

St. Charles County companies take top awards among entrepreneurs

Posted 12/09/11 2:26 pm

Progress 64 West is a 24-year-old organization dedicated to entrepreneurship. That means jobs, jobs, jobs – especially along the Hwy. 40 corridor slicing through St. Charles County.

The Nov. 23 awards banquet featured plenty of St. Charles County leaders and business owners along with the St. Louis County's award winners for leadership in economic and community development and expansion.

There were two local recipients of 2011 Excellence in Community Development awards – CenterPointe Hospital, Weldon Spring, and Ungerboeck Software International, Dardenne Prairie.

One, a consortium of mental healthcare professionals, the other a family-owned IT concern represent the type of business development – and expansion – that reflects the values Progress 64 West seeks to continue to promote.

Progress 64 West isn't just a glorified chamber of commerce nominally stretching across a river. While it is a civic organization its focus is promoting serious, responsible growth and commerce along the I-64 corridor from I-270 to I-70. That's not just a bridge to cross – it is two communities to unify.

First there's the infrastructure portion of the equation. Realizing business growth is greatly enhanced by excellent infrastructure, Progress 64 West has thrown its considerable weight behind the new Missouri River bridge and all the connecting streets and highways that provide access to business on both sides of the river.

Representing St. Charles County's government participation in the organization and the economic development side of the coin, banquet speakers included County Executive Steve Ehlmann and EDC President and CEO Greg Prestemon.

These two community leaders understand that access to shopping and services is key to growth.

Since CenterPointe Hospital was founded as the only provider of inpatient substance abuse and mental health treatment facility in St. Louis or St. Charles counties, patients from St. Louis County also have to have access to its Weldon Spring location.

The need has been so great CenterPointe will open a \$12 million expansion project early next year.



EDC President Greg Prestemon, left, and St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann were featured speakers at the Progress 64 West annual awards banquet Nov. 23.

Ungerboeck Software is about to experience an expansion of its own. The Dardenne Prairie company literally does a worldwide business in end-to-end event management software. So successful at meeting a need in the marketplace, Ungerboeck has experienced more than 1,000 percent growth in the past 15 years.

Access to an international airport and interstate-quality highways in all directions have served Ungerboeck's expansion in a cutting-edge software market extending to Europe, Australia, Hong Kong and China.

Sharon Huber, Mid Rivers Newsmagazine marketing director is a member of the board of directors and one of the scholarship presenters.