

Polk County
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Dallas chamber names award winners

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — If you are a regular attendee to the Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce's annual Community Awards, you will notice a few changes this year.

The biggest change is that there are fewer awards.

JD Shinn, the chamber's chief executive officer, said the reason for that isn't that there are fewer people in town worthy of awards. The chamber simply wanted the awards it gives out to mean more, he said.

"We want to make to make sure they are perceived as a prestigious thing," Shinn said, noting in other communities with similar traditions, perhaps as few as three awards are presented each year. "We were giving out 10."

Shinn said he noticed some overlap in the qualifications for awards and narrowed them down so that each is unique.

This year, which marks the celebration's 60th year, the award winners are:
First Citizen — Jinett Yeager, who started Jinett's Closet, a clothing closet at Dallas New Life Church of the Nazarene.

Business of the Year — Heartstrings Florist & Artisans, whose owner, Linda Taylor, organized a downtown turkey giveaway that helped connect local businesses and donated turkeys to the Dallas Food Bank.

Young Pros of the Year — Devin Colby Jones and MacLarin Jones, the owners of Harvest Crossfit, which opened in 2014.

Organization of the Year — CASA of Polk County, an organization of volunteers who represent the interests of foster children in the court system.

Excellence in Arts — Abe Huff was selected for the honor by the Dallas Arts Association, which will present to award to him during the ceremony.

Winners will be recognized at the Community Awards Banquet on Feb. 24 at 6 p.m. at the Ne-smith Readiness Center in Dallas.

Washington Street Steakhouse will cater a prime rib dinner, and Em-maly and Wyatt Basaraba will provide live jazz music for the 60th anniversary celebration.

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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

The Oregon Department of Transportation has begun initial work to install a roundabout at Clow Corner and 99W.

ROUNDABOUT

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Studies nationwide show that modern roundabouts reduce fatal crashes by 90 percent.

They reduce injury accidents by 75 percent.

Those statistics, courtesy of the Federal Highway Administration and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, are just two of the reasons the Oregon Department of Transportation has lobbied for a roundabout at the intersection of Clow Corner Road and Highway 99W.

Until recently, local officials have advocated for a traffic light at the intersection, citing the success of the Hoffman Road and 99W traffic light installed about 15 years ago. There have been no fatalities at the intersection, and the number of crashes has declined by 71 percent, according to county officials.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners voted, with some reservations, to work with ODOT on installing a roundabout at Clow Corner, the site of a fatal accident in September. All three commissioners said they felt a light — the less expensive option at about \$1.2 million compared to about \$5 million for a roundabout — would be effective there, but wanted to move on making the intersection safer.

Tim Potter, ODOT's Area 3 manager, said an evaluation performed in 2016 had the intersection failing "warrants" for a signal. The study evaluated a set



criteria, or warrants, including traffic volumes over and an eight- or four-hour period, peak hour traffic, pedestrian usage, and how close the intersection is to a school or rail crossing.

"Franky Clow Corner didn't meet any of those warrants," Potter said. "That immediately sets an uphill challenge (for a light)."

He added that while they are close together, Hoffman and Clow Corner are not identically situated. Hoffman is closer to an urban area in Monmouth, Potter said. Drivers traveling north on the highway just left an urban area and wouldn't be surprised to encounter another signal, he said.

However, the same evaluation was done in 2007, and Clow Corner passed the warrants test. At the time, the analysis was conducted as part of an overall highway corridor study and didn't have funding attached.

When money was placed in an account for a safety upgrade in 2013,

ODOT had begun looking at other solutions, including a roundabout and redesigning the intersection to improve safety.

"We were looking for a solution that we felt would overall solve the problem better than a signal could," said Angela Kargel, ODOT's Region 2 traffic manager.

Kargel said she didn't think the success of the light at Hoffman Road would be repeated at Clow Corner.

"It doesn't solve the problem," she said. "It most likely will not solve the problem."

Todd Whitaker, Polk County's public works director, said the Hoffman signal has outperformed the averages.

"Right now, we've seen a 71 to 73 percent reduction in serious and fatal accidents at Hoffman Road, but that is better performance than they see nationwide," he said. "Generally, they see 40 to 50 percent crash reduction."

Whitaker said he didn't agree with all of the engineer's conclusions in the 2016 warrants analysis, but agreed it would be a difficult sell to continue to ask for a signal.

Potter said roundabouts greatly reduce the chance of high-speed rear-end accidents and eliminate the possibility of red-light running accidents, which can be severe. He said the one-way traffic flow of roundabouts reduce the number of "conflict points" — where cars can collide — to just one, so drivers don't have to time the movements of multiple vehicles.

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Dreier takes reins of Dallas visitors center

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The new face of the Dallas Area Visitors Center isn't someone new at all.

Bonnie Dreier, who has worked for the chamber and visitors center since 2007, has taken over as the visitors center director and events coordinator. Dreier is the Polk County Bountly Market manager, but has helped organize all chamber and visitors center events for years.

She moved to her new job in early January and has been busy setting up this

years slate of events, including the Dallas Awards Celebration, Bountly Market, Freedom-fest, Summerfest, Trick 'n' Treat and Winterfest. This year brings a unique opportunity



Dreier in the Aug. 21 solar eclipse, and Dreier is working with businesses and organizations for Dallas' downtown party. Dreier said so far, the step

up has been a lot of work, but she's also found plenty of support.

"I had lots of the people come and saying 'How we can help?'" she said.

JD Shinn, the Dallas Area Chamber's chief executive officer, also hired a part-time administrative assistant, Ashley Kahl, to round out the organization's staff.

Dreier said Kahl, who started on Jan. 23, is helping with event coordination.

"She's been amazing," she said. "This place is being revitalized."

Shinn, who was brought

on board in October, said the more he worked with Dreier, the more he knew she was the best person for the job.

"Bonnie has really stepped up a lot," he said. "I knew the potential was there ... She has continued to surprise herself and confirm what I saw in her."

Shinn said Kahl, as the most recent addition, is bringing more talent to the new team.

"They have so many strengths that I don't have," Shinn said. "I'm thrilled to have both of them on board."

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
Woman OK after heating pad fire.
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FALLS CITY
OSAA to hear Falls City about staying in Class 1A.
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INDEPENDENCE
Central School District learns to Be GLAD.
»Page 8A

MONMOUTH
Dollar Zone aims to save customers money and help them have fun while shopping.
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EDUCATION
Students create their own eclipse myths.
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SPORTS
Dallas swimmer Jolie-Rae Ford hopes to make it to state for the fourth time.
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BOC to hold hearing on bond

Itemizer-Observer staff report
POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Board of Commissioners is holding two public hearings regarding the proposed up to \$10 million bond for maintaining existing county facilities on Feb. 15 at 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Both meetings are in the Polk County Courthouse conference room at 850 Main St., in Dallas.

If approved by the board, the measure would be before voters in the May 2017 election. At \$10 million for 10 years, the bond would cost an average of 20 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties.

For more information: 503-623-8173.

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Don't forget to follow the *I-O* on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to receive updates on happenings from around Polk County.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
Do something healthy for yourself and get your blood pressure checked for free at Salem Health West Valley. 2-3 p.m. Free.

Rain
Hi: 46
Lo: 44

thu
Want to quit, but don't know how? WVP Health Authority hosts a freedom from smoking series at the Flaming center. 9:30-11 a.m. Free.

Rain
Hi: 53
Lo: 42

fri
Dust off your instrument and join local musicians at Guthrie Park Community Center for the monthly music jam. 6:30-10 p.m. Free.

Showers
Hi: 46
Lo: 34

sat
Share your vision for the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center at the fair board's annual work session. 8 a.m. Free.

Showers
Hi: 48
Lo: 31

sun
Why not take the morning off from cooking and grab breakfast at the Buell Grange, just off Highway 22. 8-11 a.m. \$6.

Partly sunny
Hi: 48
Lo: 33

mon
Clutter can accumulate everywhere. Take a moment to clean up your computer on National Clean Out Your Computer Day.

Partly sunny
Hi: 50
Lo: 36

tue
Happy Valentine's Day! What better way to celebrate than saving a life through donating blood at WOU? 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Partly sunny
Hi: 54
Lo: 38