

Chamber Banquet honors business community

Written by Sean Green

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The Bossier Chamber spent Tuesday night celebrating a year of growth and innovation with its annual gala at the CenturyLink Center.

The event marked their 65th meeting.

"We look darn good for 65," joked President and CEO Lisa Johnson.

2012 Chairman passed the gavel to new 2013 Chairman Jason Smith.

"2012 was a very busy year and decisions had to be made - some were easy, some not so easy," said Lowrie. "My strategy for 2012 was simple: to remain an indispensable resource to your business."

The Chamber also unveiled Bossier Innovates with a special video. The new effort seeks to promote the area's quality of life, burgeoning technological industry, high performing schools, the growth of Bossier Parish Community College, diverse industrial base - including oil and gas, gaming, and tourism - Barksdale Air Force Base, partnership between governmental agencies, and infrastructure.

"Bossier innovates and that makes us innovators," said Smith. "I encourage you to maintain your partnerships as we continue to innovate."

He also said the Chamber will also strive to maintain its efforts from the past year.

"We will work on military outreach, be advocates for you in Baton Rouge and Washington D.C., remain partners with our education members," said Smith.

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Business of the Year went to Boomtown Casino and Hotel. Business Person of the Year was Sandy Cimino of Ouachita Independent Bank.

The "You Made It Happen" Award for business that donated time and effort to the chamber's events went to Ace Outdoor Advertising. The new Golden Pineapple Award for customer service was given to Jimmy Lindgren of Hilton Garden Inn.

Military Relations Supporter of the Year was awarded to the business that supported Barksdale and other military in Shreveport-Bossier with Northrop Grumman Aerospace System taking it home.

"We have to continually improve our quality of life for our temporary residents, we may all be temporary," said Lowrie. "If Barksdale Air Force Base closes, every molecule in our area will feel it."

Community Partner of the Year for the business who strived to improve Shreveport-Bossier went to Townsquare Media. And Diplomat of the Year went to Will Carpenter of Legal Shield.