

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

January 20, 1977

1977

Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Carter-Mondale Transition
Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Ham:

Last week I was called by the Transition staff about the appointment of the Administrator of the Small Business Administration. Following is my response.

It seems to me of utmost importance that the new SBA Administrator have impeccable credentials in the area of small business. Such a background will signal the Administrator's concern for and understanding of the problems faced by small business across the country.

Each year the SBA chooses the "Small Business person of the Year", a national award based on a 50 state competition. In 1976 the award winner was Duane Pearsall, a businessman from Lakewood, Colorado. A copy of his resume is attached.

Duane is a truly special person, not just because of his business success, but because his is an extraordinary blend of human characteristics that, if shared by more people would make this world the uncommon place we'd like it to be. This is a mixture of idealism with great business success, personal warmth and organizational ability, gentleness and clearly directed resolve.

Some years ago Duane founded a company (with an SBA loan) to make home fire detection devices. The product has been a smash hit (now manufactured for all the major chain stores, and moving overseas), and the company has grown to about 750 employees. Duane is now negotiating the sale of the company to a large firm.

As the company has grown, so has Duane and his position in the community. He has become an increasingly effective figure in local and state business; is on any number of boards; and serves on national SBA and Chamber of Commerce advisory committees; his company is a model of employee relations and morale. His quiet, effective voice is listened to at all levels.

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Duane is a registered Republican who is now, in his own words, "probably 80% Democrat". I came to know him during the 1974 election, when he was characteristically fair to me as the Democratic candidate in an extremely Republican area. Since then we have spent a good deal of time together, he and his wife have been to two Washington seminars sponsored for businessmen from my District, and in the 1976 election he chaired a "Businessmen for Wirth" group. This was, I think, very difficult for him, given the nature of the business-political environment, and the fact that my opponent was a popular and well-known former Chamber of Commerce President.

As you sort through various alternatives and choices for the SBA position, I urge you to consider Duane Pearsall, and to have him in for an interview. His interest is keen -I called him and we agreed that it was worth giving it a try. He would bring to the job a most unusual, human and respected background and set of credentials. The nation, small business, and Governor Carter would be remarkably well served.

I hope we can pursue this at your convenience. Good luck and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Timothy E. Wirth

cc: Matthew Coffey