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### Hopatcong —Government Top Stories



Chuck Roberts of Ames Rubber Corp. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller

#### Photos



Chuck Roberts of Ames Rubber Corp. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



The audience gives a standing ovation to Freeholder Richard Vohden, who received the Distinctive Leadership Award. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Richard Vohden, upon learning he is the winner of the Distinctive Leadership Award. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Attendees give a standing ovation to Richard Vohden. *Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller*



Guests at the Lafayette House for the 8th Annual Economic Development Awards Luncheon. *Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller*



The 8th Annual Economic Development Awards Luncheon. *Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller*



Tammie Horsfield, President of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, and Sussex County Economic Development Partnership, Inc. *Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller*



Cate and Tom Roberts of Tamarack's Country Villa accept the New Business Award. *Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller*



Wayne Dietz, and Susan Hammer of D&H Alternative Risk Solutions, and, Rob Austin of RDA Fitness, accept their awards for Business Expansion. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Chuck Roberts presents the award to Commissioner Hal Wirths for Business Advocacy. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Thomas S. Russo, Jr., Town Manager, Town of Newton, presents the Municipal Award. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Michael Francis and Maria Galate receive the award for Hopatcong Borough. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



CP Engineers Ray Roggero, Joe Toscano, and Stan Puszc, receive the Business Investment Award. Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Janet Braen, accepts the award for Business Investment, for the Braen Family of Companies.Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Julia Quinlan accepts the award for the Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice/Karen Ann Quinlan Memorial Foundation.Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Robert Nicholson III, after being presented with the Environmental Leadership Award.Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



Jay and Jill Fischer of Ag Choice, with John Drake.Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller



John Drake, Director of Client Services.Credits: Jennifer Jean Miller

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**Sussex County Businesses and Individuals Honored at 8th Annual Economic Development Awards Luncheon; Sussex County Freeholder Richard Vohden Chosen for the 'Distinctive Leadership Award'**

Jennifer Jean Miller

Thursday, September 27, 2012 • 11:24pm

LAFAYETTE, NJ – Almost 70 businesses, municipalities, and individuals were recognized today at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic Development Awards Luncheon held at The Lafayette House, for the Sussex County Economic Development Partnership.

CP Engineers, LLC sponsored the event.

Special guests at the event included: Senator Steven Oroho, Assemblyman Gary Chiusano, Freeholder Richard Zeoli, Freeholder Richard Vohden, and municipal officials from several Sussex County towns were present.

Vohden received the Distinctive Leadership Award, the highest honor of all the awards.

"It's never easy to go through a list of nominees," said Tammie Horsfield, President of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, and Sussex County Economic Development Partnership, Inc. "This awards program is a direct way to thank you for assisting us with economic development in our county. All of you are winners of this community, whether you walk away with a plaque or not."

She praised the nominees for, "keeping quality economic development in our county," and said, "This is to celebrate you."

For Vohden's award, Horsfield presented the award herself.

"Today's leader must be willing to work harder, longer, smarter, and better than ever before," said Horsfield. "This year's award recipient truly fits the bill. He is a man who gives all he can and then some. He is dedicated to making Sussex County a better place to live, work, and play, and doesn't just own a few titles, he rolls up his sleeves, and really does his job, and, by the way, does it well."

Vohden is also a member of the New Jersey Highlands Council, Chairman of the Green Township Environmental Committee, past member of the Green Township Planning Board, past chair of the Green Township Open Space Committee, served as Chairman of the Sussex County Open Space Committee, served as a member of the County Strategic Growth Committee, and was Chairman of the Sussex County Planning Board.

Vohden has been a farmer in Green Township since 1983, worked 35 years in the construction industry, and is a veteran of the Korean War.

He is a member of the VFW, Green Township Historical Society, Sons of the American Revolution, New Jersey Farm Bureau, New Jersey Forestry Association, the League of Municipalities, the NRA, and has served as a Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselor.

"I want Sussex County to be more business-friendly while maintaining its rural character," said Vohden, who was given a standing ovation. "Thank you for this award, and for everyone who got me into this point to receive this award."

There were eight other award categories including the New Business Award (for businesses relocated to the county within the last three years), the Business Expansion Award (to an existing business that continues to expand), Business Advocacy Award (for a business that supports local business through consultation, programs, and more), Municipal Award (municipality that serves as a strong business proponent), Business Investment award (given to businesses that contribute financial resources to support business or businesses), Economic Innovation Award (to a business that has created new and innovative solutions), Training and Workforce Development Award (an individual or organization that provides training and development of the county's workforce), Environmental Leadership Award (a business that expands to complement Sussex County's environment).

Nominees in the New Business Award Category were: All County Pool & Spa, Chuckle Time, Cloveberry Café, CP Engineers LLC, Dollar General (Newton and Vernon Locations), Down to the Bone BBQ & Company, Ena's Emporium, Halloween Center, Performance Pediatrics, Regetta Girl, Smokey's Brick Oven Tavern (Vernon), Spirit of the Arts Foundation, Tamarack's Country Villa, TCBY (Sparta), SALT Studio, Shelter Vintage, Woody's Mug Shot Pub & Eatery, and Zoom Ziplines.

Tamarack's Country Villa received the award. Glenn Lewis of the SCEDP Board of Trustees, and from Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice, gave out the New Business Award.

Cate and Tom Roberts refurbished the stone farmhouse, once known as Colby Mansion.

Cate Roberts said, "I wanted to stay in the county after retirement, and this is the way to do it."

Nominees for the Business Expansion Category were: Andover Animal Hospital, Braen Family of Companies, CKO Boxing, D&H Alternative Risk, East Coast Alternative Energy, Lakeland Bank, Losma, Inc., Newton KIA, and RDA Fitness.

Kurt Gewecke of KG Companies Solar, another member of the SCEDP Board of Trustees, gave out the award. There were two recipients.

One of them was RDA Fitness in Byram, which the facility has grown to 10,000 square feet, and will become "the most complete, professionally appointed, family and community focused, fitness center in the area."

D&H Alternative Risk Solutions in Newton, which said, "their staff is simply the best, and that they do things the old-fashioned way," took away the second award. The company celebrated their 15-year anniversary this year. [Click here](#) for the story by The Alternative Press

Rob Austin, who accepted the award for RDA Fitness said, "This is an honor to be recognized. It's a tough go. You have to spend money to make money. If I'm up here next year, you know it's working."

Wayne Dietz, and Susan Hammer accepted the award. Dietz thanked the SCEDP, as well as Hammer.

"We did it by support of the community, and our customers, and that's how we've grown," said Dietz of their success.

Nominees for the Business Advocacy Award were: Project Self-Sufficiency, PSE&G, Sussex Bank, and Hal Wirths.

Chuck Roberts, a SCEDP Board of Trustee member from Ames Rubber Corp., read the winner's name.

"The winner is Hal Wirths," Roberts said. "Known to many as Commissioner Wirths, Hal's roots started right here in Sussex County."

Wirths has served as Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, appointed by Governor Chris Christie in January 2010. A longtime resident, Wirths owned The Oak Shoppe, and organized Noble Community Bank (now known as Highlands State Bank). He served on the Highlands State Bank Board of Directors. Wirths was a Sussex County Freeholder for about 10 years.

"It is truly an honor to be honored in Sussex County where I've spent my life, and raised my family," Wirths said. "I'm really really proud to get this."

Nominees for the Municipal Award were: Andover Township, Franklin Borough, Hopatcong Borough, Montague Township, Sparta Township, Stanhope Borough, and Vernon Township.

SCEDP Board of Trustee Member, and, Town of Newton Town Manager Thomas S. Russo, Jr., awarded the winner.

"The Governing Body, Land Use Board and volunteer boards and commissions of the Borough of Hopatcong are committed to removing impediments and reducing red tape to expedite the planning and zoning process so that development and reconstruction can move forward much more quickly," Russo said.

Representatives from Hopatcong Borough smiled in surprise at their award.

The borough established a farmer's market, and is working on a flea market for 2013.

Councilman Michael Francis said the borough has had businesses more involved due to the moratorium on their sign ordinance, to increase signage, as well as drive traffic to borough businesses.

"Hopatcong is open for business," he said.

Nominees for the Business Investment Award were: Braen Engineering, Chase, CP Engineers, LLC, First Hope Bank, Highlands State Bank, Lakeland Bank, PNC, Sussex Bank, Wachovia, and Wells Fargo.

Roberts presented the award, and there were, once again, two winners.

The first was Cerenzio & Panaro, P.C. (CP Engineers), which included Ray Roggero, Stan Puszc, and Joe Toscano.

Braen Family of Companies received the second award. The company now has two limestone quarries, including in Franklin, and also the former Limecrest in Sparta.

"We're building our business, it's not work, it's our pleasure," said Puszc of CP Engineers. "We're part of the community, we need to give back."

"We're pleased to be in Sussex County, it's such a business friendly place," said Janet Braen, on behalf of the Braen Family of Companies.

Nominees for the Economic Innovation Award were: Ag Choice, LLC, The Alternative Press, Hopatcong Farmers Market, Liberty Farm – Sunflower Maze, Sparta Farmers Market, and Sussex County Clerk's Office.

John Drake, Director of Client Services for the SCEDP, presented the award.

Ag Choice, a commercial food waster and livestock manure composter, won the award.

"It has encouraged others to utilize composting techniques as they now have an alternative to typical waste disposal and thereby are becoming more environmentally friendly while saving costs in trash pickup as well," said Drake.

Jay Fischer, Ag Choice owner, accepted the award for he, and wife, Jill.

"We appreciate the support of everyone in the county," Fischer said.

The company currently has six full-time employees, Fischer said, and will be adding two more soon.

Nominees for the Training & Workforce Development Award were: County of Sussex – Health & Public Safety, Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice, Sussex County YMCA, and Sussex/Warren Human Resources Mgt. Association.

Michael Schoen of JCP&L, and SCEDP Board of Trustees, presented the award to Karen Ann Quinlan Memorial Foundation for their training of certified home health aides. Julia Quinlan, and Mary Pugliese accepted the award.

"She [Pugliese] is doing a fantastic job, we are very lucky to have her," said Quinlan.

Nominees for the Environmental Leadership award were: AG Choice, Blue Diamond Disposal, Brighton Industries, Cartridge World, Hopatcong Farmers Market, Robert Nicholson III, SK Shred, Sparta Farmers Market, and Vernon Earthfest.

George Sous of PSE&G presented the award to Robert Nicholson III, as founder of the Sparta Township Green Team, Chairman of the Sussex County Trails Partnership Committee, and founding member of the New Jersey Audobon's Corporate Stewardship Council.

"I believe we all have a responsibility as business people, and residents, to keep Sussex County pristine in a sustainable way," Nicholson said.

For more information about the Sussex County Economic Development Partnership, [click here](#).

*Editor's Note: The Alternative Press of Sussex County was one of five nominees for the 2012 Economic Innovation Award.*



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