



Contact: Susan Baka,
OWIT-Toronto
Tel: 416-410-1654
e-mail: sbaka@baycomm.ca

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Canadian Clinches International Trade Award

TORONTO, ON – **The Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT)** has named Canada’s **Andrina Lever** – a pioneer and a long-time advocate and champion for the advancement of women’s entrepreneurship internationally, both in public policy circles and with respect to access to international markets – as the 2006 recipient of its prestigious **Woman of the Year Award**. It is given annually to a woman who has furthered trade through excellence and innovation and who by doing so has enhanced the status of women in international trade and business.

Andrina, who will be honoured at OWIT’s *2006 World Conference* in San Francisco this fall, is President of Toronto-based Lever Enterprises, a consulting firm specializing in international trade, finance and commercial development. She is also a founding partner of JIT International Ltd., a UK based not-for-profit firm specializing in assisting and training women entrepreneurs in developing countries and countries in transition. Andrina has trained women in more than 25 countries on all continents, most recently in the Republic of Georgia.

“As part of the founding Board of the first Canadian chapter of OWIT in Toronto in 2000, this honour from OWIT at the international level is very special indeed,” says Andrina. “It is a unique organization which brings together women from all over the world in all different sectors who have an interest or stake in international trade. It is important to support organizations like OWIT which can help educate us, create networks for us and in general support us in our businesses. There are huge opportunities in international trade, especially in the service sector, that women need to know about. It is even more important that women are aware of the implications of poor trade policy on their businesses – well-intentioned policy may have the adverse effect because women have not been at the negotiating table.”

Andrina has spearheaded and participated in a number of initiatives which were important to underlining the role of businesswomen in the world of international trade as well as identifying their unique policy needs and concerns. Among her accomplishments:

- founded the Women Leaders Network of APEC, the Women Leaders Network of the Americas and the Commonwealth Businesswomen Leaders Network
- instrumental in advising and developing policy recommendations on women entrepreneurs for APEC SME Ministers and OECD since 1996, covering more than 100 governments
- organized the first Canadian women’s trade mission in 1997 to Washington, DC and the 1999 Canada/USA Businesswomen’s Trade Summit
- Canadian Prime Minister’s Representative to the APEC Business Council (1998 - present) and a member of the Trade Minister’s SME Advisory Board (2002 – present)

The Organization of Women in International Trade-Toronto (OWIT-Toronto) is a non-profit professional organization designed to promote women doing business internationally by providing networking opportunities, export education and global contacts. OWIT-Toronto members enhance their professional skills, share international trade information and establish business contacts in the private and public sectors. OWIT-Toronto is the first Canadian chapter of OWIT, which has over 5,000 members and 29 chapters worldwide, including Alberta.

For more information about OWIT and the upcoming World Conference in San Francisco, visit www.owit.org. For more information about OWIT-Toronto, visit www.owit-toronto.ca.