

# Carroll Business Awards highlight businesses small and large

By Kelcie Pegher Times Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, November 7, 2013 12:15 am

Sixteen businesses will be honored today by the Carroll County Department of Economic Development and Carroll County Chamber of Commerce.

Categories in small business, expanding businesses, emerging businesses and workforce development are all part of the Carroll Business Awards, which will take place tonight.

T&D Duct Cleaning in Eldersburg is among the eight small businesses that will receive the award, between the two partners who grant the awards. Tim Unverzagt, an owner, said the award is special, particularly because it's the company's 10th year in business. The business won in the category for small businesses between 11 and 50 employees.

"We did nights and weekends for a while. A couple years later we finally had the guts to quit our full-time jobs," he said.

The 19 employees at T&D Duct Cleaning all live in Carroll County. He said while duct-cleaning wasn't necessarily recession-proof, the company has grown every year since it has been in business.

Melissa Clark, of Bluehouse Architecture in Marriottsville, is among one of the businesses with between one and 10 employees that is receiving the award. She said as a three-time winner of the award, she's very excited the company has been able to weather the storm of the recession and is seeing an uptick in business.

"The change in the economy, the building industry was especially hard hit," she said.

Seeing the community rebound as well as her business has been especially rewarding, she said. This year, the company hasn't needed to advertise as much because there are so many repeat customers and referrals, she said.

"Projects are getting bigger and more complex and just generally more interesting," she said.

She said while business has been busier, she's been mostly behind a desk and is looking forward to networking with people at the Chamber of Commerce.

For Laura Meck, of Sonata Venture Solutions in Westminster, networking is just another part of the job. Her company was awarded for small business by the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce. The marketing and branding company created a training initiative called Launchbox last year, where small businesses can learn the basics of public relations and marketing.

The company recently released a book for Launchbox that helps business owners create their own marketing plan, and in January is launching an online self-paced version of the program, as opposed to

a workshop.

Meck said she firmly believes fostering small business is the way to see the economy truly succeed and the Launchbox helps to do that.

“It’s a great validation that the things we’re doing in the community are working,” Meck said.

Brinton Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, a retirement and continuing care facility, is receiving a workforce development award from Carroll County Economic Development this year because of the training it’s done with its workforce. It participated in a workforce development program with the Business and Employment Resource Center to employ youths in the area.

“The program was a huge success and we were able to hire one of the students,” Danielle Green, the director of admissions and marketing, said.

As first-time winners of one of the Carroll Business Awards, Green said it is a great honor for the facility.

“We’re so proud of the work we’ve been able to accomplish with their students,” she said.