

BizWest | Aug. 19 - Sept. 1, 2016

# bravo!

ENTREPRENEUR

---

# AWARDS

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
IN NORTHERN COLORADO

**Honoring  
the best of Northern  
Colorado business**



presented by **BizWest**



# Entrepreneurs continue to excel

**E**ntrepreneurship is alive and well in Northern Colorado! Hard work, ingenuity and effective marketing create unstoppable prosperity. And now that 2016 is improving over last year, so is the Bravo! Entrepreneur Awards program and all of the accolades that go with it!



2016 honorees stem from a variety of industries, including: banking, natural and organic, hospitality, beverage, government and technology — another great subsection of the Northern Colorado economic market.

A big thanks goes to professor Dr. David Thomas for spearheading the student judging for the Bravo! Emerging Entrepreneur Award.

A robust thank you goes out to our title sponsors: EKS&H, Flood and Peterson Insurance, and Home State Bank. Our associate sponsors are: Coan Payton & Payne, LLC, McWhinney, Palmer Florists, Miramont Lifestyle Fitness, DaVinci Sign Systems, The BBB Serving Northern Colorado and Wyoming, Embassy Suites, Survey Gizmo and GrafXGroup. On behalf of the BizWest team — we thank you!

Lastly, we want to thank the entire BizWest staff for their help in producing this event, especially Kimberly Willard and Lexi Valenti for their event stewardship!



**PUBLISHER**  
JEFF NUTTALL



**PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
CHRIS WOOD



## Honorees

Lifetime Achievement	3
Regional Spirit	5
Emerging	7
Outlying Communities	9
Fort Collins	11
Greeley	13
Loveland	15

## Advertiser Index

EKS&H	4
DaVinci Signs	10
Better Business Bureau of Northern Colorado and Wyoming	8
Co's BMW	8
Verus Banks of Choice	8
Coan Payton Payne	10
Miramont Lifestyle Fitness	10
North Range MPO	10
Guaranty Bank	12
Home State Bank	14
Flood and Peterson	16



**The Bravo! Entrepreneur** mission is to celebrate the spirit of entrepreneurship by honoring regional business leaders who have had a positive economic and cultural impact on Northern Colorado. Since 1998, over a hundred individuals and/or organizations have been honored as Bravo! Entrepreneurs. Thank you to the 2016 Bravo! Entrepreneur event sponsors.

### Presenting Sponsors



### Associate Sponsors



**bravo!**  
 ENTREPRENEUR  
**AWARDS**  
 CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
 IN NORTHERN COLORADO

2016 Bravo!  
 Entrepreneur

—  
 Lifetime  
 Achievement

**Wes Sargent**  
 Guaranty Bank  
 and Trust Co.



# Communities built Sargent's lifetime of achievements

By Elizabeth Gold  
 news@bizwestmedia.com

Almost every reference Wes Sargent makes about what has contributed to his success comes down to the geography of his life.

"All of my achievements stem from the fact that we've lived in this community—Longmont, Loveland, Greeley, Fort Collins and the surrounding areas," he said. "People here have always stepped up for each other—from dealing with the flood to dealing with the economy.

"It's a very positive place to live."

Sargent is quick to add that the personal community that has most supported his success is his wife. "Trudy, my lovely wife, has as many credentials as I have," he said.

As senior vice president of Guaranty Bank and Trust Co. in Fort Collins, Sargent stresses that success in a community is directly related to being part of the community. Work needs to be more than a 9-to-5 investment.

Personally, he has spent a lifetime

practicing what he preaches. That commitment ranges from 39 years announcing Colorado State University Ram games and serving as grand marshal for the Greeley Stampede to 25 years as master of ceremonies for nonprofit events and helping Future Farmers of America build a \$3 million facility.

Sargent started his banking career at First National Bank in Fort Collins under the guidance of Tom Gleason, who is a former CEO and chairman of the bank. "The only thing I knew about banking at that time was that I was overdrawn," Sargent said.

He refers to Gleason as one of the many mentors throughout his career, with each one of them impressing the same need to focus first on the community.

"It's all about relationships — you don't have a business without customers," he said. "It's about shaking as many hands as possible — they call it working the room now."

Although Sargent affirms that he has led a good life, he's also faced and

overcome some obstacles along the way.

"I've been through at least five bank mergers," he said.

At the very least, that type of situation requires adaptation, flexibility and creativity.

"Through mergers, you have to keep positive and look at what you have to offer. Make sure the company knows what you can do, and if you're leaving the company, look at where you would best belong," he said.

Here's where Sargent brings in the idea of listening to hear opportunity knocking. When he was "left in the cold" as a result of one of the mergers, he moved into teaching and opened a consulting business.


"If I had stayed in one place all that time, I would have gotten a gold watch after 40 years instead of learning and trying all the new things I did. It's important to remember that you don't have to fold your tent when things like that happen," he said. "Use it all as an opportunity."

## Past Winners

### Lifetime Achievement

2015	Bonnie Dean, Greeley
2014	Dick Boettcher, Greeley
2013	Loren Maxey, Maxey Cos.
2012	Norm Dean, Greeley
2010	Don Churchwell, Loveland
2008-09	Gene Markley, Fort Collins
2007	Larry Kendall, Fort Collins
2006	B.D. "Pete" Peterson and J. Barney Flood, Greeley
2005	George Hall, Greeley
2004	Bill Neal and Leo Schuster, Fort Collins and Loveland
2003	Kathryn Hach-Darrow, Loveland
2002	Bob Tointon, Greeley
2001	Tom Gleason, Fort Collins
2000	Ken Monfort, Greeley
1999	Bob Everitt, Fort Collins
1998	W.D. Farr, Greeley



A man with a beard, wearing a grey suit jacket, a light blue dress shirt, and a dark tie, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is looking out a window with white blinds. The background is bright and slightly blurred, showing the window frame and the blinds. The overall tone is professional and optimistic.

Congratulations to the honorees  
and finalists of the 2016  
Bravo! Entrepreneur Awards.





▲ From Left to Right: Sean Conway, Weld County Commissioner; Mindy McCloughan, Loveland Chamber of Commerce; Sarah MacQuiddy, Greeley Chamber of Commerce; David May, Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce; Barbara Kirkmeyer, Weld County Commissioner.

**bravo!**  
ENTREPRENEUR  
AWARDS

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
IN NORTHERN COLORADO

2016 Bravo!  
Entrepreneur  
—  
Regional  
Spirit

# Regional cooperation drives progress on I-25

By Elizabeth Gold  
news@bizwestmedia.com

Working single-mindedly as a group of strong leaders who represent different factions has, without a doubt, inherent challenges. Meeting the demand in the case of making Interstate 25 in Northern Colorado wide enough to keep traffic moving and the area thriving has required shifting the focus from micro to macro and staying focused on the goal.

The section of I-25 that's been the target for regional development, close to 50 miles long, stretches along I-25 north between Colorado Highway 14 on the northern edge of Fort Collins and Colorado Highway 66, at Longmont's northern edge. Adding a third lane to the interstate will cost about \$1.5 billion.

Drivers for the project included an increased population along the corridor — 425 percent over the past 20 years — and a glimpse of what would happen if the project didn't happen sooner rather than later.

"We saw the future of I-25 after the flood, when all north and south roads 20 miles west of I-25 and 20 miles east of Greeley were closed," said Barbara Kirkmeyer, chair of the North I-25 Coalition. "We were being told that improvements wouldn't

happen until 2075, and we already knew that some sections only had a 10-year life span."

"The flood was the fire under us to get this done sooner," said Sean Conway, Weld County commissioner at large and co-founder of the Coalition. "It forced all traffic on I-25 into a gridlock, and it was harvest time in Weld County — we'd lose crops if the roads weren't fixed."

In addition to the Colorado Department of Transportation decree that improvements were out of the question until 2075, the project lacked financial backing and was not fully understood in terms of detriment to communities along the corridor.

"Some communities didn't want more lanes because they thought it would just create more congestion," Conway said.

To give life to the project and move it up the priority list, community leaders came together. Included in the groups these leaders founded are the Fix North I-25 Business Alliance formed in 2014.

The Alliance is a joint committee of the Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland chambers of commerce, Upstate Colorado Economic Development and the Northern Colorado Economic Alliance.

Another group, the North I-25 Coalition, was founded in 2013 as a collec-

tion of about 15 town, city and county governments along the North I-25 corridor in Larimer and Weld counties.

"The challenges and obstacles we faced were pretty common for a start-up initiative," said David May, convener for the Fix North I-25 Business Alliance. "To be successful, you need to be crystal clear about your purpose and objectives."

"In our case, we had to fight the temptation to broaden our focus to anything other than adding additional lanes to North I-25."

Progress to date includes a \$15 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to help fund a tolled HOV/express lane in both directions from Fort Collins to Loveland, construction on a climbing lane south of Berthoud and other projects. Various governmental jurisdictions have contributed funding.

"We saw this as economic development life blood for us," Kirkmeyer said. "It's a major corridor that has significance for the state of Colorado as well as for Northern Colorado — it's an economic driver for the state. Typically, people tend to be parochial about something like this, but we went against that and said 'let's go fight this together.'"

"That's what regional cooperation and collaboration is about," Conway added.

## Past Winners

### Regional Spirit

- 2015 Banner Health Northern Colorado
- 2014 Northern Colorado Chapter, American Red Cross, Fort Collins
- 2013 Pamela King, Mountain States Better Business Bureau
- 2012 CSU College of Veterinary Medicine, Fort Collins
- 2010 Area Chambers of Commerce (Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland)
- 2008-09 CSU Office of Economic Development, Fort Collins
- 2007 AIMS Community College, Greeley/Loveland
- 2006 Premier Colorado, Fort Collins
- 2005 New Belgium Brewing Co., Fort Collins
- 2004 Monfort Family Foundation, Eaton
- 2003 The Bohemian Foundation, Fort Collins
- 2002 Longs Peak Council of the Boy Scouts
- 2001 State Farm Insurance Co., Greeley/Evans
- 2000 Greeley Independence Stampede, Greeley
- 1999 Eastman Kodak Co. (Kodak Colorado Division), Windsor
- 1998 Hewlett Packard Co., Fort Collins



# Your business. Your city.

## BW GREELEY BIZ

### Tim Veldhuizen is cookin' with gas

Restaurateur aims to build on eclectic Greeley successes

By Joshua Lindstrom  
joshua@bizwestmedia.com

GREELEY — Entrenched in Loveland at the time as owner of three restaurants, Tim Veldhuizen passed several years back when a customer proposed taking the 4th Street Chophouse concept and opening another location in Greeley. The idea stuck with Veldhuizen, however.



Tim Veldhuizen, owner of Greeley Chophouse, Moody's American Grill and 1900 Speakeasy, stands behind the bar at his restaurant.

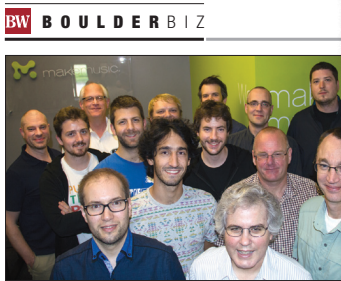
"That's what makes it fun for me is to have the opportunity to do a variety of different things," Veldhuizen said. "I like to develop a real strong, direct Colorado company."

Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done.

Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done.

Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done.

Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done. Veldhuizen said he's far from done.



The Weezie and MakeMusic teams gathered at MakeMusic's Boulder headquarters in June.

### MakeMusic singing new tunes after purchase of Paris' Weezie

Cloud-based application provides entry to Web, Chromebook Market

By Jeff Thomas  
jeff@bizwestmedia.com

BOULDER — Boulder's MakeMusic, an interactive music-training technology, picked up what could have been a major competitor for an undisclosed amount last week, along with the Web-based technology needed to launch its own market-leading product into the cloud.

## BW BROOMFIELD BIZ

### Serving up success

Co-working space comes with a side of mentoring

By Paula Ann Gladych  
paula@bizwestmedia.com

BROOMFIELD — The Kitchen Coop in Broomfield is not your average commercial kitchen co-op. It provides kitchens and production areas for small food producers to make their wares, but it adds a little something extra: sound advice.



Founder and owner Jeff Greenberg puts his background in psychology and his love for small food producers to work in his kitchen.

"We make sure that they have a realistic view of their product's profitability so they aren't making money," Greenberg said.

Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done.

Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done.

Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done.

Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done. Greenberg said he's far from done.

## BW LOVELAND BIZ

### Desktop 3-D printers hit big time with little things

Alph Objects printing its own replacement parts

By Jeff Thomas  
jeff@bizwestmedia.com

LOVELAND — With the evolution of 3-D printing accelerating in exponential fashion, how could a small Loveland company distinguish itself in a world in which the industry is launching into prosthetics, e-cables and perhaps even custom pharmaceuticals?



The LulzBot Mini 3-D printer prints a fuel part before being shipped.

"The folks over at NASA really like the LulzBot TAZ 5 3-D and platform design," said sales manager Josh Bryant.

Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done.

Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done.

Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done.

Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done. Bryant said he's far from done.

## BW BOULDER BIZ

### Environmental safeguards

Continuous Program Improvements

Bill Barrett Corporation

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

Environmental safeguards. Continuous Program Improvements. Bill Barrett Corporation.

What's new? What's successful? What are the challenges? What's on the horizon? BizWest's new city-specific coverage highlights the business and economic scene of individual communities throughout the Boulder Valley and Northern Colorado — in every issue and online.

The BizWest PrintPlus subscription delivers the print newspaper right to your mailbox, access to our latest online content, a replica "Flyp" edition of BizWest, access to our robust online offerings and every one of our annual industry directories, including the Book of Lists — all for just \$59.99. Subscribe today!

Visit [BizWest.com](http://BizWest.com)  
 Call 303-630-1953 | Boulder Valley  
 Call 970-232-3143 | Northern Colorado

# BizWest

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL OF THE BOULDER VALLEY AND NORTHERN COLORADO



**bravo!**  
 ENTREPRENEUR  
 AWARDS  
 CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
 IN NORTHERN COLORADO



*2016 Bravo!  
 Entrepreneur*  
 —  
*Emerging  
 Entrepreneur*

**Jeff Moe**  
 Aleph Objects Inc.

# Aleph Objects' Moe innovative by default

By Elizabeth Gold  
 news@bizwestmedia.com

LOVELAND—Jeff Moe's entrepreneurial spirit has turned the traditional business model for a software company into a free-for-all.

As founder and CEO of Aleph Objects Inc., Moe and his team created a company that develops and manufactures 3D desktop printers. LulzBot is a product line of that parent company: Aleph Objects Inc.

The line includes 3D printers, as well as accessories and parts.

What's unique about Aleph is that its code, design, plans and spreadsheets are open sourced. Users have the same information as the company does and are invited to modify and improve the technology in the same manner.

As opposed to using the closed-source model, which keeps source code under wraps, Moe believes that technology evolves and advances more quickly when everyone can experiment with the source code.

"Before we even release a new product, people can download and offer their input," Moe said. "In this

century, open and collaborative outpaces secretive and patented."

The philosophy of open-sourced code makes business a win-win. Customers and other interested individuals have the opportunity to build their own — 3D printers in this case — and to experiment with customized options.

For companies such as Aleph, the feedback that follows can reduce the time its in-house R&D group spends upgrading.

For example, one of the critical components of 3D printers is called a hot end. When one user got ahold of Aleph's hot-end source code and started working on it, the cloned result was a product that had more features and cost less than the original model.

"We wound up buying it from our cloner and rolling it into our next versions," Moe said.

His goal is to use collective intelligence and spend time on the tasks that uniquely support the business.

In addition to tapping into technological wisdom and creativity outside of his company, Moe put the man-

agement of his company's employees into the hands of a professional employer organization.

As opposed to an in-house human resource department, he outsources tasks such as employee benefits, payroll and workers comp.

The innovations have helped Aleph grow from a basement business to a crew of 115 in a 17,000-square-foot space in Loveland.

Scaling up has been one of the bigger challenges the company has faced, Moe said. "Not letting any part of the company get ahead of any other part and keeping them all in sync has been demanding," he said.

Using a communication technique that keeps everyone in the loop has proved to meet the demand.

"We have weekly meetings of each department and between departments so everyone knows what everyone else is doing and stays on the same page," Moe said. "And once a month we have a companywide meeting so everyone in the company knows what everyone else is doing — from manufacturing and marketing to IT."

## Past Winners

### Emerging Entrepreneur

- 2015** Jeff Lindauer and partners  
Spring44 Distilling Inc.,  
Loveland
- 2014** Ray Schofield and Bob Flynn,  
Green Ride Colorado
- 2013** Betsy Craig, MenuTrinfo
- 2012** Justin Bzdek, Symbios  
Technologies
- 2010** Guy Babbitt, Czzero, Fort Collins
- 2008-09** Kelly Giard; Clean Air Lawn  
Care, Fort Collins
- 2007** Steve Byers; EnergyLogic,  
Berthoud
- 2006** Kevin and Paul Brinkman;  
Brinkman Partners, Fort  
Collins
- 2005** Paul and Nenita Pelligrino; Nita  
Crisp Crackers, Fort Collins
- 2004** Bruce Golden, Bernard E. Rollin  
and Ralph V. Switzer Jr.,  
Optibrand Ltd. LLC,  
Fort Collins
- 2003** Tom and Kristi Johnson,  
Bingham Hill Cheese Co.,  
Fort Collins
- 2002** Maury Dobbie, MediaTech  
Productions, Fort Collins
- 2001** Jeff Whitham, Encorp Inc.,  
Windsor
- 2000** Tim Gan, OpenLCR.com, Fort  
Collins
- 1999** Eastman Kodak Co., Windsor
- 1998** Hewlett-Packard Co., Fort  
Collins



# LOOK FOR THE SEAL.



[bbb.org](http://bbb.org)



## CO'S BMW CENTER- WHERE THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE MEETS THE ULTIMATE ENTREPRENEUR.



Congrats Christina on being a BRAVO! Entrepreneur of the Year for Loveland Finalist!

-Your Co's BMW Team



**Co's BMW Center**  
4150 Byrd Drive • Loveland, CO 80538 • 970-292-5200 • [cosbmw.com](http://cosbmw.com)



2016 Bravo! Entrepreneur Award Honorees!

Congratulations Mark Kross and Gerard Nalezny!

Communities are best served with care that is home grown!

**VERUS** Bank of Commerce

3700 S. College Ave. Unit 102  
Fort Collins, CO 80525  
[www.verusboc.com](http://www.verusboc.com)





# bravo!

## ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
IN NORTHERN COLORADO

2016 Bravo!  
Entrepreneur

—  
Outlying  
Communities

Koel Thomae and  
Rob Graves  
Noosa Yoghurt LLC

# Noosa bucked old trends to cultivate new growth

By Elizabeth Gold  
news@bizwestmedia.com

“We were complete strangers going into business in a getting-to-know-you, full-speed-ahead way.”

That’s how Koel Thomae describes how she and co-founder Rob Graves started Noosa Yoghurt.

The idea started when Thomae sampled a taste of Australian yoghurt in a beach town named Noosa near Australia’s Sunshine Coast.

An Aussie ex-pat, Thomae was living in Colorado at the time and felt driven to develop her own version of the yoghurt, which is spelled with an ‘h’ in honor of its Australian roots.

“I was looking for a milk supplier and started to learn about all the complexities of the dairy industry when I came across a flier for Morning Fresh Dairy,” she said. “The fact that they grew their own crops with no hormones or pesticides really piqued my interest, so I cold-called Rob, and he agreed to meet.”

“I think he thought I was a little crazy.”

Graves, who was unavailable at the time of this interview, is a fourth-generation dairy farmer on the family farm, Morning Fresh Dairy in Bell-

**“We were complete strangers going into business in a getting-to-know-you, full-speed-ahead way.”**

Koel Thomae

vue.

Thomae said that Graves was instantly on-board when he tasted her yoghurt. “It’s made from best-in-class fruit puree and whole milk infused with honey — it’s like eating velvet,” she said.

Making Noosa a sought-after product took a bit of convincing when they first took it market.

“We were going against old trends at the time because it’s whole fat, whole milk, and in 2010, the trend was low fat and no fat,” she said. “Even though it was against industry norms, though, we thought that if we could get people to taste it they would love it.”

And they did. Early on, however, tying down the right branding and marketing proved challenging.

Noosa hit what Thomae called a

“stumble” when they partnered up with a retailer in New York.

“The retailer treated us like any other yoghurt on the shelf instead of as a premium and unique product,” she said. “Instead of working with us to determine how we could be successful together, they took the same approach as with any other yoghurt.”

Problems such as having a premium price, a short shelf life and a weak strategic plan took a toll on the company.

“We had to pull out because we didn’t have the resources to meet their rules for delivering product, and it set us back tens of thousands of dollars,” Thomae said.

The lesson learned was to build the brand locally and create a strategic plan to use when they were ready to go out of state.

Another lesson was to stick to the core product. “I got a lot of input from consumers to do too many things at once and learned that you can’t be all things to all people,” she said. “Not all opportunities are the right opportunities.”

It’s all paid off, however. Noosa was acquired in 2014 by Advent International, a Boston-based private-equity firm.

## Past Winners

### Outlying Communities

- 2015** John Shaw  
DaVinci Sign Systems, Inc.,  
Windsor
- 2014** Bill Scaff and Ed Holloway,  
Synergy Resources
- 2013** Mike Burns, Burns Marketing  
Communications
- 2012** Henry Obermeyer;  
Obermeyer Hydro, Wellington
- 2010** Bill Rankin, UQM, Longmont
- 2008-09** Mike McCurdie; SAFEbuilt,  
Windsor
- 2007** Martin Lind; Water Valley,  
Windsor
- 2006** Andy and Bob Brown; Harsh  
International Inc., Eaton
- 2005** Tom Baur and Garry Gorsuch;  
Meadowlark Optics,  
Frederick
- 2004** Mark Hopkins; Peak Industries  
Inc., Frederick
- 2003** Tom Gray; Gray Oil Co. Inc.,  
Fort Lupton
- 2002** Israel “Izzy” Salazar; TSN Inc.,  
Frederick
- 2001** Joe and Bob Raith; Morning  
Fresh Farms, Platteville
- 2000** Bob, Max and Dean Walker;  
Walker Manufacturing Co.,  
Timnath
- 1999** Louis Lucio; Armadillo, LaSalle
- 1998** Bill Coleman; Colorado  
Greenhouse Holdings Inc.,  
Fort Lupton



**DAVINCI**  
Extraordinary Belongs To Those Who Create It!  
*Congratulations!*  
BRAVO AWARD WINNERS!

**JAX**  
RANCH & HOME  
STORE HOURS

LOVELAND MARKETPLACE  
WESTERN STATES BANK  
STARBUCKS COFFEE  
BURKE CLEANERS  
Noble Roman's Pizzeria  
You Bake or We Bake!

**WOODWARD**  
**REVE**

**DAVINCI**  
SIGN SYSTEMS, INC.

WINDSOR, CO  
4496 BENTS DR.  
970-203-9292

CHEYENNE, WY  
108 W. LINCOLN WAY  
307-220-4316

DAVINCISIGN.COM

COAN, PAYTON & PAYNE, LLC WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE NOMINEES AND WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S **BRAVO! ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS** AND SAY THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT.

COAN, PAYTON & PAYNE, LLC  
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW

DENVER  
303-861-8888  
FORT COLLINS  
970-225-6700  
GREELEY  
970-339-3500  
WWW.CP2LAW.COM

Special Offers for Local Businesses

- \$10 off 5 and 10 packs
- ½ off first month of unlimited classes
- NEW! 30 minute lunch time express classes

*Some restrictions apply. New clients only.*

**Please call or visit our website to set up your free trial week**  
970.480.0880 | Revefitness.com

Hot Yoga • Spinning • Barre • Boot Camps

**REVE**  
by Miramont

YOU BIKE, VAN POOL, BUS, AND WALK? I'M YOURS.

SIMPLE STEPS. BETTER AIR.  
OzoneAware.org

LOVE, COLORADO

Connecting Northern Colorado to jobs.  
**Ride to work with us!**

**VAN GO**  
1-800-332-0950  
WWW.SMARTTRIPS.ORG

Be social.

**BizWest**  
BOULDER VALLEY • NORTHERN COLORADO

@bizwestmedia  
/bizwestmedia  
/groups/bizwestmedia-1743627/about

Subscribe: 303-630-1953 ■ 970-232-3143 ■ www.bizwest.com Click subscribe link.

**BOULDEROPOLIS.COM**  
START. INNOVATE. SOAR.

@boulderopolis  
/boulderopolis  
/groups/Boulderopolis-6655564/about





▲ Gerard Nalezny, left, and Mark Kross, right.

**bravo!**  
**ENTREPRENEUR**  
**AWARDS**  
 CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
 IN NORTHERN COLORADO

*2016 Bravo!*  
*Entrepreneur*

—  
*Fort Collins*

**Gerard Nalezny  
 and Mark Kross**  
 Verus Bank of  
 Commerce

# At Verus, even business banking is personal

By Elizabeth Gold  
 news@bizwestmedia.com

The trick to sharing leadership roles is to focus on the what, rather than the how, according to Gerard Nalezny and Mark Kross. And for 11 years, the formula has worked well for the company that the co-founders co-lead.

Nalezny and Kross had a sense of each other's style before they teamed up to start what's now known as Verus Bank of Commerce in Fort Collins in 2005. They'd already worked together for 15 years.

"We would listen to what customers wanted, but we couldn't do anything about it," Nalezny said, referring their previous work together.

"So when we decided to form this bank, our primary drive was to do what customers asked us to do."

To start out, Nalezny and Kross created a business plan, objectives and values to make sure they would stay on the same page with the company's direction and to create a culture that would stay true to its roots.

"It's important that people have different perspectives, but to get along as co-leaders, we couldn't have turf," Kross said. "There are areas I focus on, and areas he focuses on, and we then come together to discuss them."

Acknowledging different ways of achieving results helps them stay focused on the end, rather than the means.

They chose the bank's name to keep their initial business goal in front of them.

'Verus' is Latin for 'right,' which Kross and Nalezny use as a key theme for the bank. It means they focus on doing the right thing for the community, the shareholders, the employees and the customers.

"For example, we want to have the best people possible as employees, so that means we have to pay them the best and provide a great environment," Kross said. "When we have the best people, they treat our customer the best, our shareholders are happy so the bank is able to help the community by cre-

ating jobs and helping companies grow."

Being entrepreneurs themselves helps when other entrepreneurs come in for financial assistance and advice, Nalezny said. "We've been where they are. When we say we're a local institution, we mean that our board is here, and our perspective is the same as our clients."

Kross used the challenge of creating a work-life balance as an example of a potential obstacle to success that the co-founders have with their customers.

"It boils down to the fact that your business needs you all the time in the early days, but if you set up goals, objectives and values early on, the organization develops a culture that can go on without you," he said. "It also makes the transition of not having to be there all the time easier."

"Our conversations aren't necessarily always just about banking," he said.

"There's a saying that 'it's business, not personal,' Nalezny added. "But with us, it's personal."

## Past Winners

### Fort Collins

- 2015** Cliff Buchholz  
Miramont Lifestyle Fitness
- 2014** Connie and Doug Dohn,  
Dohn Construction Inc.
- 2013** Steve Taylor and Scott  
McCarthy, Hot Corner  
Concept
- 2012** Bob Wilson, Columbine  
Health Services
- 2010** Curt Richardson, OtterBox
- 2008-09** Doug and Wynne Odell,  
Odell Brewing Co.
- 2007** Rulon Stacey, Poudre Valley  
Health Systems
- 2006** Terry Drahota, Drahota  
Commercial LLC
- 2005** Lori Schlotter, Colorado  
CustomWare Inc.
- 2004** David Bethune, Atrix  
Laboratories Inc.
- 2003** William Ward,  
Front Range Internet
- 2002** David & Jim Neenan,  
The Neenan Co.
- 2001** Spiro Palmer, Palmer  
Gardens
- 2000** Kim Jordan and Jeff  
Lebesch, New Belgium  
Brewing Co.
- 1999** Douglas Schatz, Advanced  
Energy Industries Inc.
- 1998** Kent and Gloria Sampson,  
Value Plastics Inc.





**Congratulations Wes Sargent, recipient of the  
Bravo! Entrepreneur - Lifetime Achievement Award.**

Thank you for all that you do in our community and for our bank.

**GuarantyBankCO.com | 970.454.4220**

**G GUARANTY BANK  
AND TRUST COMPANY<sup>SM</sup>**

Member FDIC



## **BUSINESS REPORT DAILY**



**Delivered twice  
daily, directly  
to you.  
Free.**


Business Report Daily provides the latest in breaking local business news, compiled by BizWest's team of experienced business reporters and editors.

Daily e-mails are sent out every every weekday, morning and afternoon, with extra e-mails as breaking news demands. Additionally, subscribers can sign up for weekly industry-specific e-mails, including Banking, Health Care, Real Estate, Technology, Construction, Economic Development, Small Business, Green Business, Agribusiness, Hospitality & Tourism and Economy & Labor.

Sign up now at [www.BIZWEST.com](http://www.BIZWEST.com).

**BizWest**  
BOULDER VALLEY • NORTHERN COLORADO  
[www.BIZWEST.com](http://www.BIZWEST.com)

 @bizwestmedia

 /bizwestmedia

 [www.linkedin.com/groups/BizWest-1743627](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/BizWest-1743627)

**Boulder Valley** ■ 1790 30th St., Suite 300, Boulder, CO 80301

**Northern Colorado** ■ 1550 E. Harmony Road, Fort Collins, CO 80525

**Subscribe: 303-630-1953 ■ 970-232-3143**

[www.bizwest.com](http://www.bizwest.com) Click subscribe link.



**bravo!**  
 ENTREPRENEUR  
 AWARDS  
 CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
 IN NORTHERN COLORADO

2016 Bravo!  
 Entrepreneur

—  
 Greeley

**Richard and Brenda Lucio**  
 Coyote's Southwestern Grill,  
 Palomino Mexican Restaurant,  
 Blue Agave Grill



# Lucios' recipe for success: special people

By Elizabeth Gold  
 news@bizwestmedia.com

There are no signs that Richard and Brenda Lucio are slowing down. With 17 years as restaurant owners and four successful restaurants, they're in the final stages of opening a fifth in Denver in October.

"Like most people in this work, we started out and grew up in this industry," Richard said. Together, they spent years working in Armadillo restaurants. By the time they left in 1988, they'd each been regional managers who both knew how to manage multiple locations.

"Brenda knew HR, and I was cost control, so our different skill sets were advantageous when we started our own business," Richard said.

Like most startups, The Lucios' first restaurant — Coyote's Southwestern Grill in Greeley — struggled for a few years before gaining traction. When the opportunity popped up a few years later, they opened a second restaurant — Palomino Mexican Restaurant in Evans.

"The big secret for being successful is to surround yourself with spe-

cial people," Richard said. Managing multiple locations required them to pass the torch to on-site staff for some of the personal touches that patrons seek.

"We're constantly trying to develop our management skills and teach them what we know," he added.

Restaurant number three — another Palomino, this time in Loveland — was followed by Blue Agave Grill in downtown Fort Collins. Blue Agave will be opening its second location in Lower Downtown Denver in the fall.

Over the years, the Lucios have made it through a range of challenges. One of the more-difficult times came during the 2007 and 2008 recession.

"It was really a turning point for us, in a positive way, though," Richard said. "We realized the if people wanted to still dine out and could do that only once a week rather than three times, we wanted to be the restaurant they chose."

To increase that likelihood, the Lucios decided to focus on making even better food, rather than skimping on any ingredients.

We invested in a new training program and added new tools to improve our service people," Brenda said. "People weren't buying cars or homes, but they could go to dinner and a movie, so eating out became part of what they could do."

In looking back over the years, Brenda believes that creating their identity and brand and sticking to it has been one of their success points.

When they opened the first Coyote's, the community tried to convince them to serve traditional Mexican food, rather than Southwestern.

"They knew our background from a Mexican chain and that we grew up in Greeley," Richard said, referring to the area as a meat and potatoes town where meat and potatoes meant burritos and tacos.

It took time, but the community did finally embrace the different menu.

And, today, the Lucios keep customers coming back, in part, because they change those menus regularly.

"If you have a product that's in demand but not doing what you want, reinvest, recreate and reinvent to make it work," Richard said.

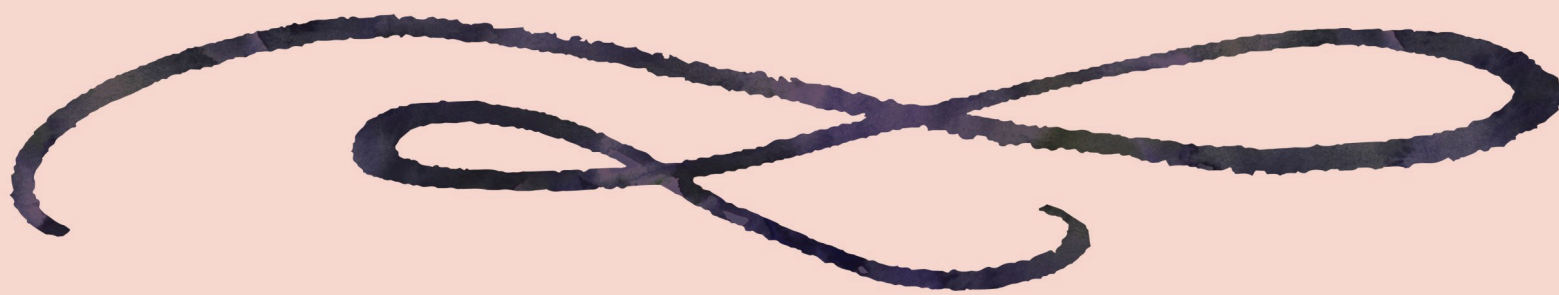
## Past Winners

### Greeley

- 2015 Masoud Shirazi  
Shirazi Benefits
- 2014 Bob Ghent, Ghent Chevrolet  
Cadillac
- 2013 Lee & Warren Yoder, Weld  
County Garage
- 2012 Bruce White and Dale  
Butcher, Conquest Oil
- 2010 Ted Warner, Connecting Point
- 2008-09 Trent Johnson, Greeley Hat  
Works
- 2007 Larry Seastrom, New Frontier  
Bank
- 2006 Roger Knoph, Envirotech  
Services Inc.
- 2005 Mark Kendall, Kendall Printing  
Co.
- 2004 Tim and Sally Warde,  
Northern Colorado Paper  
Inc.
- 2003 Tom Roche, Roche  
Constructors Inc.
- 2002 Ruben and Scott Ehrlich,  
Ehrlich Motors
- 2001 Jerry Morgensen, Hensel  
Phelps Construction Co.
- 2000 Bill Farr, Centennial Bank of  
the West
- 1999 John Todd, Toddy's
- 1998 Darrell McAllister,  
1st Choice Bank



# BRAVO!



**To all of the nominees  
and winners from your  
friends at**



**Proudly providing community banking to Larimer  
and surrounding counties for over 66 years!**

***www.homestatebank.com***  
***970-203-6100 or 303-682-7100***



# bravo!

## ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE  
IN NORTHERN COLORADO



2016 Bravo!  
Entrepreneur

—  
Loveland

Jerry Helgeson  
American Eagle  
Distributing

# For Jerry Helgeson, it's all in a (long) day's work

By Elizabeth Gold  
news@bizwestmedia.com

Growing up in North Dakota provided one of the bottom-line experiences to which Jerry Helgeson credits his success: a strong work ethic. Farmers know what hard work is and what it takes to make a day productive.

As founder of American Eagle Distributing Co., a wholesale beer-distributing company in Loveland, Helgeson infused that ethic into how he focused on the daily tasks of his business, as well as how he focused on people who are on both sides of the counter.

"It's so important to treat everybody as fairly as possible — that means treating small accounts the same as big accounts," he said.

"It was a challenge working with so many different suppliers — we had to keep all of them in the top of our minds and continue to represent them in the market. We worked to keep that in front of us every day."

Working a steady 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. day helped Helgeson meet the goal.

Making sure he extended that same appreciation and value to his employees gained his company a reputation that attracted a loyal team.

"What makes a company successful is hiring the right people and making sure the attitude of the company is positive," he said. "That means treating employees with respect, creating a good atmosphere, a good facility, great equipment, and providing good health care and pension and profit sharing."

Another key to success is knowing when to make a move and which move is the right one to make. With that wisdom well in place, Helgeson's risk-taking confidence compelled him to sell some of his companies in order to acquire others, sometimes against the advice of financial advisers.

That intuition and drive also led him to cash in life-insurance policies and borrow money from friends

when the going got tough.

In terms of results, Helgeson's diligent efforts, strong work ethic and relationship-based principles have paid off.

Anheuser-Busch InBev, the second-largest beer distributor in the United States, made an offer to purchase his company last year, which he agreed to, as long as he could keep his office.

"A-B was attracted to us because we were always trending in rankings as great in the market and great in having some of the best employees in Northern Colorado," Helgeson said.

Having started his business ownership with six employees, he ended it with 125.

As a true entrepreneur, Helgeson's advice is clear. "I encourage anyone who wants to start their own company to just do it. Just remember that capital is really important.

## Past Winners

### Loveland

- 2015 Eric Holsapple & Don Marostica  
Loveland Commercial
- 2014 Joe Kellogg and JB Kellogg,  
Madwire Media
- 2013 George & Mark Lundeen,  
Lundeen Sculpture
- 2012 Marcia Coulson, Eldon James  
Corp.
- 2010 Aubrey Poore, Numerica Corp.
- 2008-09 Clayton Schwerin, Alliance  
Construction Solutions
- 2007 Linda Ligon, Interweave Press
- 2006 Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale  
Guest Ranch
- 2005 Jerry Donnan, Kroll Factual  
Data Inc.
- 2004 Mark Burke, Burke Cleaners  
and Mister Neat's Formalwear
- 2003 Ervin Weinmeister, Super  
Vacuum Manufacturing Co.
- 2002 Jack Devereaux, Home State  
Bank
- 2001 Chad and Troy McWhinney,  
McWhinney Enterprises
- 2000 Bill Beierwaltes, Colorado  
Memory Systems, Colorado  
Time Systems, OnStream Inc.
- 1999 Dave Duke, Duke  
Communications International
- 1998 Thom Schultz,  
Group Publishing Inc.





**Flood and Peterson**

**Proudly partnering  
with Colorado  
entrepreneurs  
since 1939.**

**Supporter of the Bravo! Entrepreneur Awards.**

Commercial Insurance | Employee Benefits

Surety | Captives | Home-Life-Auto

**FloodPeterson.com**

Denver • Greeley • Fort Collins