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GMSDC NAMES AT&T 'CORPORATION OF THE YEAR' DURING ITS 34TH ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER HONORING EXCELLENCE IN SUPPLIER DIVERSITY AND MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Ethnic-minority-owned Companies, Corporations and Industry Titans Honored in Blue Carpet Style

ATLANTA (October) – On September 25th, one might have confused downtown Atlanta for Hollywood and A-list business icons for Academy Award celebs during the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council's (GMSDC) 34th Annual Spirit of Alliance (SOA) Awards ceremony. AT&T, Georgia Power, Johnson Controls, The Home Depot, The Coca-Cola Company and UPS were just a few of Atlanta's corporate powerhouses that walked in on GMSDC's 'Blue Carpet' and walked out with Awards.

Aptly themed "*Legends of the Blue Carpet*" this year, the Spirit of Alliance is the largest statewide platform for honoring Georgia's corporate leaders and certified ethnic minority businesses enterprises (MBEs) who have demonstrated unparalleled excellence in supplier diversity and minority business development. Hundreds of companies are nominated by their peers and/or partners and vie for up to 16 awards in varying categories (Complete listing/descriptions below).

While blue-chip corporations earned their due during the annual black tie affair, the star power of Georgia's MBEs in various Classes and industries also headlined the night. With nominees and attendees from companies throughout Georgia, all four big winners -- Accolades!, All (n) 1 Security, Primus Software Corporation and Pyramid Consulting – are companies headquartered in and around Atlanta.

"Spirit of Alliance is one of the most important initiatives of this Council as it marks our moment in time to acknowledge and honor the tireless works of our MBE and Corporate partners," said Stacey Key, GMSDC President & CEO. "While the Recession has certainly affected all aspects of business, the unprecedented number of nominations, attendance and overall excitement, underscores Georgia as a thriving business metropolis. And the nearly \$1 billion spent with minority companies during the past year validates supplier diversity as a valuable mainstay and in some cases even an economic recovery tool," Key added.

AT&T -- YOUR WORLD DELIVERED THROUGH SUPPLIER DIVERSITY; GEORGIA POWER PROVES DOUBLE THE BUYING POWER!

Perhaps the most esteemed and coveted corporate designation of the night was the Corporation of the Year Award won by AT&T, beating out 11 other corporate finalists. The Home Depot's Michelle Johnson took the George Lottier Rising Star Award and UPS's James Mallard was named Executive of the Year. Corporate Buyers from The Home Depot, The Coca-Cola Company and two from Georgia Power won Buyers of the Year. Johnson Control's Al Richardson was awarded Advocate of the Year, while UPS snagged the Crystal Award.

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2009 SPIRIT OF ALLIANCE AWARD WINNERS & WHY

AWARD CATEGORY	WINNERS	DESCRIPTION
Corporation of the Year	AT&T	Corporate entity that has unparalleled commitment to GMSDC, minority business development and provide equal economic access through its minority purchasing programs
Executive of the Year	James Mallard, UPS	Senior-level corporate executive that has a demonstrated record of accomplishment of accomplishments in minority business development and serves as an internal champion of progress at their companies.
Advocate of the Year	Al Richardson, Johnson Controls, Inc.	Corporate individual who is a catalyst for minority business development in general and demonstrated advancement through specific individual efforts
Crystal Award	UPS	Selected by certified ethnic-minority business owners, this award recognizes a GMSDC corporate member or government entity that have excelled in minority business development
George Lottier Rising Star Award	The Home Depot	Corporation with leading advancement in minority business development programs
Eagle Award	Pyramid Consulting, Inc.	MBE that has promoted and created economic development and advancement among minority business enterprises in Georgia. This peer to peer award is presented by GMSDC's MBEIC
Supplier of the Year Class I	Accolades!	MBE with Annual Sales Less than \$1M that consistently delivers quality products and services to their customers
Supplier of the Year Class II	All (n) 1 Security Services, Inc.	MBE with Annual Sales \$1M - \$10M that consistently delivers quality products and services to their customers
Supplier of the Year Class III	Primus Software Corporation	MBE with Annual Sales \$10M - \$50M that consistently delivers quality products and services to their customers
Buyer of the Year/IT	Brian Coe, Georgia Power – A Southern Company	Individual that has facilitated successful procurement of MBE contracts in the Information Technology sector
Buyer of the Year/ Professional Services	Chris Horace, The Coca-Cola Company	Individual that has facilitated successful procurement of MBE contracts in the Professional Services sector
Buyer of the Year/Staffing	Lisa Slaker, The Home Depot	Individual that has facilitated successful procurement of MBE contracts in the Staffing sector
Buyer of the Year/ Real Estate & Facilities Services	Marquisha Handy, Georgia Power	Individual that has facilitated successful procurement of MBE contracts in the Real Estate & Facilities Services sectors

INTRODUCING GMSDC'S BLUE LEGEND AWARD

For the first time in the event's 34-year history, GMSDC created a new award – The Blue Legend Award. This award honors pioneers who have taken risks, pushed against adversity and helped level the playing field for minority businesses as well as in other facets of life. The inaugural recipients included Senator Sam Nunn, GMSDC organizer Franklin O'Neal, The Late Honorable Mayor Maynard Jackson and the Late Sara Gonzales of the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS OF SPIRIT OF ALLIANCE

Georgia Power, Pyramid Consulting, The Home Depot, Lockheed Martin and UPS served as major sponsors of the Spirit of Alliance as well as more than 30 other sponsors and supporters. GMSDC also partnered with the Samaritan House of Atlanta in the spirit of supporting everyday, unsung heroes that might otherwise not be recognized.

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