

## Chamber kudos: Good people make great businesses

By **Mary Wenzel**/ Staff Writer

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**MARLBOROUGH** - New Horizons and The Vin Bin shared kudos with **Larry LaChance** and the Assabet River Rail Trail in Hudson and Marlborough as nearly 300 people offered congratulations to the winners at the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Awards Recognition Dinner.

The festivities were held at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites with city and state officials joining with Chamber members and guests to recognize the outstanding local businesses.

"Chamber membership truly does matter," said Susanne Morreale Leeber, president and CEO of the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce. "By joining together, business people have accomplished and can still accomplish what no one person could do alone."

New Horizons at Marlborough, named Business of the Year, was represented by Robert O'Connor, executive director, as well as a group of employees from the not-for-profit, non-denominational facility.

"I want to thank the Chamber and board of directors for nominating New Horizons," said O'Connor who accepted the Chamber's award for New Horizons, which accommodates up to 500 seniors in a wide range of independent, assisted and Alzheimer's living programs.

Owned by the Cummings Foundation, the New Horizons community's longstanding philosophy has been to empower seniors to take charge of their lives by leaving behind often burdensome and time-consuming activities such as cooking, cleaning and maintenance.

"New Horizons is one of our largest employers of Marlborough citizens," said Morreale Leeber, "with approximately 90 city residents currently working at the Hemingway Street facility."

The Small Business of the Year award went to The Vin Bin, a specialty wine, cheese and gourmet foods store that opened in September 2004.

"I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for their support and for choosing The Vin Bin as Small Business of the Year," said Rick Lombardi, who with his wife, Julie, owns the store at 27 South Bolton St. in Marlborough. Customers at The Vin Bin can choose from a selection of nearly 1,000 different wines and a cheese case that features more than 150 cheeses.

"It takes a large number of people to make a small business run," said Lombardi as he thanked his family and staff as well as a "courageous banker."

As proprietors of The Vin Bin, the Lombardis have embraced dozens of charitable events that further improve the quality of life for local residents.



**Larry LaChance**, president of Bankers Capital in Marlborough, honored as Business Person of the Year, enjoys the festivities with his wife, Sandra. (Staff photo by Mary Wenzel)

"In just the past year, The Vin Bin has conducted or supported more than 40 fundraisers for causes such as the Evening of Giving, Marlborough and Southborough schools and the Area Arts Alliance, to name a few," said Morreale Leeber.

**Larry LaChance, president of Bankers Capital in Marlborough, was named the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year.**

**"Larry is an active ambassador for the Chamber and now serves on our board of directors," said Morreale Leeber.**

**LaChance has been a member of the local Chamber since 1995 and was a founding member of the Marlborough Chapter of Business Network International.**

**"People will forget what you said, and people will forget what you did, but people never forget how you made them feel," said LaChance in accepting the award.**

Marlborough Mayor Nancy Stevens accepted the Marlborough Pride Award for the Assabet River Rail Trail.

A grand opening of the first 5.8 miles of the Assabet River Rail Trail was held in September 2005.

The multi-purpose recreational trail, used for walking, biking and more, runs from downtown Marlborough north through downtown Hudson and now terminates near the Hudson-Stow line on Rte. 62.

In addition to the business awards, Dan Verrico was honored with the Presidents Award for Outstanding service to the Chamber during the year.

The Ambassador of the Year Award went to Donna Morrison who works for Citizens Bank.

Also, Maria Bentley, of Murphy Insurance Agency, was cited as Outstanding Volunteer.

In other business, Stephen Hitner officially took over as 2006 chairman of the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce board of directors as 2005 chairman Richard Bennett stepped down.

David Greenwood, of David A. Greenwood & Associates, was master of ceremonies for the festivities.

The premier sponsor for the event was the Hudson Savings Bank, which sponsored the dinner. The awards and program sponsors were Boston Scientific Corporation and Rohm and Haas Electronic Materials. David Fox, photographer, took the official award photographs for the Chamber.