

SECTION  
**B**

Oct. 29-Nov.11, 2004

# Bravo!

## 2004 ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

*Celebrating Excellence in Northern Colorado Business*



THE NORTHERN COLORADO  
**BUSINESS REPORT**

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM SCHLICHTING

*Platinum sponsors:*



**1<sup>ST</sup> FIRST COMMUNITY BANK**

# Neal, Schuster epitomized best of entrepreneurship

Celebration of entrepreneurship in Northern Colorado would not be possible this year were we not also to celebrate the lives of Bill Neal and Leo Schuster, who died in a July plane crash, along with Fort Collins real estate broker Scott Nelson.

In a year when many worthy individuals were considered for the Bravo! Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement Award, Neal and Schuster stood out as the clear choices of our Awards Committee for that most-prestigious of all the Bravo! Entrepreneur awards.

Yes, the key word is "choices." For the first time, we are presenting two Lifetime Achievement Awards, rather than limiting ourselves to just one, so lasting and deep are the legacies of Neal and Schuster. Both individuals not only built successful companies but also built and gave back to their communities in remarkable ways.

You will read about both men in related stories in this special section.

Before we continue, however, it would be advisable to recap some details about Bravo! Entrepreneur, a Northern Colorado Business Report program conducted in partnership with the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greeley/Weld Chamber of Commerce, the Loveland Chamber of Commerce, the Greeley-Weld Economic Development Action Partnership Inc. and the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp.

Presidents of these organizations appointed business leaders to an Awards Committee, which this year sifted through more than 125 total nominees — a record for this program. This year's Awards Committee included: Rene Clements, The Clements Co., Fort Collins; Tim Dow, The Dow Law Firm, Fort Collins; Bob Hessler, retired banker, Greeley; Lucille Mantelli, Kodak Colorado Division, Windsor; Kelly Peters, Loveland Center for Business Development, Loveland; Ron

## PUBLISHERS' NOTEBOOK



CHRISTOPHER WOOD



JEFF NUTTALL



Schneider, Bank One, Loveland; and Ted Warner, Connecting Point, Greeley

Winners of Bravo! Entrepreneur awards are chosen from Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland and Outlying Communities. Additionally, an Emerging Entrepreneur Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award and a Regional Spirit Award are also presented.

The best traits of entrepreneurship so evidenced by Neal and Schuster is demonstrated as well by our other winners. Here's a rundown of all Bravo! Entrepreneur winners for 2004:

■ Emerging Entrepreneur Award: Bruce Golden, Bernard E. Rollin & Ralph V. Switzer Jr., Optibrand Ltd. LLC, Fort Collins.

■ Bravo! Entrepreneur, Fort Collins: David Bethune, Atrix Laboratories Inc.

■ Bravo! Entrepreneur, Greeley: Tim and Sally Warde, Northern Colorado Paper.

■ Bravo! Entrepreneur, Loveland: Mark Burke, Burke Cleaners and Mister Neat's Formalwear.

■ Bravo! Entrepreneur, Outlying Communities: Mark Hopkins, Peak Industries, Frederick.

■ Regional Spirit Award: Monfort Family Foundation, Eaton.

■ Lifetime Achievement Awards: Bill Neal, Wheeler Commercial Property Services LLC, Fort Collins, and Leo Schuster, Progressive Living Structures Inc., Loveland.

As always, we at *The Northern Colorado Business Report* need to thank our many partners, including those chambers of commerce and economic-development agencies noted above. Thanks also to Invision/Buzz Events, MediaTech Productions, Caldera Creative Services, Genteel Graphics, Palmer Flowers and Signs by Tomorrow, and to our own Jim Rath, who jumped in to take care of many details.

Lastly, thanks to our many sponsors, including platinum sponsors First Community Bank and Kodak Colorado Division. Our reception sponsor was Hewlett-Packard Co., our dinner sponsor was McWhinney Enterprises, and our corporate gift sponsor was C3 Technology Inc. Gold sponsors included Everitt Commercial Partners and Front Range Real Estate Consultants Inc. We also benefited from having a record number of table sponsors.

*Jeff Nuttall and Christopher Wood are co-publishers of The Northern Colorado Business Report and founding partners of Bravo! Entrepreneur.*



### Bravo! Entrepreneur Steering Committee

David May, president, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce  
Gaye Stockman, president, Loveland Chamber of Commerce  
J.J. Johnston, CEO, Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp.  
Ron Klaphake, president, Greeley/Weld Economic Development Action Partnership Inc.  
Jeff Nuttall, co-publisher, The Northern Colorado Business Report  
Tim Tracy, president, Greeley/Weld Chamber of Commerce  
Christopher Wood, co-publisher, The Northern Colorado Business Report

### Bravo! Entrepreneur Awards Committee

Bob Hessler, retired banker  
Rene Clements, The Clements Co.  
Tim Dow, Dow Law Firm  
Lucille Mantelli, Kodak Colorado Division  
Kelly Peters, Loveland Center for Business Development  
Ron Schneider, Bank One  
Ted Warner, Connecting Point of Greeley

### Presented By:

Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greeley/Weld Chamber of Commerce  
Greeley/Weld Economic Development Action Partnership Inc.  
Loveland Chamber of Commerce  
Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp.

### Platinum Sponsors



### Reception Sponsor



### Dinner Sponsor



### Corporate Gift Sponsor



### Gold Sponsors

Everitt Commercial Partners • Palmer Flowers  
Front Range Real Estate Consultants Inc.

### Table Sponsors

Home State Bank, Ptarmigan Country Club, Mr. Neat's Formalwear, Drahota, New Frontier Bank, Flood and Peterson, First National Bank, Community First Bank, Charles Schwab, Wells Fargo, Centennial Bank of the West, First Community Bank, Atrix Laboratories, McKee Medical Center/Foundation, Lighthouse Lending LLC, Peak Industries, Cache Bank & Trust, Advantage Bank, The Group, Phelps-Tointon, Inc., Progressive Living Structures, Connecting Point, City of Fort Collins, CSU College of Business, Front Range Internet Inc.

### Marketing

Buzz Events

### Video Production

MediaTech Productions

### Media Sponsor

NCBR

### Event Coordinator

James Rath

### Audio/Visual Coordinator:

MediaTech Productions

### Décor

Caldera Creative Services

### Flowers

Palmer Flowers

### Print Sponsor

Genteel Graphics

### Special thanks to:

Signs By Tomorrow  
Colorado Heirloom, Inc.  
Bobbie Carlyle





COURTESY OF ATRIX LABORATORIES INC.

**LEADING MAN** — David Bethune, Chairman and CEO of Atrix Laboratories Inc., helped to lift the Fort Collins pharmaceutical company from financial hardship to profitability.

# Bethune rides hard to rescue Atrix Laboratories from slump

By Tom Hacker  
*The Business Report*

Sooner rather than later, David Bethune will figure out what the leisure thing is all about.

He was almost ready for it five years ago, when he was lured out of his third retirement to resurrect sinking Atrix Laboratories Inc., a Fort Collins biotech company whose sole product languished without a market.

It was a job that seemed close to impossible in November 1999.

Investors in this one-trick pony of a company — and a lame one at that — were on the edge of revolt, having seen their stock's share value tumble from slightly more than \$20 to less than \$5 in just two years.

Employees wore the grim faces of defeat, having watched their Atridox periodontal disease treatment fall flat as a flounder in the dental pharmaceutical market.

"I was hesitant, but did it kind of as a favor to the board," Bethune said, recalling how he and his wife were building their retirement home in Scottsdale, Ariz., when fellow Atrix board members summoned him.

"The company was just down on its knees with Atridox. The job was either to sell the company, or get it back on a course of progress. When I got here, I couldn't stand the thought of just getting rid of it."

When Bethune celebrates his fifth

anniversary next month, the date will mark a milestone that no one in 1999 could have imagined. The merger of a revived Atrix with Canadian pharmaceutical giant QLT Inc. — a deal that meant a six-fold increase in the value of Atrix stock — will conclude within a few weeks of Bethune's five-year mark.

The achievement is only part of what led judges to select Bethune, the 64-year-old Atrix president and CEO, as the Bravo! Entrepreneur of the Year award winner for Fort Collins.

Never in regional history have a public company's fortunes reversed so sharply, and so quickly, as at Atrix.

"He's a turnaround specialist," said close friend David Neenan, president of regional construction giant Neenan Cos. "He's done that before a couple of times in other places with other companies, and he worked the miracle again here. He's one of the most effective leaders in this town."

Bethune's company colleagues also push the credit toward him.

Michael Duncan, Atrix's vice president and general manager, remembers the darkest days, having joined the company in 1995 after a successful career with Ciba-Geigy, now known among the pharmaceutical giants as Novartis Inc.

"A lot of the people who worked here then were at the lowest point," Duncan said. "They had become familiar with failure."

The company was then in a near-futile strategy of getting Atridox, a time-release antibiotic, into the hands of dentists who treat periodontal disease.

"Then Dave comes in, and the guy's basic principle is you get more luck the harder you work at it," Duncan said. "It was like he was the manager of an underdog baseball team, with everybody down-in-the-mouth. He said, 'If you believe in me and do what I ask, we'll get there.'"

What Bethune asked for was diversification. His vision was to take Atrix's core technology — a polymer-based substance called Atrigel — and use it to

See ATRIX, 12B

2004



Bravo!  
Entrepreneur —  
Fort Collins

David  
Bethune



Everitt Commercial Partners  
applaud all entrepreneurs—  
especially Nominees & Winners  
of this year's Bravo! Awards  
for representing  
the spirit of America.



Commercial Real Estate

Development • Consulting • Brokerage

(970) 226-1500

Call Rick Callan, Tom Livingston, Pete Kelly or Stuart MacMillan

Hematology Oncology Associates  
is now

Cancer Center  
of the Rockies

"DEDICATED TO CARING FOR THE WHOLE PERSON SINCE 1980":

Michael P. Fangman, MD, FACP

Miho Toi Scott, MA, MD

Paolo Romero, MD

Charles R. Tweedy, Jr. MD

Anne M. Kanard, MD

Visit our website for additional information:

[www.cancerhealth.com](http://www.cancerhealth.com)

970-493-6337

Located in the Harmony Medical Campus at  
2121 E. Harmony Rd., Ste. 150, Ft Collins, CO 80528



# Energetic Wardes can't settle for the status quo in business

By Sue Lenthe  
Business Report Correspondent

GREELEY — Greeley entrepreneurs Tim and Sally Warde say their 26-year-old business, Northern Colorado Paper, is a work in progress.

"It's a passion for me," said Tim Warde, who is known for rising early and working long hours. "You learn every day."

The couple built the wholesale paper distribution company from scratch. They launched it at a time when they were too naive to realize how hard building a viable business might be, Sally Warde said.

That was back in October 1978. Tim had been working in a family business — a corrugated box company owned by his father called Container Systems. When that business sold to a larger corporate entity, Tim and Sally decided they wanted to stay in Greeley and have more control over their future than corporate life might allow. They figured

*Bravo!*  
*Entrepreneur* —  
*Greeley*

**Tim & Sally  
Warde**

they could build on Tim's existing contacts.

"We naively said, 'Let's start a distribution business,'" Sally recalled. "We bought a carload of paper products, rented a little warehouse and Tim went out on the streets with rolls of toilet paper under his arms and knocked on doors. At night I would do the books and all the secretarial work."



COURTESY OF TIM AND SALLY WARDE

**POWER COUPLE** — Tim and Sally Warde, co-owners of Northern Colorado Paper in Greeley, have made the company successful with their strong work ethics.

Today Northern Colorado Paper extends well behind the region it is named for. The company delivers a variety of industrial paper products, shipping supplies, janitorial supplies and equipment, hospital specialty products and restaurant supplies across the Front Range and into southern Wyoming and southwestern Colorado.

Clients range from small, independently owned businesses to government entities and corporations.

"We always say there's not a single business that couldn't use some of our products, whether it's toilet paper, cleaning chemicals or whatever. It's unlimited," Sally said.

That simple statement embodies the interest and energy that Tim and Sally bring to their "work in progress." They're passionate about the business, its customers and employees.

Associates use words like dedication and fairness when describing Tim and Sally.

Darrell McAllister, CEO of Bank of Choice and a long-time friend of the Wardes said, "They're extremely hard-working, very diligent and very caring about their employees and taking good care of their business."

Tim is a member of the board of directors for Bank of Choice, a role he was selected for because of his business acumen and community involvement, McAllister said.

For the Wardes, building Northern Colorado Paper has meant building good customer relationships both inside and outside the business, Tim said. "It's certainly not going to be a success unless you have good customers."

Providing good service to the company's external customers requires strong relationships among its internal customers — the employees. "Two things are integral in our opinion and that is the internal customers and the external customers," Tim said.

Both Wardes say they enjoy the variety the business offers. "No day is the same, no week is the same, no year is the same," Tim said. And that's a good thing for a man who describes himself as "hyper to the

See GREELEY, 13B



All kids are inventors.

It's because they're not afraid to get their hands filthy. To eat the paste.

To use a hammer as a brush. To break something just to see how it works.

And to start with the impossible, which is where grownups usually stop.

Just a few of the things we're keeping in mind as we invent the new hp.

Want to come along? [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)





**Congratulations**  
**to The 2004 BRAVO!**  
**Entrepreneur Winners**

**A proud citizen of the Northern Colorado  
Community Since 1969**



**10% discount** when you order by Oct. 31\*

**Start your holiday gift giving early this season.**  
Custom gift baskets crafted especially for you, and your clients!

Avoid the shopping crowds when you send your gifts early this holiday. We use only the finest quality products to create a gift experience that will make this holiday one to remember! We ship with care, practically anywhere.

Call your custom gift designer today.  
**970.217.6843**  
www.AspenCanyonGiftBaskets.com

*Aspen Canyon Gift Baskets*

\*with 50% non-refundable deposit.




KRISTEN BASTIAN • THE BUSINESS REPORT

**ABOVE THE CROWD** — Mark Burke, founder of Mister Neat's Formalwear and Burke Cleaners, stands on a platform overlooking his Loveland warehouse filled with tuxedos.

**GOT A TIP?**

THE NORTHERN COLORADO  
**BUSINESS REPORT**

Call (970) 221-5400 (Larimer),  
(970) 356-1683 (Weld) or  
(800) 440-3506

WITH THE INSIDE SCOOP ON  
NORTHERN FRONT RANGE BUSINESS.




**WITHOUT TRANSFORT, EVERY DAY HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE COULDN'T GET WHERE THEY NEED TO GO.**

**HOW WOULD THAT AFFECT YOU?**

Every day, Transfort enables people from all walks of life to get to work, to get to class, to volunteer, or just go where they want to go. And when our citizens thrive, our City thrives. For route information call 221-6620 or visit [www.fcgov.com/transfort](http://www.fcgov.com/transfort)

**Transfort**  
Wherever life takes you

## Burke avoids bad advice, finds perfect fit with formalwear idea

**Kristen S. Bastian**  
*The Business Report*

LOVELAND — As the oldest of five children and the possible heir to a dry cleaning business, a young Mark Burke knew one thing; he wanted to get out of his hometown of Davenport, Iowa.

He found his escape and success in Northern Colorado. Burke came to Fort Collins to attend Colorado State University. It was while he was still a senior at the school that he decided to start his own business. He wanted to do something different, something that the area didn't already have. He decided to open a tuxedo shop.

Burke approached his academic advisor with his vision. His advisor suggested making the business plan a class project. In the end, the class determined that a tuxedo business was destined to fail in the area.

At the time, the population of Larimer County was just shy of 120,000. Fortunately, Burke didn't heed his classmates' warnings. He couldn't because he had already secured the funding and signed a lease with the Fort Collins Foothills Fashion Mall. In 1974, Burke opened his first business, Mister Neat's Formalwear.

Today, that first store is the only original tenant of the mall still operating under the original ownership. Burke now has 20 stores stretching across the Front Range from Cheyenne, Wyo., to Colorado Springs.

In 1996, Burke purchased dry cleaning equipment to handle the needs of Mister Neat's. Prior to doing the service in-house, the company's laundry expense was about \$500,000 annually.

"It wasn't just about saving money, it was about controlling quality," Burke said.

The quality of dry cleaning was so good that Burke opened up a store in Fort Collins to serve as a pick-up center for the central dry cleaning operations — Burke Cleaners.

There are four Burke Cleaners in Fort Collins and two in Loveland. All of the cleaning is still done at the central operations, but now 80 percent of the cleaning is for customers and only 20 percent is for Mister Neat's.

Burke will not take all of the credit for his success.

"The word entrepreneurship doesn't

mean that much because no one does it alone," he said. The key to the success is the management team."

Nancy Haboush, president of Mister Neat's, has been with the company since 1988. Keith Longwell, senior vice president has been with the company since 1989. Bret Ellis, the chief financial officer, started with the company in 2000.

Haboush said the reason she has stayed is because of Burke and his work ethic. She said he is not the typical "desk executive."

"That's not the kind of leader he is," she said. "He is still really involved with the company because he is passionate about it."

She said he visits the stores often and still works with the customers.

"When people find out he's the CEO, they're surprised," she said.

Haboush also said that Burke's dedication to all of his employees is what keeps the company together.

"He knows every employee in our company by name and what store they work in," she said. In a company with more than 200 employees, that's impressive.

Burke holds quarterly company meetings for all full- and part-time employees. These meetings are more like events. They're held at a Denver hotel and feature a dinner, and what's best is the employees get paid for being there.

"He's a good boss," said Will Sebra, an employee at the Fort Collins Foothills Mall store. "He knows what he wants and he wants it done that way. It's good because he knows what he is doing."

Sebra, a speech communications/Spanish major at Colorado State University, was employed with Mister Neat's for three years.



*Bravo!*  
*Entrepreneur* —  
*Loveland*

**Mark  
Burke**

See **LOVELAND, 14B**



# Ex-HP engineer helps company scale peaks in competitive sector

*Hopkins' success earns  
Bravo! for outlying areas;  
Peak nears \$75M in sales*

**By Kim Lock**  
*The Business Report*

FREDERICK — When large companies need to manufacture products they look to Peak Industries Inc. in Longmont to provide the detailed services they require.

The company specializes in manufacturing low- to mid-quantity batches of high-value products. This includes medical equipment used in hospitals and doctors' offices and commercial goods used by professionals and companies nationwide.

Peak manufactures commercial products for Hewlett-Packard Co., Coinstar Inc. and Particle Measuring Systems Inc. The company builds optical jukebox data storage systems, self-service kiosks and particle measurement counters for the respective companies.

"We build product for StorageTek for Hewlett-Packard and for some of the big Front Range names in terms of storage equipment," said Mark Hopkins, president of Peak Industries. "And then we do some things for companies you wouldn't necessarily have heard of. We have a lot of California-

based customers ... and we have some smaller locally based businesses."

Hewlett-Packard has Peak Industries build its optical jukebox data storage system because the company has a record of quality.

"Mark is an ex-HP guy who knows our business needs and has been a great partner who is building these pretty complex pieces of machinery," said Jeff Kato, director of Hewlett-Packard's automation business segment of data storage. "They are more nimble and are more adaptable to our products than others are."

Peak manufactures 150 devices a month for Hewlett-Packard. These devices range from desktop storage modules to devices that are large enough to stand it.

Peak is also a registered device manufacturer with the U.S. Food and



**Bravo!**  
**Entrepreneur —**  
**Outlying**  
**Communities**  
**Mark Hopkins**



KIM LOCK • THE BUSINESS REPORT

**ASSEMBLY LINE** — Mark Hopkins, president of Peak Industries, stands with a Coinstar change machine. Coinstar is among the clients for Peak, which is a contract manufacturer based in southwest Weld County.

Drug Administration and it builds all of its medical products under FDA scrutiny.

"Typically we are building complex machinery like a kidney dialysis machine," Hopkins said.

The company manufactures a metabolism analyzer for Healthetech Inc, a home hemodialysis machine for Aksys Ltd. and a spinal nerve detection sys-

tem for Nuvasive Inc.

In 2004, Hopkins said the company hopes to have \$75 million in revenues.

**Out of plastic**

Peak Industries was founded in 1996 as a spin off of DTM Products Inc., a Longmont-based injection-molding firm. At the time, customers

See **OUTLYING, 18B**

## Fraud and theft.....how secure is your business?

**Did You Know**

- The average loss to small business due to fraud schemes is \$98,000 per year.
- The average fraud scheme lasts about 18 months before it is detected.
- Small businesses (less than 100 employees) are the most vulnerable to occupational fraud and abuse.
- Most people that commit fraud are first time offenders (83%).
- Employees who hold grudges against their companies often turn to fraud and abuse for revenge.
- Strong internal controls are one of the most effective measures against fraud.
- Organizations with fraud hotlines cut their fraud losses by about 50% per scheme.

Source: Association of Certified Fraud Examiners 2004.

**Let Sample & Bailey CPAs help you build confidence in your accounting and financial controls. Our team of CPAs and Certified Fraud Examiners will help you address these risks and develop safeguards against them.**

**For more information visit: [www.stopfraudandabuse.com](http://www.stopfraudandabuse.com)**

375 East Horsetooth, Shores Four, Suite 200, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525

970.223.8825 Ext. 224 • email: [svdh@sbcorporateadvisors.com](mailto:svdh@sbcorporateadvisors.com)



**Sample & Bailey**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS, P.C.



**Corporate Advisors, LLC**  
BUSINESS STRATEGISTS AND CONSULTANTS



**“OUR STANCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT?  
HOW ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST AGGRESSIVE VOLUNTARY  
EMISSIONS REDUCTION PROGRAMS IN THE NATION?”**



www.xcelenergy.com ©2004 Xcel Energy Inc.

“Our plant emissions already met state and federal air quality requirements. But we saw that we could do more – and began one of the most aggressive voluntary emissions reduction programs in the country. We have reduced sulphur dioxide emissions at three plants in Colorado by 70% and nitrogen oxide by 2,500 tons. Xcel Energy is also a leader in wind power – delivering about 10% of all the wind power sold in the U.S. with plans to triple that amount in the coming years. We also have several hydroelectric power plants that run on clean water power, four waste-to-energy facilities that turn potential landfill waste into useable electricity, and we’re researching other ways to use clean, renewable energy sources. The way we look at it, we’ve only got one planet. We owe it to future generations to take better care of it.”

Mary, Environmental Analyst



*Join Windsource® brought to you by ConservationSmart from Xcel Energy,™ and you'll be part of developing wind energy in Colorado. Call 1-800-824-1688 to sign up.*

*Every time you flip a switch or turn a dial, you tap into the energy of over 12,000 people working to make your life better. Xcel Energy. You get all of our energy.*



# Optibrand quick to make mark with its livestock tracking tool

*Innovative technology leads to pick as Emerging Entrepreneur*

**By Kim Lock**  
*The Business Report*

FORT COLLINS — It began as a radical idea to end cattle branding. Now it could be the key to the future of the American beef market.

Optibrand Ltd. LLC launched its OptiReader to the commercial market at the end of 2003 — one week after a cow in Washington was discovered to be infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, more commonly known "Mad Cow Disease".

The serendipitous timing worked in Optibrand's favor; the company is receiving worldwide attention in trade magazines and major news outlets like CBS and USA Today. Earlier this month members of Japan's Nippon media visited Optibrand to find out more about the reader.

"We have a press delegation out every other week or so," said Bruce Golden, Optibrand's CEO.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has decided to let the marketplace determine the technology used in the National Animal Identification System. This is good news for Optibrand because the company's system is so versatile.

"Our technology is one of many alter-

natives that meets the standards of NAIS," Golden said. "Our customers are gravitating towards our solution because of the secure features no other technology offers."

**The safety of technology**

Optibrand is built on the simple idea of finding a way to identify cattle from birth to butcher. Ranchers and feedlot operators traditionally relied on a paper system which tracked cattle by their individual ear tag numbers and by branding on the rear.

The company's Secure Identity Preservation system offers a humane and non-invasive method to identify livestock by photographing the retina.

The device uses the retinal vascular pattern — the pattern of blood vessels located at the back of the eye. The retinal vascular pattern is present from birth, never changing from birth to



*Bravo!*  
*Entrepreneur — Emerging Entrepreneur*

**Bruce Golden, Bernard E. Rollin & Ralph V. Switzer**

See **EMERGING, 15B**



KIM LOCK • THE BUSINESS REPORT

**EYE OF INVENTION** — Bruce Golden, CEO of Optibrand Ltd., displays the OptiReader system he helped develop. The system collects retinal images of cattle to prove their identity. A real-time retinal scan is shown on the screen behind Golden. The device can also read bar codes and take pictures of ear tags or other identifying features to track the cow.

A key to success is getting in front of the inevitable.  
Welcome to I-25 & Highway 34: the inevitable.



This is where the future is unfolding in Northern Colorado. 3,000 acres of mixed-use mojo. Right in the heart of it all.



A McWHINNEY COMMUNITY

5.9 MILLION SQUARE FEET OFFICE • 4 MILLION SQUARE FEET RETAIL/MIXED USE • 5,100 HOMES • 1 MILLION OPPORTUNITIES

• I-25 & US-34 • LOVELAND • COLORADO • 970.962.9990 • WWW.CENTERRACOLORADO.COM •



# Neal, Schuster shared zest for business, communities

By Robert Baun  
The Business Report

In 1976 Bill Neal gave up his job as a staff planner with the city of Greeley's planning department to delve into real estate. The early career change put Neal on a track to become one of the most instrumental figures in Northern Colorado's development over the past quarter century.

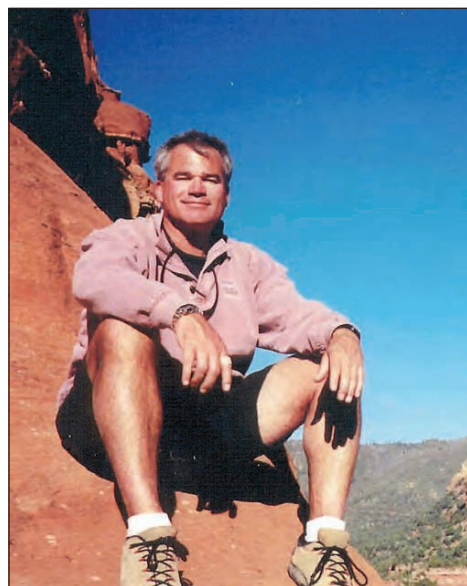
Just a year later, Leo Schuster arrived in Loveland, fresh out of college, plying a trade as a handyman. In 1978 he bought three housing lots in Masonville. It was the first step to his company's construction of 1,200 new homes throughout the region, as well as business and community interests that included restaurants and the arts.

Neal's and Schuster's paths eventually crossed in the 1980s. To each other, they would become friends, business allies, and inspirations. To those who worked with them, they would become mentors and leaders in their respective firms.

Neal and Schuster died in a plane crash on July 24, but their contributions and legacies are recognized with 2004 Bravo! Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement award from *The Northern Colorado Business Report*.

**Origins of influence**

Neal cut his teeth in the real estate business at Wheeler Realty in Greeley, under the guidance of John R. P.



COURTESY OF WHEELER COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES, PROGRESSIVE LIVING STRUCTURES

**HIGH ACHIEVERS** — Bill Neal, left, and Leo Schuster, each made a deep impression on Northern Colorado with their business success and community service. The two men died earlier this year in a plane crash.

Wheeler. He later opened a Wheeler office in Fort Collins, and assisted in the development of subdivisions like Brown Farm and Fairbrooke.

Neal would eventually acquire the Wheeler business in its entirety, and became more directly involved in residential land development, said Joe Zahn, a long-time friend of both Neal and Schuster.

Even as he was establishing his own position in the industry, Zahn recalled that Neal "always took people under his

wing. There are a lot of successful real estate people that came up under Bill's tutelage."

In the late 1980s Neal's influence in the community was recognized by then-Gov. Roy Romer, who picked Neal to represent Northern Colorado on the state's Transportation Commission.

Neal's business interests expanded in the 1990s when he formed a commercial real estate operation, Wheeler Commercial Property Services, in 1995 along with partner Fred Croci.

The gregarious Neal served as the public face of the Wheeler partnership.

"His main function was to try to find deals and to handle the political aspects" of the development process, as well as lining up necessary investors, Croci said. "I did the grunt work, so to speak."

The role fit Neal's personality.

"He knew everybody," Croci said. "He was just such an easy going sort of guy. Nothing ever riled Bill. He could analyze things very quickly on his feet. He knew who to talk to. If it wasn't an area of his expertise, he knew how to get in touch with people who could help him."

Wheeler Commercial put together trend setting projects in Fort Collins and Windsor, such as Poudre Valley Plaza, Rigden Farm, and Windsor



*Bravo!*  
**Entrepreneur — Lifetime Achievement**

**Bill Neal & Leo Schuster**

See LIFETIME, 17B



**FRONT RANGE REAL ESTATE CONSULTANTS, INC.**

*Serving Colorado and Wyoming*

**Loveland**  
**970.669.9161**  
[www.frreci.com](http://www.frreci.com)

**Appraisals...**  
Residential. Commercial. Resort.

Northglenn 303.252.9766	Southern Colorado 719.544.7817	Grand Lake 970.887.9840	Montrose 970.252.0319	Cheyenne 307.637.4484
----------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

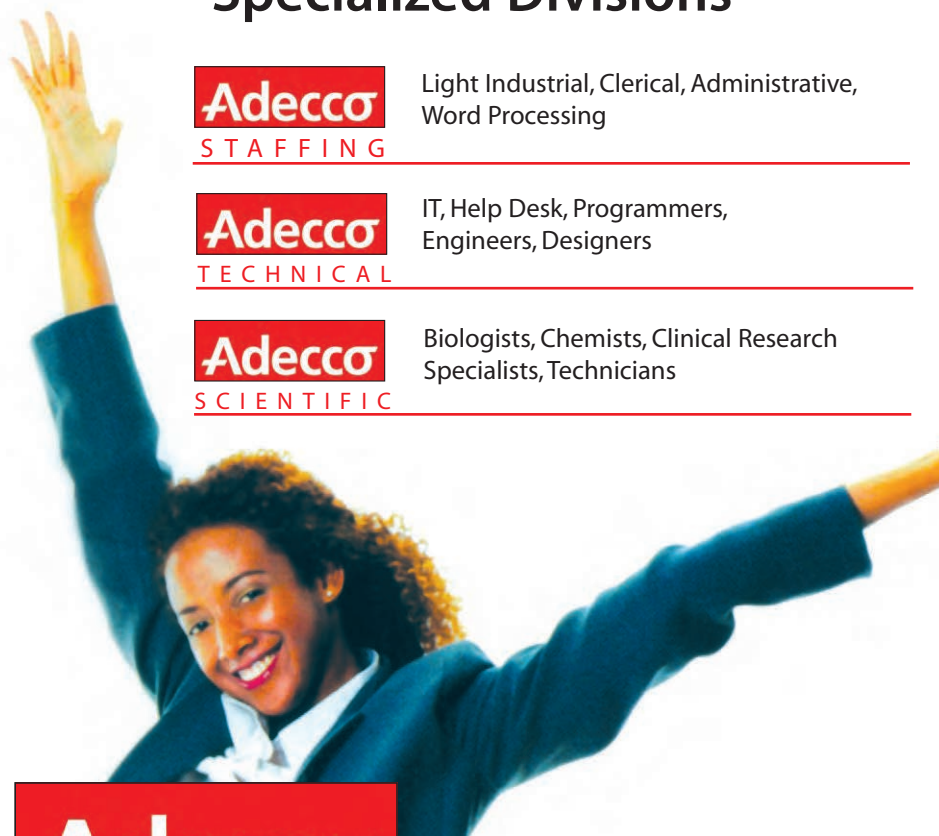
**What makes Adecco**  
*STAND OUT.*

**-Specialized Divisions-**

**Adecco STAFFING** Light Industrial, Clerical, Administrative, Word Processing

**Adecco TECHNICAL** IT, Help Desk, Programmers, Engineers, Designers

**Adecco SCIENTIFIC** Biologists, Chemists, Clinical Research Specialists, Technicians



**Adecco**

THE EMPLOYMENT PEOPLE®

**Adecco Staffing > 970.204.4801**

**Adecco Technical > 970.377.2944**





KIM LOCK • THE BUSINESS REPORT

**GIFT GIVING** — A gift from the Monfort Family Foundation helped to fund development of Colorado State University's Edna Rizley Griffin Concert Hall, which opened in April. The Monfort Foundation is the 2004 Bravo! Entrepreneur Regional Spirit award winner.

# Monfort Foundation lends weight to charitable efforts

**By Robert Baun**  
*The Business Report*

EATON — In the late stages of its 2001-2002 fundraising campaign, the prospects for the United Way of Weld County were looking grim.

The charitable agency was nearly \$400,000 short of its goal with less than a month before the deadline. Many would-be donors were apparently tapped out after giving money to help with the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Furthermore, the stock market was in decline, putting extra pressure on the potential pool charitable funds.

That's when the Monfort Family Foundation came into the picture, cutting a check for \$350,000 to put the United Way within reach of its goal.

In ensuing years, the foundation

has added gifts of \$400,000 each year to the United Way, one of a growing list of causes to benefit from the family which is synonymous with Weld County's status as an agribusiness powerhouse.

"They are very generous to United Way," said Jeannine Truswell, executive director of the United Way of Weld County. "If you look at the last 10 years, it would be millions."

United Way is one of the Monfort Family Foundation's regular beneficiaries — Foundation trustees Dick Monfort, Kay (Monfort) Ward and Kyle (Monfort) Futo have all served on the United Way's board of directors at various times.

"Not only is it a family foundation, but they individually have all lent their leadership," Truswell said. Still, it's just one of a long list of grantees that includes causes such as the American Cancer Society, Colorado 4-H, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, North Colorado Medical Center Foundation, the Special Olympics, the University of Northern Colorado and the Weld Food Bank.

Major gifts announced in recent years include:

- The Children's Hospital, Denver, \$10 million.
- University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, \$5 million.
- The University of Northern Colorado Monfort College of Business,



**Bravo!**  
*Entrepreneur* —  
*Regional Spirit*

**Monfort Family Foundation**

See SPIRIT, 18B

**Your Local Eye on Business**

**NCBR.com**

Why We're Different.

**OPTIMISTIC**

1-800-352-5239 X 205

www.porterindustries.com  
www.maid-clean.com

**PORTER** Porter Industries, Inc.  
5202 Granite Street,  
Loveland, CO 80538

Professional Cleaning Since 1967

**Prototyping**

**CNC Milling • CNC Turning**

**Production Machining**

**Electro-Mechanical Assembly**

**Tooling & Fixturing**

**Short Run Production**

**"Turn Key Solutions"**

418 8th St. SE, Unit B11, Loveland, CO 80537-6492  
www.kimble-precision.com

**970.667.2778 | Fax: 970.667.1232**

**got events?**

**Caldera**  
CREATIVE SERVICES

**Planning • Design • Production • Decor**  
**970-495-0891 • info@calderacreative.com**



# Fort Collins Bravo! finalists display economic diversity

Advertising, electronic media, commercial real estate and the restaurant business are sectors that spawned the 2004 finalists for *The Northern Colorado Business Report's* Bravo! Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Fort Collins:

■ Thirty-two years of steady growth have marked Mike Burns' progress in delivering advertising services to Fort Collins clients. Along the way, Burns Marketing Communications Inc. also became a leader in community service, providing pro bono work for a broad spectrum of non-profit clients including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County, Wingshadow, Foothills Gateway and the Discovery Science Center.

■ Maury Dobbie, the founder and

owner of MediaTech Productions Inc., has been an entrepreneur since the age of 19 and has owned five diverse companies since 1979.

She has also stepped forward as a leader in the women-owned business community, sharing tricks of her various trades with other female entrepreneurs.

Media Tech, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, has reaped numerous national awards for television and Internet production work. Dobbie is the previous winner of a Bravo! Award, the 2002 honor for the region's emerging entrepreneur.

■ Breaking away from a solid base without leaving it completely behind, Tom Livingston and Stu MacMillan have taken their 18-year careers with Everitt



BURNS



SEASER

Cos. to another level with Everitt Commercial Partners, the project management arm of the company.

Formed in 1995, the group headed by MacMillan and Livingston has helped change the Fort Collins landscape with projects such as the Centre for Advanced Technology, Oakridge

Business Park and Colorado State University's Natural Resource Research Campus.

■ Rayno Seaser and his wife, Patty, opened their first Egg and I restaurant in Fort Collins in 1987, and it quickly became one of the city's favorite breakfast-and-lunch dining venues. Classical music and fresh flowers, amenities usually reserved for fine-dining dinner establishments, were part of the Egg and I formula that led Seaser to own and manage four other locations in the northern Front Range, and launch a franchise company that controls another nine locations in Colorado and Wyoming. The company also plans to open three more franchises by early next year.

## ATRIX, from 3B

deliver drugs to treat illness far beyond the narrow realm of dental disease.

He asked for speed. He wanted the new products in and out of the federal Food and Drug Administration regulatory maze within a few, not a dozen, years.

Reinvigorated Atrix workers delivered Eligard, a time-release treatment for prostate cancer, that has become the company's flagship product.

He asked for commitment.

"My first job was looking at the culture, and the morale, and deciding whether we could fix this thing," Bethune said. "My first goal was to develop a vision that people could latch onto. It worked, and we started trying to build something here."

The house that Bethune and 200 Atrix employees built was attractive enough to lure the interest of QLT, a cash-rich Canadian firm that had an eye-disease drug as its runaway success.

Five years after Bethune's arrival, shareholders and employees alike have

found what Bethune told them was ahead. Now Atrix's CEO says its time to spend more time on a horse, or a Harley, than behind his president's desk.

He recently bought his third Harley-Davidson motorcycle, a \$20,000 Ultra Classic Electra Glide — a hog that is, well, presidential.

"I splurged and bought some heated grips," he confessed. "They really are a lot more comfortable."

When not on weekend rides in the mountains with a group, including Duncan, that has become almost a company Harley club, Bethune and his wife

are likely to be at a Loveland horse farm where six cutting horses keep both busy.

Ah, the office is still there — if only for a few more months.

"I'm going to be on board during the transition, because I've got a lot of good people that we care about," Bethune said, adding he'll stay on the board of the combined company once the merger is complete.

"Then, I really do want to spend as much time as I can raising some world-class quarter horses, and find out about this leisure thing. I have friends who have told me about it."

**Celebrate**  
those magic moments  
again



**Anniversary Rings—  
Traditional Elegance**

 **Weiss Jewelers**  
970-352-6580 *Since 1915*  
827 10th Street • Downtown Greeley

## 2005 Audi A4 1.8T Quattro

**\$265/mo**  
24<sup>mo</sup> Lease plus tax



\$2,750 cap reduction plus 1st mo payment plus \$575 acquisition fee plus tax. MSRP \$32,020. Sale price \$31,100. 10k miles per year. No security deposit required. STK# 34841. Expires 11/01/04.

"A Comfortable Place to Buy Your Next Car."



Since 1967

**Ed Carroll**

970-226-3000 • 3003 S. College • Ft Collins

**MediaTech**  
PRODUCTIONS

**HOSTING**

**224-5911**

[mediatechproductions.com](http://mediatechproductions.com)



# Greeley finalists reflect wide range of industries

By Business Report staff

New Frontier Bank opened in Greeley in 1998 in a tiny modular building with \$6 million in capital. Since then, chairman and CEO Larry Seastrom has guided the company to become a \$475 million banking operation with 93 employees at two locations.

Seastrom's leadership has included a close attention to employee needs. He created the creation a position with the unique title of vice president of cultural enhancement, which focuses on inter-

nal communication and keeping employees engaged in bank operations.

Lee and Warren Yoder continue a near-century old legacy of Weld County Garage, which the father and son duo has helped to operate since 1982.

Lee Yoder moved to Greeley in 1976 and went to work for Garnsey and Wheeler Ford. But he always knew he wanted his own dealership and made that dream come true six years later.

Weld County Garage opened in downtown Greeley in 1908. The dealership recently moved to the U.S.

Highway 34 Bypass in west Greeley.

Warren Yoder is general manager of the company, which sells GM, Buick and Pontiac cars and trucks. The dealership employs about 140.

Ted Warner runs Connecting Point of Greeley, an information technology services firm that provides computer support for Northern Colorado business clients.

The company recently secured a three-year deal, in alliance with another firm, to develop a remote-access data base system for a collection of Weld County health care agencies.

Connecting Point totals more than \$5 million a year in revenue and employs 20 people.

Bi-State Machinery President Duane Wallin recently expanded his John Deere agricultural equipment business when he acquired a rival dealer in Fort Collins. With the purchase, he grew his business from \$23 million in annual sales to nearly \$30 million.

Wallin took over Bi-State in 1990. He prospered despite a slump in farm prices, in part by diversifying into lawn-and-garden and construction equipment.

## GREELEY, from 4B

point that I don't like to sit in one place too long."

Sally describes Tim as the driving force in the business, the one who works 14 hours a day connecting with customers and vendors. "I always tell Tim he's like a superman. He can get on a forklift and work in the warehouse. ... He drives trucks, loads trucks."

Tim says Sally doesn't give herself enough credit. "She does the HR and heads up the management team."

Sally has long since stepped out of the accounting and helps with sales. "I'm like Tim, I don't really like to sit still and be in the office." She also likes to be active in the community and par-

ticipates in a long list of organizations including the Economic Development Action Partnership, United Way and the chamber of commerce.

The business is based out of a 75,000-square-foot warehouse in Greeley. A branch operation with a smaller warehouse is located in Pueblo. Tim and Sally say they look toward more growth for their company. They may put a warehouse in Durango and are considering a branch in Denver. They may look at reaching into New Mexico and farther into Wyoming.

Tim and Sally believe growth and change in business is important. Tim said, "The minute you think you want to take anything for granted or you want to maintain a status quo you're going to probably go downhill or backwards."

**Hey, 3 out of 4 ain't bad.**

- Tenacious
- Hard working
- Outside sales experience
- Self starter

**970.225.9292**  
[www.snelling.com/ftcollins](http://www.snelling.com/ftcollins)  
[snelling@frii.com](mailto:snelling@frii.com)  
**Over 250 offices nationwide**

Unfortunately, to some staffing companies, this is a qualified candidate. At Snelling, we pride ourselves in finding the right person to match all your needs. From temporary to career placement, we have the resources and experience to deliver only the most qualified candidates. Give us a call today. Because the right fit is not only important, it's everything.

*Building Excellence . . .*  
 As one of Colorado's premier Construction Management and General Contracting firms, we at Alliance Construction Solutions are proud of our overwhelming sense of commitment to our industry and clients. Moving into the future, we look forward to the opportunity to propose our pre-construction, design build and construction services by offering highly qualified and accredited staff, proven experience and qualifications and provide building solutions for project needs.

**Our Mission Statement...**  
 "Committed to our partners, building excellence, into the future"

2725 Rocky Mountain Ave., Suite 100  
 Loveland, CO 80537  
 970.663.9700 \* 970.663.9750





# Give the Gift that lasts all year!

Show them you care by sending a new subscription to The Northern Colorado Business Report. You will be giving them the best business news coverage in the region, and tons of sales leads. Now for only \$39.97. We will even send the recipient an acknowledgement that you bought this for them.

- The Lists • Sales Leads • The Leader's Edge
- Special Reports • Breaking Stories
- Quarterly Sections • Real Estate • Finance
- Health & Wellness

**Yes!** Start The Subscription Immediately.

This gift is from: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check Enclosed    Charge to     VISA     Master Card

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (Required) \_\_\_\_\_

Include payment or subscribe online at [ncbr.com](http://ncbr.com)

141 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 or Fax to 970.221.5432

THE NORTHERN COLORADO  
**BUSINESS REPORT**  
[www.ncbr.com](http://www.ncbr.com)

## Loveland 2004 finalists have business growth in common

**Kristen S. Bastian**  
*The Business Report*

LOVELAND — From meager beginnings, David Yowell built MM Solutions into a company 28-employees strong with nationally recognized clients.

Yowell started the company in his garage with a pickup and a cell phone while he was working for his father-in-law at Mail Mart. His first major job was crating for the annual sculpture show in Loveland. He moved from there to consolidating box orders and doing packaging for the local mailing companies and then providing order fulfillment for Teledyne Waterpik. He retained a building and incorporated the business in 1994.

Now Yowell serves companies such as Agilent, Advanced Energy, Celestica and Dakocytomation. MM Solutions offers logistics services, freight management, crating and packaging and packaging materials. The 2003 sales were up about 50 percent from the previous year.

Marcia Sampson runs Eldon James Corp. full-steam ahead. Since she took control of the reins in 2000, she's ushered through the expansion of the product line, the company's professional certification and registration and an increase in distributor agreements nationally and internationally.

The company manufactures tubes and hose fittings for applications in industries ranging from beverage dispensing to medical products.

Sampson's dedication to seeing Eldon James grow led her to spend a year traveling the country, living in a 30-foot trailer. Her dedication to her children led her to bring them along for the journey.

The company's 2003 revenues were \$2.6 million and they employed 24 people.

In 1982, Susan Jessup took over management of Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch. The Jessup family operated the ranch since it was opened to the public in 1946.

Named "Best Family Vacation" by Frommer's Colorado guidebook and rated among the "top ten Colorado Dude Ranches" by True West Magazine

During the 1990s, the ranch expanded its customer base from guest ranch tourists to businesses looking for a unique retreat, weddings and family reunions. There are now five meeting rooms suited for parties of 10 to 150.

The ranch maintains a herd of 80 horses and employs 65 to 70 people in the summer and 25 through the winter months.



**DONNAN**



**JESSUP**



**YOWELL**



**SAMPSON**

The ranch struggled to remain open in the early 1980s but has steadily moved into the black after Susan Jessup began an active marketing program in 1987.

Kroll Factual Data Inc. specializes in background information for mortgage lending, employment screening and other types of business information.

Jerald Donnan started Factual Data Corp. with his wife, Marcia, as a two-person mortgage-credit-reporting agency in Fort Collins in 1985. The business relocated to Loveland in 1998.

In 2003, New York-based Kroll Inc. purchased Factual Data Corp., with unanimous approval from its board of directors, for \$115 million in cash and stocks. Chairman and CEO Donnan became president of the newly formed Kroll Factual Data Inc.

"Joining Kroll is a win for our shareholders, our customers and our employees alike," he said in a statement.

Donnan retired at the end of 2003, turning the leadership over to his son James Donnan.

For the second quarter of 2003, the last that Donnan served as chairman and CEO, the company reported \$24 million in revenues, a 70 percent increase over second quarter 2002.

Jerald is currently looking at a number of local business opportunities to start or venture; his entrepreneurial spirit and drive are still going strong since his retirement from Factual Data.

### **LOVELAND,** from 6B

He transferred from the Denver store a year ago to attend the university. He said the company is very flexible with his schedule for school.

Burke believes in supporting schools. This year, the company started a scholarship program and gave out \$1,000 scholarships to 10 students all across the Front Range. He hopes to increase the amount of scholarships given each year.

The stores are prospering. The combined revenues for 2003 were about \$10 million. Burke said he's not done yet. He said he plans to expand both businesses.

He is looking to build more Burke Cleaners in Fort Collins and Loveland and eventually move into Greeley and Longmont. The company could open as many as 15 more locations in the next couple of years; after that the facility will need to be expanded.

Mister Neat's might get two more stores in the metro area in the near future. Burke also said he has interest in expanding into Utah in the Salt Lake area and into New Mexico. He estimated this could happen as soon as 2006.

Burke never expected the company would be so big. His constant goal has always only to be the best.

"We don't rent a tux; we sell an experience," he said.



## Alternative fuels start-up firm among high-revving newcomers

Northern Colorado rising business stars are represented among the finalists for the Bravo! Emerging Entrepreneur award. Up-and-coming entrepreneurs include:

■ Privately held Blue Sun Biodiesel, a breakthrough agriculture energy company headed by Jeff Probst, develops oilseed energy crops and production and distribution networks to sell high-performance biodiesel fuel. Founded in 2001, Blue Sun's objective is to bring the cost of biodiesel in line with petroleum diesel. Blue Sun will be building a 2.5-million-gallon per year biodiesel plant in Alamosa to supply the company's pre-sold distribution network.

■ Front Range Real Estate Consultants started in September 1999 with one employee and Julie O'Gorman. The business now has offices in Loveland, Cheyenne, Northglenn, Colorado Springs, Grand Lake and Montrose. In 2003 the company reported \$2.6 million in revenues and now employs 34. The business offers a 24-hour turnaround time from inspection to completion. Clients have included banks, insurance companies, the federal government, various state and local governments, private individuals and investors.

■ Citadel Advisory Group, a Fort Collins-based consultant for buyers and sellers of existing companies, The company is reaping the fruits of increased activity in the mergers-and-acquisitions marketplace for small- and mid-sized businesses. Co-owners John A. Smith and Chris C. Frevert started the company in 2002 and reported \$3.7 million in revenues in 2003. Citadel offers merger



HUNT



PROBST

and acquisition advisory services, succession planning, company and intellectual property valuations, divestment advisory and strategic financial advisory services.

■ Angelique Hunt was born and raised in New York City and met her husband and business partner Rick Hunt — a Colorado native — while both worked at Pfizer Inc. in New York City. The Hunts purchased Risk Removal — a company created by the Neenan Co. in 1989 — in October 2002. Angelique is majority owner and president of the company and Rick is general manager and chief estimator.

Risk Removal cleans up asbestos, lead, mold, mercury, contaminated soils and other biohazards for clients that include schools, government, hospitals, military bases and residential customers.

The company has 15 full-time employees and serves a territory primarily in Colorado and Wyoming. Risk Removal Inc. was recently rated No. 52 in Colorado Biz magazine's Top 100 women-owned businesses and No. 28 in the Top 50 minority-owned businesses.

## EMERGING, from 9B

death.

The OptiReader is a combination handheld computer and ocular fundus digital video camera. The user holds the reader in front of the eye of the animal for less than a second. The camera captures an image and the computer stores the image and records the date, time, and location of the animal. The computer contains a global positioning system to provide accurate information.

The reader wand also contains a bar code reader to read codes imprinted on a carcass. Optibrand also developed a wand, which reads any microchips implanted in the cattle.

This information is downloaded to a computer and the customer can use the information to analyze herds and track birth traits. This information is then encrypted into a database to track an animal from birth to feedlot to slaughter.

Another important safety feature of the program is the security of the OptiReader. The device housing cannot be opened without disabling the device, making the system tamper-proof.

"For larger customers we charge them a subscription fee rather than a per-click fee," Golden said. "It is our customers' data so we give them the hardware and the software that man-

ages the data. We monitor what is going on in real time, and we take care of the hardware."

### Leading in the marketplace

Optibrand is a graduate of the Fort Collins Virtual Incubator, which provides discounted professional services to start-up companies. The company graduated from the incubator — now called the Fort Collins Technology Incubator — in April 2003, and is now the organization's shining star.

"When they started in the incubator they held onto our coat tails, but now I feel like we are holding on to their coat tails as they are more and more successful," said Kathy Kregel, executive director of the Fort Collins Technology Incubator. "I am just tickled for them at all of their success."

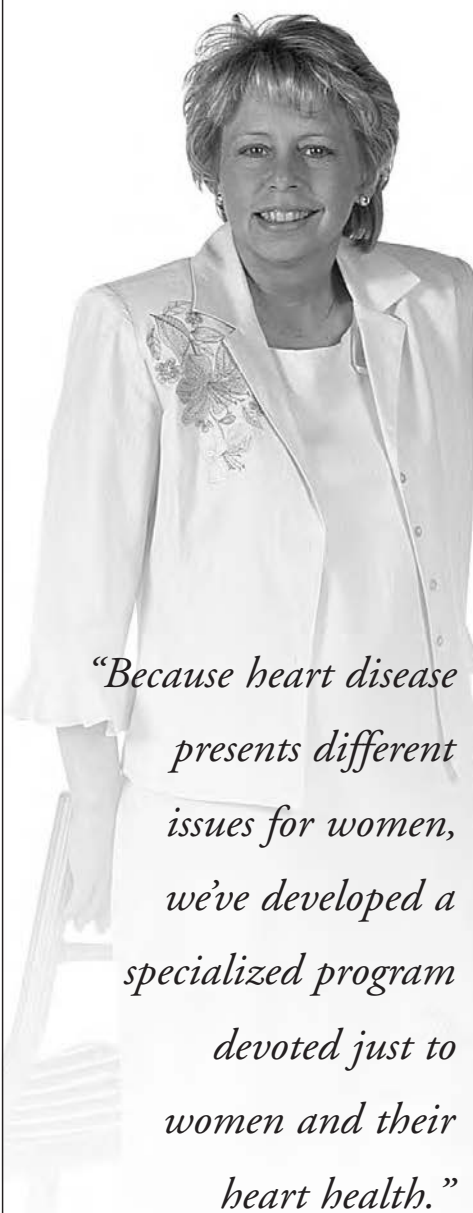
The company has a select few customers including Greeley-based Swift & Co. and Denver-based Maverick Ranch Natural Meats. Within the next five years, Golden said he hopes to have an international presence in all major livestock species and to be a larger provider in the food safety world.

The company is on track to reach those goals. While Golden declined to comment on revenues, he mentioned the company now employs 20 people and recently moved to a 4,800-square-foot office space in the Opera Galleria in downtown Fort Collins, which doubled the previous headquarters space.



HEART CENTER OF THE ROCKIES

# EXPERTISE in Matters of the Heart.



*"Because heart disease presents different issues for women, we've developed a specialized program devoted just to women and their heart health."*

Kerry Rayder, R.N.  
Clinical Cardiology Nurse,  
Heart Center of the Rockies

### A Woman's Heart Program

Heart disease kills more women than breast cancer, diabetes and Alzheimer's combined. Heart Center of the Rockies, a leader in advanced cardiovascular care, has developed a specialized program just for women. "A Woman's Heart." Heart Center of the Rockies, the region's premier heart center, is based in Fort Collins, with clinics throughout northern Colorado, southeastern Wyoming and southwestern Nebraska. Find out how early screening and knowledge about prevention can protect you. Call today.

### Our services include:

- A Woman's Heart Program
- Community Outreach
- Preventive Care
- Heart Attack Treatment
- Cardiac Surgery

Heart Center of the Rockies

Affiliated with Poudre Valley Health System

For more information in Fort Collins: 970-221-1000 or 800-459-4241



# Northern Colorado Technology/ Manufacturers Directory

*The Authority on Northern Colorado High-Tech*



**Ask your sales rep for  
publication dates &  
deadlines**

**PRICING:**

**Full:** \$1,700

**1/2 Horizontal or Vertical:** \$850

**1/3 Horizontal or Vertical:** \$750

**1/4:** \$550

**1/8:** \$350

**Page One:** \$1,900

**Glossy**

(Includes four color charges)

**Back Cover:** \$2,700

**Inside Front or Back Cover:** \$2,500

**Glossy Pages:** \$2,200

**Special Placement:** Add 10%

**W**here do you turn to reach the region's top technology & manufacturing companies? Look no further than the Northern Colorado Technology/Manufacturers Directory, listing more than 1,700 companies.

**PACKED WITH INFORMATION,:**

- An overview of the technology and manufacturing sectors.
- A directory of technology & manufacturing companies in Northern Colorado and Southeastern Wyoming, including Agribusiness, Aerospace, Biotechnology, Computers & Peripherals, Instruments, Internet, Materials, Medical-Products, Machinists, Microelectronics, Plastics, Publishing, Remote Sensing, Manufacturers, R&D, Robotics, Software, Telecommunications & Testing.
- Indexed by category, alphabet, geography, parent-company affiliation.
- Data includes key contacts, address, phone, fax, e-mail, Web, number of employees, revenues, product descriptions & more!
- Distributed to key contacts, purchasing managers & decision-makers to technology and manufacturing companies and other local businesses. Also distributed through local chambers of commerce, economic-development agencies, technology expos, retail outlets and the World Trade Center.
- Mailed to paid subscribers of the Northern Colorado Business Report.

**SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE:**

**Cover Sponsor \$5,000** (includes a premium page, full-color, cover logo, section logo).

**Section Sponsor \$3,500** (includes a full-page ad next to the list of your industry, logo on section front page, logo on table of contents)

**Ask about these other  
powerful business  
directories:**

Discounts  
available when  
you purchase all 4.



**Call for advertising information,  
(970) 221-5400 / (970) 356-1683**



## LIFETIME, from 10B

Commons.

Neal also saw opportunities outside of Northern Colorado, launching projects in Wyoming and Nebraska, as well as metropolitan in Denver.

At the same time, Neal linked up with other partners outside Wheeler for projects around the region, including Tuscany in Evans and Miramont in Fort Collins.

Neal became known for his willingness to embrace unconventional approaches to development.

For instance, when the city of Fort Collins implemented new land use standards that emphasized higher density housing, many developers groused about the heavy-handed city regulations. Neal openly chastised the critics and developed Rigden Farm as the first large-scale subdivision under the new code.

"Rigden Farm was one of the best things we did and one of the worst things we did," Croci said. "It was a great project — it still is a great project. Economically it will become very viable for us."

But Rigden Farm's many delays and changes experienced as a "guinea pig" project absorbed many of the would-be profits, Croci acknowledged. Appropriately, Wheeler has gained permission to name William Neal Parkway within the Rigden project.

Neal's community interests made him an unlikely figure in the development industry.

He patronized artists, led the charge for taxes to buy public open space, and backed environmental causes, such

clean up along the Cache la Poudre River. He also recorded an album as a tribute to the river.

"His vision was the most important thing," Zahn said. "He wanted to make a constructive and positive contribution to the quality of life for the people living in the homes in his subdivisions, or for those working and operating businesses in the commercial centers he built.

### 'A sense of timing'

Leo Schuster showed instincts for business decisions soon after he started Progressive Living Structures, the homebuilding company he founded in 1978 with his wife Darlene.

"He would look at projects ... other people wouldn't, and create something popular," Darlene said.

An example was his first development, a 24-unit condominium project in Loveland called Locust Park.

A group of 18 would-be homebuyers who knew each other were interested in living near to each other. They were either retirees, or approaching retirement.

"In their mind it was kind of like their dream community," Darlene said. And Leo delivered.

More recently, Schuster conceived of the idea for what be the Pyrenees development on an isolated piece of ground in northwest Loveland. His vision was for a French country-style home.

"People thought Loveland couldn't support this type of product at the time," Darlene said. "Leo was a very calculated risk taker. He would some potential and follow it through to success."

Schuster's ability to see potential worked for people as well as for housing subdivisions.

"Leo hired people who knew how to do their jobs," Darlene said. "He was not somebody who micromanaged."

The deft touch helped Progressive Living Structures stay consistently profitable during periods of ups and downs in the real estate industry in Northern Colorado. Leo seemed to know when not to commit to projects when demand was about to wane, and when to invest in advance of a growth curve.

"We survived when a lot of builders didn't," Darlene said. "Especially in the '80s when the economy was flat.

Leo made great choices ... He knew when not to be expanding. He would say the most money he ever made was all the money he never spent."

At the time of this death, Schuster's company was building about 80 new homes per year, and had started more than 1,200 in 26 years of business.

Zahn credited Schuster with an "elegant sense of timing."

An example was during the late 1980s, when larger building companies were leaving Northern Colorado at the peak of a real estate slump.

"That's when Leo bought most of the Wagon Wheel subdivision (in Fort Collins)," Zahn recalled. "It was certainly counter intuitive ... He stepped up and took a big risk. Ultimately the 1990s were an exceptional period for Northern Colorado in terms of growth."

Schuster applied his business acumen to other sectors. He invested in a series of restaurants in Loveland, including Springfield's and the Cactus Grille. He hired Mike Severance in 1988 to manage the Cactus Grille, eventually allowing Severance to invest in the business before selling to Severance entire-

ly.

Severance now operates two restaurants, the Cactus Grille and Out of Bounds, in Loveland.

"Leo is the sole reason this business, actually these two restaurants, are viable," Severance said.

"I never met another individual like him. He had the ability to bring people to their full potential. He gave them the room to stretch their wings, so to speak. I had been a restaurant manager for corporations for a long time ... I think Leo saw something in me."

Schuster also saw something in his community.

He headed up the High Plains Arts Council during the years when Loveland was cementing its national reputation as a center for sculpture art. He also served on Loveland's Economic Development Council board of directors.

His donations of supplies, money and time helped varied groups such as Habitat for Humanity, the Boy Scouts of America, Colorado State University and the MS Society.

### Different but equal

Zahn, who was a friend and associate of both Neal and Schuster, said the two men had distinctive personalities.

Neal was outgoing and rarely shied from public view. Schuster, despite his community contributions, managed to stay out of the news.

But the two shared a commitment to honest dealings.

"One thing that embodies both of these guys is that ethics was of the utmost importance," he said. "A lot of people give lip service to 'win-win,' but that would be true of both of them."

# Complete Local, Long Distance, and Internet Solutions

Ask us about Voice over IP -  
it's simple *and* affordable!

RockyNet...

"Increasing the Speed of Information"

Call Today!

877-826-4031

**RockyNet**

sales@RockyNet.com www.RockyNet.com





## SPIRIT, from 11

Greeley, \$10.5 million.

■ Colorado State University Monfort Professor Program, Fort Collins, \$2.5 million.

The foundation was started in 1970 by Warren and Edith Monfort, whose grandchildren now oversee the organization.

"Until '87, it was just focused on Weld County," said Dick Monfort.

In 1987, when ConAgra Foods Inc. acquired the Monfort Inc. meatpacking business, the proceeds from the sale boosted the value of the foundation. The foundation's assets doubled again in size in 2001 when the late Ken Monfort passed away, leaving a large gift from his will.

"The foundation was really started by my grandparents to help the community," said Dick Monfort, who runs the foundation with his brother Charlie, sisters Kay and Kyle, and Ken's widow Myra Monfort.

In the mid 1990s, the foundation — which counts assets of about \$40 million — started issuing large-scale grants for regional institutions, including Colorado State University, the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and, most recently, Children's Hospital in Denver.

In September the Monforts announced a \$10 million donation to the Denver-based hospital to be parceled out over a number of years.

The latter gift also reflects the central



D. MONFORT



C. MONFORT

mission of the foundation's giving — children.

"We want to help children who have had a tough blow in life, who are not as fortunate as we have been," Dick Monfort said.

Collectively, Dick and his siblings have 15 children of their own, which has helped to influence the foundation's focus on children.

"We're very fortunate we have children who are healthy," he said.

The Monfort Children's Clinic in Greeley, which opened in 1995, stands as the most enduring local symbol of the foundation's emphasis on children's issues.

"They care so much about this area and its families and children," Truswell said. "I think they recognize the future of children is so important. They have just reached out so much

The foundation's ongoing goal is to distribute at least \$2 million a year in gifts, Dick Monfort said.

While he declined to disclose a full list of recipients and their grants, the foundation has announced about \$25.5 million in total gifts to about 200 agencies in the last five years.

# High-tech firm, restaurant make mark in outlying areas

One of Northern Colorado's leading high-technology companies and one of the state's landmark restaurants are among the finalists this year for Bravo! Entrepreneur Outlying Communities award.

Applied Films, located in the Interstate 25 corridor in southwest Weld County, was founded in 1976 in Longmont. The company, now headed by Tom Edman, provides thin film deposition solutions around the world for the flat panel display industry, architectural, automotive and solar glass, consumer products packaging and electronics industries.

The company employs over 500 worldwide and in 2003 the company reported \$228.5 million in revenues, or 48 per cent growth.

In 1950, Joe S. Johnson and one of his managers, Clayton Bearly staked the outlines of a new gas station and cafe on Colorado Highway 87. When Interstate 25 opened in 1954, the legacy of Johnson's Corner truly began. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, Johnson's Corner has never closed its doors. Johnson died in 1981 leaving his stepson Chauncey Taylor to run the operation. Taylor and his wife, Christy, are currently in the midst of a

\$4 million to \$5 million renovation of the landmark.

Colorado Inspection Agency, located in Windsor, inspects facilities during the phases of construction. It can inspect one-family homes to custom homes to major facilities. Billy Roberts and Craig Crader founded Colorado Inspection Agency in 1992. After many years of inspecting buildings, they sold the business to Mike McCurdie in 1999.

Since taking over the business, McCurdie has created two more offices — one in Westminster and the other in Centennial. His payroll has increased from four employees in 1999 to 20.

Martin Lind founded Trolco Inc., a Windsor-based development company, along with former Denver Broncos star Steve Watson. The partnership launched Water Valley, one of the state's premiere master-planned golf course communities, which features the Pelican Lakes Golf and Country Club.

While Watson has since returned to the Broncos organization as an assistant coach and Lind has continued to build in Water Valley. His projects also include the Eagle Crossing development in Loveland, and he's a principal investor in the Colorado Eagles minor league hockey team

## OUTLYING, from 7B

of DTM were asking company officials to assemble the pieces they manufactured.

This desire to manufacture and provide labor for others, led to the inception of Peak Industries.

"We started with a relatively small crew, maybe 15 people doing really simple assemblies, which included snapping together plastic parts," Hopkins said. "We were fortunate enough to align ourselves with some pretty key players and we started expanding the business."

A year into the business, Hopkins said he realized the company was selling labor, which could be found for a lower rate in Asia.

"Selling labor in one of the highest-labor cost countries in the world is not a sustainable, long-term strategic plan," he said. "We got together and thought of markets that were sustainable in the Colorado economy and what we thought of was lower- to medium-volume, high-complexity, high-engineering content, high-quality requirement markets."

The company now employs about 300 people with an average wage rate of \$13 per hour. The company atmosphere is one of acceptance and understanding that different people have different needs.

Peak has a coffee club, where members have 50 cents a week deducted from their paychecks to have the privilege of drinking Starbucks coffee at work. Hopkins is active companywide

with his monthly "Lunch with Mark" meetings which allow employees to discuss issues and ideas and he abides by the "no-door" policy — no one has a door.

### The creation of an entrepreneur

Hopkins decided to move to Colorado from upstate New York after falling in love with the area during a ski trip.

He decided to work at Hewlett-Packard because the company had facilities in Colorado.

He worked at the Fort Collins location as a mechanical engineer and while there he decided he wanted to start his own company, but knew he couldn't get the experience he needed in his current position.

So, Hopkins accepted a position in Boulder working for Micromotion Inc. as its vice president of manufacturing.

"I knew I wanted to found my own company and I knew that I didn't know what I needed to know, so I looked for a position where I could get more practical manufacturing management experience," he said.

In 1996 Hopkins met Bob Grubb, president of DTM, through networking with the Boulder Chamber of Commerce. The two sat down and decided to start the manufacturing firm with Hopkins at the helm.

"I think there are some characteristics of entrepreneurs that are pretty common and are well documented, but I think there are a lot of things you need to learn to be successful," he said. "Basically I think it comes from passion to want to create something where there wasn't something before. And if you have that I think the rest of it can come naturally."

**J-R ENGINEERING**  
A Westrian Company

*Meeting the Needs of our Communities across the Front Range*

Civil Engineering    Public Works    Surveying  
Structural Engineering    Water Resources

**Colorado Springs**  
4310 Arrows West Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
(719) 593-2593

**Denver**  
6020 Greenwood Plaza Boulevard  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
(303) 740-9393

**Fort Collins**  
2620 East Prospect Road, Suite 190  
Fort Collins, CO 80525  
(970) 491-9888

**North Denver**  
12301 North Grant Street, Suite 110  
Thornton, CO 80241  
(720) 872-9850



# 2004 Bravo! nominees

## Emerging Entrepreneur

Brent Eskew, FindYourSpot.com, Windsor  
 Bruce Golden, Bernard E. Rollin and Ralph V. Switzer Jr., Optibrand Ltd., Fort Collins  
 Angelique Hunt, Risk Removal, Fort Collins  
 Mike Jensen, Fort Collins Real Estate, Fort Collins  
 Prue Kaley and Mike Levy, NorthernColoradoRentals.com, Fort Collins  
 Brenda and Richard Lucio, Coyote Grill, Greeley  
 Julie O'Gorman, Front Range Real Estate Consultants, Fort Collins  
 Clair Orr, AgTown Technologies, Greeley  
 Paul and Ninita Pellegrino, NitaCrisp, Fort Collins  
 Howard Perko, Secure Foundations and Structures Inc., Fort Collins  
 Jeff Probst, Blue Sun Biodiesel, Fort Collins  
 Kim Schatz, K&D Enterprises, Loveland  
 John Smith, Citadel Advisory Group, Fort Collins

## Fort Collins

Michael Aller and David Lingle, Aller-Lingle Architects  
 David Bethune, Atrix Laboratories Inc.  
 Robert and Heather Bisetti, Bisetti's Italian Restaurant  
 Mike Burns, Burns Marketing and Communications  
 David Carson, CBW Automation  
 Rhys Christensen, Realtec Commercial Real Estate Services  
 Joe and Karen DeAnda, Trios Salon and Spa  
 Jim Dismore, Ultimate Support Systems  
 Maury Dobbie, MediaTech Productions  
 Terry Drahota, Drahota Construction  
 Dawn and Michael Duncan, Creative Career Connections  
 David Dwyer, Dwyer, Ringenberg and Funk  
 Chad Fletcher, Engenuity Inc.  
 Gretchen Gaede and Ryan Keiffer, The Write Words  
 Rick Griggs, Tantalus Books  
 Dave Herzfeld, c3Technology Inc.  
 Jeff Hiatt, Prosci  
 Richard Keith, Private Escapes LLC  
 David King, Triple Crown Sports  
 Rich and Colleen Laub, Institute for Business and Medical Careers  
 Keith Lipps, Invision  
 Lester Litton, Earth Engineering Consultants  
 Stuart MacMillan and Tom Livingston, Everitt Commercial Partners  
 Loren and Carl Maxey, Maxey Cos.  
 Scott McCarthy and Steve Taylor, Austin's  
 Doug Odell, Odell Brewing Co.  
 Gunther Preuss, Genesis Fixtures Inc./Genesis Innovations  
 Roger Sample and John Bailey, Sample & Bailey  
 Lori and Steve Schlotter, Colorado CustomWare



Rayno Seaser, The Egg and I  
 Chris Sharp, SharpNet Solutions  
 Dean Suposs, ADP/Avert Inc.  
 Patty S. Taylor, First Class Direct  
 Mai Tran, Information Technology eXperts Inc.  
 Tom Turner and Dave Marvin, Wind2 Software Inc.  
 Frank Vaught and Joe Frye, Vaught Frye Architects  
 Bob Vomaske, Vista Solutions  
 Gary Young, Outdoor Promotions  
 Ted and Ellen Zibel, The Perennial Gardener

## Greeley

Byron Bateman, Cache Bank  
 Bill Bensler, Flood and Peterson Insurance  
 Dale Butcher and Bruce White, ConQuest Oil Co.  
 Brad Clarkson, The Group Real Estate Greeley  
 Bonnie Dean, Bonnie Dean Associates  
 Allison Dunning, Merry Makers & Decorators  
 Todd and Zeke Garretson, Garretson's Sports Center Co.  
 Rob Haimson, Potato Brumbaugh's  
 Trent Johnson, Greeley Hat Works  
 Mark Kendall, Kendall Printing  
 Roger Knoph, Envirotech Services  
 Laurie Masi, The Point/ErgoMed  
 Mike Morgan, StarTek  
 Carol Parish, Westlake Wine and Spirits  
 Powell Prothe, Vintage Corp.  
 Curtis Sears, Landmark Cos. LLC  
 Larry Seastrom, New Frontier Bank  
 Tim Thissen, Thissen Construction  
 Betty Tointon, Antiques at Lincoln Park  
 Duane Wallin, Bi-State Machinery  
 Tim and Sally Warde, Northern Colorado Paper Co.  
 Ted Warner, Connecting Point of Greeley  
 Sid Wilke, Big R Manufacturing and Distribution  
 Lee and Warren Yoder, Weld County Garage

## Loveland nominees

Rod Bryant, Gregory Electric Inc.  
 Rod Bryner, RMV Landscape  
 Mark Burke, Burke Cleaners and Mister Neat's Formalwear  
 Jerry Curtis, EagleSpan Steel Structures Inc.  
 Van DeWar, Northern Colorado Cost Cutters Inc.  
 Jerald H. Donnan, Factual Data Corp.  
 Hamid and Janice Eslan, The Black Steer Restaurant  
 Craig Harrison, Harrison Resource Corp./LandVoyage.com  
 Jerry Helgeson, American Eagle Distributing  
 Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch  
 Linda Ligon, Interweave Press  
 Bob Moorehead, Network Analysis and Design Inc.  
 Marcia Sampson, Eldon James Corp.  
 Steven Sanford, Gibson Heating  
 Clayton Schwerin, Alliance Construction Solutions  
 Mike Severance, Cactus Grille  
 Richard Van Der Meer, Goldco Industries  
 David Yowell, MM Solutions

## Outlying community nominees

Thomas Edman, Applied Films Corp., Longmont (Weld County)  
 David Fahrenbruch, Sunblest Farms, Fort Lupton  
 Gary Gorsuch, Meadowlark Optics, Frederick  
 Mark Hopkins, Peak Industries, Frederick  
 Martin Lind, Trollco Inc./Water Valley, Windsor  
 Tom Rader, Colorado Railcar Manufacturing, Fort Lupton  
 William Rankin, UQM Technologies, Frederick  
 Karrol Steeves, Comfort Keepers, Windsor  
 Chauncey and Christy Taylor, Johnson's Corner, Johnstown  
 Nicolae Toderica, Star Precision, Longmont (Weld County)  
 Larry Wexler, Ecomshare  
 Sherry Wirtz, The Local Pages, Windsor



## Lifetime Achievement

Richard Boettcher, Professional Finance Co., Greeley  
 Don Churchwell, Home State Bank, Loveland  
 Dr. Don Cook, Monfort Children's Clinic/National Pediatrics Association, Greeley  
 Jack Devereaux, The Home State Bank, Loveland  
 Bill Farr, Centennial Bank of the West, Windsor  
 George Hall, Hall-Irwin Corp., Greeley  
 Loren Maxey, Maxey Cos., Fort Collins  
 Bill Neal, Wheeler Commercial Property Services, Fort Collins  
 Wayne Schrader, Schrader Oil Co., Fort Collins  
 Leo Schuster, Progressive Living Structures, Loveland  
 Joe Tennesen, New Frontier Bank, Greeley

## Regional Spirit

Agilent Technologies, Loveland  
 Celestica Colorado, Fort Collins  
 Erion Foundation, Loveland  
 Flood & Peterson, Fort Collins  
 Funding Partners for Housing Solutions, Fort Collins  
 The Group Real Estate Inc., Fort Collins  
 Rich Harter, Fort Collins Convention & Visitors Bureau, Fort Collins  
 High Plains Arts Council, Loveland  
 Eric Holsapple and Don Marostica, Loveland Commercial LLC, Loveland  
 McKee Foundation, Loveland  
 Monfort Family Foundation, Eaton  
 New Belgium Brewing Co., Fort Collins  
 Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp., Loveland  
 Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance

## Searching for lending solutions? Head for Centennial!

**Commercial • Small Business • Home Equity  
 Construction • Bridge • Home Improvement**

One of your most important advisors when shopping for a loan is an experienced lender who can structure a loan to fit your individual needs. Centennial offers experience and competitive rates. Stop by, get acquainted with our "bold new spirit" and see why so many of your business associates, friends and neighbors are choosing to do business with Centennial Bank.

*Come bank  
 with Centennial!*







**WE'LL HELP YOU GAIN  
MORE CAPITAL,  
AND CAPITALIZE ON  
YOUR GAINS.**

**GREG METZO, SVP, COMMERCIAL LENDER  
970.225.4908**

**1<sup>ST</sup> FIRST COMMUNITY BANK**

**NOT YOUR TYPICAL BANKERS.  
NOT YOUR TYPICAL BANK.**

**[www.fcbcolo.com](http://www.fcbcolo.com)**