



News Release through December 16, 2023

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City of Oakridge & Oakridge Westfir Chamber of Commerce

Holiday Party & Awards Ceremony

Saturday, December 16, 2023 | Willamette Lanes Bowling Alley, 6-9PM

The Oakridge Westfir Chamber of Commerce is proud to present our first annual Business Leadership Awards as part of the City of Oakridge Annual Holiday Party & Awards Ceremony on Saturday, December 16th, 6-9pm at Willamette Lanes Bowling Alley, 47707 OR-58, Oakridge, OR 97463.

In addition to the 3 Business Leadership awards presented by the OW Chamber of Commerce, the City of Oakridge will be presenting 3 additional awards for Oakridge Citizen of the Year, City Employee of the Year, and Committee Member of the Year. All 6 awards will be presented at the ceremony on December 16th. According to Oakridge City Administrator James Cleavenger, "It is important to give recognition to the people in our community who have put forth so much effort to make our community a better place to live. It is my hope that these annual awards will become an annual tradition, in partnership with the Oakridge-Westfir Chamber of Commerce and RAIN Catalysts."

The OW Chamber Business Leadership Awards are a community tribute to entrepreneurs, businesses and nonprofit organizations that contribute to the greater Oakridge and Westfir economic development efforts and quality of life for local citizens. The awards are community driven, and include both Chamber board nominees, as well as nominations that were provided by individual residents and business owners in the area. Winners were chosen by local community members, through an online voting survey with almost 100 respondents participating. "The OW Chamber proudly recognizes all of the businesses, nonprofits, and individual efforts that bring our community together and provide for equitable solutions and quality of life experiences that aid in economic development, access to essential services, and civic pride," said Chamber President, Michelle Emmons.

“It is a privilege for me, as a RAIN Catalyst, to support the city of Oakridge and see the dedication and growth of the entrepreneur and business community. Oakridge is an integral part of the RAIN ecosystem,” said Melissa Prestinario of RAIN Catalysts.

In addition to award winners, the OW Chamber will also be recognizing all nominees in each awards category as follows (top three highlighted):

2023 New Business of the Year

Sweetvine

Brock's Wood Lot

Cascade Art Works/Art Works

SoMetal

Campfire Restaurant

Bloomin' Bowls

Happy Belly Burgers

Sacred Spiral Gift Shop

2023 Nonprofit Business of the Year

Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative/South Willamette Solutions

Oakridge Food Bank - Bev McCulley

Oakridge Warming Center - Kathy Holston Nichols

WeRSharp - Norine “Tink” Marquardt Blankenship

Mountain Respite & Mission Safety Animal Rescue - Trudy Hammond

Oakridge Disc Golf Club - Jason Nehermer

Zero Clearance Theater – Loren Michaels

Westfir Oakridge Farmers Market

NICA - Eugene & Sue Cathcart

2023 Business Leader of the Year

Vanessa Tharp - Vanessa Tharp Consulting

Jacqui Lomont & Wendy Dennis – Mane Street Coffee

Todd Holly - Oakridge Tire Center

Toni Wassenburg - Casey's RV Park, Artworks and First Friday ArtWalk

Harry Rumor & Mindy Dowell – Dowell's Towing

Matt Burney – SoMetal

Barbara Council-Burney – Marbalous Art

Stephanie Hays – Corner Bar

Priscilla Davidson – Bigfoot Real Estate

John & Bree Crane – 3 Legged Crane

City of Oakridge 2023 Employee of the Year:

Clint Whitney – Public Works

Officer Valeri Miller – Police Department

Leah Brewer – City Hall Staff

Aric Higdon - Fire Department

City of Oakridge 2023 Citizen of the Year:

Lynda Kamerrer

Chelsi Corcoran-Rhule

Kathy Holston-Nichols

Eugene Cathcart

Bev McCulley

Loren Christopher Michaels

Rustie Ackland

City of Oakridge 2023 Committee Member of the Year:

Julia Yoder

Jason Nehmer

Kevin Gobelman

Lynda Kamerrer

Trudy Hammond

Cyma Lovell-Beers