Aurora Chamber Names Eastern Metro’s Best!

The awards were presented by last year’s award winners in a special ceremony marked with warmth and camaraderie. Those singled out for their accomplishments in 2011 are:

(Back row, left to right): Community Leadership: Jim Abendschan, Arapahoe County Fair Manager, Arapahoe County

Man of the Year: Dave Maxwell, Executive Vice President, FirstBank of Aurora

Ambassador of the Year: Mark Werner, Owner, Great Western Printing

Chamber Leadership: Dennis Heap, Manager, Front Range Airport

Humanitarian of the Year: Officer Jim Seneca, Aurora Police Department, Cops Fighting Cancer

(Front row, left to right): Business for the Arts: Charles Packard, Executive Director, Fox Arts Center

Woman of the Year: Cathy Noon, Mayor, City of Centennial

Business Person of the Year: Cindy Kreutz, CEO and President, Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital

Small Business Person of the Year: Bill “Smitty” Smith, Owner, Smitty’s Sprinkler Systems

Inset photo: Business of Year: Warden Matt Holm, GEO Group

Sponsors of the event included: FirstBank, Pinnacol Assurance, Wells Fargo Bank, Western Credit Union, Merrick and Company, Comcast and the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

LeGare proposes bond extension for infrastructure

City Council member at large Bob LeGare has an idea that would bring many badly needed improvements to Aurora and Eastern Metro roads at no additional cost to already hard-pressed taxpayers in the area. He rolled the idea out at the Chamber Transportation Committee on April 4.

LeGare has formally proposed to the Aurora City Council that a mill levy that helped finance the Alameda Exchange be continued and applied to several critical infrastructure upgrades. “There would be no additional taxes imposed on our citizens,” LeGare said, “but by continuing the small amount people are already paying, we could greatly improve our local roads.”

LeGare, who strongly believes in full transparency when it comes to City spending, said the continuation would be targeted at specific projects and not be used for the general fund.

Some of the projects that would be covered include better access to Buckley AFB by extending Sixth Avenue out to an E-470 exchange, and pushing Tower Road through from 6th Avenue to Colfax.

In addition, LeGare has proposed several access improvements for the rapidly growing Anschutz/ Fitzsimmons Campus, as well as upgraded roads in the Southeast Aurora area, which include the widening of Arapahoe Road between Waco and Himalaya (with additional support from Centennial and Arapahoe County), and the partial widening of Gun Club Road including an upgraded Quincy/Oun Club/E-470 interchange.

Nearly 20 dozen other projects, somewhat smaller in scope, are also proposed all over the city, such as improved parking for the new lllf Light Rail station, sidewalk and bike path improvements throughout the city, and badly needed changes to the Parker corridor around Quincy.

The Chamber Transportation Council, led by Chris Fasching with Feelsburg Holt & Ullering, voted unanimously to support the initiative and put the proposal before the Chamber Board for their approval.

“Many of Councilman LeGare’s proposals are in sync with the projects our committee has been proposing for more than six years now,” Fasching said. “It is great to see some movement in that arena.”
Challening and exciting: a year in the Chairman’s seat

David Gruber  
Chair

What an exciting year this has been for me. The Chamber is steeped in rich history and propelled by an entrepreneurial drive that has lifted my spirits every day. At our annual awards banquet last month, I had the privilege of beginning the process of turning over the mantle of leadership to my friend and colleague Jeff Thompson from the University of Colorado Hospital. I have absolutely no doubt Jeff will continue, and expand upon, the Chamber’s deep traditions.

As I began thinking about my year as the Chairman, it occurred to me that Chamber is stronger than ever. The Chamber staff works every day to implement the motto of “Community First, Business Always”. The Board has striven to ensure our viability while simultaneously finding ways of supporting you – our members. The economy has been tough for the last few years, so the board worked with Kevin, George and the Chamber staff to protect our financial stability. We could see the outlines of the economy improving, and we managed our finances carefully to ensure the Chamber would be prepared when the economy eventually improves. At the same time, the Board focused on what we could do for you. Even given our constrained finances, the Chamber achieved many terrific successes.

The Defense Council kept a strong bond between our business community and our military partners. I am proud to say the Armed Forces Recognition Luncheon, sponsored again this year by our friends at Northrop-Grumman, will again be an outstanding tribute to the military’s best of the best.

Our Health Care Council has built the foundation for a strong relationship with the medical community and all businesses that work with them. And while there isn’t space here to go through the tremendous successes of all of our committees, I do want to highlight Naomi Colwell and her work in rebuilding the Women in Business group. When her ideas were presented to the Board, we thought there was some potential, but we had no idea that Naomi would grow the organization so effectively—although I have to admit that a meeting focused on wine and chocolate tends to be a much better draw than some other committee meetings targeting area traffic problems or political intrigue.

Another program I am very proud of is Aurora Mayor Hogan’s and City Manager Skip Noe’s initiatives to make Aurora business friendly. Our Board’s position has been that no one in our area can say the government is business friendly unless we, the business community, say they’re business friendly. The Chamber has worked with the city as an honest broker between our members and their staff offices. As a result, we have seen tremendous progress and a promising future for this important initiative.

As we look ahead, my colleagues on the Board and I see a number of emerging challenges in the coming years. The military budget will drop next year and there will undoubtedly be a discussion about closing a number of military installations including Buckley AFB and moving all the missions that are there. Frankly, we see those discussions as an opportunity. Our goal is to show that Buckley’s advantages are so attractive; the base will actually gain missions that come from other installations that may close.

We also see great promise for the medical community. We are blessed to have several internationally recognized hospitals and teaching facilities here. They will continue to drive economic growth, and Jeff Thompson is the perfect person to guide the Chamber in that area. We are also optimistic that the State will choose to fund the Gaylord resort. The Mayor and the Aurora Economic Development Council have done a first-class job in bringing in a facility that is destined to become the cornerstone in the aerotropolis surrounding DIA. The Eastern Metro Area is very well situated for strong, sustainable growth.

It’s been an honor representing the entire Chamber membership this year on the Board of Directors. I’d especially like to single out Kevin and his remarkable staff: George, Naomi, Linda, Paul, Kimberly, Mitzi and Mary Beth. They truly define the word synergy: their total output is considerably greater than what you might expect from the sum of this great group. And to the many volunteers that give the Chamber that extra touch upon which our reputation has been built—thank you. My hope is that we will continue to work together to make the next 110 years as fruitful as this year has been for us all! Thank you again for all of your support and dedication to our cause.

Over to you Jeff!

The Chamber’s Mission

The mission of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce is to serve as a voice for the business community, acting as an advocate for its members on issues that affect their growth and long-term economic vitality.

DON’T FORGET: “Every employee of a Chamber member is a member of The Chamber”

Please route this issue to your sales reps, account managers, marketing directors, HR and PR departments. You can also access each month’s newsletter online at our website, www.aurorachamber.org, so you can forward it to every employee in your company!
Congratulations to the 2012 Leadership Aurora graduates

“Uniting Today’s Leaders to Build a Stronger Aurora for Tomorrow”

On Thursday, June 7, the Leadership Aurora program celebrates its 27th graduating class with a celebration/reception at the Aurora Public School’s Professional Conference & Learning Center, 15771 E. 1st Avenue, Aurora, CO 80011. The event begins at 5 p.m. The program celebrates the accomplishments of the class and serves to continue the legacy of leadership in Aurora.

The 2012 class has been successful in uniting to build a stronger Aurora in a variety of ways, including a “Pay It Forward” lunch and silent auction that raised money for program scholarships for non-profits and small business persons; their participation in a Rebuild America event at the American Legion Hall; and their class project of sorting toys and building a computer lab for the Salvation Army. They also have been generous in donating items and monies for various events.

Please help us celebrate the accomplishments of this outstanding class on June 7. Individual tickets are $30 and reservations are required. You may call Kimberly Curtis at 303-344-1500 for more information or go to www.aurorachamber.org to register.

Leadership Aurora applications due July 15

The Chamber is currently accepting applications through July 15, 2012 for the 2012-13 Leadership Aurora class. Since 1985 the Aurora Chamber has promoted and fostered the development of leadership in our community. As a result, Leadership Aurora educates and prepares community leaders who are committed to shaping Aurora’s future.

Leadership Aurora provides the opportunity for participants to broaden their knowledge of the community while enhancing their leadership skills. Participants benefit by gaining a strengthened sense of personal vision, awareness of issues and challenges facing the community, the rewards of networking with a diverse group of community leaders, and the opportunity to make a difference in the community.

The program begins each year in mid-September with a 2-day class retreat, followed by eight monthly sessions from October to May on the third Thursday of each month. A celebration reception is held in early June. Tuition for the program is $350 and includes all program costs and materials, including room and meals at the retreat. Partial tuition assistance is available, and awarded based on need and class composition.

For an application or more information, contact Kimberly Curtis 303-344-1500, or e-mail kimberly.curtis@aurorachamber.org. You may also complete an application online at www.aurorachamber.org, click on the Leadership Aurora tab.

“The community resources we’ve been exposed to have been remarkable—businesses, charities, government agencies, and such a wide variety of fields of interest—and the personal and professional friendships we have developed as a class are to be treasured.”

— Greg Baker, City of Aurora

“The Leadership Aurora experience has confirmed what I already knew—that Aurora is a great city! By continuing to immerse myself into the community and all that it has to offer, I have new avenues to search for ways to use my resources for the benefit and betterment of the community.”

— Joyce Rocha-Brown, Southlands Shopping Center

“I’ve gained a greater awareness of my community! I plan to apply what I’ve gained by sharing resources and “handing over the torch” to a future Leadership Aurora participant. My experience reaffirms my purpose to continue giving back—it takes many to make a difference!”

— Marilee Roybal Verdun, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

“I’ve learned so much about our community! It has created a new sense of belonging, and being part of something bigger with a purpose.”

— Stephanie Benintendi, Children’s Hospital Colorado

“My newly gained knowledge and insight about our community has restored for me the importance of volunteerism, and I will continue to stay active in our community.”

— Karen Hookstadt, Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital

The 2012 Leadership Aurora graduates

Elizabeth Agresti, Colorado Air National Guard
Jeff Anderson, Advantage Security, Inc.
Gregory Baker, City of Aurora–Water
Rachel Banks, Adams County Workforce & Business Center
Jon Barber, Artistic Apparel, LLC
Stephanie Benintendi, Children’s Hospital Colorado
Kinder Blache, Colorado Air National Guard
Cassieeee Carlson, Aurora Police Department
Steven Clagg, Aurora Public Schools
Tom Henley, Xcel Energy
James Hitz, KeyBank
Karen Hookstadt, Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital
Brent Houbell, FirstBank of Aurora
Marlene Hussen
Celeste Johnson, RTL Networks, Inc.
Mara Kalin, Aurora Mental Health Center
Ralph Kasper, Adolison & Peterson Construction
Marena Lertch, City of Aurora – Public Safety
Oren “You” Limbaugh, The Limbaugh Law Firm, LLC
Christopher Lockwood, Rural/Metro Ambulance
Rachel Macias, Famous Dave’s Legendary Bar-B-Que
Richard Maestas, Community College of Aurora
Scott Mills, Aurora Fire Department
William Moran, Wells Fargo Banks
Easley Peters, Visit Aurora
Mark Pray, City of Aurora – IT
Lisa Reddel, Cherry Creek School District
Ellen Rehman, University of Colorado Hospital
Naquetta Rick’s, Network Financial Group, LLC
Joyce Rocha-Brown, Southlands Shopping Center
Daniel Rodriguez, Allstate Insurance
Julie Marie Shepherd, Aurora Public Schools/Board of Education
Kira Suurvarik, 18th Judicial District Juvenile Assessment
Marilee Roybal Verdun, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
Patricia Wells, Aurora Fox Arts Center
Thate Wilmes, Colorado First Construction
The yet-to-be-built Colorado Freedom Memorial has a new home, according to Rick Crandall, president of the Colorado Freedom Memorial Foundation. “The City of Aurora has long been a partner of this project,” Crandall said, “and has now created an incredible space for the Memorial in the new Springhill Park adjacent to the Beck Recreation Center.” The park, originally sited south of Buckley in an undeveloped city park area, is now located directly north of Buckley Air Force Base with four acres set aside for the Memorial, gardens and gathering spaces. “This will be the perfect place for families and comrades of those who sacrificed their lives in service to come and remember,” Crandall stated. Crandall also announced a new fund-raising campaign to complete the project. He is teaming up with The Chamber, VisitAurora, KEZW AM-1430 Radio, Dry Dock Brewing Company, and the American Legion in Colorado to raise the final $400,000 to allow construction to begin this year. Crandall urged companies throughout the metro area to get involved in the drive. “Challenge your employees to get involved by coming up with their own fund raisers,” he suggested. On May 25, KEZW Radio will be hosting a 12-hour radio-thon at the Dry Dock Brewing Company in Aurora from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. “We’ll be asking everyone along the Front Range to put us over the top by contributing to our FREEDOM 2012 drive,” Crandall said. Companies and individuals interested in partnering with Crandall to help with his goal of finishing the fund-raising by the end of May can contact him at rck1430@comcast.net. “With very favorable construction costs available to us right now, there’s no better time for us to build the Memorial!” he concluded. Additional information on the Colorado Freedom Memorial is on their web site at www.cfmf.net.

These Women Make a Difference!

The Women Making a Difference annual luncheon, held February 24, was a huge success – and an inspiration to the nearly 300 attendees. Amelia Earhart from Channel 9 motivated the crowd of nearly 300 with her enthusiasm and story of perseverance; followed by an impressive line-up of nominees and winners.
**You get wireless and breakfast!** — Rajendra and Mayo Desai, owners of the new Fairfield Inn & Suites - Southlands, at 24192 E. Prospect Dr., cut the ribbon for the new hotel. Recreational amenities at the hotel include an indoor pool, a spa tub, and a fitness facility, and guests can take advantage of the 24-hour business center, which offers audio-visual equipment and business services. Complimentary wireless and wired high-speed Internet access is available in public areas, and there is event space consisting of conference and meeting rooms. The hotel also serves a complimentary continental breakfast each morning. (Photo courtesy Brian Molitoris Photographer)

**Grab a big spoon, and dig in!** — Kirk and Julie DeJac opened Zookie’s Frozen Yogurt with a goal of providing the community with a classic “mom and pop shop” — where everyone is greeted and treated like family. The Veteran owned and operated self-serve yogurt oasis is a place to relax, while enjoying what Kirk and Julie believe to be the best frozen treat in the Denver Metro area. Zookie’s is at 700 South Buckley, Unit F, in Aurora. Go ahead — fill a cup, add some toppings, and enjoy! (Large spoon actually not recommended, due to brain freeze potential!) (Photo courtesy Brian Molitoris Photographer)
Rural/Metro-Pridemark checks stress levels at State Capitol

On March 12, Rural/Metro-Pridemark Ambulance employees checked the blood pressures (BPs) of State lawmakers and staff to identify whether the House or Senate is “more stressed.” According to the results of this unscientific, informal survey the House has a higher average BP, making it more “stressed” than the Senate.

Sixteen House Representatives and staff participated in the BP checks, with an average BP of 140/85. Seven State Senators and staff participated, with an average of 138/83. A normal BP is a systolic (top number) between 100 and 130, and a Diastolic (bottom number) between 65 and 85.

Rural/Metro-Pridemark Ambulance organized the event to bring greater awareness to the pre-hospital services provided by ambulance first responders, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and registered nurses. Legislators and staff also had the opportunity to talk with first responders, and to view emergency medical equipment.

T-Mobile a “Top Workplace”

The Denver Post recently published “The Denver Post Top Workplace,” and Chamber member T-Mobile was on the list of midsize employers (150-499 employees).

The evaluation for the Top Workplace program is based on feedback from employee surveys. T-Mobile’s employees ranked their company’s strengths as execution, career, managers, conditions, and pay and benefits. The employees enjoy the people they work with, the flexible, fun, values-based culture and results-oriented environment where they have opportunities to take on new challenges that drive them to success.

CenturyLink employees volunteer for largest JA in a Day in Colorado

CenturyLink is once again partnering with Junior Achievement-Rocky Mountain, Inc. to create the largest JA in a Day event in Colorado for the tenth year running. Approximately 250 CenturyLink employees are spending a day in 125 classrooms. The volunteer effort takes place during Financial Literacy Month and coincides with National Volunteer Week (April 15-21, 2012).

CenturyLink employees are volunteering more than 4,000 hours to teach students in kindergarten through eighth grade, inspiring and preparing more than 3,000 young people to succeed in a global economy. The lesson plans focus on three areas: entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness.

Rural/Metro and Girl Scouts collaborate

Rural/Metro-Pridemark Ambulance and Girl Scout Troop 75 recently collaborated for the benefit of all. The Troop donated 75 toy bears to Rural/Metro-Pridemark Ambulance in exchange for a lesson in first aid to earn credit for their Girl Scout first aid patch. 17 Daisies and Brownies, aged 5-8 years old, used part of their earned Girl Scout cookie money to purchase the stuffed animals for donation to Rural/Metro-Pridemark Ambulance. The company gives the animals to pediatric patients, as a way to help comfort them in a medical emergency.

ALMC Mortgage joins NOVA Home Loans

Mortgage Professional Cheryl Braunschweiger’s company, ALMC Mortgage, recently joined forces with NOVA Home Loans.

“I’m excited,” said Braunschweiger, president and founder of ALMC. “I’ll still be here doing business as ALMC Mortgage, but I’ll have the NOVA Home Loans team of professionals supporting me. That means I’ll be able to devote more of my time to the thing I do best and enjoy the most – working one-on-one with my clients to make sure their borrowing needs are met.”

Women’s History wrap-up

The Colorado Women’s Legislative Caucus recently reunited with former state senators and representatives whose service dates back to the 1970s. Outgoing Senators Nancy Spence and Suzanne Williams were honored for their leadership on the Board, and encouraged the returning members to continue raising the visibility of the Women’s Caucus. Former Senator Pat Pascoe reminded the audience of the challenges of our pioneering predecessors, speaking in the appropriate – and impressive – setting of the History Colorado Center. Pascoe highlighted the life of the first woman Senator, Helen Ring Robertson, in her recently released book.

Arapahoe County celebrates opening of Lima Plaza

Arapahoe County residents can now access five County offices at a single location in Centennial, following the completion of the new Lima Plaza campus at 6904-6904 South Lima St. Job-seeker services, licensing and motor vehicle registration, zoning and building permits are just a few of the many services offered on the new campus.

[continued on page 7]
Arapahoe County Commissioners Nancy Sharpe, Rod Bockenfeld, Nancy Jackson and Bill Holen, Clerk and Recorder Nancy Doty and Treasurer Sue Sandstrom were joined by more than 100 guests at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 14 for the grand opening.

Lima Plaza is now home to the Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center, the Clerk and Recorder’s Centennial Motor Vehicle Branch, the Public Works and Development Department, the Open Spaces Program and the Judicial Services Division. The campus also houses the County’s Retirement Plan Administrator, as well as satellite space for the Human Resources and Facilities and Fleet Management departments. More than 200 employees work at the campus daily.

Merrick’s Outlaw and Dixon named vice presidents

Merrick’s Gary Outlaw, GISP, and Peter Dixon, CEng, MiChemE, have both been named vice presidents. They will play vital roles in leading the firm’s Corporate Business Development professionals and Market Sector Leaders in achieving Merrick’s growth visions, announced Christopher Sherry, PE, senior vice president, Business and Corporate Development Group.

In his new position, Outlaw will focus on leading the firm’s business development efforts covering the Infrastructure Market Sector (civil engineering, surveying and mapping as well as water resources); Dixon will oversee business development for the National Security Facilities, Nuclear Services & Technology, Energy, and Life Sciences divisions.

Kline appointed Adams County human services director

Chris Kline has been appointed the new human services director for Adams County. He replaces Dr. Donald Cassata as who retired in March 2012.

Kline began working for Adams County in October 2006 as the administrator for the workforce and business center. He was promoted to director of the workforce and community services division within the human services department. Prior to joining Adams County, Kline spent nearly six years with the Jefferson County Department of Human Services.

A&P earns national award

Associated Builders and Contractors recently awarded Adolfsen & Peterson Construction a Pyramid Award in the Historical Restoration category for their work on North High School in Denver, Colo. A&P representatives received the award during the 22nd annual Excellence in Construction Awards celebration in Phoenix, Ariz.

A&P has received two other prestigious awards for its work on Denver’s landmark North High School: The Best Renovation/Restoration project from ENR Mountain States and the Excellence in Construction award for historic renovation projects (between $10 million and $100 million) from ABC’s Rocky Mountain Chapter.

Aurora Chamber Spotlight on:
Greg and Jeanne Barber, Artistic Apparel LLC

Greg and Jeanne Barber of Artistic Apparel, LLC, met in Phoenix, Arizona in 1979. At the time, Greg was attending trade school and Jeanne was working – trying to figure out what she was going to do with her life. Turns out, she was going to marry Greg in July of 1980 – and the rest is history! They have two children, Krystin, 30, and Sean, 29; and five grandchildren.

Before they began their business in Bartlesville Oklahoma in 2004, Greg was a certified auto mechanic, and then a millwright, rebuilding steam turbines at power plants; Jeanne was a flight attendant, and an account manager for Ryder TRS/Budget Trucks. Through his interest in computer technology and his mechanical background, Greg contracted with Melco Embroidery Systems as a computerized embroidery technician and training. So began their promotional product company!

Their business expanded with the help of well-known clients including Conoco/Phillips, Schlumberger, Siemens USA, Rogers State University and Oklahoma Wesleyan University. And, in the summer of 2009, Artistic Apparel expanded to Aurora, Colorado – and Greg and Jeanne joined The Chamber and the Chamber Ambassador program.

“We really love being Ambassadors. It gives us an opportunity to meet all kinds of people, and to interact with businesses that might use our services,” said Jeanne. “We also enjoy telling people about all the great things that the Chamber can do for them – like it’s done for us!”

Greg and Jeanne recently added Greg’s brother and sister-in-law, Jon and Sandy, to the business, and Jon is currently in the Leadership Aurora Program.

Today, Artistic Apparel LLC offers a wide variety of products and services from two locations, including Embroidery, Screen Printing, graphic design, digital printing, a broad range of Apparel from corporate wear to Athletic Wear, and as many as 800,000 unique and interesting promotional products to put your brand or logo on.
For weather-related decisions on cancellations, please call the Chamber after 3 p.m. at 303-344-1500 on the day of the concert or tune in to KEZW Radio, AM 1430 for the latest updates. For more information, visit www.auroragov.org/concerts or call 303-344-1500.

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<td>June 21</td>
<td>Dean Bushnell Orchestra</td>
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<td>June 28</td>
<td>Hazel Miller</td>
<td>Blues, Jazz, R&amp;B</td>
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<td>July 5</td>
<td>Phat Daddy</td>
<td>High Energy R&amp;B, Rock, Contemporary Hits</td>
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<td>Peoria &amp; Mexico</td>
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<td>July 19</td>
<td>Hot Tomatoes</td>
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<td>Daddio featuring the 17th Avenue Allstars</td>
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<td>August 9</td>
<td>Chris Daniels &amp; The Kings</td>
<td>Roots Rock &amp; Roll with Horns</td>
<td>Meadowood Park</td>
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