

5th Women's Enterprise Week Opens: Growing Through Technology, Connecting Through Empathy

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) and the Korea Women Entrepreneurs Association (KWEA) opened the 5th Women's Enterprise Week on July 1 at the Dynasty Hall of The Shilla Seoul in Jung-gu, Seoul.

Now in its fifth year, the opening ceremony was again co-hosted by a coalition of women's economic organizations, including KWEA, the Korea Women Venture Association, the Korea Women Inventors Association, the Korea Association of Women IT Entrepreneurs, and the Korea Federation of Women's Science and Technology Associations.

This year's theme is "Women's Enterprises: Growing Through Technology, Connecting Through Empathy." It captures the aspiration of women entrepreneurs – who have grown their companies on the strength of their technology and engaged the market through empathetic leadership – to lead the way in AI and digital transformation.

A Month of Events

Following the opening ceremony, the 5th Women's Enterprise Week will feature a policy forum (July 3), the Women's Startup Competition awards ceremony (July 3), and a merchandiser consultation session to strengthen women's enterprises' market capabilities (July 7). Throughout July, the week will also run a joint online recruitment fair for women's enterprises and an online showcase of their standout products, along with regional Women's Enterprise Week events across the country.

The opening ceremony drew around 500 attendees, including National Assembly Speaker Cho Jung-Sik, women entrepreneurs, representatives of women's enterprise organizations, heads of SME associations, and figures from companies driving innovative growth in new industries and emerging technologies.

Honoring Exemplary Women Entrepreneurs

The ceremony also featured the presentation of government awards to model women entrepreneurs, including the Gold Tower Order of Industrial Service Merit. In total, two Orders of Industrial Service Merit (one Gold Tower, one Silver Tower), one Industrial Service Medal, four Presidential Citations, and seven Prime Minister's Citations were awarded.

This year, Kim Yeon-Sun, CEO of Daehan OK Steel Co., Ltd., received the Gold Tower Order of Industrial Service Merit, and Nam Mi-Kyung, CEO of Han Mandu Food Co., Ltd., received the Silver Tower Order of Industrial Service Merit.

Kim Yeon-Sun has devoted 47 years to a single path in steel, building unrivaled expertise in the manufacturing and distribution of cold-rolled steel. She was recognized in particular for expanding her manufacturing base to regional hubs such as Dangjin in South Chungcheong and Gimhae in South Gyeongsang, creating quality local jobs in the process.

Nam Mi-Kyung is a former "insurance sales champion" who built her company after overcoming considerable adversity. In a frozen dumpling market dominated by large corporations, she grew her business through a

succession of hits that broke with convention – from galbi dumplings to webfoot octopus dumplings – while building a range of family-friendly, fulfilling workplaces.

Remarks from the Ceremony

“Countless women entrepreneurs are grappling with hard questions in their own fields, growing again and again through technology and innovation,” said KWEA Chair Park Chang-Suk in her opening address. “I hope this occasion affirms the strength of Korea’s women’s enterprises – growing through technology and connecting through empathy – and becomes fresh momentum for moving toward a greater future.”

“The more technology advances, the more the ability to read others’ emotions with sensitivity and to communicate will become a company’s ultimate competitive edge,” said MSS Vice Minister Lee Byeong-Gweon. “MSS will stay closely attuned to what women entrepreneurs need on the ground, and back them robustly so that those who combine strong technology with empathetic leadership can lead this the way and see their ambitions through.”

For more news and updates on Korea’s SME and startup policies, follow the Ministry’s official **LinkedIn** page:

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