

Business awards reflect community spirit

September 23, 2009

The Salem Area Chamber of Commerce's annual Business of the Year Awards banquet was held Monday at the Salem Conference Center, where business owners and managers recognized extraordinary accomplishments.

Indeed, the winners were extraordinary given the ongoing economic obstacles that the Salem area and our state have faced since last year. Despite the credit-crunching challenges faced by businesses large and small, the reality is that many have persevered and — for that matter, succeeded — this year.

Perhaps it's reflective of the character of Salem-area businesses that those who were honored Monday shared three similar traits — community involvement, strong mentoring and a culture of customer service.

At a time when it's easy for businesses to get caught up in day-to-day duties, these owners and managers have recognized the return on investment that comes in giving back to the community. Salem-area businesses have contributed considerably in dollars and time to this community's many initiatives.

It was fitting that Gerry Frank received a special presentation award Monday because it would be hard to find anyone who matches his level of community involvement, mentoring and focus on community service.

In his acceptance speech, he mentioned his father's advice on how important it was to build a sense of community.

The same could be said for Orville Roth and Michael Roth of Roth's Fresh Markets, a past chamber winner with a track record for focusing on customers and giving back to the community. It was a touching moment to hear Orville Roth talk about the lessons he learned while also recognizing his son's ongoing commitment to the community.

Arbuckle Costic Architects won the chamber's Business of the Year honor for emulating what has become strength of many Salem businesses — an understanding of community and an optimistic take on the future. Arbuckle Costic is known for many high-profile projects, such as The Meridian, yet the company also has contributed pro bono efforts that better the Salem area.

This is the week that the Kroc Center will open its doors, the result of a five-year dream that brought together thousands of businesses, individuals and organizations that understand the value of helping others. That same sense of community also has made this year's chamber Business of the Year honorees stand on their own.

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce awards

Special Presentation: Gerry Frank

President's Choice: Capital Press

New Business of the Year: Hot Rod Hair

Employer of the Year: Roth's Fresh Markets

Regional/National Business of the Year: Unitus Community Credit Union

Small Business of the Year: Abbey Carpet Care

Agri-Business of the Year: Redhawk Vineyard and Winery

Business of the Year: Arbuckle Costic Architects Inc.