

Editorial: CEDR Awards reveal county's growing economic sophistication

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On every day of any week it's a safe bet that somewhere in the U.S. a business-awards event is praising local entrepreneurial progress. But there aren't many places that have as much to be proud about as we do, following last Wednesday's Clatsop Economic Development Resources' second annual Outstanding Business awards ceremony.

Good reasons for this pride were everywhere Wednesday. There were young people there who have created vibrant new enterprises with courage, sweat and imagination. There were middle-aged county residents who have taken family businesses to new heights. There were senior citizens who have ridden the economic roller-coaster for decades, giving back to local communities and providing local kids their first start toward success. There were younger and older immigrants who have become neighbors, earning warm applause from their peers in business.

The event reflected the smart priorities put in place by CEDR and its board of directors. Several award-winners said they were aided by the wide variety of business-related courses and seminars organized by CEDR. Keynote speakers Alana and Mark Kujala of Skipanon Brand Seafood were particularly eloquent about just how much intense hard work and thought has gone into making their company a symbol of achievement, and how CEDR was able to help.

The antiquated legend of American success is that the world will beat a path to your door if you build a better mousetrap. The truth is that there are heaps of good ideas that never make their creators any money, due to the nearly infinite host of "technical difficulties" that get in the way of achievement. Government red tape is a favorite target of business ire – often justifiably so.

With its free and confidential counseling services, CEDR goes a long way toward bridging these gaps. It's not going to get the loan for you, but it can go a long way toward providing a start-up with the kinds of knowledge needed to win support from a bank.

The words "economic development" all too often spark cynical thoughts among those who observe cities and states chasing companies by offering tax incentives that end up being paid for by long-term residents. Perhaps the biggest message to come out of the CEDR awards is that true economic development succeeds by building a foundation for prosperity for residents. Clatsop County people are cooperating in building a well-diversified economy. It's an exciting time to be here.