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Marva Smith Battle-Bey is 2007 National Minority Small Business Champion

*Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corp President and
CEO Wins Prestigious SBA Award*

Los Angeles- The U.S. Small Business Administration announced the selection of Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corporation (VSEDC) President and CEO, Marva Smith Battle-Bey, as the Nation's 2007 SBA Minority Small Business Champion. To reach this exalted level, Ms. Battle-Bey had to first be selected by the local SBA District Office from a cadre of entrants nominated by individuals and entities from throughout Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties. Next she had to survive the selection process at the State / Regional level; and eventually was selected in Washington, D. C. in a process that evaluated entrants from 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. Marva Smith Battle-Bey was nominated by Earl "Skip" Cooper, President and CEO of The Black Business Association.

Ms. Battle-Bey was singled out for her myriad contributions to inner-city economic development, particularly in the underserved South Los Angeles community. She founded VSEDC to serve as a lightning rod to bring together businesses, residents, vested interests, and resource partners to effect much-needed physical, economic, and social change. Through Marva's innate ability to rectify economic development deficiencies by drawing on partnership networks and other friends of microenterprise development, the first business incubator in South Los Angeles was opened and prospered under her aegis.

She has championed the cause of minority and inner-city small business for more than a quarter century. No project no matter the size was overlooked. Each was an important piece of the economic development puzzle. Under her leadership VSEDC has achieved more than \$40 million in economic development projects in the Vermont Slauson community. As a result of her efforts more than 3,000 much-needed jobs were created in an area where approximately 40% of the residents live below the poverty line.

In the words of Los Angeles SBA District Office Director Alberto G. Alvarado: “ Marva Smith Battle-Bey has set the benchmark for inner-city economic development. For decades her programs have consistently provided technical assistance, entrepreneurial training, and project development that helped stabilize the communal infrastructure and advanced the minority business community. This award is a veritable crown for her accomplishments. We are all proud of what she has achieved and laud her for her success. All hail, for South Los Angeles has been blessed with a true queen of economic development-- Marva Smith Battle-Bey.”

The actual award will be presented to Ms. Battle-Bey at the kick-off ceremonies of the 2007 Small Business Week activities which will be held April 23rd and 24th in Washington, D.C. After this inauguration the celebration will roll-out across the country, with local festivities taking place at a luncheon to honor entrepreneurship on May 30th in downtown Los Angeles.

Marva Smith Battle- Bey is available for interviews. Please contact Frank Brancale at (818) 552-3203.

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