

Businesses bring home hardware

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Hors d'oeuvres were served, laughs were shared and awards given to individuals and businesses looking to help improve downtown Beloit during the Downtown Beloit Association's annual party on Thursday evening.

The Downtown Beloit Association brings together property owners, business people and volunteers who are committed to revitalizing Beloit's Central Business District and supporting the city's Main Street program.

"There are so many groups that just need a little nudge to come downtown and the Downtown Beloit Association holds the stick to bring them," said outgoing Chairperson Jason Braun.

Before awards were handed out, Braun handed over the Downtown Beloit Association chairman's gavel to Peter Fronk, who will act as the DBA board chairperson in 2013.

Honorable mentions of the evening went to Farmers Insurance Redieske Agency, Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint, Domenico's Italian Ristorante and Pizzaz for their work in 2012.

"These businesses have done great projects over the past year," said Fronk.

Winners of the evening included:

- First National Bank & Trust Company for Best Façade Renovation over \$10,000; accepted by Elaine Ribarich
- The Century Center for Best Façade Renovation under \$10,000; accepted by Dwight and Vickie Kruse
- The Cheese People for Best New Business; accepted by Darren Larsen
- John Mansfield for Upper Floor Housing Renovations
- The 615 Club for Best Business Expansion
- Cash Store for Best Façade Restoration over \$10,000; accepted by Nancy Spelius
- The Strong Building for Best Façade Renovation over \$10,000; accepted by Doug and Mary Eddy
- Volunteer of the Year to Becky Moffett and the late Kevin Minter; accepted by Becky Moffett

- Chairman's Award to Tim McKearn; accepted by Frank McKearn

The final award of the evening was the first of its kind presented by the Downtown Beloit Association.

The first recipient of the Legacy Award went to John Nicholas.

"It's my experience with John that he does things not to get a pat on the back, but to get things done," Fronk said. "If anyone deserves this award, it's him. He's a true Beloiter through and through."

Nicholas took the podium briefly to express his thanks for the honor.

"I wound up on the Downtown Beloit Association Board to improve relations of Beloit College with downtown businesses and my mission was to bring the college off the hill," he said. "When I first came to Beloit it was down on its luck, but now it's the envy of others...what Beloit has accomplished is amazing and it's successful because of everyone who believes that Beloit is worth fighting for."

Downtown Beloit Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said she was pleased with how the evening, which is the group's 25th and her first, went.

"The Downtown Beloit Association really has something for everybody and the more creative minds that we can get together, the better," she said.

