



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **Johnny's Selected Seeds Wins National SBA Award**

**BOSTON** – Robert L. Johnston, chairman and founder of Winslow- and Albion-based Johnny's Selected Seeds, has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2008 National, New England and Massachusetts Entrepreneurial Success Award winner. Johnston won the Maine competition for this award and went on to win both the New England and national contests.

The Entrepreneurial Success Award is presented annually to an individual who owns and operates a business that received SBA assistance when it was a small business and has since grown into a large business according to SBA size standards. Johnny's Selected Seeds was judged on six basic criteria: Received SBA assistance that led to growth; growth in number of employees; increase in sales; current and past financial reports; innovativeness of product or service; and evidence of contributions to community-oriented projects. Johnny's was nominated for this award by P. James Nicholson, CPA, Nicholson & Associates, PA.

"This SBA award is a very special one," said SBA Administrator Steve Preston. "Johnny's Selected Seeds is an excellent example of how SBA's programs are supposed to work. When the business was small, SBA helped with its expansion at a critical time in its growth cycle with a SBA 504 Certified Development Company loan. Since then, this business has grown into a great company."

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Johnny's Selected Seeds is a mail order seed producer and merchant located in Albion and Winslow, Maine. The company was established in 1973 by Founder and Chairman Rob Johnston, Jr. Johnny's prides itself on its superior product, research, technical information, and service for home gardeners and commercial growers. Products include vegetable seeds, medicinal and culinary herb seeds, and flower seeds as well as unique, high quality gardening tools and supplies. Johnny's export department ships seeds internationally. Johnny's has grown from a single employee to 80 full time and 50 seasonal employees with annual revenues of just under \$15 million.

"Johnny's Selected Seeds is a great example of what can be accomplished with the right partnership between banker, backer and ambitious entrepreneur," said SBA New England Regional Administrator Sandy Blitz. "The SBA is very proud of the role it played in enabling this vital small business to grow and thrive."

Mr. Johnston will be recognized at SBA's National Small Business Week celebration in Washington, D.C. on April 23, 2008. He will also be honored locally by SBA's Maine District Office at the Ramada Inn in Lewiston on May 16, 2008.

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