

Chamber Honors 9 Businesses for Excellence

By Kevin Ireland

In a celebration featuring the type of innovation it wants to promote in Gainesville, the Gainesville area Chamber of Commerce has honored nine local businesses for excellence with a high-tech awards ceremony.

The October event featured Skype video presentations from prominent high-tech business leaders, including Mitchell Baker, who led the team that developed the Mozilla web browser. Audience members got in on the high-tech too, as they took part in a discussion and a poll about major innovation in this region, with voting taking place on the chamber's Facebook page.

Top awards at the event went to CH2M Hill of Gainesville and InterMed Biomedical Services on Alachua.

In winning recognition as best overall large business, CH2M Hill, was recognized for its excellence in several areas. First, it's been named to the *Fortune 100* list as one of the top companies to work for nationwide and has earned recognition from the Ethisphere Institute as one of the world's most ethical companies. It is also a major player in engineering projects worldwide. Among its current jobs is work on the Panama Canal expansion and design work for the 2012 Olympics.


Intermed was recognized as the small business of the year for its fast growth and commitment to charitable work in the community. The company, which repairs and sells sophisticated medical devices like X-ray and ultrasound machines, was recently named to *Inc.* Magazine's list of the 5000 fastest growing businesses.

In the community, Intermed's president Rick Staab is known for founding (with his wife) the Tyler's Hope charities. Named for their son, the charity raises money to support research into finding a cure for dysytonia, a neurological movement disorder from which Tyler suffers.

These companies also were honored at the event:

- Child Advocacy Center – Nonprofit winner
- City of Gainesville RTS Bus Service – Commitment to the Environment
- Carpet Systems Plus – Best Minority Business
- Student Maid cleaning service – Leading Women's Enterprise
- Tutor Matching Service – Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- New Horizons – Business Expansion
- Grooveshark – International Business

Summing up the opinion of many of the award winners Kirsten Hadeed of Student Maid said, "I owe everyone in this city a big 'thank you.' I've been amazed by the mentoring I've received from people in this room and how giving the community has been."

For several of the winners, the Chamber's recognition was just part of a string of recent honors. Last month, New Horizons was named Global Center of the Year for 2010. Grooveshark, the online music streaming site, was named one of *Time* magazine's top websites. And Tutor Matching Services was honored as the first winner of the Cade Prize for Innovation. 

Santa Fe College Seeks Women of the Year Nominees

To mark Women's History Month in March, Santa Fe College will be honoring women who have made significant contributions in Alachua or Bradford county.

Nominations are being accepted through Nov. 3 for the 24th annual Alachua-Bradford County Women of Distinction and Woman of Promise.

Nominees for Women of Distinction should have unique achievements in the arts, business, industry, science, environment, medicine, education, government, social services, human rights, history, sports, agriculture, humanities, community service or philanthropy in either county.

Nominees must be 16 to 21 years old and have demonstrated character, achievement and leadership.

Finalists will be chosen by a bi-county panel of judges; the women will be honored at a luncheon on a Tuesday in March.

Nomination forms are available online at www.sfcollge.edu/wod, and must be postmarked by Nov. 3.