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Contact: Kim Brown
(212) 944-2430
kim.brown@nmsdc.org

NMSDC SALUTES TOP REGIONAL MINORITY SUPPLIERS

New York, N.Y. – September 22, 2010—The National Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc.® (NMSDC®) today announced its 2010 Regional Minority Supplier of the Year winners. The 15 outstanding minority-owned businesses were selected from nearly 70 nominees from across the country. They represent a broad range of industries: architecture and engineering, electronic security, frozen food manufacturing, janitorial and building maintenance, marketing, safety products and armed and unarmed security personnel. NMSDC will present awards to each regional winner on Wednesday, October 27, at the 2010 NMSDC Conference and Business Opportunity Fair in Miami Beach, Florida.

“These minority-owned businesses represent the best companies among NMSDC’s certified suppliers,” said NMSDC President Joset B. Wright. “Their tenacity and resilience allow them to thrive in a recovering economy and continue to deliver great products and quality service to their corporate customers. NMSDC is proud to recognize their achievements.”

The 15 regional winners are nominated by their corporate customers and divided into four classes based on annual sales. NMSDC-certified Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American businesses are evaluated on the basis of business growth, development and performance, community service and the ability to overcome challenges brought on by the company owner’s heritage or background.

One regional winner from each of the four classes will be named a National Winner at the Awards Banquet during the NMSDC Conference. The Conference theme is “Minority Businesses and Corporate America—Partnership: The Engine for a Global Economy.” More than 6,000 participants, including minority business owners and corporate purchasing executives, are expected to attend the four-day conference, which will be held at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

The 2010 NMSDC Regional Suppliers of the Year are listed below.

CLASS IV, ANNUAL SALES GREATER THAN \$50 MILLION

Hightowers Petroleum Company, Franklin, Ohio – Stephen L. Hightower is the president and chief executive officer of Hightowers Petroleum Company, a national distributor of gasoline, diesel fuel, biodiesel fuel, ethanol, lubricants, oils and greases.

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2010 NMSDC Regional Supplier of the Year

Page 2

The 26-year-old Black-owned company had \$100 million in sales in 2009 and projects sales of \$120 million in 2010. The firm spent \$5.2 million with MBEs last year, and projects an MBE spend of \$6 million in 2010. Hightowers Petroleum has 19 employees and lists AK Steel; Duke Energy; Ford Motor; General Motors; Honda; Kroger; and Sonoco among its major customers. In the community, Mr. Hightower is involved with the Atrium Medical Center Foundation; Boy Scouts of America; the Fine ARTS Fund; Junior Achievement; Louella Thompson's Dream Center and Wright State University. www.hightowerspetroleum.com

Pinnacle Technical Resources, Inc., Dallas, Texas – Nina Vaca-Humrichouse is the chief executive officer of Pinnacle Technical Resources, a Hispanic-owned consultant firm that provides staffing, payroll and vendor management services to Fortune 500 clients nationwide. The company has nearly 3,000 IT, professional and clerical/administration specialists employed across all 50 states. Pinnacle is one of only two firms nationwide to be recognized by Staffing Industry Analysts as both Top 10 for growth and Top 20 for IT. The company had \$175 million in sales in 2009 and projects sales of \$225 million in 2010. The 14-year-old firm spent \$25 million with MBEs in 2009 and projects \$31 million in MBE spend in 2010. Pinnacle's major customers include AT&T, EDS/Hewlett-Packard, Energy Future Holdings, Unisys and Verizon Communications. In the community, Ms. Vaca-Humrichouse and Pinnacle support the Mayor's "Back to School" program; Emmett J. Conrad Leadership Program; the Education is Freedom summer internship program; and the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. www.pinnacle1.com

SBM Site Services, LLC, McClellan, California – Don Tracy is the owner of SBM Site Services, a Black-owned janitorial and building maintenance company that services more than 350 million square feet throughout the U.S., Canada and Latin America. The 28-year-old company had \$220 million in sales in 2009 and projects \$238 millions in sales in 2010. SBM Site Services spent \$3.49 million with MBEs in 2009. The company has more than 4,500 employees, and lists Abbott, Amgen, CB Richard Ellis, Cummins, Hewlett-Packard, Johnson & Johnson, Lockheed Martin, Merck, Nationwide and WellPoint as its major customers. SBM Site Services participates in the community by providing backpacks filled with school supplies to employees' children and grandchildren in grades K through 8; completing projects with its Costa Rican non-profit, Responsibility with a Heart; and raising more than \$44,000 in donations for Healing Hands for Haiti by matching employee contributions to support Haiti earthquake relief. www.sbmcorp.com

2010 NMSDC Regional Supplier of the Year

Page 3

CLASS III, ANNUAL SALES BETWEEN \$10 MILLION AND \$50 MILLION

AKRAYA Inc., Sunnyvale, California – Sonu Ratra is president of AKRAYA Inc., an Asian Indian-owned staffing company. AKRAYA’s clients include IT giants eBay, Facebook, Paypal and Yahoo; financial companies Chicago Mercantile Exchange and Wells Fargo; and health care enterprises Abbott and Genentech. In 2009, AKRAYA’s sales topped \$32 million. Sales for 2010 are projected to be \$36.5 million. The company spent \$16 million with other MBEs last year and projects its MBE spend to reach \$20 million in 2010. AKRAYA has 220 employees, and is also serious about community service work. The company has long been a gold sponsor for the Race for Literacy. It also supports orphanages in India and partnered with the Red Cross to raise \$10,000 for Haiti in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake earlier this year.

www.AKRAYA.com

Primus Software Corporation, Duluth, Georgia – Sangeeta Basandra and Veena Kalale are co-founders of Primus Software Corporation, which provides technology and staffing solutions, including strategy consulting, project management and network engineering to its clients. The Asian Indian-owned company has a staff of more than 250 in the United States and India, and recorded sales of \$29 million in 2009. Sales for 2010 are projected to be \$32 million. The 14-year-old business has a companywide goal of spending 59 percent of its outsourced services with other MBES this year (\$16 million). For the last three years, the firm was the top IT staff augmentation supplier for The Coca-Cola Company. Its other major clients include AT&T, Cox Communications and United Parcel Service. Primus has 190 employees and supports TechBridge and other community organizations benefitting children. www.primussoft.com

Reggio’s Pizza Inc., Chicago, Illinois – John M. Clark, Jr. is president and chief executive officer of Reggio’s Pizza Inc., the only Black-owned and operated frozen pizza manufacturer in the world. Since its inception as a retail carryout and delivery operation in 1972, the company has witnessed tremendous growth and secured distribution to major grocery chains in more than 40 states. The firm has 177 employees. Reggio’s Pizza is in the freezer section of Kroger, Safeway, Shop N’ Save, Ralphs and Walgreens. In 2009, the company reported sales of \$13 million and projects sales to be \$14 million in 2010. The firm spent \$150,000 with other MBEs last year and plans to spend \$175,000 this year. Over the past 38 years, Reggio’s Pizza has received numerous awards from civic, social and business organizations, including being named one of the 10 “Most Outstanding Minority Businesses” by the *Minority Business Report* in 2000.

www.reggios.com

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2010 NMSDC Regional Supplier of the Year

Page 4

SAI Systems International, Inc., Shelton, Connecticut – Dr. Ramesh Wadhvani is chief executive officer of SAI Systems International, a technology services, outsourcing and systems-integration company with 260 employees. The Asian Indian-owned firm was established in 1993 and provides IT services to Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Nestle Foods and United Technologies. The company posted revenues of more than \$11 million in 2009 and is projecting more than \$15 million in sales in 2010. SAI Systems prides itself on employing a team of qualified and experienced professionals, and the firm is dedicated to fostering business with other minority-owned companies. Last year, it spent more than \$2 million with a host of MBEs and expects to spend close to \$3 million in 2010. Dr. Wadhvani is also devoted to supporting community initiatives, including adult literacy, after-school tutoring, and health and meditation classes. www.saisystems.com

CLASS II, ANNUAL SALES BETWEEN \$1 MILLION AND \$10 MILLION

All(n)1 Security Services, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia – Mary Parker is the president and chief executive officer of All(n)1 Security Services, a Black-owned firm that provides security technology, security traffic control, as well as armed and unarmed security and courtesy officers at a variety of venues and special events. All(n)1 security officers provide protection at buildings and warehouses; churches and schools; construction sites; condominiums and residential communities; corporate offices; hospitals; hotels; and malls and retail stores. The company had \$3.39 million in sales in 2009, and projects sales of \$10 million in 2010. All(n)1's major clients include AGL Resources, Coca-Cola, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Live Nation, Morehouse College and Standard Parking Company. In 2009, the nine-year-old firm had 230 employees and spent \$1.5 million with other minority business enterprises (MBEs). www.alln1security.com

David Mason & Associates, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri – David Mason is the president and chief executive officer of David Mason & Associates, a 21-year-old Black-owned architecture firm headquartered in St. Louis. The company specializes in architecture, engineering, construction services, program management and surveying, and also has offices in Chicago and Dallas. The firm has 54 employees. Ameren, Black & Veatch, Burns & McDonnell, HOK and Lambert St. Louis International Airport are among the company's major clients. David Mason & Associates had \$8.5 million in sales in 2009 and spent \$500,000 with MBEs. In the community, David Mason & Associates offers a St. Louis Internship Program for Black high school students who may have an interest in architecture and engineering careers. www.davidmason.com

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2010 NMSDC Regional Supplier of the Year

Page 5

ICE Safety Solutions, Fremont, California – Pamela Isom is the president and chief executive officer of ICE Safety Solutions. The Black-owned company provides disaster preparedness services and training, disaster preparedness products, first-aid kits, health and wellness training, medical products, safety training and safety equipment for a wide range of corporate, education and municipal clients. The company's major customers include R.R. Donnelley; Genentech; J.W. Marriott Walnut Creek; Macy's West; Toyota Motors USA and University of California-Berkeley. ICE Safety Solutions had \$1.3 million in sales in 2009 and projects sales of \$1.6 million in 2010. The company has six employees and spent nearly \$500,000 with MBEs in 2009. www.getice.com

Tiger Controls, Inc., Greensboro, North Carolina – Neeta Singh is the president of Tiger Controls, an electronic, electrical and industrial supplies distribution company. The Asian-Indian American-owned firm, which was established in 1999, has seven employees and also offers engineering services. Tiger Controls had sales of \$5.3 million in 2009 and projects \$7.2 million in sales in 2010. The company spent \$552,392 with MBEs in 2009. Argon ST, Dominion Virginia Power, Duke Energy, Northrop Grumman and Smurfit Stone are among the company's major customers. www.tigercontrols.com

CLASS I, ANNUAL SALES LESS THAN \$1 MILLION

Accolades, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia – Daryll H. Griffin is president of Accolades Inc., a Black-owned marketing firm that specializes in developing, delivering and implementing marketing merchandise programs. The programs are designed to help support its customers' brand promises, products and event-planning objectives. Accolades had nearly \$1 million in sales in 2009 and projects sales of \$1 million in 2010. The 20-year-old firm has four employees and spent \$63,148 with other MBEs in 2009. The Coca-Cola Company, Georgia Power Company, The Home Depot and UPS are among its major clients. Ms. Griffin is actively involved in the Atlanta business community and is an advocate for minority-owned enterprises. She is the former board chair of the Atlanta Business League and now serves as the organization's board secretary. <http://www.accolades-inc.com>

Cherokee Data Solutions, Claremore, Oklahoma – Pamela Huddleston-Bickford is the owner of Cherokee Data Solutions, a nine-year-old company that provides computer and technology products, office supplies and furniture, promotional products and recycling services. The Native American-owned business has five employees and tallied nearly \$1 million in sales in 2009. The firm projects sales of \$2.1 million in 2010. The company's

2010 NMSDC Regional Supplier of the Year

Page 6

major customers include several federal and state agencies, Indian tribal nations and the University of Oklahoma. Cherokee Data supports community-based organizations and national nonprofits such as Claremore Meals on Wheels, the BSA Indian Nations Council, and the Cherokee National Economic Trust Development Authority. In 2008, the company was named “Business of the Year” by the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma. www.okcnds.com

commVerge Marketing, Milford, Connecticut – Lori Johnson is president and chief executive officer of commVerge Marketing, a full-service business-to-business marketing firm. The Black-owned company was founded in 2000 and posted annual sales of \$430,000 in 2009. The company projects \$2.1 million in sales in 2010. Its direct spend with other MBEs was \$31, 860 in 2009. That spend is projected to be \$280,000 in 2010. Aetna, the Housing Authority of New Haven, Northeast Utilities and Norwalk Community College are major customers of the 10-year-old company. Under the direction of Ms. Johnson, commVerge was recognized by the Small Business Commerce Association as the best marketing-services firm in the Milford area. The company has four full-time employees and is committed to hiring residents of public housing in New Haven as temporary employees in order to provide work experience and training. commVerge also mentors students from local high schools who are enrolled in business marketing programs. www.cverge.com

Diversified Security Solutions, LLC, Racine, Wisconsin – Phillip S. Hill is president and principal owner of Diversified Security Solutions, an electronic security company that designs, installs, monitors and supports IP video surveillance and other technologies. The firm had \$176,000 in sales in 2009 and projects \$400,000 in sales in 2010. The company has five employees. Diversified counts Fair Oaks Farms, Gateway Technical College, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District, Racine Montessori School and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside among its major clients. In addition to expanding Diversified’s business practices, Mr. Hill is committed to making sure the company is among the locally-owned firms working together to build a better business community in Racine. As a result of his leadership, contributions and integrity, he was honored by the African American Business and Professional Association of Racine and Kenosha with its inaugural “Person of the Year” in 2009. www.protectbuydss.com

About NMSDC

Providing a direct link between corporate America and minority-owned businesses is the primary objective of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, one of the

2010 NMSDC Regional Supplier of the Year

Page 7

country's leading business membership organizations. It was chartered in 1972 to provide increased procurement and business opportunities for minority businesses of all sizes.

The NMSDC Network includes a national office in New York and 37 Regional Councils across the country. There are 3,500 corporate members throughout the network, including America's top publicly-owned, privately-owned and foreign-owned companies as well as universities, hospitals and other buying institutions. The Regional Councils certify and match more than 16,000 Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American businesses with member corporations that want to purchase their products and services.

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