



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
**NEWS RELEASE**

City of Seattle  
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

*For Immediate Release:* October 2, 2009

Contact: Alex Fryer, (206) 684-8358 or (206) 941-5931 (cell), [alex.fryer@seattle.gov](mailto:alex.fryer@seattle.gov)  
Karin Zaugg Black, (206) 733-9810 or (206) 465-8387 (cell), [karin.zaugg@seattle.gov](mailto:karin.zaugg@seattle.gov)

**2009 Mayor's Small Business Award winners  
contribute to local economy, quality of life**

*10 local small businesses to be honored on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>*

SEATTLE –Mayor Greg Nickels today announced this year's 10 Mayor's Small Business Award winners, who will be celebrated at an awards ceremony at Town Hall on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

“Small businesses are the economic engines that employ local people and provide innovative products and services throughout our city – small business owners are my heroes,” said Mayor Nickels. “They add character to our neighborhoods and create gathering places that make Seattle so wonderful.”

Every year, 10 small businesses in Seattle receive special recognition for their accomplishments through the Mayor's Small Business Awards presented by Wells Fargo. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the program.

**When:** Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
Reception from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. (Formal Program starts at 6:30 p.m.)

**Where:** Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Avenue, Seattle (Between Spring & Seneca)  
[www.townhallseattle.org](http://www.townhallseattle.org)

**Parking:** Street and area garages; also Parking at Convention Center Main Garage (Entrance is on 8th Avenue between Seneca and Pike Streets)  
Discounted parking vouchers (\$4.00) are available for pick up at event

**Tickets:** Tickets may be purchased online ([brownpapertickets.com/event/84535](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/84535)) for \$20. They will also be sold at the door of the event; please bring a check or cash.

The 2009 Awards honor the diversity and excellence of Seattle's small businesses, and their contribution to the city's economic vitality and quality of life.

- more -

Ten winners have been selected on the basis of excellence in management, entrepreneurial spirit, customer service, and community involvement.

This year's winners represent a cross-section of Seattle's small businesses and illustrate the diverse nature of small business in the variety of services, locations and strategies for success. To qualify, the business must have no more than 100 employees and gross revenues of less than \$10 million.

Over the last two decades, the awards program has recognized more than 240 small businesses, many of which have later enjoyed phenomenal success. Past recipients include companies such as: Starbucks Coffee Company (1984), Uwajimaya (1984), Ezell's Fried Chicken (1989), the Dilettante (1990) and City People's Mercantile (1993). Last year's winners included Arab Film Distribution / Typecast Films; Compendium, Inc.; glassybaby LLC and Macrina Bakery & Café.

The five judges involved in this year's awards included small business owners, previous awards winners and representatives of community development organizations. After a confidential review of the nominations and rounds of deliberation, they selected this year's winners.

This year's winners of the 2009 Small Business Awards, presented by the City of Seattle and Wells Fargo, are:

**Alki Kayak Tours**

Greg & Kara Whittaker - (206) 953-0237  
1660 Harbor Avenue SW (West Seattle)  
www.kayakalki.com

Spurred by their love of exploring the natural beauty of the West Seattle peninsula, Greg and Kara Whittaker founded Alki Kayak Tours in 2005 with the goal of getting paddlers on the waters of the Puget Sound. Their sea kayak touring business, which began with one primary guide and one small fleet of kayaks, now employs twelve people seasonally and will get more than one hundred people paddling on Elliott Bay on a busy day. In addition to sea kayak tours that explore the natural history and human history of Puget Sound, the company also provides kayak, inline skate, bike, and fishing boat rentals overlooking the Seattle skyline. Alki Kayak Tours' use of non-polluting human powered watercraft, plus adherence to environmental best management practices, embodies the Whittakers' dedication to sustainable business practices as well as the conservation and preservation of Puget Sound. Their tours were recently voted "Best Way to View the Seattle Skyline" in the *Seattle Weekly's* Best of 2009 Issue.

**Annie's Nannies**

Annie Davis & Suzanne Royer McCone - (206) 784-8462  
2236 NW 58th Street, Suite 101 (Ballard)  
www.anihouseholdstaffing.com

Annie Davis founded Annie's Nannies in 1984 in response to a need for nanny placement agencies in the Northwest. In its twenty-five years in business, Annie's Nannies has grown from a one-person, part-time operation into an agency that employs five full time staff—and has located jobs for thousands of others—while setting industry-wide best practices in domestic employment. Annie and her daughter, Suzanne Royer McCone, along with their wonderful staff, have perfected the art of matching nannies and families in the greater Puget Sound Area. Employees and job-seekers at Annie's Nannies are treated as a vital resource, where all are valued and rewarded. Annie's Nannies is active in their community, contributing to schools and local fundraisers. With honesty and integrity as integral values, Annie's Nannies strives to ensure that “every child under a nanny's care is safe, happy, and constantly learning.” They are the industry experts!

**Ballard Sip & Ship / Greenwood Sip & Ship**

Stephen & Diana Naramore – (206) 789-4488  
1752 NW Market Street (Ballard, Greenwood)  
www.sipandship.com

Stephen and Diana Naramore founded Ballard Sip & Ship in 2002 as a one-stop-shop for shipping and mailing, espresso drinks and snacks, and one-of-a-kind gifts, inspired in part by another small local business, the Queen Anne Mail & Dispatch. Now at two locations in Ballard and Greenwood, Sip & Ship provides a genuine community gathering place where customers can shop, mingle, and connect. Both stores are deeply invested in their surrounding neighborhoods, donating their popular custom-made neighborhood gear (t-shirts, hoodies, hats) and sustainably-roasted coffee to local schools and organizations. Many of the stores' cards and gifts, as well as sandwiches, donuts, and other snacks, are sourced from other local businesses—another way that Sip & Ship invests in the Seattle business community. Exemplary, personalized customer service and community building are Sip & Ship's core values. Dedicated patrons describe the business as “an old-time general store updated for the 21st century” and “what a neighborhood hang-out is all about.”

**Cupcake Royale and Vérité Coffee**

Jody Hall – (206) 782-9557  
2052 NW Market Street (Ballard, Capitol Hill, Madrona, West Seattle)  
www.cupcakeroyle.com

Craving a red velvet, salted caramel, or peppermint party cupcake—and an espresso drink to match? Jody Hall's Cupcake Royale and Vérité Coffee (Vérité Ventures, Inc.) have just what you need. Founded in 2003 with only seven employees, Jody now operates four funky neighborhood locations in Ballard, Capitol Hill, Madrona, and West Seattle. In addition to supplying Seattle with its favorite food addictions, Jody has advocated in

Washington, D.C. for health care reform that would make it easier for small businesses to buy affordable and comprehensive insurance for employees – one way she makes sure that her staff shares in the rewards of her business. A daily huddle among managers and employees ensures that everyone in the organization is on the same page, from company sales goals to customer service strategies. Giving back to the community is paramount as well; last year, they donated over 25,000 cupcakes to local organizations, schools, and children's charities, helping raise an estimated \$200,000 for various programs throughout Puget Sound.

### **Gravity Payments**

Dan Price & Lucas Price – (866) 701-4700  
1434 Elliott Avenue W., Suite C (Interbay)  
[www.gravitypayments.com](http://www.gravitypayments.com)

Dan Price co-founded Gravity Payments in 2004 as a 19-year-old freshman at Seattle Pacific University with his brother Lucas. After working in payments processing in high school, Dan realized the need for a small-business-friendly payment processing company that could negotiate rates and service with vendors. By providing around-the-clock availability and high-quality service, Gravity Payments has since grown from two employees to a staff of forty-two, and has saved its business customers approximately 20 million dollars in credit card processing fees. Through its charitable giving program "Gravity Gives," Gravity Payments donates a generous 10% of its annual profit to organizations that focus on air quality initiatives, services for needy family and children, and global poverty. Looking to the future, Dan hopes that Gravity Payments will one day be the dominant credit card processor in the Northwest, while maintaining its original values of transparency, fairness, and outstanding customer service.

### **Nyhus Communications LLC**

Roger Nyhus - (206) 323-3733  
1525 Fourth Avenue, Suite 400 (Downtown)  
[www.nyhus.com](http://www.nyhus.com)

Nyhus Communications specializes in communications and advocacy for the innovation economy. With a visible commitment to community involvement, the firm provides strategic public relations, public affairs and digital media services to organizations pursuing their businesses and missions in original ways. Since starting the firm in 1994, CEO and President Roger Nyhus and his team have provided candid counsel to organizations operating at the intersection of business, government and the community to bring about positive changes in the world. Despite a downturn in the economy, Nyhus has aggressively grown in the areas of technology, health care and global health, international economic development, real estate, and plans to open its first satellite office in Washington, D.C. next year. Employee retention, career development and continual learning are pillars of the company, which provides staff with personal and professional

guidance, as well as robust support packages and flexible schedules. Dedicated to serving the community that has allowed it to grow, Nyhus donates generous amounts of pro bono work, consultation and money to local causes, and supports employees' leadership roles in community and professional organizations.

### **Schemata Workshop**

Mike Mariano & Grace Kim – (206) 285-1589

1720 12th Avenue, #3 (Capitol Hill)

[www.schemataworkshop.com](http://www.schemataworkshop.com)

Husband and wife team Grace Kim and Mike Mariano founded their full-service architectural practice, Schemata Workshop, in 2004, after twelve years working in Seattle and Chicago. The firm takes its name from the singular 'schema' or framework, emphasizing an integrated and collaborative approach to the environment, professional practice, community building, and design. Schemata Workshop's design work reflects a simple, restrained elegance, material integrity, and is informed by the firm's clients, the surrounding environment and existing conditions. Open communication, employee mentorship, and collaboration with area firms are important. Recognizing the role and potential for the positive impact of their practice, Schemata Workshop works with clients to develop communities that emphasize a holistic view of social, ecological and economic sustainability.

### **SH Worldwide**

H. S. Wright III, Greg Gillard, & Tony Kutch – (206) 623.2090

100 Dexter Avenue N., Suite 502 (South Lake Union)

[www.shworldwide.com](http://www.shworldwide.com)

Rated by *Washington CEO Magazine* as one of the state's Top 100 Best Companies to Work For (2007-2008) and the winner of the *Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility* (2008 – 2009), SH Worldwide is a product of three prominent Seattle event services and destination management companies. The merger, in 2008, formed one of the most comprehensive event management firms on the West coast. Owners H.S. Wright III, Greg Gillard, and Tony Kutch embraced this strategic merger as a way to provide exceptional customer service with a focus on business integrity, creativity, efficiency, sustainability and profitability. To ensure that their customer service is the best in the hospitality industry, SH Worldwide employs a team of experienced event managers and utilizes online management tools that streamline their interactions with clients to provide smooth and efficient service. Truly "event driven," the company's many corporate events and tour programs showcase Seattle's food, coffee, cruises, nature, arts, vineyards, and venues – driving not only SH Worldwide's business, but many other local businesses as well.

**Shen Consulting, Inc.**

Albert Shen – (206) 228-1364  
1029 Belmont Avenue E., #201 (Capitol Hill)  
www.shenconsultinginc.com

Shen Consulting, Inc., founded by University of Washington graduate Albert Shen in 2000, specializes in private, institutional, and government program and project delivery of large infrastructure projects. Based in Seattle's Capitol Hill, the Washington state certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) provides diverse services to businesses using an established network of analysts, architects, planners, engineers and contractors. Delivering results on time and under budget is a priority for the company, which has recently worked on the Port of Seattle Sea-Tac Airport Capital Improvement Program and the Port of Seattle Marine Terminal Expansion Improvements. Although the boutique firm remains small, the company nearly doubled its revenue between fiscal years 2008 and 2009. Dedicated to the community that fosters its growth, Shen also supports multiple local fundraisers through corporate contributions and donations of auction items.

**X-BAR**

Brad Benner – (206) 264-XBAR  
219 First Avenue S., #420 (Pioneer Square)  
www.xbarit.com

In 2002, as the cloud of the dot-com crash hung over the IT industry, Brad Benner did something a little unusual: he founded an IT company, X-BAR, which empowers small- and medium-sized companies to flourish through the strategic use of information technologies. What began as a tiny creative technology company with one employee has since grown into a thriving IT services firm that focuses on strategic consulting, technology implementation, and ongoing support services. X-BAR rejects the typical IT model of "break/fix" support in favor of a strategic, proactive, and comprehensive approach to managing IT. Specialized tools and a close relationship with clients enable X-BAR to provide unparalleled service with an emphasis on fairness, positive action, quality, transparency, and business sustainability. X-BAR's participation in the Seattle Climate Partnership and the Seattle Climate Action Now campaign, together with its dedication to green and energy-efficient IT practices, embody the company's commitment to sustainable business and unparalleled IT support in the Seattle community.

Get the Nickels Newsletter and the mayor's inside view on transportation, public safety, economic opportunity and healthy communities. Sign up at [mayor.seattle.gov](http://mayor.seattle.gov).

###