

GWENDOLYN JONES

President & CEO
Gregory Truck Body and Fire Apparatus, Inc.



Ms. Gwendolyn Jones is the President and Chief Executive Officer of one of the nation's leading truck manufacturing companies. Under Ms. Jones' leadership, Gregory Truck Body & Fire Apparatus, Inc., an Oakland, California based company, would become one of the fastest growing manufacturers of fire trucks and beverage delivery route vehicles in the nation.

Being an African-American woman in a conservative, male-dominated industry has taught Ms. Jones that it isn't enough to simply build the best fire trucks and specialty vehicles. Her strong business and political acumen was also needed.

Shortly after purchasing the company, Ms. Jones and her husband, Jesse, made their first acquisition – a fire truck manufacturing company. Today, Gregory Truck Body & Fire Apparatus, Inc. is an SBA 8(a) certified minority and women-owned business that enjoys an industry reputation as a superior-quality innovator that brings state-of-the-art technology and concepts to the fire apparatus and beverage trailer manufacturing industries. The company's motto, "We Build the Best and Repair the Rest."

Gregory is also the developer and sole source manufacturer of an innovative wildland fire-fighting vehicle dubbed "The Oakland Model". After the catastrophic Oakland Hills fire in 1991 in which fire trucks were unable to negotiate many of the steep hills and tight turns of the Oakland Hills streets, Gregory engineers saw the need for a smaller, lightweight fire truck and went about designing one. Today, Gregory is receiving orders from around the nation and from countries throughout the world for this widely demanded vehicle.

Gregory's beverage truck manufacturing division is also benefiting from its technological innovation. Its engineers are currently developing advancements in beverage trailers, which are expected to revolutionize the beverage trailer industry while establishing Gregory as the dominant player in that industry.

Over the past forty years, Gwen Jones has frequently visited Bay Area maximum-security prisons in her spare time, in an effort to bring hope and inspiration to an all but forgotten segment of society. Gwen observed that many of those men and women behind bars are both desirous and fully capable of turning their lives around with help, yet most don't know where or to whom to turn to for assistance.

Adopting the approach that every person is either part of the problem or part of the solution, Gwen recently formed Yeshua's Second Chance Foundation, a groundbreaker in the rehabilitation of ex-prison inmates. The organization provides them with comprehensive support, which includes instruction in moral values, personal enrichment and development, life skills, anti-drug and alcohol dependency treatment, career training and placement, and other critical disciplines – all designed to break the cycle of recidivism. For those ex-inmates who qualify, a manufacturing apprenticeship can be the reward. The Foundation, which is dependent upon grants from corporations, small businesses, grant foundations, churches and private individuals, depends upon grants and donations to expand its reach and programs.

Ms. Jones is a member of the Minority Business & Professionals Network.

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