

HERITAGE NEBRASKA | Main Street

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FREMONT, NE – The Heritage Nebraska Main Street program’s annual Awards of Excellence were presented Friday night [May 21] at the historic Love-Larson Opera House.

Awards of Excellence and Honored Recognition were presented in ten competitive categories. In addition, each of Nebraska’s 13 designated Main Street communities honored a Business of the Year and a Volunteer of the Year.

The awards were presented by Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy and Heritage Nebraska Main Street Director Elizabeth Chase. The awards banquet culminated a day which included training for Main Street managers and members of their boards. The quarterly board meeting and Annual Meeting of Heritage Nebraska, the parent organization for Main Street, was also held.

The award winners:

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC PARTNER: The City of Wayne for continuing financial support and representation at every meeting of Wayne Main Street and participation in activities of the organization.

The City has also contributed \$150,000 to the program’s revolving loan fund for downtown improvements.

Rick Houk of the City of Alliance and the Fremont Parks and Recreation Department also received Honored Recognition in the category.

CREATIVE FUNDRAISING: Main Street Beatrice for the Nebraska Governor’s Pheasant Hunt which attracts visitors from across the country and includes classic and European style hunting in Gage County. In nine years of the event, the program has raised more than \$80,000 to support revitalization efforts. Honored Recognition went to three first-time events in the category: The Underground Vault Tour in Alliance; the Meet Me Under the Stars Progressive Dinner in Elkhorn and the Dazzle Them With

Diamonds event in Geneva.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION, MARKETING AND IMAGE DEVELOPMENT: Historic Main Street Alliance received the Award of Excellence for its social media promotion, Facebook fan page, logo and newly designed website.

Honored Recognition went to: Historic Downtown Sidney for its Shop Local Appreciation Fridays.

RETAIL EVENT COMPETITION: Main Street Beatrice won the Award of Excellence for the Merry Main Street and Gift-A-Day Give Away which appealed to families and created a positive downtown atmosphere.

SPECIAL EVENT AND FESTIVAL CATEGORY: Honored Recognition went to Heritage Days in Alliance and the Wayne Quasquicentennial [Q-125] celebration.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND SUPPORT: Award of Excellence presented to Main Street Beatrice for its business plan contest which presented a \$20,000 grant to an individual interested in starting a business downtown. The competition drew 12 sustainable business plans and the winner, Dan Owens, started Lost Coast Clothing Store.

FACADE RENOVATION OVER \$10,000: Larry Eggert of Kearney for the historically sensitive façade of the Fair Building in downtown Kearney received the award of excellence.

Honored recognition went to the Copy Write/Keepsake Video and the Pieper, Miller & Dahl law offices in Wayne.

STREETScape UNDER \$50,000: The Award of Excellence went to Downtown Kearney for efforts in replacing trees and planters following a damaging tornado and windstorm in 2008 which came on top of damages caused by an ice storm in 2006-2007.

CREATIVE WINDOW DISPLAY: Honored recognition to Swan's Apparel of Wayne and the Baer-Nelson Furniture Store in York.

INTERIOR IMPROVEMENT COMMERCIAL: The Award of Excellence goes to Cindy Naber for the renovation of a 100-year-old building in York Town Centre (downtown). The project took more than 4 years and resulted in a new home for C. Naber & Associates accounting firm.

Honored Recognition went to Alotta Brownies in Fremont and Redman's Shoes in Alliance.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR: Laura Lachman of Alliance; Larry Lindberg of Elkhorn; Adam Morris of Falls City; Craig Ronhovde of Fremont; Kurt Haecker of Grand Island; Jon Bokencamp of Kearney; Todd Davis of Nebraska City; Gerry Byrk of Plattsmouth; Eleanor Plummer of Sidney; The Q-125 Committee of Wayne and Doreen Luthje of York. Two awards were given posthumously to the families of Scott Johnson of Beatrice and Hugh C. Cam Wilkins of Geneva.

BUSINESSES OF THE YEAR: Health 4 Life Chiropractic, Dr. Scott Ruff of Alliance; Back Alley Eatery and Owners Kathy and Randall Diekman of Beatrice; Heartland Café and owner Sharon Janovsky of Elkhorn; Grand Weaver Hotel and owner Mitch Glaeser of Falls City; Fremont National Bank of Fremont; Gambles Do It Best Hardware and owner Glen Loontjer of Geneva; The Tattered Book and owner T.R. Merchen of Grand Island; Warehouse Antiques @ 609 and owners Kimberly Ballinger Crossfield and Dan Kelly of Nebraska City; KSID Radio and owner Deadshort Broadcasting of Sidney; Gemstone Bridge Bead and Gem and owner Kurt Schrandt of Wayne and Chances 'R' Restaurant and Lounge of York.