

Individuals, businesses honored for community betterment

Written by elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 24 February 2011 18:29 -



Awards given at annual Chamber/GIC/DAD banquet.

Community members, businesses and industries learned they were treasures at the annual Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce/Gothenburg Improvement Company/Dawson Area Development annual banquet Friday night.

“We Treasure Our Members” was the theme of the banquet at Walkers Steakhouse & Lounge which honored members and others for their contributions to Gothenburg in 2010.

Receiving Pony Express Rider awards were the local Lions Club, the Gothenburg Roping Club and volunteer Diane Trullinger.

The award is given to individuals or groups who go above or beyond the call of duty or who contribute to the economic stability of the community.

Community Development Office director Anne Anderson said the Lions Club, a local worldwide organization, has helped meet the needs of communities.

Anderson said the local club provides yearly health screenings to school children, collects eyeglasses and ink cartridges for recycling, sponsors scouting, offers scholarships, puts out flags and does a myriad of other volunteer activities.

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The Gothenburg Roping Club, established in 1936 for riding and roping and the first such club in Nebraska, has provided a place for horse enthusiasts and other to gather at an arena north of town.

She said the group also hosts the annual Pony Express Rodeo which brings in up to 400 contestants each summer and makes an economic impact on the city.

“Just about every weekend during the summer, there’s an event or activity happening up in the arena,” Anderson said.

Local volunteer Diane Trullinger was honored for her energy like the “ever-ready” bunny through her involvement on the Chamber’s tourism committee, serving as scribe, delivering brochures and taking refreshments to rest area workers.

Trullinger, Anderson said, has volunteered in many other ways, including her membership on the Gothenburg Tree Board.

Recognized for their commitment to economic development of the city was Central Nebraska Seed & Chemical, Parker Tech Seal Division, Baldwin Filters and its manager David Haynes.

GIC president Mike Bacon said Craig Finke, Jon Hudson and Jerry Schwindt opened Central Nebraska Seed & Chemical in December of 2004 and later expanded to Scottsbluff. In 2010, the business opened an 11,500 square-foot warehouse in Gothenburg.

Bacon said Parker Tech Seal Division, which opened in 1974, has benefitted GIC in developing an industrial site.

Josh Lipker, a new engineer at the business, figured out how to use less water during plant operations so the city can reapply for a \$1 million grant to develop an industrial site, he said.

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Insufficient sewer capacity had been an obstacle to the grant, Bacon said, when Parker used water for cooling which ended up in the sewer. Lipker redesigned internal systems which greatly reduced sewer load.

Baldwin Filters has been a part of the community for 20 years. A need for child care when the business opened, Bacon said, led to the opening of Building Blocks Child Care Center & Preschool.

David Haynes, Baldwin manager, was given an award for increasing productivity and efficiency at the plant. Haynes will retire in June.



Frito-Lay, which was built in Gothenburg 15 years ago, was honored for its investment in Gothenburg and Dawson County with its support of local growers and the community.

DAD director Jen Wolf said the corn-handling facility accepts and processes more than 600 million bushels of corn yearly.

Mary Gohl, coordinator for the Advocating for Business Labor Education (ABLE) program, presented an ABLE leadership award to Mike Teahon, superintendent of Gothenburg Public Schools.

Teahon was noted as a strong supporter of the ABLE program because of his recruitment of alumni and support of career education.

In reviewing 2010, Bacon talked about successes in the community which have included the

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opening of the Comfort Suites Hotel, the presence of the Monsanto Learning and Water Utilization Center, an operational new business known as Dayton Phoenix Group and milestone anniversaries for Baldwin Filters and Frito Lay.

Bacon said the organization and city are increasing efforts to install infrastructure in GIC's industrial site east of Cottonwood Drive.

Having sewer, water and streets at the site will help recruit new industry and grow Gothenburg, he said.

Outgoing Chamber president Ruthie Franzen said that volunteerism is alive and well in Gothenburg because community members choose to dream big and recruit other dreamers to invest in the community.

Dreamers have helped recruit businesses like Frito Lay, build a new school and make improvements to its hospital.

However she cautioned against allowing success to be taken for granted, noting that success depends on "all of us" having dreams and an investment in the community.

"I challenge you to continue to dream because in Gothenburg, we dream big," Franzen said.



John Burks, the 2011 president, was asked to tell about himself.

Burks grew up in Lexington and received double majors in agri-business and ag economics

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before settling in Des Moines, Iowa, as a commodity trader for a soybean processing plant.

The office manager for Eastside Animal Center said he missed small-town involvement so joined Orscheln Farm and Home in Gothenburg as manager before taking on his current job.

“I plan to spend the rest of my life here,” Burks said.

Ambassadors recognized

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