



CORNERSTONE
CHAMBER
of COMMERCE

Lake, Life & the Pursuit of Business

November 2009

**CORNERSTONE ALLIANCE/CORNERSTONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BUSINESS RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

Dear Cornerstone Alliance Investor, Chamber Member and Friends:

As you get older it is harder to have heroes, but it is sort of necessary. The words of author Ernest Hemingway who spent time in Michigan's *Great Southwest*. As we pause again to honor the heroes among us who champion commerce and freedom, I ask you to take a moment now to consider nominations for our **Annual Business Awards**, and remember your *own* achievements. Many previous winners in all eligible categories have been self-nominations. Please help us to identify those eligible for nomination. Perhaps *your* company is one of them. Award categories include the following:

- ***Entrepreneur of the Year – Manufacturing Sector***
- ***Entrepreneur of the Year – Commercial Sector***
- ***Salute to Business Stake Awards: Platinum, Gold & Silver***
- ***The Merlin Hanson Exemplary Business Leader Award***
- ***The Cornerstone Award: Large Business of the Year***
- ***Excellence in Customer Service Award***

You are essential to our efforts both as a potential award winner and as a nominator. Give your colleagues, yourself and your employees the well-earned recognition you deserve. Submit your nominations for any one or all of these categories whether you are nominating yourself or others. Remember, your accountant, marketing service or attorney may enter on your behalf.

Directions and nomination forms are enclosed. They are streamlined for ease of submission. All awards will be presented at the Cornerstone Combined Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 18, 2010 at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center's Grand Upton Hall.

Deadline for submission is Tuesday, December 29, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. Please mail entries to Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce, ATTN: Awards Committee, PO Box 428, Benton Harbor, MI 49023-0428. If you have any questions, call Pat Moody at 757-0216.

Sincerely yours,

Pat Moody

Pat Moody
Executive Vice President

DEFINITIONS OF AWARDS AND INSTRUCTIONS

- You may nominate other firms as well as your own, unless otherwise noted. [As in the case of the Excellence in Customer Service award]
- Some information may require verification.
- Proprietary information, trade secrets and confidential data need not be divulged.
- Anyone can nominate, however all winners must be members of Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce or investors in Cornerstone Alliance.
- Awards are based on data assessed from 2007 through November 2009.
- Businesses (including your own) may be nominated for more than one award.

Entrepreneur of the Year

- Nominees in each category (Manufacturing & Commercial) can employ not more than 100 employees.
- The form included in this mailing must be used. Instructions are part of the form.

Cornerstone Award: Large Business of the Year

- Nominees must employ 100 people or more.
- The form included in this mailing must be used. Instructions are part of the form.

SALUTE TO BUSINESS AWARDS

Use the enclosed nomination form for all of the following award categories:

Platinum Stake Award

- Based on one or more of the following: employment increase of 100 jobs; 100% increase in sales; expansion of the physical plant by at least 50%; capital investment of at least \$300,000.

Gold Stake Award

- Based on one or more of the following: employment increase of 50 jobs; 50% increase in sales; expansion of the physical plant by at least 25%; capital investment of at least \$200,000.

Silver Stake Award

- Based on one or more of the following: employment increase of 25 jobs; 25% increase in sales; expansion of the physical plant by at least 10%; capital investment of at least \$100,000.

Merlin Hanson Exemplary Business Leader Award

- Nominees for this award are to submit a narrative not to exceed four pages. It should address the criteria delineated in the application sector regarding the Merlin Hanson Exemplary Business Leader Award.

Excellence in Customer Service Award

- Self-nominations in this category are *not* allowed.
- Additional criteria are posted on the submission form.

**CORNERSTONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR 2009
NOMINATION FORM [100 or Fewer Employees]**

Cornerstone will honor Entrepreneurs of the Year in two (2) categories at our awards program at the annual meeting on February 18, 2010. To nominate someone, please complete this form and return it to Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce, ATTN: Awards Committee. **The deadline is Tuesday, December 29, 2009.** This completed nomination form should be accompanied by a narrative of not more than four (4) pages. Questions should be addressed to Pat Moody at 757-0216. Include a statement explaining why this person is deserving of recognition as Entrepreneur of the Year. Additional details are on the reverse side of this form.

Category of Nomination [Check one]

- Manufacturing Sector** **Commercial Sector**

General Information (Please type or print)

Name of Person being nominated: _____

Business Name: _____

Address of that business: _____

Your Name (Nominator): _____ Your Phone No: _____

Employment Increase from 2007 through November 2009 (Full-time plus permanent Part-time positions) Check one:

_____ 25 to 49 jobs _____ 50 to 99 jobs _____ 100 or more jobs

*Staffing agencies must count only their own direct employees. You may add those you have placed only if they have been hired by the worksite as their own employee.

Increase in Sales from 2007 through November 2009. Check one:

_____ 25% to 49% increase _____ 50% to 99% increase _____ 100% or more

Plant Expansion from 2007 through November 2009. Check one:

_____ 10% to 24% expansion _____ 25% to 49% expansion _____ 50% or more

Capital Investment from 2007 through November 2009. Check one:

_____ \$100,000 to \$199,000 _____ \$200,000 to \$299,000 _____ \$300,000 or more

[See opposite side for Criteria to be used in Narrative report]

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:
ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR
Manufacturing Sector and Commercial Sector**

These awards are presented annually to the businessperson in each sector of our economy who has demonstrated top management skills and leadership. The business must have no more than 100 employees. The selection will be based on the following criteria:

1. STAYING POWER

The ability to survive during tough times

2. GROWTH IN NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

A benchmark for the impact on the local economy and job market

3. INCREASE IN SALES

A benchmark for growth as an indication of management skill and ability

4. FINANCIAL STATUS

Evidence of fiscal responsibility and viability [Confidential data need not be disclosed. Partial data with confirmation statements from auditors and/or accountants will be acceptable.]

5. PRODUCT, SERVICE AND METHOD INNOVATIONS

Illustrations of management's creativity and imagination

6. RESPONSE TO ADVERSITY

Skills exhibited and solutions found to challenges that have been faced

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Civic accomplishments or affiliations through the use of personal time and resources

When you address these topics in your narrative report, please consider the time period from the year 2007 through November of 2009 as your primary consideration for this recognition.

CORNERSTONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
SALUTE TO BUSINESS 2009 NOMINATION FORM
Platinum, Gold and Silver Stake Awards

Cornerstone will conduct our annual "Salute to Business" awards program at the annual meeting on February 18, 2010. To give your business proper recognition, complete this simple form and return it to Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce, ATTN: Awards Committee. **The deadline is Tuesday, December 29, 2009.** You need only complete the section(s) that represent the basis for which you are submitting an award. You are, however, free to complete all sections, and you will receive the highest award for which you qualify.

General Information (Please type or print)

Name of Business being nominated: _____

Address of that business: _____

Your Name (Nominator): _____ Your Phone No: _____

Employment Increase from 2007 through November 2009 (Full-time plus permanent Part-time positions) Check one:

_____ 25 to 49 jobs _____ 50 to 99 jobs _____ 100 or more jobs

*Staffing agencies must count only their own direct employees. You may add those you have placed only if they have been hired by the worksite as their own employee.

Increase in Sales from 2007 through November 2009. Check one:

_____ 25% to 49% increase _____ 50% to 99% increase _____ 100% or more

Plant Expansion from 2007 through November 2009. Check one:

_____ 10% to 24% expansion _____ 25% to 49% expansion _____ 50% or more

Capital Investment from 2007 through November 2009. Check one:

_____ \$100,000 to \$199,000 _____ \$200,000 to \$299,000 _____ \$300,000 or more

**CORNERSTONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AMBASSADORS
EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE 2009
NOMINATION/ENTRY FORM**

Briefly describe your experience with the nominee in a narrative format of not more than two (2) pages to accompany this nomination form. [12-point font, single sided] Your narrative should address the criteria listed below. Please print or type and be as specific as possible.

Excellence in Customer Service is defined as: *The ability of an organization to continually and consistently exceed the customer's expectations.*

The deadline for submission is Tuesday, December 29, 2009. Return the nomination to Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce, ATTN: Awards Committee. Questions should be addressed to Regina Ciaravino at 757-0227 or Pat Moody at 757-0216.

Category of Nomination [Check one]

- Retail Sector** **Service Sector**

General Information: (please type or print)

Name of Nominee:

Business Name:

Address:

Your Name (Nominator): _____ Your Phone No.: _____

Criteria for Nomination:

1. Business should be at least one year in existence (please list year company was established _____)
2. Entry is open only to those businesses classified as part of the retail or service industry
3. Self-nominations will *not* be accepted for this award
4. Nominee will be contacted to finalize nomination and secure additional supporting materials, which may include; customer letters, documentation of industry awards, and the like
5. Additional considerations important to this nomination should be detailed as a part of your submission
6. A company must be a Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce member to be eligible. However, you are encouraged to nominate anyone. If a nominee is not a current member, they will be offered a 20% discount on their first year membership dues.

CORNERSTONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2009 NOMINATION FORM

Cornerstone will conduct our annual "Salute to Business" awards program at the annual meeting on February 18, 2010. To nominate a company for Large Business of the Year honors, complete this simple form and return it to Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce, ATTN: Awards Committee. **The deadline is Tuesday, December 29, 2009.** Include a statement explaining why this business deserves recognition as Large Business of the Year. You may include narrative of not more than four pages to support your nomination. Questions should be addressed to Pat Moody at 757-0216.

General Information (Please type or print)

Name of Business being nominated: _____

Address of that business: _____

Your Name (Nominator): _____ Your Phone No: _____

Employment: If there was a significant increase in employment from 2007 through November 2009, check the appropriate range below (Full-time plus permanent Part-time positions)

_____ 25 to 49 jobs _____ 50 to 99 jobs _____ 100 or more jobs

Sales: If there was a significant increase in sales from 2007 through November 2009, check the appropriate range below.

_____ 25% to 49% increase _____ 50% to 99% increase _____ 100% or more

Plant Expansion: If there was a significant expansion in plant facilities from 2007 through November 2009, check the appropriate range below.

_____ 10% to 24% expansion _____ 25% to 49% expansion _____ 50% or more

Capital Investment: If there were significant investments from 2007 through November 2009, check the appropriate range below.

_____ \$100,000 to \$199,000 _____ \$200,000 to \$299,000 _____ \$300,000 or more

Your narrative should address the following criteria:

- **RESPONSE TO ADVERSITY:** Explain any major problem that might have been faced at the local facility emphasizing the response of local management and employees.
- **COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY:** Address investment, employment growth and/or modernization of facilities in the local area.
- **CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY:** Civic affiliations and accomplishments through the involvement of employees and management, or other company resources.

BUSINESS SIZE: Nominees must have more than 100 total employees to qualify.

The Merlin Hanson Exemplary Business Leader Award

This award is named after the founding Chairman of the Community Economic Development Corporation, forerunner to today's Cornerstone Alliance and Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce.

The criteria for this award is based on the tenets that formulated Mr. Hanson's remarkable career, and closely mirror the standards that he has always set for both himself and the men and women who work for his companies.

The ideal candidate for this award will exhibit most of the following attributes:

- Admiration for teammates and a belief that everyone in the company has value...
- Strong leadership skills with the ability to encourage teammates to perform to the best of their ability...
- The ability to ask the right questions and challenge people in the proper manner...
- Adherence to high standards and ethics...
- A risk taker with an entrepreneurial attitude...
- The ability and readiness to step in and be a part of the solution...
- Always a facilitator...playing the appropriate role with each team as necessary...

The bar is purposely set high for this award, and as such there may not always be a recipient in any given year. Nominations are welcome, and Cornerstone staff members will also play a key role in determining prospective nominees.

Nominees for this award are to submit a narrative not to exceed four pages. It should address the criteria delineated herein, explaining why the nominee is worthy of this prestigious award. If no nominees are proffered that substantially match the criteria, there is no guarantee that an award will be presented in any given year.