

COOPER CONGRATULATES TENNESSEE WINNERS OF NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

State's winners all from Fifth District, celebrated with official trip to Washington

NASHVILLE-U.S.

Congressman Jim Cooper last week congratulated Michael and Barbara Turney and Sheila McLendon, Tennessee winners of the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2008 Small Business Awards. The Turneys were named "Small Business Persons of the Year," while McLendon collected the "Small Business Subcontractor of the Year" award.

In visits

to the winners' businesses on Friday, Cooper praised their entrepreneurial spirit. "People like Michael, Barbara and Sheila, and everyone who works with them, understand the hard work and risk involved in running a small business," said Cooper. "I'm here to congratulate them for having the determination and skill to make their entrepreneurial ideas become reality. In Nashville, small business owners keep our community strong and our economy resilient, and I'm proud that SBA recognized Michael, Barbara and Sheila with this honor."

Based on

his wife's reputation for crowd-pleasing homemade pies, Mike and his wife Barbara founded Mama Turney's in 1996 with the goal finding a way to mass produce quality homemade-tasting pies. To help with business growth, the Turneys got help from the Nashville Chapter of SCORE which helped them prepare a business plan. They received two SBA-guaranteed loans to finance various phases of the business's growth, and today the company has nine employees, sales of almost \$1.1 million, and services more than 2,500 commercial accounts throughout Tennessee and eight other states. Their clients range from The Kroger Corporation to the Tennessee Titans. (Source: U.S. Small Business Administration)

Empirical Laboratories was founded in 1967 as an in-house laboratory for a national environmental consulting firm. After several ownership changes, Sheila McLendon, a finance and business executive with over 15 years experience in the environmental laboratory marketplace, acquired majority ownership of the company. Empirical Laboratories is now an independent, full-service environmental laboratory headquartered in Nashville, providing environmental testing services directly to a variety of private companies and government agencies. As president and CEO, Sheila provides leadership, guidance and support to the company's staff of 35 employees, which is capable of handling large site investigation and remediation projects. She is proud that the company operates as a fully independent entity, with no outside corporate obligations or control administered by a larger parent company. Empirical is certified as a woman- owned business and a HUBZone firm, and has applied for renewal as a Small Disadvantaged Business. (Source: U.S. Small Business Administration. See also http://www.empirlabs.com/SBASCoY_2008.html)

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