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History of Annual Hospitality Heroes Awards & People’s Choice Awards

Cartersville, Georgia – The Annual Hospitality Heroes Awards and People’s Choice Awards were first presented by the Cartersville-Bartow County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) in 2005. The CVB felt the need to say ‘Thank You’ to some of the key people who had contributed to the local tourism industry’s growth throughout the past decade.

The inaugural award recipients were also bestowed the lasting legacy of having subsequent awards named in their honor. “In the years to come we will always remember the contributions of these fine honorees,” explains CVB Executive Director Ellen Archer.

Categories presently awarded include:

The Entwisle Award for Lifetime Service in Tourism

The Bentley Award for Economic Development in Tourism

The Kordecki Award for Contribution to the Arts

The Grant Award for Community Service with a Smile

Additional award categories are the ***Distinguished Volunteer Award***, the ***Hotelier of the Year Award*** and the ***Shining Star Award***. The inaugural award recipients were chosen by the CVB Board of Directors. With award criteria in place, the CVB called for nominations from community leaders in 2006. “Obviously, the Cultural Arts Alliance is the appropriate body to designate the recipient of the Kordecki Award for Contribution to the Arts; the Economic Development Authority is best suited to designate the Economic Development in Tourism Award, and the local government officials are logical choices to nominate the Community Service with a Smile recipient, so those entities are who we called on for nominations,” Archer said. The Lifetime Service and Shining Star awards recipients were chosen by the CVB Board of Directors.

The People’s Choice Awards were conceived to honor the opinions of local residents and visitors that know the best that the Bartow County community has to offer. The Best Restaurant,

Best Shoppe and Best Attraction are chosen annually by online voting at www.VisitCartersvilleGA.org.

AWARD CRITERIA

The Entwisle Award for Lifetime Service is Tourism is presented by the CVB Board of Directors to honor a resident for their efforts to foster the development and environment for tourism in Bartow County. Likewise, the Distinguished Volunteer Award is presented by the CVB Board of Directors to honor those who volunteer their time in support of tourism on an annual basis.

The Bentley Award for Economic Development in Tourism is nominated by the Joint Economic Development Authority. Criteria established by the CVB demands that the recipient will have had a laudable influence on job creation, capital investment and increased tourism expenditures in Bartow County through the development of tourism product. The recipient could be anyone who has developed or expanded a restaurant, shop, attraction, hotel, etc., or has had a demonstrable influence on the development thereof.

Nominations for The Kordecki Award for Contribution to the Arts are solicited from the Cultural Arts Alliance to honor a recipient whose works and passion have fostered a sustained support for, and public access to, the performing and/or visual arts in Bartow County, Georgia.

The Grant Award for Community Service with a Smile is intended to honor an employee of any municipality in Bartow County, or of Bartow County Government, who exemplifies “service with a smile,” in his or her dealings with the public. The interactions of governmental nominees with the public must exemplify the utmost in customer service and congeniality, thus casting a favorable impression of Bartow County on visitors and residents alike.

Formerly known as the Hotelier of the Year Award given to hotel owners or general managers, the scope of this honor changed in 2012 with a shift to recognize successful lodging properties within Bartow County and its municipalities. Criteria for this award chosen by the CVB Board of Directors includes occupancy rates, increases in revenue, industry recognition, and many other factors.

The Shining Star Award recipient may be a Bartow County resident or organization whose excellence in a positive endeavor has earned national recognition, thus generating a

favorable light on Bartow County, Georgia. This honor is also chosen by the CVB Board of Directors.

Finally, the People's Choice Awards for Best Restaurant, Best Shoppe and Best Attraction are chosen annually by online voting at www.VisitCartersvilleGA.org. To be eligible for voting, restaurants and shoppes must be local, non-franchised businesses within the limits of Bartow County and its municipalities. The same geographical criteria applies to Best Attraction.

INAUGURAL HONOREES

- ***The Entwisle Award for Lifetime Service in Tourism*** – Named in honor of Frank Entwisle who dedicated almost 20 years as a constant force guiding the tourism industry in Cartersville. Entwisle served was first named to the Cartersville Tourism and Industry Council on January 3, 1985 by Mayor John Dent, and continued to serve the Board when this organization restructured forming the Cartersville Tourism Council. In 1990, Entwisle was instrumental in the formation of the joint City-County Cartersville-Bartow County Tourism Council, known today as the Cartersville-Bartow CVB. Entwisle served as Treasurer of the CVB from January 1991 to January 2004. The CVB's sustained growth is credited greatly to Entwisle's sound financial stewardship. His legacy of leadership and financial responsibility continues to strengthen the CVB's mission of fostering economic growth through visitor spending.
- ***The Bentley Award for Economic Development Through Tourism*** – Honoring Bob Bentley, former Executive Director of the Etowah Education Foundation. Under Bentley's direction, the foundation advanced from administering scholarships to open the first Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center (GYSTC), create the Teacher Resource Center, and establish a partnership with Floyd College that led to the Cartersville Campus of Georgia Highlands College. In addition, Bentley conceived and initiated the Scholarship Sharing Program growing the local grant pool awarded by the foundation from \$49,500 to almost \$150,000 in 2005. The Foundation's cultural contributions include starting the Bartow History Center, acquiring and renovating the

Grand Theatre, and acquiring and enhancing the Weinman Mineral Museum. Thus, Bentley's stewardship of the Etowah Education Foundation fostered the evolution of the family of attractions known today as Georgia Museums Inc., also the parent organization of the Booth Western Art Museum.

- ***The Kordecki Award for Contribution to the Arts*** – Named in honor of Don Kordecki. Technical Director of the Grand Theatre and lovingly known as “the father of theatre in Cartersville.” He organized “The Dramateurs Community Theatre” here in 1963, followed by “The Red Top Mountain Players,” and, with the help of his wife Ollene, “The Pumphouse Players” in 1975. Kordecki has been in more than 100 productions since he first took the stage in 1948 in a high school production of *The Mikado* in his native Chicago. An actor, director, producer, voice talent, set designer, lighting and technical director and more, Kordecki has been active on Marietta and Canton stages, as well as Cartersville. He is a Past President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Bartow County; Past Chairman of the Cartersville Downtown Development Authority, and presiding Chairman of the Cartersville-Bartow County Convention Center and the Cultural Arts Alliance. Kordecki served on the advisory board for the Council of the Arts under Governor Carl Sanders and the Georgia Film and Video Advisory Board under Governor Joe Frank Harris, and is a Past President of the Georgia Citizens for the Arts.
- ***The Grant Award for Community Service*** – Honoring Jimmy Grant, a member of the public works department for the City of Cartersville for 21 years. Those who know Jimmy recall his wonderful smile as he goes about his job of keeping our beautiful city clean. Co-workers often say “Have a Jimmy Grant Day” to wish each other a great day. Grant is also a valued member of Cartersville's Wal-Mart team and personally assists “Santa Claus” in his work each year. He is a vital part of the tourism team in Cartersville.

RECIPIENTS

The Entwisle Award for Lifetime Service in Tourism

2005 – Frank Entwisle

2006 – Marion Lacey

2007 – Sam Smith

2008 – Gwen “Granny” Marler

2009 – Ken Akins, former Superintendent Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Not awarded

2012 – David G. Archer, Sr.

2013 – Herschel Wisebram

2014 – John Lewis

2015 – Clarence Brown

2016 – J.B. Tate

The Bentley Award for Economic Development through Tourism

2005 – Bob Bentley

2006 – Carmike Cinemas

2007 – Barnsley Gardens Resort – Julian Saul and Michael Meadows

2008 – Samir Shah, Hampton Inn and Hilton Garden Inn

2009 – Georgia Museums, Inc. – Tellus Science Museum

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Bartow County Government and municipalities City of Cartersville, City of Adairsville, City of Kingston, City of White, City of Emerson and City of Euharlee for SPLOST investment in creating the Clarence Brown Conference Center

2012 – Seth Hopkins

2013 – Not awarded

2014 – LakePoint Sporting Community

2015 – City of Adairsville

2016 – Ray Thacker, Grand Oaks

The Kordecki Award for Contribution to the Arts

2005 – Don Kordecki

2006 – Margaret Mines

2007 – Rose and Lucky O’Lague

2008 – Mina Harper

2009 – Louis Tonsmeire, Sr.

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Jean Belew

2012 – George & Jonalyn (posthumously) Bew

2013 – Terri Kayser

2014 – Ollene Kordecki

2015 – Angee McKee

2016 – Terri Cox

The Grant Award for Community Service with a Smile

2005 – Jimmy Grant, City of Cartersville

2006 – Judy Jones, City of Cartersville

2007 – Linda Everett, Bartow County

2008 – Freida Lance, City of Adairsville

2009 – Not awarded

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Not awarded

2012 – Richard Osborne, City of Cartersville

2013 – Not awarded

2014 – Not awarded

2015 – Thomas N. Culpepper, City of Cartersville

2016 – Dr. John Harper, Bartow County Schools Superintendent and Dr. J. Howard Hinesley, Cartersville City Schools Superintendent

Hotel of Excellence (formerly Hotelier of the Year)

2005 – Jay Patel, Days Inn – Cartersville

2006 – Penny Miller, Hampton Inn – Cartersville

2007 – Joe Honeycutt, Holiday Inn – Cartersville

2008 – Kishor “Kenny” Patel, Quality Inn & Suites, Comfort Inn & Econo Lodge, Cartersville

2009 – Terry & Kim Terrell, America's Best Inn Cartersville

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Sam Shah, Hilton Garden Inn – Cartersville

2012 – Hilton Garden Inn & Suites – Cartersville

2013 – Not awarded

2014 – Not awarded

2015 – Not awarded

2016 – Not awarded

Distinguished Volunteer Award

2005 – Lyn Maret and Dot Myers, Cartersville-Bartow County CVB

2006 – Radell Nalls, Adairsville Welcome Center

2007 – Patty Wallenburg, Friends of Etowah

2008 – Michele Sims, Host City Committee – Miss Georgia USA Pageants

2009 – Damon Kirkpatrick, Friends of Red Top Mountain

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Monique Vidoli, Cartersville Grand Gardeners

2012 – Jody Grizzle, Cartersville-Bartow County CVB

2013 – Roy Bethune, Rose Lawn Museum

2014 – Lee Burger, WBHF / Anverse, Inc.

2015 – Mary Norton

2016 – Ralph “Sonny” Miller

Shining Star Award

2005 – Cledus T. Judd, for Musical Accomplishment

2005 – Wayne Knight, for Theatrical Accomplishment

2006 – Ronnie Brown, for Athletic Accomplishment

2007 – Cartersville Senior League World Series Champions

2007 – Braves’ Manager Bobby Cox

2008 – Benjamin Walker Davis, for Theatrical Accomplishment

2009 – Not awarded

2010 – Not awarded

2011 – Not awarded

2012 – Justice Robert Benham

2013 – Van Council, Michael Council, of VanMichael Salon

2014 – Brooke Rucker, 2014 Distinguished Young Woman of America

2015 – Dean Lewis, Old Car City USA

2016 – Vic Beasley, Jr, for Athletic Accomplishment; and Brad “Butch” Walker for Musical Accomplishment

People's Choice Awards

Best Restaurant in Bartow County

2005 – D. Morgan's

2006 – Appalachian Grill

2007 – Hearth & Harvest

2008 – D. Morgan's

2009 – Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse

2010 – Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse

2011 – Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse

2012 – Antonino's Italian Grotto

2013 – Swheat Market

2014 – Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse

2015 – The City Cellar & Loft

2016 – Swheat Market

Best Shoppe in Bartow County

2005 – Write on Main

2006 – c.a.n.o.p.y.

2007 – Periwinkle

2008 – Periwinkle

2009 – Periwinkle

2010 – GiGi's Hidden Treasures

2011 – Periwinkle

2012 – Spring Place Pottery & Artists' Gallery

2013 – Spring Place Pottery & Artists' Gallery

2014 – It's About Time Boutique

2015 – It's About Time Boutique

2016 – It's About Time Boutique

Best Attraction in Bartow County

2005 – Booth Western Art Museum

2006 – Booth Western Art Museum

2007 – Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site

2008 – Red Top Mountain State Park

2009 – Tellus Science Museum

2010 – Tellus Science Museum

2011 – Tellus Science Museum

2012 – Booth Western Art Museum

2013 – Booth Western Art Museum

2014 – Booth Western Art Museum

2015 – Booth Western Art Museum

2016 – Bartow History Museum

CARTERSVILLE-BARTOW COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

HISTORY

Local tourism promotion began with the Cartersville Tourism and Industry Council in 1978. This organization restructured in the early 1980's as the Cartersville Tourism Council. In 1990, Tourism Director Ellen Archer proposed the formation of the jointly-funded Cartersville-Bartow County Tourism Council, known today as the Cartersville-Bartow County CVB.

Since opening the destination marketing organization offices and Visitor Information Center on Cartersville's Main Street in January 1991, the CVB has fostered a 300% increase in lodging tax revenue within Bartow County. In 2002, the CVB relocated its Cartersville offices and Visitor Information Center to the 1854 Railroad Depot at Friendship Plaza in downtown Cartersville. For almost a decade (September 2001-June 2010), the CVB also operated the Adairsville Welcome Center in the restored W&A Railroad Depot in Historic Adairsville.

In September 2010, consolidated its visitor information centers, and relocated to the new Clarence Brown Conference Center. The CVB now operates the Clarence Brown Conference Center, as well as the Official Georgia Regional Visitor Information Center located inside the center at 5450 State Route 20 in Cartersville, accessible from I-75 Exit 290.

History: Hospitality Heroes and People's Choice Awards – Regina Wheeler, 770-387-1357

The CVB proudly markets Cartersville, Adairsville, Emerson and all of Bartow County, Georgia to leisure, group, and business travelers. For information call 770-387-1357, or toll-free 800-733-2280. Visitors may learn more online at www.VisitCartersvilleGA.org.

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