

Pacific Mobile Structures Named Business of the Year

BANQUET: Large Crowd Celebrates Accomplishments, Looks Toward the Future at Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce Banquet

By Christopher Brewer

cbrewer@chronline.com

A Chehalis business whose name has become widely known for its modular structures took home the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year award during the chamber's yearly banquet.

Members from the Twin Cities business community gathered at Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound Friday evening for the banquet at which Pacific Mobile Structures received the Chamber's highest honor. Company owners Garth Haakenson and Gretchen Moore — children of Pacific Mobile Structures founder and original owner Dick Haakenson — accepted the award on the company's behalf.

The Chamber's executive director, Alicia Bull, introduced the board of directors for 2014, and outgoing chairman Ken Kostick looked back on what he termed as a fruitful 2013, speaking of an increase in general memberships and strong support from the Chamber's Ambassadors.

New chairman Tony Ketchum challenged the Chamber membership for 2014, saying he hoped people would not just join the Chamber of Commerce, but instead become active members and "step out of the box."

Ketchum also announced an



Chris Brewer / cbrewer@chronline.com

Garth Haakenson pauses while giving a speech on behalf of his business, Pacific Mobile Structures, which was named the Business of the Year by the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce during its annual banquet Friday at Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound.

intention for the Chamber to further its reach and ask communities throughout Lewis County if they would be willing to partner with the group.

"We're looking forward to expanding our community this year," Ketchum said. "If we can grow our family, we become more supportive of area businesses."

The Business of the Year award was the final order of business for the evening. Garth Haakenson spoke of his experiences growing up in Onalaska and one day vowing to leave the county. However, he returned, and in 2007 became the CEO of Pacific Mobile Structures along with his sister Gretchen Moore, who was named CFO. In 2011,

the duo bought the company and became outright owners.

According to a Chamber business profile, Pacific Mobile Structures was founded in 1985 and employs 112 people, 25 of whom live in the general Chehalis area. The company has branched out to eight locations and owns a rental fleet of 2.5 million square feet of mobile job sites as well as

sales and office space. The company has also created a product known as the SAGE Classroom, a type of portable classroom schools can utilize.

The company also funded the construction of the Pacific Athletic Center in Chehalis. That center serves as a multi-purpose indoor gymnasium aimed toward young athletes.