

South County shines at 2014 CEDR Awards

By Louie Opatz

Seaside Signal | Posted: Friday, April 11, 2014 6:38 pm

This year's Clatsop Economic Development Resources (CEDR) awards had a distinctly South County flavor.

Three Seaside businesses — Beach Books, Seaside Brewing and Doel Hospitality, which owns several hotels in town — captured CEDR awards at the March 19 event, held at the Liberty Theater in Astoria.

Beach Books' owner Karen Emmerling won "Business Service to the Community - Small Business"; Seaside Brewing's owners Jimmy Griffin and Jim Berg accepted the "Stewardship" award; and hotelier Masudur Khan, from Doel Hospitality, which owns the Inn at Seaside and the soon-to-be-opened River Inn at Seaside, captured the "Entrepreneurship - Large Business" award.

Emmerling believes that book stores can be a valuable community hub, and she strives to keep Beach Books involved in Seaside and the greater community.

"I think book stores are just a great place for an exchange of ideas," Emmerling said. "Books lead to discussions of a lot of other things."

Beach Books moved to its current location, at the corner of Broadway and Holladay Drive in downtown Seaside, over a year ago, and Emmerling is thrilled with the change of scenery.

"It's like night and day," she said of her more prominent downtown spot. "It's a great space. I think it says a lot about Seaside that there's a bookstore in this location and an absolutely terrific library."

Emmerling received the CEDR award for her numerous community outreach efforts, including hosting a wishing tree of books every holiday season, providing her space free for local visual artists and writers and teaming up with the Assistance League to donate books to those in need.

Emmerling believes that locally owned businesses like hers are vital to keeping a community vibrant.

"Independent local business is what makes a community unique," she said.

Just down the street from Beach Books sits Seaside Brewing, which received the "Stewardship" award for remodeling and repurposing the 100-year-old, 4,400-square-foot former Seaside City Hall and jail at 851 Broadway.

Seaside Brewing owners Jimmy Griffin and Vince Berg left Rogue Brewing to start their Seaside brewpub, which is part of the North Coast Beer Trail and recently upgraded to a 15-barrel brewing system.

"Of all the awards we could have been given, this means the most to us," Griffin told the EO Media

Group. “We really did pour our heart and souls into the building. Really, to us, that’s what craft beer is all about. It’s soul.”

Hotelier Masudur Khan, who received the entrepreneurship award for large businesses, has left his mark on Seaside since arriving in town five years ago.

Khan’s company, Doel Hospitality, owns the Inn at Seaside, the City Center Motel and his newest venture, the River Inn at Seaside, 531 Avenue A, which cost over \$4 million. Khan plans to open the River Inn in May.

Khan said that more than 60 percent of the contractors on the River Inn at Seaside were local, and the new hotel will bring roughly 15 to 20 new jobs to Seaside.

Next year’s CEDR awards will have an especially strong Seaside flavor: The 2015 awards ceremony will be held at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center on March 18.