

## Press Release

## For Immediate Release

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### Clermont Chamber Annual Meeting to Honor Small Business

Small business is an extremely important part of our economy here in the U.S.A. Small firms:

- Represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms.
- Employ half of all private sector employees.
- Pay more than 45 percent of total U.S. private payroll.
- Have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually over the last decade.
- Create more than 50 percent of nonfarm private gross domestic product (GDP).
- Supplied more than 23 percent of the total value of federal prime contracts (in FY 2005).
- Produce 13 to 14 times more patents per employee than large patenting firms. These patents are twice as likely as large firm patents to be among the one percent most cited.
- Are employers of 41 percent of high tech workers (such as scientists, engineers, and computer workers).
- Are 53 percent home-based and 3 percent franchises.
- Made up 97 percent of all identified exporters and produced 28.6 percent of the known export value (in FY 2004).

The Clermont Chamber of Commerce has selected Melink Corporation, Ideopia, American Micro, ML Barnard, Northern Plumbing Systems and SeaMaster Cruises for the 2008 Small Business Awards presented at the Chamber Annual Meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

Demonstrating best practices as an **Emerging Small Business** is **Northern Plumbing Systems** "We want to be everyone's plumber!" This is the motto for Northern Plumbing Systems LLC, a company that will be celebrating five years in business in early 2009.

Whether it is residential or commercial, new construction, remodeling or repairs, Northern Plumbing Systems LLC can direct the solutions for all plumbing needs. All work is done with a 100% Satisfaction Guarantee. Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Northern owners, Tim & Stewart Moss, began with 3 trucks and five employees and now offer employment to over 30 experienced and dedicated team members.

**Demonstrating best practices in Customer Focus** are **ML Barnard Inc.**, in the 1 – 50 employee division, and **American Micro Products Inc.**, in the 51 – 250 employee division.

**ML Barnard Inc.** was established in 1992 by Michael L. Barnard, to serve clients' design/build needs. Within the last ten years ML Barnard has served clients in the tri-state area as a General Contractor, Designer, Construction Manager and Designer/Builder on several projects. Their experience ranges from high-rise office buildings to office/manufacturing facilities to tenant finishes.

ML Barnard's clients are attracted to the company because of its business philosophy of being "Dedicated to Our Client's Needs." This has been their philosophy from the beginning; their business grows by referrals. Normally, once ML Barnard does a building, those clients are clients for life.

Such long-standing relationships don't just happen over night. They're fostered through painstaking commitment to clients and uncompromising adherence to the company's values. Honesty, integrity and quality are important to the company and they're important to its clients. For over a decade now, ML Barnard has been meeting and exceeding those expectations, and is poised-with a healthy reputation and a commitment to excellence for continued success in the decades to come.

**American Micro Products Inc.**, has been a well-respected leader in the field of precision-machined components since 1957. Their global expertise and capabilities in micro and high precision manufacturing has allowed us to uniquely serve a variety of high-technology markets including: aerospace, diesel/off-road vehicles, fluid power, medical/dental devices and more.

With over 50 years in the manufacturing business, American Micro has invested in technology and assembled the key elements of a successful organization in meeting the needs of customers and partners, worldwide. First and foremost, is the role employees play in this success.

American Micro's skilled craftsmen are ready to accept the most challenging projects. From early design and prototype through the full production cycle, American Micro will provide customers with the service needed to complete the job. American Micro believes in strategic alliances with its customers, helping the company to better understand their customers' needs and how their combined resources can bring comparative advantages in meeting the customer's goals.

**Ideopia and Melink Corporation** have been selected for demonstrating best practices in **Innovation** in the 1-50 employee and 51 – 250 employee categories respectively.

**Ideopia** is an advertising and interactive agency. The Ideopia premise is simple: An ad nobody pays attention to is a zero. A waste of money a waste of human and natural resources, no ROI, just a big greasy donut on your balance sheet. On the other hand, super-innovative creative and strategic approaches for advertising and web sites command attention. They also generate additional value through word of mouth ("Hey, did you see them stick the monkey in the dish washer?"), and sell stuff.

Creativity is the rocket fuel that can blast companies and products into orbit. Branding is the navigation system. Integrated approaches that encompass web sites, advertising, email marketing, and hundreds of other tactical options are the delivery systems we use. In the end, it's the idea that has the greatest power to persuade. That's why ideas matter most at Ideopia.

**Melink Corporation** is a leader in energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions for commercial, institutional, and residential buildings. Their mission is to promote best practices in sustainable design and to inspire others for our example. Since 1987 the company has grown to serve many of the largest restaurant, supermarket, hotel, and retail chains in the U.S. and world. This allows Melink to reduce the energy footprint of thousands of new and existing buildings every year. Few causes will be as great in 10-30 years as world temperatures continue rising, the frequency and severity of droughts and hurricanes increase, a growing number of plant and animal species become extinct, polar ice caps melt and begin to flood the coastlines, and the quality of life as we know it changes forever. Melink's national, certified, and independent building/HVAC commissioning services are considered the industry standard. Melink designed and constructed its own LEED-Gold certified headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio in 2005. The company leases a fleet of hybrid cars that achieve up to 50mpg for its national network of employees, and Melink provides incentives for employees to buy renewable energy improvements for their homes.

Small Business Best Practices Awards are selected by the Small Business Development Center Advisory Committee, from nominations submitted by the membership and business community at large.

Ken Woodruff of **SeaMaster Cruises** is being recognized as New Member of the Year. This award recognizes a member who has joined the Chamber within the past 24 months and has shown initiative in becoming an active participant in various aspects of the Chamber. Since SeaMaster Cruises joined the Chamber just under two years ago, Ken Woodruff has been a regular contributor to the Networking @ Noon program, and is a member of the Membership Development Committee, charged with helping the chamber attract and retain new members. Ken served on the Gather on the Green Committee in 2008, helping to plan and coordinate the annual golf outing, and for 2009, Ken has stepped up to Chair the Gather on the Green Committee.

In addition to honoring these selected small businesses, the February 6<sup>th</sup> Chamber Annual Meeting will feature Dan Rolfes, long time Chamber member and founder and CEO of Holiday Homes as the keynote speaker as the Chamber celebrates 40 years of advocating for business in the Clermont area. WGRR's Chris and Janeen will serve as special guest emcees. The Annual Meeting is sponsored by The Midland Company, and will be held at Holiday Inn Cincinnati – Eastgate, 11:15 am – 1:00 pm. Individual and Table Reservations may be made through January 30<sup>th</sup> online at [www.clermontchamber.com](http://www.clermontchamber.com), or by calling 576-5000

*Founded in 1969, the Clermont Chamber of Commerce promotes local and regional business through business attraction, retention & expansion, educational and networking opportunities, business consulting assistance and business advocacy for the over 1000 Clermont Chamber Members. Find us at [www.clermontchamber.com](http://www.clermontchamber.com). The President of the Clermont Chamber of Commerce is Matthew D. Van Sant, and the Chairman of the Board is Chip Gerhardt of Government Strategies Group, LLC.*