

# Register-Star

## NEWS

### Celebrating business excellence

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The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce held its annual Excellence in Business Awards and Showcase Thursday night.

Chamber members came together once again at the Stageworks theater in Hudson to honor local businesses they felt exemplified the strength and diversity of business in the area.

"I think the list of nominees this year showed how our local home grown businesses create a robust local economy," said Chamber President David Colby.

Award winners this year ranged from a home multinational medical research supply company to a humble, old-fashioned grocery store that happens to be new.

Taking home the evening's biggest prize, the Business Person of the Year Award, was Taconic President and CEO Todd Little.

Over the past year Little has led the Germantown-based global specialized lab rodent breeding and supply company to acquire a number of large new ventures.

Taconic recently completed a 10-year agreement with the government of Singapore to establish a breeding facility for that country's medical research endeavors. Little also oversaw Taconic's acquisition this year of the New Jersey-based company Xenogen BioSciences from Caliper Life Sciences.

This year Taconic also committed to have its main headquarters remain a long-term presence in Columbia County and undertook a multi-million dollar electric and water management utility project at the Germantown facility.

The chamber's Most Promising New Business Award also went to a Germantown operation, though one decidedly smaller than its global neighbor.

Otto's Market on Main Street in Germantown took home the coveted award and owner Otto Leuschel said the accolade was a credit to his small but hard working staff.

Otto's is housed in what was Germantown's local grocer since 1927 and has a focus on stocking local products. Leuschel, who previously served as Northeast Region Vice President for Whole Foods Market, reopened the closed local staple.

Leuschel said he believes that an all-purpose grocer like his market can help begin revitalization of main streets in the Hudson Valley as Otto's has done for Germantown.

"We are off to a great start for being in business just 18 months," Leuschel said. "I am looking forward to being a partner with the Chamber of Commerce and a contributor to economic growth in Columbia County for many years to come."



Winners of the 2010 Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Awards from left, Otto Leuschel of Otto's Market, Matthew Griesemer, Paul Freeman and Andrew Howard of Freeman and Howard P.C., Todd Little of Taconic, Sidney Richter and Tony Jones of the Hudson River Bank and Trust Co. Foundation, and Donald Gibson and Martha Keeler of the Bank of Greene County. (Contributed photo)

Winner of the Small Company of the Year award for 2010 was the law firm of Freeman Howard, PC, which represents a number of fellow chamber businesses.

Since its formation in August of 2007 the firm says it have approached its work as an opportunity to demonstrate how responsive and innovative legal services can make a difference for clients.

The Large Company of the Year award for 2010 went to the Bank of Greene County. A statement from the bank, which celebrated its 120th year in business in 2009, says that since its founding it has committed to remaining independent and serving the best interests of the local communities. In the past year the Bank of Greene County has made more than \$60,000 in donations to charitable organizations.

This year's Community Service Award was given to the Hudson River Bank and Trust Co. Foundation. The foundation's financial support extends to causes throughout Columbia County and in the past 12 months alone HRBTF provided more than \$800,000 to 140 organizations in the area.

A special award of recognition was also given to Vice President of M&T Bank Gary Pollard. The chamber awarded Pollard the Chairman's Award for Outstanding Service for his significant efforts over the years promoting and supporting businesses in Columbia County.

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