

Changes announced to HCBI annual dinner format

By JOSH FUNK

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If you're planning on attending the Huntingdon County Business and Industry's annual dinner in May, be prepared for a few changes, namely in location and format.

The organization's yearly gathering is slated for 5:30 p.m. Thursday, May 13, at the Huntingdon Country Club, along Route 26 south of Huntingdon. The evening begins with a social hour from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and dinner is served at 6:30 p.m.

But after dinner, don't expect to hear a featured speaker from a county business. There won't be a featured speaker this year.

Instead, HCBI will follow an award ceremony format.

"Think the Grammys, but only smaller," said Susanne House, HCBI's director of business outreach.

HCBI membership committee chairman Charlie Bierbach said that the awards format is easily the biggest change of the event.

"We're pretty enthused about this," Bierbach said. "By doing this, we can grant some businesses (in the county) that are doing good things some exposure."

Awards will be presented in four categories, House said. Those categories are: innovation, greenovation, longevity/outreach and reinvention. Criteria needed to meet nomination requirements for the four award categories are as follows:

- Innovation – a business that shows a economic impact through the invention or revolutionary use or development of a new technology.
- Greenovation – a business that has made environmentally conscious efforts in the areas of sustainable resources, recycling or reusing while minimizing waste and sustaining items or resources in order to make an immediate or future environmental impact.
- Longevity/outreach – businesses that have been successfully operating in Huntingdon County for 20 or more years that has had an impact in the community through outreach and service in the county.
- Reinvention – a business that has made a major commitment in remaining competitive through reinventing either its business or its business mission or a business that has made adjustments and diversified itself to react to changes in the conditions of the market.

Nomination forms for awards will be made available Feb. 15, both in print at Sill Business Incubator, 419 14th St., Huntingdon, and on the web at <http://www.hcbi.com/annualdinner> (the site was officially launched Tuesday afternoon). Nomination forms are due back to the incubator by 5 p.m. Friday, April 2.

Bierbach noted that the awards are not exclusive to HCBI member businesses. Non-HCBI member businesses are encouraged to fill out nominations forms and can also be nominated to win awards.

It should be noted that the nominations and awards are limited to businesses within Huntingdon County.

Businesses can also nominate themselves if they meet the specific criteria in any categories, House said.

An independent committee comprised of individuals from outside of Huntingdon Co8nty will review the nominations and determine the winners, House said. The committee is made of five people – an individual from Blair, Bedford and Centre counties, a representative from the Southern Alleghenies and a representative from Saint Francis College's Small Business Development department.

Award winners will be notified before the dinner so that they can plan to be in attendance. Businesses who sponsor the awards will serve as the presenters. Businesses can also opt to sponsor dinner tables, centerpieces or programs as well.

Invitations for the annual dinner will be sent out April 23. Tickets will cost \$40 for members and \$45 for non-members. Tickets for the event can be ordered by calling 641-6697.