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Big night for Beloit's Chamber

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'Spirit Award' renamed for Ken Hendricks

By Hillary Gavan

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Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce 2008 Board Chairman Doris Mulder announced the annual Community Spirit Award has a new name, and it was presented to one of the community's biggest supporters.

Diane Hendricks was presented with the Ken Hendricks Community Spirit Award - renamed in remembrance of the late entrepreneur and founder of ABC Supply Co. - Tuesday at the chamber's annual dinner.

"Thank you, Diane, for believing in the promise and spirit of the Greater Beloit community. Your contributions, and those of your late husband, Ken, will never be forgotten," Mulder said.

Mulder listed Hendricks' long list of achievements in the community. She is one of the major underwriters of Wisconsin Eye Public Affairs Network, the first privately funded state public affairs network, and also a founding benefactor for the Beloit International Film Festival, an annual event bringing great artistic and quality of life distinction for Beloit.

As a board member of the Wisconsin Aviation Academy, Hendricks provided the financial support to create the Southern Wisconsin Airfest, bringing world class aviation acts and military elite to the Stateline Area.

Hendricks also has served on the boards of the Beloit Foundation, Stateline Boys and Girls Club, Beloit Memorial Hospital, KANDU Industries, Blackhawk Bank, Stateline United Way and the advisory board of Rock County Junior Achievement.

Hendricks is chairman of ABC Supply Co., Inc, the largest wholesale distributor of roofing materials in the nation and one of the nation's largest distributors of siding, windows and other select exterior building products. The company celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2007 and has been a two-time recipient of the Gallup Great Workplace Award honoring the most engaged and productive workplaces in the world.

She is also the chief executive officer of Hendricks Holding Co, which includes companies in



Award winners at the annual Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce Dinner were, from left, Steve Kinkade, Ambassador of the Year; Michelle Matthys, Ambassador Gavel Award; Jeff Adams, Headliner Award; Dave Riemer of Ace Hardware, Small Business - Retail Award; Nancy Forbeck, outgoing Chamber President; John Franks of Electrol Specialties, Small Business - Manufacturing Award; Diane Hendricks, the Ken Hendricks Community Spirit Award; Mike Gransee of Kerry Inc., Large Business of the Year; Curt Lansberry, Chairperson's Award; and John Nicholas of Beloit College, Environmental Leadership Award. *Staff photo by Clint Wolf*

insurance, wind power, construction, manufacturing, medical research and other industries.

This past year Hendricks purchased River's Edge Foundry and has relocated operations to the Iron Works complex. Resident artist Don Reed will be creating art pieces from bronze and is collaborating with Beloit College for internships.

Upon receiving the award, Hendricks acknowledged her children and thanked the city.

"Over 40 years we worked in the City of Beloit," Hendricks said. "It's the city we learned to call home. We founded our business here and made our lifelong friends," Hendricks said.

Hendricks said repaying the community has been a continuing goal. She said her husband loved life and inspired others to pursue their dreams.

"He was an inspiration to everyone he met," she said.

Although she said life was cruel when she lost her husband, Hendricks said Ken never gave up and she won't give up either, on her commitment to the community.

"I will continue to do everything I can to help," Hendricks said.

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