

“Certainly the Vancouver campus is a critical piece of this improvement in rankings.”
 —David Whidbee, associate dean for faculty affairs and research at the WSU College of Business, regarding the school's improved ranking in U.S. News & World Report

Washougal businesswoman competing for National Minority Small Business Person of the Year award

BY NICHOLAS SHANNON KULMAC | VBJ

For as long as she can remember, Kim Erion has been in love with the wilderness. The daughter of a lifelong logging man, it's no surprise that her "office" is located outside, in Mother Nature. What is a surprise, she said, is the fact that the outdoorsy work she loves is now being recognized on a national level.

As president of LKE Corporation, a Washougal-based company that specializes in wildlife restoration and engineering, Erion will be one of 10 minority small business owners vying for the title of National Minority Small Business Person of the Year at the 29th annual Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference. Hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, the conference will take place on September 27-30 in Washington D.C.

"I really did not expect to be in the running," said Erion. "But I have been involved with SBA and SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) since I was about 17. I like to get into people's brain and figure out what works and what doesn't."



Nicholas Shannon Kulmac, of the VBJ

Kim Erion stands with her husband, Tim, at a work site. Erion said the best part of her job is getting to work with her husband on a daily basis.

Since 1993, LKE Corporation has removed logging roads, inserted trails, planted trees and engineered habitat from Canada to Mexico and east through South Dakota. Working alongside her husband Tim, Erion has seen her work force grow from four to 42.

"I fail to see the bad economy today," she said. "To me, the economy is great because I have really great workers and I'm going to give them really good jobs to work at and they appreciate that."

Speaking of workers, Erion credits the SBA for helping her to hire quality people, rather than just employees.

"Now we're building a team," she added.

In addition to hiring help, Erion said the assistance and training she has received from SCORE, SBA and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has made her a more efficient leader.

"I already know how to do a good job. I know how to run a crew. I

know how to run the equipment. But SCORE, SBA and SBDC have allowed me to step back and look at the company in a different light," she explained. "I can step out of the business and analyze myself more and realize my own failures. When I see those things, I can regroup, write a list and grow."

Erion is the only business owner in the Pacific Northwest that has been nominated for the National Minority Small business Person of the Year award.

AW OFFICE OF
Cynthia Horenstein, PLLC

101 SANTA FE DRIVE
VANCOUVER, WA 98661
PHONE: 9866-4100
FAX: 9866-5850
E-MAIL: cph@chhznw.com
www.chhznw.com

Erion's love for the best of both worlds with this family

20*****CAR-RT LOT**C-045
Cindy Horenstein
Law Office of Cynthia Horenstein, PLLC
101 N Santa Fe Dr
Vancouver, WA 98661-7020

Compliments of your GVCC

Periodicals Postage PAID At Vancouver, WA