

Finalists set for Business Person of the Year

Small Business Council to name the winners at annual event on Oct. 9

By **ANDREA DECKERT**

Twelve executives from 10 businesses are finalists for this year's Business Person of the Year Award, presented by the Small Business Council of Rochester.

The annual awards honor individuals who have contributed to the growth of their companies, excel at leadership and give back to the community. Awards are presented in two categories, for small firms with fewer than 50 employees and for large firms with 50 or more.

The winners are to be announced at a gala luncheon Oct. 9 at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Lt. Gov. Robert Duffy is scheduled to be the keynote speaker.

The finalists for the award for leaders of firms with fewer than 50 employees:

■ Michelle Ashby, CEO of Tipping Point Media Inc., a public relations, social media marketing and media agency;

■ Thomas Ioele, president and CEO of Employee Relations Associates Inc., an employee services firm;

■ Michael West, president and CEO of West Fire Systems Inc., a provider of fire alarm and detection products;

■ Amy Castronova, president and CEO of Novatek Communications Inc., a training and document company; and

■ Dawn VanDamme, president and CEO, and Sigmund VanDamme, chief customer officer and founder, of NimbleUser, an integrated technology provider.

The finalists in the category for leaders of firms with 50 or more employees:

■ Robert Healy, president of LaBella Associates P.C., an architectural, engineering, environmental and planning services firm;

■ Michael Margiotta, chairman and CEO, and Ken Rosenfeld, president and chief technology officer, of eHealth Technologies Inc., a medical record and imaging provider;

■ Mark Davitt, president of Continental Service Group Inc., which does business as ConServe, an accounts receivable manager serving customers in the higher education, government and commercial markets;

■ Brian Reh, president of Gorbel Inc., a manufacturer of overhead cranes and lifting devices; and

■ William Pollock, president and CEO of Optimization Technology Inc., an industrial engineering services firm and provider of automation systems.

Lynn Hartrick, a member of the SBC board of directors and chairman of the selection committee, said candidates for the Small Business Person of the Year Award are nominated by their peers and the selection committee then reviews the nomination packages and selects finalists.

Nominees are interviewed and then voted on by the SBC membership in the fall. It is then up to the selection committee to gather all the data and select the winners.

More than 35 applications were received this year, the largest number of applications he has seen while working on the awards committee for the past several years, Hartrick said.

"The quality and caliber (of this year's applicants) is as good as I've seen," he said.

The local SBC has been presenting the awards for more than 30 years.

Last year, the awards went to John Ford Nichols, president and CEO of construction company Nichols Team Inc., and Raymond Isaac, president of Isaac Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. Nichols won among businesses with fewer than 50 employees, and Isaac won in the category for larger companies.

Organizers expect more than 1,000 people to attend this year's networking session and luncheon. For more information, go to www.rochestersbc.com.

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