

# **NEWS** *For Immediate Release*

## **U.S. Department of Labor Honors Birmingham Company for Creating Opportunities in the Workplace**

WASHINGTON - Buffalo Rock Company, Birmingham, is one of eleven companies and organizations to be honored by the U.S. Department of Labor for their efforts to foster workplace diversity. The recipients will be recognized at an annual awards ceremony on Thurs., Oct. 17, hosted by the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).

Three awards -- Secretary of Labor's Opportunity Award, Exemplary Volunteer Efforts (EVE) and Exemplary Public Interest Contribution (EPIC) -- will be presented to recognize excellence and leadership in the implementation of effective equal employment opportunity standards.

"Each of these employers can take great pride in their efforts to provide women, people of color, veterans, and people with disabilities access to equal employment opportunities in our 21st Century workforce," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. "They create opportunity in America's workforce and serve as role models for employers across the country."

Buffalo Rock Company, a mid-size soft drink manufacturer and beverage distributor and one of the oldest and the largest family-owned Pepsi franchises in the U.S., will receive an EVE award for its exemplary EEO programs. Particularly effective is the company's "First Response Professional Workplace Conduct Program," which provides a strong policy statement, extensive manager training and a confidential and easy-to-use reporting procedure for handling sexual harassment. In training, the company emphasizes the important role employees play in reporting potential harassment and makes clear the support they will receive from top management. A toll-free harassment help-line has been installed to ensure confidentiality for complainants. Supervisors and managers are trained in "first response" techniques to recognize early signs of harassment and to respond properly to employee reports of such behavior. "First response" also addresses workplace violence, including possible warning signs.