

Six area businesses honored for excellence

Written by Sarah Ottney | | sottney@toledofreepress.com

Six area businesses were recently announced as this year's Entrepreneurial & Business Excellence Hall of Fame (EBE HOF) honorees.

Honored for business excellence are Burkett Restaurant Equipment, based in Toledo; Clouse Construction Corp., based in New Riegel; NovaVision Inc., based in Bowling Green; and Riker Products, based in Toledo. Mel Lanzer Company, based in Napoleon, is honored for excellence in family business. Solar Spectrum LLC is honored for excellence in startup innovation.

The companies will be inducted during a ceremony at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 8 at The Pinnacle, 1772 Indian Wood Circle, in Maumee. Tickets are \$85. The Davenport-Longenecker Lifetime Achievement Award for Business Advocacy will be announced at the event.

The EBE HOF, presented by the University of Toledo, recognizes entrepreneurs who have built and sustained growing businesses and created jobs in the region as well as businesses that display technological innovation, said Adam Davenport, EBE HOF chairman and president of Gorillas & Gazelles, founding sponsor of the event.

"We're really excited," Davenport said. "We have a few construction companies, a restaurant supplier, solar once again through the University of Toledo, an automotive supplier, a security label manufacturer. There's just a lot of diverse industries represented this year."

Gary Frye, president and CEO of Riker Products, said, "We feel very, very honored to receive this award."

Riker Products, which has been in business since the late 1940s and employs about 180 people, buys and bends tubing for use in heavy-duty exhaust systems and sells its products to trucking, mining and agricultural companies worldwide. Frye has been with the company for more than 40 years, starting as a laborer while still in high school and working his way to head of the company.

Mike Messmer, vice president and general manager of NovaVision, said the company is honored.

“One person could not do what we’re doing and the fact that we can grow is because we have such an excellent team,” Messmer said.

Founded in 1994, NovaVision has about 45 employees and specializes in technologies that provide anti-counterfeiting and anti-tampering features, including hologram labels, tamper-evident stickers, security tape, security seals and more. Its products are used worldwide, including by federal and state governments, military, airlines, ski resorts and collectibles dealers, Messmer said.

More than 700 people attended last year’s ceremony, Davenport said.

“It’s just a breath of fresh air to see that so many people will come out and support an event like this that showcases some of the inspiration stories and companies around this area,” Davenport said. “One thing we’re told is it’s an inspiration to many people out there that there are a lot of great things happening around here.”

Visit www.ebehof.com for more.

Pounds: Round of applause

Written by Tom Pounds | President / Publisher | tpounds@toledofreepress.com

There are a number of annual events Toledo Free Press is proud to support, but one stands out for me each year — The Entrepreneurial & Business Excellence (EBE) Hall of Fame ceremony.

Formed in 2006, the EBE recognizes, according to its website, “outstanding entrepreneurs and business leaders who have built and sustained growing businesses and created jobs in the region. EBE also applauds established and fledgling businesses that display technological innovation in their respective industry. The program was formed as a result of a recognized need to foster and honor entrepreneurial success and business excellence in our region and is anticipating more than 700 attendees this year.”

This year, six local companies will be inducted during the annual ceremony on Nov. 8 at The Pinnacle in Maumee:

Business Excellence Awards go to Burkett Restaurant Equipment, Clouse Construction Corp., NovaVision, Inc. and Riker Products. The Excellence in Family Business Award goes to Mel Lanzer Company. The Excellence in Startup Innovation Idea Award goes to Solar Spectrum, LLC.

Adam Davenport, EBE chairman, said, “In what some say is a struggling economy in our region, we continue to honor companies that are going against all odds and are achieving high levels of success in both sales and also the creation and retention of many employees.



Thomas F. POUNDS “The support of so many businesses, organizations and past Hall of Fame honorees is what truly makes this program successful year after year, and I don’t expect that to ever stop. It proves that if events are put on to show the positive aspects of our area, great successes can be identified and celebrated.”

The 2012 Entrepreneurial and Business Excellence Hall of Fame is presented by The University of Toledo and is founded by Gorillas & Gazelles LLC in partnership with Bowling Green State University, Davenport, Hanf & Company, LLC and Medical Mutual of Ohio/BDS Agency Management. Additional primary sponsors include UT Innovation Enterprises, UT College of Business Administration and The Center for Family and Privately Held Business. Toledo Free Press is proud to be the event’s media sponsor and, as a 2008 honoree, can attest to the honor the EBE bestows.

Visit the EBE website at www.ebehof.com for further information about event tickets and sponsorship opportunities.

Join us in applauding this year’s recipients and celebrating their contributions to our community.

Thomas F. Pounds is president and publisher of Toledo Free Press and Toledo Free Press Star. Contact him at tpounds@toledofreepress.com.

6 area firms named to excellence hall of fame

BY KRIS TURNER

BLADE BUSINESS WRITER

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Six Toledo-area companies were honored with awards from the Entrepreneurial & Business Excellence Hall of Fame this year. The awards highlight the achievements of entrepreneurs and family businesses.

Four companies were granted businesses excellence awards: Burkett Restaurant Equipment, a Toledo-based business that sells freezers, pizza prep tables, and other large-scale items; Clouse Construction

Corp., a New Riegel company that specializes in home and commercial projects; NovaVision Inc., a Bowling Green firm that produces hologram stickers, security tape, and security seals, and Riker Products, which is based in Toledo and manufactures and distributes heavy duty exhaust components and accessories.

The excellence in family business award was given to Mel Lanzer Co., which is a Napoleon general contractor that manages projects across northwest Ohio.

The excellence in start-up innovation idea award went to Solar Spectrum LLC.

The awards ceremony will take place Nov. 8 at The Pinnacle in Maumee.

“We continue to honor companies that are going against all odds and are achieving high levels of success in both sales and also the creation and retention of many employees,” Adam Davenport, Entrepreneurial & Business Excellence chairman, said in a statement.

No, the EBE Hall of Fame won't run out of nominees

By Kristy Erdodi



Adam Davenport

It's been six years since Adam Davenport and Gorillas and Gazelles LLC started running the Entrepreneurial and Business Excellence (EBE) Hall of Fame. With the help of the EBE executive board and local business sponsors, he recognizes between six and 10 Toledo-area businesses every year. He says there's one question he is asked about this all the time: "When are you going to run out of nominees?" His answer: "You never do. With so many diverse industries in the region, there are always going to be companies that are very successful or up and coming that our demographics may not have heard about."

This diversity is nothing new, and it's apparent in the EBE's history. "If you look at the member companies in the EBE Hall of Fame that have been honored over the past 24 years, you will see the diversity of all companies and industries represented," Adam said. Businesses across a myriad of industries, ranging from large corporations to small family companies, have made the list.

The EBE's history actually started with Adam's father, Larry Davenport. In 1989, he brought an "Entrepreneur of the Year" program to northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan through Ernst and Young. But after 17 years, it started to become mostly Detroit based. So Larry approached Adam, who runs Gorillas and Gazelles, a personality assessment company in Toledo. "He said, 'Why don't you take this over with Ernst and Young's blessing?'" Adam remembers. Thus, in 2006, Gorillas and Gazelles founded the EBE Hall of Fame, which would focus again on northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.

The EBE Hall of Fame now consists of an executive board, comprised of Adam, an events coordinator and the University of Toledo, which has been the presenting sponsor for the EBE for the last three years. It also has several local business sponsors. "I believe last year we had close to 70, which are just companies that support our event," Adam said.

Each year, Adam finds businesses within a 50 to 60 mile radius of Toledo via nominations. After nomination follows a lengthy process, during which the EBE team gets to know the business. They go on site for interviews and study the company's philanthropic commitments, for example. Then a panel of judges, including business leaders and past winners, chooses that year's honorees, who are honored at a ceremony in November. Among the awards are those for Business Excellence, Family Business, Start-up Innovation and Lifetime Achievement Award for Business Advocacy.

"It's a great recognition program for the area, to show that there are positive things that are going on," Adam said. Apparently many people want exposure to these positive things, because attendance at the yearly events remains high. "When we actually started in 2006 we had over 400 people, but then in the last couple years, and we're anticipating again, over 700 people," Adam added.

The 2012 event is on November 8 at 5:30 p.m. at the Pinnacle in Maumee for \$85 a ticket. Honorees include: Burkett Restaurant Equipment, Clouse Construction Corp., Mel Lanzer Company, NovaVision, Riker Products and Solar Spectrum.

As for 2013, Adam says it still won't be the year that he runs out of businesses to honor. "I already have 19 possible nominees." And the judging doesn't even occur until next June.

If you have found this story to be interesting, informative or inspiring, please let Adam know! You can contact him at 419-874-0000 ext. 106; visit him at 28276 Kensington Ln. Suite 100, Perrysburg; email him at adavenport@gorillas-gazelles.com; or visit the website at www.ebehof.com.