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Chamber honors small biz Crucial cogs in local economic engine

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DOWNTOWN

- A construction company and an industrial gas provider won the region's top small-business awards from the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.

Small companies create nearly all of the net new jobs in today's economy and employ more than half of total workers, chamber officials said before presenting the Small Business Excellence awards after a luncheon at Duke Energy Center. Keynote speaker was Jerry Kathman, principal at downtown-based branding firm LPK.

The categories included:

Emerging Business of the Year. The winner was World Pac Paper LLC, a national distributor of printing and packaging papers, and the runner-up was Embrace - A Sweets Co. LLC, an Over-the-Rhine dessert maker.

Non-Profit Business of the Year. Winner Wellness Community provides programs to people with cancer and their loved ones, while runner-up Crayons to Computers is a store for school supplies donated by local businesses.

Minority Business of the Year. The winner was Megen Construction Co.

Megen has helped build high-profile projects such as Great American Ball Park and the renovation of Fountain Square. Runner-up MJB Consultants Inc. provides construction management services throughout the region.

Retailer/Hospitality Business of the Year. The winner was Prestige Audio Visual, a supplier of audio-visual services to hotels and other entertainment destinations. The runner-up was City Barbeque, a restaurant and catering chain that came to Greater Cincinnati last year.

Small Business of the Year, 1-50 employees, Winner Wright Brothers Inc. sells specialty gases, while runner-up Truepoint Capital LLC is a fee-only wealth-management firm.

Small Business of the Year, 51-250 employees. The winner was Paul Hemmer Cos., a real-estate, construction and building services provider. The runner-up was Schiff, Kreidler-Shell Inc., the largest locally owned independent insurance agency in Southwest Ohio.

The chamber also awarded "10 under 10" awards to companies that employ fewer than 10 workers:

Anthony Cole Training Group

Art Design Consultants

Aunt Flora & Co.

Best Practice Advisors LLC

Blue Whitespace

DHArchitects

Fresh Restaurant and Catering

Heaven & Earth Building Services Inc.