

# U.S. Chamber Seeks Nominations for Small Business of the Year Awards

The U.S. Chamber Small Business of the Year Award will return to pay tribute to the small business community and the outstanding examples of entrepreneurship found across the United States. The award presents an opportunity for companies to recognize the hard work of employees and to highlight the success of small businesses. Nominations and applications must be made by Jan. 15.

Applicants will be judged on: financial performance and business history; staff training and motivation; community involvement; community service; business plan or strategy for growth.

Several levels of recognition are awarded to honor the wide range of highly talented and effective small businesses. Companies that demonstrate excellence in business history and commitment to customers, employees, and the community will receive the U.S. Chamber Blue Ribbon Small Business Award. These Blue Ribbon winners are sent through a second round of judging to select Regional Finalists. Finally, a panel of small business experts will evaluate each of the finalists to identify one outstanding business to be honored as the U.S. Small Business of the Year, awarded at this year's U.S. Chamber America's Small Business Summit 2007 in May.

There is nothing to lose and a great deal to gain by nominating and submitting an application for an outstanding company to win America's small business of the year award. Contact Samantha Roe, U.S. Chamber Director of Small Business Marketing Communications, at 202-463-5856 or sroe@uschamber.com.

## NEWS

*From the Black Press*

### The Lop-Sided American Justice System

Chicago Crusader  
Chicago, IL

Recently, former Governor George Ryan was a guest on the revered and increasingly popular Cliff Kelly Show on WVON AM 1690. Ryan, now a convicted felon after having been found guilty of corruption during his tenure as Governor of Illinois, was also responsible for a major moratorium on the death penalty before he left office.

Ryan received a great deal of support from WVON listeners because of the courage that he displayed in calling for the moratorium on the death penalty. He shared information that, previous to now, a lot of people did not know. For instance, many people were unaware of the fact that Ryan personally reviewed each death penalty case before deciding that the system was not working. It became obvious that a number of inmates on death row were innocent of the crime of murder. Certainly they were not "angels," but they were not guilty of crimes requiring the death penalty.


Ryan became involved in the death penalty issue when family members of death row inmates requested a review of their loved ones' cases because they were convinced of their innocence. Ryan reviewed several cases in an attempt to determine who was, or was not, innocent. After initial findings, he expanded his search examining the cases of everyone on death row, concluding that there was no foolproof method for determining guilt or innocence.

As fate would have it, students from Northwestern University helped prove the innocence of death row inmate Anthony Porter. Subsequently, it was found that half of the people on Illinois' death row were there erroneously. Ryan basically said, in so many words, that he would be extremely remorseful if innocent people lost their lives, which is why he called for the moratorium. George Ryan was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his moratorium decision.

Recently, after his conviction, Ryan was able to stave off reporting to jail in January—he will be allowed to stay free on bail during the appeals process. He did, however, lose his pension.

Ryan was found guilty of corruption, to be sure. But consider the juxtaposition of his case to that of Jon Burge, the retired police commander who was found guilty of torturing at least 150 African American male suspects since about 1972. The city of Chicago paid more than \$10 million to defend Burge, who is still being paid his pension by the city, and who will not spend a day in jail! This is truly a lop-sided justice.

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