

Chamber honors small businesses

Staff Report

BRADENTON — The Manatee Chamber of Commerce handed out its 2009 Small Business of the Year Awards at its luncheon Thursday at the Bradenton Municipal Auditorium.

This program annually recognizes five small businesses for: quality and excellence as exemplified by growth, productivity, customer service, job creation and overall contribution to the community.

This year, there were 94 nominations and the winners were chosen from among the 29 finalists.

The judges were all former winners of the Small Business of the Year Award and members of the Manatee Chamber Small Business Council. Judges screened applications and conducted personal interviews as a part of the selection process.



From left, winners were (top row) Tom and Donna Seguin of Suncoast Gem Lab, gross sales under \$2.5 million category; James Needham of Coastal Orthopedics and Pain Management, over \$10 million category; (middle row) Nick Bennett, Mary Bennett and Jessica McMaster of Campus Books, under \$1 million category; (front row) Steve and Sharon Litschauer of On A Shoestring Inc., under \$500,000 category; and Darrell Turner of Turner Tree and Landscape, under \$10 million, and the Paul Bartley Community Award.

STAFF PHOTO / THOMAS BENDER