

Service, support applauded as citizens are honored

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Willing service, loyal support and community pride were honored Monday night, Feb. 7 when Holyoke Chamber of Commerce celebrated 57 years at its 18th annual Gala.

Headlining the evening program was recognition of Outstanding Business, Employee, Youth and Citizens, as nominated by community members.

Winners included PC Telcom, business; Deanna Deselms, employee; Briar Bergner, youth; Gary Krumm, citizen; and Ray Bailey, who was honored posthumously as citizen of the year.

Additionally, Troy Kent was named Star of the Year, as voted by the Chamber board for his dedication to the Chamber and community.



Among the award winners recognized at the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce Gala are those pictured from left, front row, Phyllis Bailey, accepting the Citizen of the Year honor awarded posthumously to her husband Ray; and Deanna Deselms, Employee of the Year; and back row, Troy Kent, Chamber Star of the Year; Briar Bergner, Youth of the Year; and Gary Krumm, Citizen of the Year. —Enterprise photo

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Humbly accepting their awards for outstanding service, honorees acknowledged family and friends who gathered for support.

“This really humbles me,” said Gary Krumm. “So many people are more deserving.”

Accepting PC Telcom’s business award, CEO/GM Vince Kropp acknowledged pride for the community and appreciation for being nominated and for his staff’s dedication, as well.

“Nobody loved Holyoke more than Ray did,” said Phyllis Bailey as she accepted the Citizen of the Year award for her husband Ray who died last fall.

Entertainment by the HHS Select Choir added a lively note to the Gala, which was held at Phillips County Event Center.

Bids were placed on a wide array of silent auction items which were donated for the occasion. Door prize drawings also added to the evening fun.

Brian Akey, 2011 Chamber president, served as emcee for the program, while 1st vice president Jerry Brandt gave the invocation. Holyoke Marketplace catered the dinner.



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PC Telcom management team members are pictured with the Business of the Year award which was presented at the Monday night Chamber of Commerce Gala. Pictured from left are Ellie Beal, executive assistant/human resources coordinator; Patty Friel, customer service; Vince Kropp, CEO/general manager; Pete Markle, director of plant operations; and Jessica Cumming, accountant. Not pictured is Sharon Crist, marketing and PR manager.

—Enterprise photo

Business of the Year

PC Telcom

Citizens of this community have been benefactors of many things PC Telcom has done, noted the nomination letter. The local company was praised for being involved with numerous community activities.

“PC Telcom has kept up with modern technology, as well as expanded their businesses and services over the years. As a local co-op, the monies stay in the community and are reinvested here.”

PC Telcom sponsors many Chamber events, and their employees are out in front as volunteers at community and school events throughout the year.

Their willingness to participate in Chamber activities/events was added to the nomination, as their active involvement in the Chamber was cited.

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Employee of the Year

Deanna Deselms

“As an employee of Highline Electric Association, Deanna presents a positive image of our company,” praised Deselms’ nominator.

“She displays a camaraderie that has earned her not only the respect of fellow employees but also of customers and anyone she comes into contact with.”

“Deanna never says no to anyone needing or asking for help, and in this way she is the one everyone looks to for that extra help.”

Deselms was cited for her willingness to fill in when fellow employees are away from their jobs. She was described as being very professional, positive, prompt, dependable and loyal.

“She goes above and beyond her assigned job and does so willingly for the betterment of HEA, its employees and its customers.”

Youth of the Year

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Briar Bergner

HHS senior Briar Bergner's involvement in the community is like none other, said one of her nominators.

"She has and continues to make an impact on everyone she comes in contact with, not only with her electrifying smile, but with her kind heart."

Bergner was cited as an entrepreneur, starting Bri's Tie Dyes in order to fund her trip to World Youth Day. She has held several workshops for the community in order to give the opportunity for people to add their own personal touch to the tie dye experience.

Bergner donated shirts to seven local families for the Adopt-a-Family Christmas distribution. Her nominator noted, "Holyoke is now adorned with tie dye, which is all thanks to Briar's handiwork."

Bergner's involvement in the community and school was cited, including student leadership, 4-H, softball, swimming, golf, drama productions, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, FCCLA, FBLA, Washington Youth tour and St. Patrick Catholic Church youth group.

Bergner is employed as a lifeguard at Holyoke Swimming Pool and also volunteers as a Summer Swim Club coach and at the Peerless Theatre.

"Briar is a role model to our community's youth and adults in her attitude and actions. She has made a difference in Holyoke and will continue to do so."

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Citizen of the Year

Gary Krumm

“Gary looooooves parades,” said Krumm’s nominator when noting he has served as announcer for many community parades. And he’s been known to dress in the red Santa suit to go around town being his “jolly ol’ self.”

“Gary has an all around, fun-loving personality and cares about people, his community and county.”

Krumm’s service and active leadership as a volunteer for Relay for Life were also touted by his nominator.

“Gary has a heart for our youth.” His involvement for keeping books for the HHS basketball team, being the radio voice for Holyoke Dragon sports and taking an active interest in the Booster Club were mentioned.

In addition, Krumm actively serves Zion Lutheran Church, singing for many funerals, serving on committees and even preaching occasionally. He has also been a member of the local hospital board.

Citizen of the Year (awarded posthumously)

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Ray Bailey

Ray Bailey and his wife Phyllis moved to Holyoke after retirement, but his nominator notes Bailey was an extremely active member of the community.

He served on Holyoke City Council until his untimely death last fall.

Bailey was “active with a fervor to serve in his church—never afraid to speak about his love for the Lord.”

“Ray was physically active in the things he loved—taking care of his family, his home and property and bettering our community.”

Chamber Star of the Year

Troy Kent

Recognizing Troy Kent as the Chamber 2010 Star of the Year, the board paid tribute to the assistance Kent has provided at community events over the years.

Not only did Kent offer a helping hand at the last several Dandelion Daze, he offered to set up radio control cars to give last year’s event a new twist.

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Kent volunteered to grill hot dogs at many Spotlight Your Business Wednesdays, and if the crowd was larger than expected, his kids were eager to make a quick dash to the grocery store for more supplies.

As a member of the Holyoke Volunteer Fire Dept., Kent was directly involved with the Country Christmas soup supper the VFD sponsors as part of the Chamber-organized event.

In citing Kent's Star of the Year attributes, the Chamber board looked at his employment. "It is our understanding you will always find him being very constructive, always giving his best to get the job completed timely."