

The Daily Mail (thedailymail.net), Serving Greene county since 1972

Investing in Greene, one business at a time

Perseverance praised in face of slumping upstate economy

**By Hilary Hawke
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers**

Published: Saturday, June 5, 2010 6:16 AM EDT

CATSKILL — It's no secret the economy is tough but Greene County is holding its own thanks in large part to an active, aggressive Chamber of Commerce.

Its 10th Annual Recognition Dinner held at Anthony's Banquet Hall in Leeds on June 3 brought together almost 200 to honor some of the county's outstanding businesses.

Winners are selected from the chamber's 370 members by the sixteen-member board of directors who nominate and then vote on the candidates.

Assemblyman Pete Lopez (R-Schoharie), who presented citations to the winners, said, "The businesses honored tonight have shown amazing perseverance in the face of an extreme economy."

He also said business is the engine that fuels the economy and suggested lawmakers in Albany might take a lesson from the county.

"The success and growth in Greene County is evident. Albany is missing the obvious that New York State's health depends on investment in business."

Denise Kerrigan of the Country Place Resort and Zume Flume Water Park in Durham won the businesswoman of the year award and the businessman of the year honor went to Dr. Robert Schneider and his new Catskill Urgent Medical Care.

Emerald Awards went to Empire Merchants North for large business of the year and the winner in the small business of the year category was the Windham Country Club.

There was also an Emerald Award for not-for-profit of the year which went to Kaaterskill Care Skilled Nursing and Rehab in Jefferson Heights, Catskill.

According to Don Gibson, President of the Bank of Greene County, Zume Flume has been in operation since 1981 and this year they are adding a new million-dollar wave pool which will attract even more visitors and increase jobs.

Kerrigan won the award for "commitment to world-class family recreation and bringing dollars and jobs to Greene County."

"This is a great place to live and work," Kerrigan said. "We will have a grand opening for the new wave pool in July."

Businessman of the Year winner Schneider opened the 365-day-a-year Catskill Urgent Medical Care less than a year ago.

Presenter Steve Friedman of Rudder Finn Print and Chamber Board Director said the award honored Schneider's "commitment to the physical and economic health of the community."

"I am honored and humbled by this award," Schneider said. "My hats are off to the Chamber of Commerce. They do a phenomenal job."

Schneider also thanked the town and village of Catskill and the Greene County Legislature, saying many had contributed to the Catskill Center.

"I look forward to making many more business affiliations and I hope I can benefit this county."

Paul Slutzky, Chairman of the Greene County Industrial Development Agency, presented the Emerald Award to Jay Andretta, President of Empire Merchants North.

The company, located on 21 acres in Coxsackie's Kalkberg Commerce Park opened in May and is now the county's largest employer with roughly 350 associates.

It will distribute 5 million cases of beverages a year from its 235,000 square foot facility.

"Greene County made it easy for us to locate here," Andretta said. "The support has been wonderful. Receiving this honor sets a standard for the future and we will do our best to live up to it."

Greene County Interim Administrator Dan Frank presented the Windham Country Club with the Emerald Award for small business of the year saying they had provided "an eight-year commitment to a first-rate recreational resource."

"We are honored to receive this award," said President of the Board Russell Parry. "The Greene County Chamber of Commerce, Warren Hart and Dan Frank have allowed us to do what we do best. We're all in this together."

Finally, Kaaterskill Care Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center won the Emerald Award for not-for-profit business for its "extraordinary dedication and commitment to the region's health care and seniors."

Presenter Kathleen Packard, President of KathodeRay Media said the 120-bed center is breaking ground for Kaaterskill Manor, a 21-unit senior housing complex.

Todd Zbytniewski, Vice President of Geriatric Services, said, "I'd like to thank the Chamber of Commerce for their support. We look forward to opening later in 2010 and providing safe, high-quality health care services."

No large event occurs without plenty of behind-the-scenes preparation and Greene County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Tracy McNally pulled off a stellar evening with great food, a great location and great music by Harpist Jim Davis.

Bearfly Designs provided lighting and over 30 sponsors made the event possible.