

Winners celebrated at first-ever Vernon County Awards Event in Hillsboro

Vernon County Economic Development 13 hrs ago 0



Vernon County Economic Development in collaboration with Hillsboro, Viroqua, and Westby Chamber of Commerce, Coon Valley and Stoddard business associations, and the Friends of Readstown, Vernon County Economic Development hosted its first-ever Vernon County Awards Event, Wednesday, Nov. 8, at willow & oak Event Center at the Hillsboro Brewery.

There were over 100 community stakeholders, business owners, organizations, and county/city/village leaders in attendance for the first-ever Vernon County Awards Event.

Popular vote and consideration for geographical county-wide award dispersion determined the final winners for this first-ever awards event.

The 11 award categories and the 2023 Vernon County award winners are as follows:

- Small Business of the Year – The Daily Brew, Westby
- Large Business of the Year – Vernon Communications Cooperative
- Emerging Business of the Year – Saddle-Up Coffee & Ice Cream, Ontario
- **Person of the Year – Kimberlee Verbsky, Hillsboro**
- Volunteer of the Year – Brandie Myhre – volunteer for Music in Parks, Live in Viroqua, Driftless Music Festival, and photographer extraordinaire
- Non-profit of the Year – Driftless Curiosity, Viola

- 5-12 Educator of the Year – Ev Wick, Prairie View, De Soto
- Rising Educator of the Year – Alex Mazur, Viroqua Area Schools band teacher
- Special Educator of the Year – Jamie Gates, Hillsboro School
- Event of the Year – Vernon County National Night Out
- People’s Choice Award – Tabby Town USA.

The 11 award winners were recognized at the Vernon County Awards Event itself and were presented with a custom trophy and celebrated publicly for their work and commitment to making Vernon County a better place to live, work, and play.

Chris Hardie from 7 Rivers Alliance was the keynote speaker and representatives from Wisconsin Economic Development Cooperation, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and Sen. Brad Pfaff were also in attendance.

Christina Dollhausen, economic development coordinator for Vernon County, helped organize, host, and spoke at the event saying, “This first-ever Vernon County Awards was a true collaborative effort. In fact, if I think of the work of Economic Development and Building Community...it’s always a collaborative effort, as nothing can be done alone. Thank you all for supporting each other!”

There were over 180 nominations submitted by fellow Vernon County residents and businesses for the 11 award categories. All the nominees were sent a certificate of excellence signed by Lorn Goede, County Board Supervisor Chair, and Kay Stanek, Vernon County Economic Development Committee Chair.

To build on the momentum of the success of this awards event, plans are already in the works to improve upon the process and organize the second annual Vernon County Awards event which is to happen in the city of Viroqua in November of 2024.