

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: May 16, 2011
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Prairie Quest ranks 12th among the 13th Annual ICIC and *Fortune Magazine's* Inner City 100 winners

Annual ranking showcases the 100 fastest-growing inner city businesses in America.

Fort Wayne, IN - The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and *Fortune Magazine* released the 2011 Inner City 100 list of the fastest-growing inner city companies in the U.S. Prairie Quest, from Fort Wayne, IN, ranked 12th on this year's list. The Inner City 100 program recognizes successful inner city companies and their CEOs as role models for entrepreneurship, innovative business practices, and job creation in America's urban communities. The full list can be viewed at www.fortune.com/inncity100.

The rankings for each company were announced at the Inner City 100 Awards Dinner on Thursday, May 12, 2011 in Boston, MA. Winners attended a two-day event featuring seminars for Inner City 100 owners/managers at Harvard Business School, a procurement symposium and an awards gala that drew more than 500 guests.

The Inner City 100 list provides unmatched original data on the fastest growing inner-city businesses in the U.S. In the last 13 years, 661 different companies have earned positions on the Inner City 100, collectively generating more than \$2.2 billion in annual revenues and creating nearly 70,000 new jobs. Chevron Corporation, Staples Foundation and Goldman Sachs are long-time sponsors of the program.

For the 2011 list, a record number of two thousand nominations were received. Winners represent a wide span of geography, operating in 51 cities and 32 states. The 2011 Inner City 100 winners grew at a compound annual growth rate of 39 percent and an average standard growth rate of 379 percent between 2004 and 2009. Collectively, the top 100 inner city businesses employ 6,720 employees and have created more than 3,227 new jobs between 2005 and 2009.

"We are delighted to celebrate businesses like Prairie Quest that are playing a critical role in revitalizing America's urban communities. Through their achievements, the Inner City 100 winning companies exemplify America's remarkable potential and the future of our urban centers," Mary Kay Leonard, ICIC president and CEO. "These extraordinary companies demonstrate the market possibilities that exist within our inner cities and the growth that is at the heart of all urban entrepreneurial successes."

"We were very excited to be nominated and are proud of the recognition of our growth. Our team has worked hard to pull together and present our very best to our customers. We have exceptional employees, committed customers, and great support from our community. We took a chance to grow a government services business in the Midwest instead of locating within closer distance to our customers, and by staying in Fort Wayne, we've been able to keep our prices low, tap a rich talent pool, and maintain highly qualified staff that has led to our success. We're

very grateful that the city of Fort Wayne nominated us, and we look forward to more growth and success as we expand and diversify our programs," said President/CEO Stacey Smith. Prairie Quest recently rolled out their BuyWithPQC Group Purchasing Organization that is focused on providing discount pricing to small and mid-size businesses on core services and products.

Prairie Quest is an award winning professional services firm with an impressive track record of public and private sector contracts. With a wealth of experience and expertise, Prairie Quest provides innovative, cost-effective solutions in project management, acquisition management, advisory and assistance services, business process analysis, training support, and technology services. Prairie Quest currently provides strategic planning and military marketing support to the Army; acquisition management to the Navy; program management, training, and technology support to the Air Force, and strategic analysis support to the Census Bureau as a federal contractor.

Individually, the average Inner City 100 Company's revenues were \$11.4 million and have, on average, 12 years of experience since founding. This year's winners have a median employee turnover rate of less than 12 percent (compared to 36 percent for the national average) and 96 percent of them provide health insurance to their workers.

The list is proof of concept that doing business in an inner city area holds a distinct competitive advantage. ICIC has been studying the economic condition of the largest 100 American cities for more than a decade and is working to revitalize inner cities across the country. Highlights of the 2011 Inner City 100 list include:

- One third of this year's Inner City 100 companies are minority-owned. Nationally, just 8 percent of companies with annual revenues over \$1 million are minority-owned.
- Twenty-four percent of the 2011 Inner City 100 are women-owned. Nationally, only 10 percent of companies with over \$1 million in annual revenues are women-owned.
- The 2011 Inner City 100 boasts an average workforce that is comprised of 37 percent of inner city residents.

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