

SMALL BUSINESS HONOR



Petron Automation, its employees seen outside its Watertown factory, will be named Manufacturer of the Year at the Harold Webster Smith Awards annual breakfast on Feb. 3.

Largay, Onyx II, Petron to get awards

REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — The Waterbury Regional Chamber's Small Business Council on Thursday announced recipients of its 2017 Harold Webster Smith Awards.

The awards, in their 20th year, recognize companies that have shown achievement and excellence in small business.

Largay Travel Inc. in Waterbury will be named Small Business of the Year, while Daniel Sanchez, owner of Onyx II Fine Jewelers in Watertown, will be honored as Entrepreneur of the Year, the chamber stated in a news re-



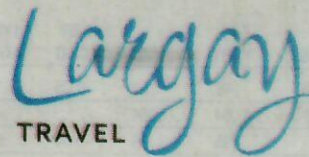
Sanchez



Brennan

lease. Petron Automation Inc. in Watertown will be named Manufacturer of the Year.

The accolades will be handed out at the annual breakfast at the Aria Wedding & Banquet Facility in Prospect, Friday, Feb. 3, from 7:45 to 9:30 a.m.



CONTRIBUTED

Largay Travel in Waterbury, its logo seen here, will be named Small Business of the Year at the awards.

Joe Brennan, president and CEO of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association, will serve as the keynote speaker.

Harold Webster Smith founded First Federal Sav-

ings of Waterbury in 1935 to help people build and buy homes. He served as CEO until 1937 and as chairman of the board until 1995, when First Federal was renamed Webster Bank in his honor.

Largay Travel, a travel management firm at 1525 Hamilton Ave., was founded in 1969 by Roland F. Largay, the chamber stated.

Paul Largay, Roland's nephew, joined the organization in 1982 and together they traveled the world while building the family business. Amanda Klimak, the compa-

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ny's current president, equity partner, and Virtuoso advisory board member, joined the team in 2001.

The company, a branch of the Tzell Travel Group and member of the Virtuoso network of travel specialists, is divided into leisure travel, group and incentive, and corporate services.

Its primary focus is soft-adventure leisure programs, including hiking, biking, ballooning, family travel, worldwide deluxe cruising and African safaris.

Paul Largay was named by Travel & Leisure magazine as one of "America's Top 100 Secret Travel Agents" for a decade, and has appeared on the magazine's "AUST" list of world's top agents, the chamber stated. Largay Travel, an active chamber member, is involved in many organizations in the region, including United Way and

the Small Business Association.

Sanchez, with the help of brand manager James Michael Murphy, has transformed Onyx II's brand and image by enhancing its store windows into Madison Avenue-level, internationally-themed displays each season. He also hosts in-store trunk shows that benefit local charities. The shop was also named by Instore Magazine as one of "America's Coolest Stores," the chamber stated.

Sanchez was involved in forming the Main Street Merchants Association and beautifying Main Street of Watertown with holiday decorations, street landscaping, updating of other business facades and marketing businesses through decorative window displays.

Onyx II is a family-owned jeweler founded on South Main Street in Waterbury in 1979 by Sanchez' grandparents that moved to 683 Main St. in Watertown in the mid-1990s.

Petron Automation, at 65 Mountain View Drive in Watertown, was founded in 1980 by Mike Petro Sr. and his wife Patricia Petro as Petron Automated Machine Products, making machinery in a one-car garage. One year later, it moved to rented space and relocated to its current 17,000-square-foot location in 1992, where it makes high-precision parts for various industries.

Petron has 22 high-precision Swiss-type and computer-numeric-controlled machines accompanied by 34 supporting, inspection and deburring machines. Since January 2015, the company has added nine full-time employees, one part-time worker and six temporary workers for a total of 26 full- and part-time employees.

Visit www.waterburychamber.com, call 203-757-0701, or email info@waterburychamber.com to reserve a seat for the awards breakfast.