

## SBA St. Louis Announces Annual Award Winners



**ST. LOUIS** - The U.S. Small Business Administration's St. Louis District Office announced the top winners for its 2020 Small Business Week annual awards competition. Influence & Company president Kelsey Raymond was named the 2020 Small Business Person of the Year for both the St. Louis district and the state of Missouri.

SBA St. Louis District Director Maureen Brinkley says one of the best parts of her job is calling business owners and giving them good news. "I've been with the SBA so long that this job has become my ministry. So when I have the opportunity to make someone's day with something so positive, it's an absolute honor."

This year the competition drew nominees from all over eastern Missouri including Columbia and Cape Girardeau. For the last two years the district office has been on a mission to increase its visibility and the general public's awareness of all SBA programs.

"There is a perception that the SBA is the government's best kept secret. That's not a compliment. We don't want that distinction," said Brinkley. "So we are laser focused on increasing outreach to the point where there is not a single resident of eastern Missouri that is not aware of what the SBA can do to help them start, grow or expand their small business."

It was great to see such a large number of quality businesses nominated this year,” said Business Opportunity Specialist Gary Alexander. “It shows the district office’s outreach efforts are paying off. We’re on a mission to make every entrepreneur within our reach aware of how the SBA can assist them in starting, growing or expanding their business.”

###

**About the U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).