engineering and Environmental Design, Phoenix

Jeffrey Holzmeister, President

JLT Mobile Computers, Tempe

Todd Einck, CEO & Founder

Ken Kobs & Associates, Inc., Phoenix

Ken Kobs, President

Liquid Productions Inc., Mesa

Scott Miraglia, President

Machine Solutions Inc., Flagstaff

Daniel Kasprzyk, President & CEO

Massage Envy, Scottsdale

John Leonesio, CEO & Founder

McIntosh Engineering Incorporated, Tempe

Scott McIntosh, CEO

Mi Ranchito Mexican Food Products INC., Phoenix

Robert Murillo, President CEO

MistAMERICA Corp., Scottsdale

Jonathan Marsh, CEO

Native Tele-Data Solutions, Tucson

Marilyn Steeber, President

PremierGarage, Phoenix

Mark Loberg, Founder and CEO

Prescott Aerospace, Inc., Prescott Valley

Michael K. Dailey, President / General Manager

Protein Technologies, Inc., Tucson

Chris Patterson, President and CEO

SEBRA, Tucson

Roger Vogel, CEO

Shephard-Wesnitzer, Inc., Sedona

John Wesnitzer, President/CEO

Sitewire, Tempe

Margie Traylor, CEO

Syncardia, Tucson

Rodger Ford, President & CEO

The Adamson Group, dba Villagio Tile & Stone, Scottsdale

Douglas Adamson, President

The Apothecary Shops, Scottsdale

John Musil, President and CEO

The Granite Shop of Northern AZ, Inc., Prescott

Dee Spitler, President

The Real Learning Company, Scottsdale

Richard Hodge, President

Tucson Embedded Systems Inc, Tucson

Dennis Kenman, VP and Co-owner

Urban Forest Tree Care, Inc., Phoenix

Malia Griffin, CEO

ViewFinder Low Vision Resource Center, Sun City

Lynne Noon, Owner, Founder

VirtuRad, Inc, Phoenix

Hirsch Handmaker, Chairman and CEO

In addition to the recognition all 50 companies will receive, five companies will be announced at the event on June 1st for outstanding achievement in one of the following categories:

- **Community Compassion**
- **Cognitive Company Culture**
- **Cutting Edge, Innovative Change**
- **Creative Customer Relations**
- **Completive Clout**

Arizona Business Magazine, the Arizona Companies to Watch publishing partner, is working with ASBA and the Edward Lowe Foundation to produce a special stand-alone magazine profiling each of the 50 winning companies. The magazine will be distributed at the awards event on June 1 in addition to more than 20,000 business leaders throughout Arizona via the June/July issue of Arizona Business Magazine and throughout 2006.

"I am pleased and proud to congratulate this inaugural group of 50 'Companies to Watch' in Arizona for 2006. These vital businesses are growing, second-stage companies, and are key components of the engine that drives our economy forward. They create new, sustainable jobs each year, and they are innovators that are willing to take significant, but calculated, risks to produce new products and services," said Governor Janet Napolitano. "The 'Companies to Watch' awards encourage us all to see more clearly how successful businesses pursue innovation, interact with their communities and treat their employees.

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ASBA secured Robert Kiyosaki, author of #1 New York Times Bestseller "Rich Dad Poor Dad" as the keynote speaker, which will add to the success and attendance for this first-time event. Kiyosaki has become a financial guru to a growing population and realized a connection with this business segment.

"ASBA and the Edward Lowe Foundation could not be more pleased with the feedback we received from the Second-stage business community," proclaimed Tom Fraker, Executive Director of ASBA. "Apparently we struck a chord that harmonized with the needs of these companies on a statewide level – they are thrilled to have an identity as Second-stage," Fraker said.

The Arizona Small Business Association assembled a committee to conduct onsite visits and interviews with each of the 50 AZ Companies to Watch to dig deeper and verify their unique business attributes and authenticate their needs. ASBA and Edward Lowe Foundation will launch the PeerSpectives (peer-to-peer) program for Second-stage companies in mid-June. For more information on the Arizona Companies to Watch Program or PeerSpectives, visit www.asba.com. **To reserve a table of ten with signage for \$1,250 or an individual seat for \$125 – call 602-265-4563.**