

AWARDS: Annual event recognizes achievements

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from a trip to Mexico to accept Volunteer of the Year honors for her work in building the organization Citizens4Community.

“Robyn is a person of enormous energy,” said Jeanette Pilak in presenting the award. She noted that Holman is the kind of volunteer who recognizes a need, pulls people and resources together to meet it, and works to keep the momentum going.

That’s what Holman did with the founding of the community-building organization. She recalled that C4C grew out of a fraught climate in Sisters a couple of years ago, where issues had divided people and “communication

broke down into personal attacks in public and in the media.” C4C fosters civility and constructive communication in public discourse.

Holman has also helped to create a Senior Alliance in Sisters.

“Nothing gives me greater joy than when I see people wanting to do something positive in the community,” she told the assemblage.

A deeply moved Brett Miller accepted the Non-profit of the Year Award on behalf of Warfighter Outfitters. Miller, himself a wounded veteran of the war in Iraq, founded the organization to promote healing for veterans through hunting and fishing expeditions and “engagement missions,” which recreate the camaraderie of military life while conducting demanding work in national parks in the West.

Miller expressed his appreciation to the Sisters community.

“A nonprofit is nothing without its support and donations, so you have made us what we are,” he said.

The Customer Service Award went to a business that evolved out of a garage to become a destination spa at FivePine in Sisters.

Owner Zoe Willitts saluted the staff members who attended the banquet, who apply Shibui Spa’s ethic of customer service every day.

“I’d like them to stand up,” she said. “I’m so proud of them.” She singled out Kendra Littrell as “a manager like no other.”

She also thanked her husband, Bill Willitts, for the impetus to actually create a spa at FivePine, “because I’d still be in the garage.”

Cris Converse accepted her Citizen of the Year Award in honor of her mother, Dorro Sokol, a pioneer of the Sisters business community who died last year. Converse was honored in part for her gift of \$250,000 worth of municipal water rights from Pine Meadow Ranch.

The donation, as presenter Lon Kellstrom noted, means that “the viability and sustainability of the community has been strengthened for decades to come.”

“I love this town — this



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Lon Kellstrom presented the Citizen of the Year award to Cris Converse.

town, this community is a really special place, with incredible people, different opinions,” Converse said. “It’s all good, because y’know what? We’re all here; we’re all committed to this community... The next well will be called ‘Dorro’s Big Drink!’”

Bend/Sisters Garden RV Resort won Business of the Year.

Owner/developer Celia Hung accepted the award, noting that, like a family, disagreements and frustrations in Sisters all are subsumed under one overarching reality: “It is the love that we have for this place that bound us together.”

Hung credited her father with opening her eyes to her surroundings, an awareness

she brought to bear in creating the exceptional atmosphere at Bend/Sisters Garden RV Resort.

“I took what God has given us, this whole community, His creation, and discovered it and made it accessible,” she said.

Hung says that she wants her visitors to feel like they have found a home away from home, that they are pulling their camper into their own garden.

That kind of effort and that level of commitment to Sisters is commonly found — and yet remains exceptional — and ensures that the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce always has a deep pool of potential honorees for their service to their community.



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Chamber director Judy Trego (left) with Volunteer of the Year Robyn Holdman at the annual awards dinner on February 8.

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