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Maryland's Top 100 Minority Business Enterprise Awards Honors Maryland Entrepreneurs for Business Excellence

Award Ceremony to be held on October 27

BALITMORE, MD (September 22, 2006) The Governor's Office of Minority Affairs and The Daily Record announced today the winners of their first-ever *Maryland's Top 100 Minority Business Enterprise Awards*. The awards program, created this year, is designed to salute and highlight Maryland's minority and women business owners who have provided exceptional products and services in the State of Maryland.

A panel of distinguished judges chose this year's winners based on their outstanding achievements in four key areas: business development, client satisfaction, professional affiliations and community outreach. Three winners, Carl D. Jones, P.E, Gary S. Murray, Sr., and Garland Williamson, will receive *Business Legend* awards. These awardees were chosen because of the continued long-term success of their businesses and their high-level of contributions in ensuring the success of their peers.

"In Maryland, we are working to promote and support minority-owned businesses," said Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. "They deserve to be recognized for the stability and economic vitality they bring to their communities. With our support, they can continue to make Maryland a better place to live."

According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau survey, Maryland is home to more than 252,000 women and minority owned businesses that account for more than half of the businesses in the State.

"The business owners selected for this award represent the best of the state's women and minority owned businesses," said Sharon R. Pinder, Special Secretary, Governor's Office of Minority Affairs. "Governor Ehrlich's administration has worked to support their efforts and celebrate their impact in maintaining Maryland's vibrant economy."

This year's winners will be honored at an awards ceremony at the Inn and Conference Center, at University of Maryland University College, in Adelphi, Maryland, at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, October 27. Additionally, honorees will be featured in a special magazine in *The Daily Record* and promoted around the State by the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs.

"We are excited to acknowledge hard-working individuals who have excelled in their respective fields", said Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, Associate Publisher and Vice President of Sales, The Daily Record. "Our newspaper is committed to highlighting entrepreneurship and achievement within Maryland's diverse business communities."

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** Attached is a full list of winners.

For more information about the awards program, please log on to www.TopMBE.com. For more information on the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs visit www.mminoritybusiness.com.