

## **Clermont Chamber Announces Small Business Award Winners**

### **2011 Annual Meeting & Small Business Awards**

February 11, 2011 – 11:30am – 1:30pm

Holiday Inn & Suites Cincinnati Eastgate

\$45.00 / Members and \$60.00 / Non-Members

Call 513.576.5005 to register or visit [www.clermontchamber.com](http://www.clermontchamber.com)

The Clermont Chamber of Commerce has selected the following companies for the 2010 Small Business Best Practices Awards to be presented at the Chamber Annual Meeting on February 11th.

#### **Customer Focus Award (1-50 employees)**

**Express Employment Professionals** in Eastgate is a locally owned franchise in place to help people find jobs and help businesses find the people and human resource services they need. Express now also offers professional search and contract staffing services through its Specialized Recruiting Group. Through this new service, candidates with experience in accounting, engineering, information technology, and many other fields are placed in short- or long-term contract work or full-time positions. The owners of the local franchise and their employees have distinguished themselves with exceptional service and courtesy to those seeking jobs in this challenging economy. The businesses that they serve have benefited as well from prompt attention and thorough follow-up on every placement.

#### **Customer Focus Award (51-250 employees)**

**Park National** Bank has several locations throughout Clermont County, including a brand new office in Eastgate. Every new employee of Park receives a Service Standards document that in very simple terms outlines what is expected when dealing with customers. Park goes beyond the words with quarterly awards to any associate who goes above and beyond the call to assist a customer. Customers are regularly surveyed about service and Park's President/CEO, Doug Compton, personally follows up at random with customers to learn more about why they rated service as they did. Park uses mystery shoppers to further validate service activities. In addition, Park has a Customer Sales & Service" group tasked with a monthly review of service and consideration of ideas for new ways to better serve customers. In the spring of 2011, Park will launch a "Service Excellence Program" throughout the corporation.

#### **Emerging Small Business Award (1-50 employees)**

**Current Electrical & Lighting** on State Route 28 in Loveland is another local business that reinvented itself in order to survive and be in position to thrive in a difficult marketplace. Current's management recognized early on the thrust toward green energy and rather than remain a struggling "old school" supplier to the construction industry, Current shifted its focus to providing customers with help in reducing energy costs in a significant way. Current was awarded the Southwest Ohio Education Purchasing council contract, gaining access to 127 school districts in Ohio. Current has retrofitted over 1000 inefficient gymnasium and warehouse lighting fixtures, performed hundreds of energy audits, held seminars on the cost benefits of energy saving lighting and are in the process of reconfiguring their web site to promote their expertise in the green market.

#### **Emerging Small Business Award (51-250 employees)**

**Lifepoint Solutions** in Amelia. Clermont Counseling Center was founded in 1973 as the first community mental health center serving Clermont County. In 2007 two long-standing service providers in the Greater Cincinnati area recognized an opportunity to strengthen existing programs and increase the population able to be served within our community. Clermont Counseling Center and Cincinnati-based Family Service began taking the steps necessary to

make this opportunity possible. On July 1, 2009, after a nearly two-year process, LifePoint Solutions was formed, leading the way to providing truly comprehensive and integrated client driven services. The formation of LifePoint Solutions allows for the opportunity to offer more comprehensive services to families, children, couples and adults at multiple locations in the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area. LifePoint is now better positioned to grow its core programs by building on its collective expertise, infrastructure and geographic reach.

**Innovative Small Business Award (1-50 employees)**

**Innerwood, LLC** in Milford is being recognized for the innovative steps management took to reposition this business for continued success in the face of a recession that was devastating to residential and commercial construction. Before the economic downturn, Innerwood depended heavily on the new housing market for its custom cabinetry, bookcases, mantles and moldings. Instead of waiting for the housing market to rebound, Innerwood management chose to think outside the box and diversify into related markets. The first venture was into manufacturing teak outdoor furniture. That was followed by Internet sales of American Classic Kits, which are manufactured DIY 3D puzzles, guitars and furniture. The latest activity is the manufacture of wooden speaker boxes.

**Innovative Small Business Award (51-250 employees)**

**Cold Jet, LLC** in Miami Township is being recognized for a similar diversification that opened new markets for this pioneering manufacturer of dry ice blasting systems. For many years, Cold Jet focused on making dry ice pellets and dry ice blasting systems that were used worldwide for cleaning and coating removal. In 2010, Cold Jet formed an alliance with Airgas to provide environmentally responsible turnkey cleaning solutions for food & beverage processing, manufacturing lines, power generators, disaster remediation and packaging & printing. Cold Jet also formed a new unit to focus on dry ice production for the worldwide market.

The Small Business Development Center Advisory Committee, from nominations submitted by the membership and business community at large, selects small Business Best Practices Awards.

*Founded in 1969, the Clermont Chamber of Commerce is an association of approximately 1000 businesses working together to make the Clermont County area the best place to locate, operate and grow your business. The Chamber's key initiatives are advocacy, economic growth and member/investor benefits. Find us at [www.clermontchamber.com](http://www.clermontchamber.com). The President of the Clermont Chamber of Commerce is Matthew D. Van Sant, and the Chairman of the Board is David McNutt of American Modern Insurance Group.*