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Harbor Springs highlights heroes

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By Noah Fowle News-Review Staff Writer

Thursday, October 16, 2008 9:01 AM EDT



Little Traverse township supervisor Bill Dohm was given the top honor for his lifetime of commitment to local projects at the Harbor Heroes award dinner on Wednesday night. He's pictured here accepting the Outstanding Citizen Award from Dana Widmar, the executive director of Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources Inc. (G. Randall Goss/News-Review)

HARBOR SPRINGS — Little Traverse Township supervisor Bill Dohm and Harbor Springs city manager Fred Geuder received a big show of gratitude from their community at the Harbor Heroes award dinner on Wednesday night.

The chamber of commerce hosted the 14th annual event at the Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club to shine a light on the unsung heroes of the community who do the little, everyday things that preserve the small town's unique character.

Chamber president Jody Ewbank said the evening's awards are special because the nominations come from the greater Harbor Springs community itself and winners are chosen through a simple popular vote.

"It's a way to commemorate our leaders and those making a difference in the community and working to continue with our quaintness," said Ewbank. "My sincere hope is that Harbor Heroes can plant a seed for more people to volunteer."

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Little Traverse township supervisor Bill Dohm was given the evening's top honor for his lifetime of commitment to local projects.

"I don't work for recognition. I work for the model of people helping people," he said after accepting the Outstanding Citizen Award.

Dana Widmar, the executive director of Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources Inc., worked closely with Dohm on the M-119 bike trail and presented him with the award.

"He's one of Harbor Springs' greatest resources," she said. "He is always willing to go the extra mile."

Dohm was so humble in receiving his award that he used most of his time to thank his long time friend and fellow honoree Fred Geuder.

Geuder, who is retiring after 20 years as city manager next year, was the first recipient of the Outstanding Public Service Award, which the chamber crafted specifically for him. Police Chief Dan Branson said the award was a testament to Geuder's combination of skills as a consensus builder and leader, as well as his intangible ability to bring in good people to provide reliable service from plowing in the winter to lawn maintenance in the summer around Harbor Springs.

"The town always looks good because he hires good people," said Branson.

Geuder was gracious in his acceptance, and like Dohm, he was quick to point the spot light back on his friends and neighbors throughout all of Harbor Springs.

"I was so fortunate to come to this community," he said. "It's the people that make it so special. Yeah, we got the beauty, but it's the people."

Donna Weber was selected as the Chamber Volunteer of the Year recipient and said she enjoyed the challenges and rewards of working with Harbor Springs' businesses and citizens.

John and Mary Fischer were honored together with the Community Service Award.

"This is totally unnecessary, but greatly appreciated," said John Fischer, before giving an extra dose of gratitude to his wife. "A lot of what I do couldn't be done without the lady at my right."

Art Tebo was given the President's Award for an individual by Ewbank, and First Community Bank was honored with a business version of the award.

"If you care about your community first, that's what's important," said Tebo.

Marge Owen was recognized as the Ambassador of the Year for her work with the Jeff Bodzick Scholarship Foundation.

"Everyone who knows me, knows I'm a talker," she said. "But all I can say is thank you."

Alan Hegedus got the chance to thank one of his oldest friends in the community, Sara Smith, when he presented her with the Little Traverse Leadership Mentor Alumni Award.

"I could not have had a better introduction to this community," he said. "Her support helped develop much of me."

Smith said she was surprised and taken aback by Hegedus' words and the award.

"I never realized I was his mentor," she said.

Four architecture awards in the categories of Residential, Beautification, Design and Heritage were given out to Tom and Mindy Mooradian, Dudley's Deck at Stafford's Pier, Little Traverse Bay Humane Society and the Harbor Springs Area Historical Society respectively.

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