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For Immediate Release

Local Businesswoman Honored by President Bush



August 13, Washington, DC-- President Bush and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans recently met with several women business leaders to honor them for their achievements in international business. The businesswomen, all clients of the U.S. Commercial Service, heard the president deliver a speech about women in international trade.

The group included representatives from Petrochem Inc, a local producer of specialty lubricants; R.M. Waite, a California building materials distributor; Candy Bouquet International, an Arkansas franchiser that manufactures and sells decorative candy arrangements; and Capitol Hill Building Maintenance, a Baltimore-area supplier of janitorial training and supplies.

Carole Sluski, President of Petrochem, and her daughter Jill Dohner, the company's Sales and Marketing Director, traveled from Lockport, Illinois to attend the event. Petrochem is a client of the Chicago U.S. Export Assistance Center, part of the global network of the U.S. Commercial Service. The U.S. Commercial Service, a Commerce Department agency, has 107 offices in the U.S. and 160 international posts where U.S. businesses, particularly small and mid-sized companies, can receive export assistance.

Petrochem currently sells its oven chain lubricants in the United States, England, South Africa, Spain, Argentina, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Saudi Arabia. Sluski credits the U.S. Commercial Service's, Global Diversity Market Entry Program in Chicago for helping her take Petrochem global. The program prepares women- and minority-owned firms to sell their products and services internationally. Trade professionals provide technical expertise, ongoing consultation and information to aid firms in pricing and financing their products for export.

Exports are key to U.S. economic growth, and Illinois is no exception. Illinois exports goods globally to 208 foreign destinations, and last year the state's exports totaled over \$32 billion. Buoyed by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the state's leading markets are Canada (26 percent of 2000 exports) and Mexico (10 percent). Other top markets include Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, China, and Australia.

For more information about the U.S. Commercial Service, or to contact a U.S. Export Assistance Center near you, visit www.usatrade.gov.