

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
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PORTLAND DISTRICT  
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**The SBA Portland District Office  
Women in Business Champion of the Year  
*Kedma Ough, Executive Director  
ONABEN Women's Business Center***



*Kedma Ough*

**Portland, Ore.** – SBA Oregon District Director, Harry DeWolf, announces that Kedma Ough, Executive Director of the Oregon Native American Business Enterprise Network (ONABEN) Women's Business Center, is the SBA 2008 Women in Business Champion of the Year for the state of Oregon. Ough will receive her award at the Oregon SBA's Small Business Week Awards Gala May 22, 2008, 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Portland, Oregon.

According to Ough, "In life we are all faced with challenges we must overcome. Each of us has a choice to learn from our lessons or to continue the cycle of struggle." As a young child, Ough was faced with her own struggles, living with an abusive parental figure. Many years passed in this difficult situation and at the age of 18, things escalated and she sought shelter for her own personal safety.

Within days her life changed forever. Ough was homeless, with no job or money to pay for her university education. A group of friends banded together and secured a small basement apartment for her to live in. She took a job at the local hospital's business division and went into hiding for three years.

With no other choice, Ough decided to plead her case to the University's financial committee petitioning to receive a full scholarship to attend the business program based on the severe circumstances she was facing. The committee took a few hours to deliberate on this unusual request. Ough states that she remembers sitting in the secretary's office vowing if the university provided this opportunity, she would spend the rest of her life providing others with the same opportunity. Two hours later the secretary walked out and shook her hand with sincere congratulations for being accepted into their full scholarship program.

It was then that Ough knew she would spend the rest of her life serving others and providing them with the same opportunity she received, regardless of the circumstances they were facing.

Ms. Kedma Ough has more than 8 years in small business experience dealing with for-profit and non-profit organizations. Community involvement has included: Department Economic Security Disability Advisory Board, Economic Development Chair for US Women's Chamber of Commerce, Adjunct professor for the University of Arizona and at Portland State University and Loan Advisory Committee Member for Mercy-Corps.

Ms. Ough actively began supporting women's role in business when she was hired as the Arizona Women's Business Director in 2000. In 2004 she relocated to Oregon and joined ONABEN in 2005 as the Women's Business Center (WBC) Director continuing her focus in serving women businesses. As the WBC Director, Kedma provides training and consulting

opportunities for women with a specialization in supporting Native American Women in businesses both on and off reservations. As a co-writer for the “Indianpreneurship” program, a national business plan program through ONABEN, Kedma is one of the lead consultants providing customized curriculum training to other trainers in support of Native American businesses.

In addition, Kedma is the president of the AVITA Business Center, a 100% woman-owned small business consulting company. She has over 10 years of experience as a management consultant providing expertise in small business training, organizational and financial analysis, new business/product launch, and mentoring to small businesses with a focus on woman-owned firms. Kedma received her Bachelor of Business Administration from Hofstra University and a Master of Business degree from the Troy State University.

Early efforts to support legislative gain for women began when Ms. Ough played a role in Oregon to support local representation of the US National Women’s Chamber of Commerce. Continuing her efforts in supporting opportunities for women and small businesses, Kedma has been commended for her efforts in bringing new opportunities to persons with disabilities. In 2006 she was appointed by the Governors Office to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council and most recently was appointed to serve on the Oregon Disabilities Commission. In both roles she brings to the forefront opportunities for women with disabilities to gain financial opportunities through self-employment initiatives.

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