

FIRST CITIZEN: 'This is a real honor.'

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Post served as a state representative for Keizer, St. Paul and Newberg for seven years before resigning in November 2021.

Post said that along with marrying his wife and raising their son, representing Keizer was the third greatest thing he has done in his life.

"Thank you for the privilege and the honor of serving you these last few years. It has been an awesome thing, and I appreciate you," Post said.

Blackman, owner of Copper Creek Mercantile, was so choked up upon receiving recognition as merchant of the year, he had a hard time speaking.

"This is a real honor," Blackman said "It's been a great experience."

Blackman has been a business owner in Keizer for more than three decades. He hosts multiple local food carts in the Copper Creek Mercantile parking lot and has helped support local youth programs through uniform sponsorships, car washes and donut sales. He also helped organize food service to animals who had been rescued during the wildfires in September 2020.

"(Blackman) is the very definition of showing up for Keizer," said Jonathan Thompson, the 2020 Merchant of the Year.

Similar to Blackman, Bethell also shed a few tears when she was surprised with the Service to Education honor.

"It has been my deepest honor to be able to serve Keizer. As a kid, I had always hoped to be able to have a family. And I have that with my husband and three kids for sure. We are a tight-knit group that sticks together. But when I decided to really take on something, I knew I needed a community around me to do it. And Keizer welcomed me with open arms," Bethell said. "I truly have a heart for kids, and I truly want to continue to serve every single one of them in whatever need or capacity they have."

Supporting a tenacious "get-it-done" attitude, Bethell has served the community in a number of different ways over the years. As the president of the



Merchant of the Year Award winner Dennis Blackman (middle) poses for a photo with Miss Oregon recipients Sofia Boru (left) and Kellen Takenaka.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

McNary Athletic Booster Club, Bethell was instrumental in McNary's football turf project, along with building new softball dugouts and providing new wrestling mats and a new scoreboard at Flesher Field.

Along with hosting McNary Holiday Bazaars and the annual Blue Day, Bethell was the executive director of the Keizer Chamber for nearly five years. She is currently in her third year on the Salem-Keizer school board and serves alongside Colm Willis and Kevin Cameron as a Marion County commissioner.

"You're an amazing human being. The Keizer community, Marion County and the state of Oregon are lucky to have you in their corner," said Tammy Ready, the 2019 Service to Education recipient.

"You're a pain in the butt, you are a wonderful human being, and I am so happy you are receiving this amazing award," added former first citizen Joe Egli.

Despite being a lobbyist involved in Oregon politics for over 30 years, Fuller has always found time to volunteer in Keizer. After his house caught fire in 2007, Fuller was

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TOP: President's Award winner Darrell Fuller (left) gets welcomed to the stage by Bob Shackelford. BOTTOM: Former state representative Bill Post speaks to the crowd.

Photos by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

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— DANIELLE BTHELL

Service to Education recipient