



## **PROSPERA BUSINESS NETWORK PRESENTS BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS AND ANNOUNCES 2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Bozeman, Montana, November, 12, 2009** – Prospera Business Network presented their 2009 Business Excellence Awards at the organization's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner this evening at the Best Western GranTree Inn in Bozeman.

Awards were given in the following categories: *Innovator of the Year*, *Entrepreneur of the Year*, *Economic Leadership Award*, and *Business of the Year*.

**The Natural Baby Company** was named the *2009 Innovator of the Year* in recognition for their success and commitment to creating innovative, eco-friendly products. The company is a designer and manufacturer of environmentally-friendly, natural baby products. Award presenter, Marci Yamasaki of Cleanwaste, said: "This 6 year old company is experiencing tremendous growth. Their most recent innovation, a 97% biodegradable and 100% compostable diaper pad has recently been picked up by Whole Foods Markets stores nationally."

**Autopilot** founder and owner, **Matt McCune** was named the *2009 Entrepreneur of the Year* in recognition for his passion to create a thriving enterprise with good, quality jobs in Bozeman. Autopilot is a product development, design and manufacturing services firm based in Bozeman with nationwide customers. In presenting the award, Lance Tinseth of Stratum Solutions said: "Matt McCune started Autopilot in the garage of his home, and in just over 3 years has achieved remarkable success. Autopilot is now located in a 3,500 square foot facility and employs 15 people in Bozeman."

**Chris Naumann** of the **Downtown Bozeman Partnership** was honored with the *2009 Economic Leadership Award* in recognition for his leadership and commitment to the continued economic vitality of Downtown Bozeman. Award presenter, Steve Holland of the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, said: "I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award than Chris Naumann for his leadership in Downtown Bozeman this year, especially in the aftermath of the explosion and in being a driving force to develop the new Downtown Improvement Plan."

**Simms Fishing Products** was named the *2009 Business of the Year* in recognition of their industry-leading vision and their commitment to manufacturing in Bozeman. In presenting the award, Dennis Dixon of Zoot Enterprises, said: "Simms is a globally recognized brand that manufactures their world-renowned line of fly fishing waders right here in Bozeman. We salute Simms for their commitment to manufacturing in Bozeman and for their generous support of the local community."

## **PROSPERA BUSINESS NETWORK ANNOUNCES 2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In the 2009 Prospera Update during the annual dinner, Prospera reported that over \$31 million in government contracts have been awarded to area businesses assisted by Prospera's government contracting program – the Procurement Technical Assistance Center or PTAC. Prospera also reported the following accomplishments during 2009:

- Prospera established a new \$750,000 loan fund to assist businesses in the rural areas surrounding Bozeman.
- Prospera was recognized as the 2009 Montana Women in Business Champion of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.
- Prospera lead the development of the first-ever economic development plan for the City of Bozeman, which was adopted in August and is now being implemented.
- Prospera was recently awarded a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to establish the Montana Women's Business Center.

#### **ABOUT THE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

Prospera Business Network presents its Business Excellence Awards each year at the organization's annual dinner to recognize exceptional businesses and leaders in our area. Award nominations are solicited and received from the business community with the final selection made by Prospera's Board of Directors. The Business Excellence Awards is Prospera's biggest event of the year, with 200+ business and community leaders in attendance.

*The Business of the Year Award* is given to an established business in recognition for its significant contribution to the economic development of our area.

*The Innovator of the Year Award* is given to a business for an innovative business model or for creating innovative or value-added products or services.

*The Entrepreneur of the Year Award* is presented to an individual or team from a company in business less than five years in recognition of exceptional performance.

*The Economic Leadership Award* is given to an individual leader from government, non-profit, or business who has made a significant contribution to the economic development of our area.

#### **ABOUT PROSPERA BUSINESS NETWORK**

Prospera Business Network is a private, non-profit, member supported economic development organization in southwestern Montana. Originally established in 1985 as the Gallatin Development Corporation, Prospera plays a leading role in economic development serving a region that is one of the fastest growing areas in the northern Rocky Mountains. The organization's mission is to support the continued growth and diversification of the area's economy, and the creation of more high-paying jobs. Prospera is dedicated to encouraging and supporting business expansion, retention and relocation by providing access to business consulting, capital, professional development, and economic research. To learn more about Prospera Business Network, visit: [www.ProsperaBusinessNetwork.org](http://www.ProsperaBusinessNetwork.org)

# # #