

Arizona Daily Star

Business

And the Oscar, er, the SASIE goes to...

Winners named by Arizona Small Business Association
By Shelley Shelton

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The Arizona Small Business Association presented its 2008 Oscar-style SASIE Awards Thursday evening at the Fox Theatre.

The acronym SASIE stands for Southern Arizona Smart Inspiring Enterprise, and the event honors businesses in the categories of culture and people, sales and marketing, customer service, use of technology, and, for the first time, environmental awareness. Each category has three winners, based on business size.

Another first this year was a partnership with the National Association of Women Business Owners to present an award for Business Woman of the Year. All female-owned businesses that were finalists in other SASIE categories were automatically entered for the NAWBO award.

Marylee Pangman, owner of The Creative Gardener, a firm that designs and installs potted gardens, said that even though she was nominated in the past in another category, this year's selection in the customer-service realm was more special to her because of the nomination's source.

It wasn't a friend or a customer, she said, but rather a colleague.

"To be recognized by a colleague, I think it meant more to me because it was someone who was a little bit more removed from my business," Pangman said.

Maurice Saroni, who, with wife Sonja, owns A Handyman's Haven, a firm that specializes in 30 home-building products, sounded tickled that the spreadsheets he's designed built for his company and vendors helped earn him a nod for best use of technology.

"I was very elated, rather surprised as a matter of fact, especially to be nominated in the technology area," he said.

He wasn't sure what the criteria were for that category, he said.

"There's all sorts of technology that's available out there. So I was very surprised with the technology that we're using, which is very sophisticated, that we were nominated for it," Saroni said.

Leslie Perls, owner of the marketing firm LP&G Inc., which eventually won in the culture and people category, deflected the idea that she had won an award. "It shouldn't be me. And it isn't me. I think its LP&G. It's about all of us. Certainly not me, I'm a steward. I'm a

gardener and I just keep the soil ready for all these brilliant people I work with every day to do their thing," she said.

AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

Culture and People Award

- Windermere Distinctive Homes & Land; Nikki Mehalic-Halle, owner.
- LP&G Inc.; Leslie Perls, owner.
- Heinfeld Meech & Co. PC; Corey Arvizu, Jennifer Shields, Scott Kies and Gary Heinfeld, partners.

Sales and Marketing Award

- Talking Trash Waste Removal; Joe Higgins, owner.
- Green Valley News & Sun and The Sahuarita Sun; Pamela Mox, publisher.
- Aristocare Home Health Services/Green Valley; Dana Rambow, president, and Steve Brean, branch manager.

Customer Service Award

- The Contained Gardener; Marylee Pangman, owner.
- New Beginnings Treatment Center Inc.; Pam Henley-Johnson, CEO and president.
- **Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson; Drs. James Boulay and Barbara Gores, owners.**

Use of Technology Award

- Demith Chiropractic & Acupuncture Healing Center; Dr. Susan Demith.
- A Handyman's Haven; Maurice and Sonja Saroni, owners.
- The International Dark-Sky Association; David Crawford, director and CEO.

Environmental Awareness Award

- Sonoran Oasis Landscaping; Deborah Muñoz-Chacon, president.
- The Station; Megan Hartman, owner.
- The Solar Store; Katharine Kent, president.

NAWBO Business Woman of the Year (tie)

- Jayne Henninger, Remedy Intelligent Staffing.
- Dana Rambow, Aristocare Home Health Services/Green Valley.

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