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Contact: Cheryl A. Croto, 603-225-1407

Email Address: cheryl.croto@sba.gov

U.S. Small Business Administration Announces 2020 New Hampshire Award Winners



***Albert J. Letizio, Jr., owner of A.J. Letizio Sales and Marketing, Inc.
in Windham selected as 2020 Small Business Person of the Year
and Jeffrey Butland Family Owned Business of the Year.***

CONCORD, NH – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced its 2020 New Hampshire Small Business Award winners recognizing outstanding small business owners throughout the state. Albert (Al) J. Letizio, Jr., owner of A.J. Letizio Sales and Marketing, Inc. of Windham has been selected as SBA's New Hampshire Small Business Person of the Year and the Jeffrey Butland Family Owned Small Business of the Year. For more than 50 years, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation announcing National Small Business Week, which recognizes the critical contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners. More than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and they create about two out of

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every three new jobs in the U.S. each year. As part of National Small Business Week, the agency is partnering with the SCORE Association to host a free, 2-Day Virtual Conference on May 5 and 6. Registration is free and will open soon at www.sba.gov/national-small-business-week. Mr. Letizio will compete with the Nation's top small businesses for the honor of National Small Business Person of the Year.

A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing, Inc. was founded 31 years ago and is continuing a 5-generation family legacy in the food industry. In 1988, A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing, Inc. was started by Al & Patti Letizio from their home in Windham, NH. A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing, Inc. is a sales and marketing agency in the wholesale food industry serving the Eastern United States. A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing serves a portfolio of clients who are leading national and regional manufacturers of food, non-food items and disposable goods. Their customers include retail supermarket chains, independent retailers, convenience and club stores, and the foodservice sector including wholesale food distributors, hotels, restaurants and institutional food users.

By the year 2000 and with 10 employees, Al and Patti were introduced to the SBA for assistance in acquiring their first office building. With help from the SBA Certified Development Corp., Granite State Economic Development Corp., they purchased a 7,300 square foot office building in Windham, NH with an SBA 504 loan. With the company's continued success, they were able to pay off the SBA loan 10 years ahead of schedule.

In 2015, Al and Patti along with Haverhill Bank nominator Dick Hanlon turned to the assistance of the SBA again for a new 504 loan to help them finance their 20,000 square foot facility, nearly tripling in size to the first office space. The project was completed in the summer of 2019 and they also opened a second office in Parlin, NJ. Dick Hanlon commented on the announcement, "It is very exciting to see Al Letizio be honored for both deserving awards! Al is a very successful and well-rounded businessman who has continued his family's long history of dedication to the team, their customers and their community. Having assisted Al and his Business for over 12 years, I very much look forward to continuing to serve Al and his business for many years to come."

The family celebrated its 100th year in the food industry in 2012 and has experienced steady growth since inception. Today the company manages sales of over \$2 million per day for its clients throughout its marketing area. From 1988 to present, the company has grown to nearly 100 employees, has customers in 17 states, and is the largest Windham, NH based private business. Just since 2015, company sales have grown by nearly 50%.

A.J. Letizio Sales and Marketing, Inc. has become one of the most recognized names in the wholesale food industry. Mr. Letizio commented, "My father always reminded me that a man doesn't build a business, a man builds an organization and the organization builds the business. I've never forgotten that advice, and no better example exists of this lesson than with our company. Working with this great team is the absolute honor of my

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career. We are ever mindful of our proud family legacy, yet we remain focused on the horizon and prepared for our future.”

The owners are also strong believers in community service. In 2000, Al and Patti founded the Windham Christmas Association (WCA), a non-profit organization that provides families in need with assistance during the holiday season. The WCA team is comprised of a group of volunteers from A.J. Letizio’s staff that assemble and distribute large food containers to those in need in Windham and surrounding communities. In 2019, they provided over \$75,000 in food and household items amounting to over 200 pounds of goods to 160 families. Greta Johansson, District Director of the NH SBA office added, “It is rare for us to recognize a business in two categories, but A.J. Letizio Sales and Marketing, Inc. stood out as both our Small Business Person of the Year and as our Family-Owned Business of the Year. Congratulations to them on achieving 100 years in business and successfully transitioning the management of this company for over 5 generations. A.J. is joined by a great group of award winners this year who have shown great leadership and commitment to their businesses and their communities. We look forward to celebrating their successes in the months ahead.”

2020 Small Business Week Winners

Small Business Person of the Year Jeffrey Butland Family Owned Business Albert J. Letizio, Jr.	A.J. Letizio Sales and Marketing, Inc. Windham
Micro-Enterprise Brianna Hammar Rolfs	Hammar’s Art Studio & Cultural Center, LLC Pelham
Exporter Andrew White	Beta Acquisition, Inc., dba Comptus Thornton
Veteran Owned Stephen Cunningham	National Flight Simulator Manchester
Woman Owned Suzanne Foley	Port City Pretzels Portsmouth
Minority Owned Megan Giokas	Granite Commercial Real Estate Nashua
Financial Services Champion Joseph B. Bator	Primary Bank Bedford

Award winners will be honored at an annual small business week celebration sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration – NH District Office and the NH Banker’s Association that will be held on Wednesday evening, May 6th at the Manchester Country Club. For more information on this event contact Cheryl A. Croto, Cheryl.croto@sba.gov or 603-225-1407.

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