

by Conner Howard  
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TWINSBURG -- The Twinsburg business community gathered at the Hilton Garden Inn on Wilcox Drive Dec. 13 to honor Robert Felber, president of Felber PR and Marketing, as the Chamber of Commerce's business person of year.

A member of the Chamber of Commerce since 1995, Felber has served as a two-term Chamber president and has been involved in many community projects including the American Cancer Society Relay for Life of Twinsburg/Nordonia and Twinsburg's charter review commission.

He currently runs Felber PR and Marketing and recently launched NEXT for Nonprofits LLC, his second business venture. Felber also serves as Public Information Officer for the Hillcrest Technical Rescue Team.

"Whenever you need a friend, help or sound business advice, there's one person in Twinsburg who is always there, sleeves rolled up, before you ever need to ask," said Mayor Katherine Procop as she introduced Felber during the award ceremony.

The sentiment was common among attendees, several of whom commented on Felber's character and eligibility for the title. Former Chamber President Tim Edgington said Felber is the kind of person who doesn't ask for the recognition, but deserves it anyway.

"[We need] more people like that, who kind of drive the community forward," Edgington said. "He absolutely, 100 percent deserved it."

Felber said he was surprised by the announcement, as the Chamber tends to keep the decision under wraps.

"I turned around and saw [my] family walk in," Felber said. "Then I'm like 'Oh my God, I've got to write a speech!'"

As he shook hands and chatted with colleagues, friends, family and business partners, Felber said the award means more to him than just a title.

"People think first it's the recognition," Felber said. "It's more of a flood of memories. I look around the room and I see the committees I've been on and the people I've worked with. It's all those different memories coming together of all the different work that you do."

Chamber of Commerce First Vice President Chip Hautala said several other qualified business professionals were considered, but Felber's selection was popular among the chamber and the community at large.

"It's never easy because there's always a lot of people [eligible for the award], but Rob was a unanimous choice," Hautala said. "He's just ... one of the most honest people you'll ever meet and he's always willing to help with anything, whether it's a business situation of a community situation."

Hautala, who has known Felber for more than eight years, said Felber's personality, professionalism and helpful attitude helped make him business person of the year.

"He's touched almost everybody's life in some way," Hautala said. "He's probably the best-connected guy you'll ever meet. He knows everybody in every facet of life and he's always more than willing to help out. Everybody knows him; he's like Mr. Twinsburg. I never hear him say a bad word about anybody and he's just a good role model for the entire business community."

Chamber of Commerce Director Mary Perlmutter was one among many to offer their praise during the award luncheon.

"You should have had this award years ago," Perlmutter told Felber. "But it's never too late."

Felber said his business, Felber PR and Marketing, thrives in Twinsburg by working closely with area manufacturers. He added that the work ethic of Twinsburg and the support of its schools and governments are part of his success in business and in the community.

"Focus in business is everything," Felber said. "[We're] focusing on manufacturing, it's a very viable industry. It's been a very big focus for us, it's allowed us to expand. It's the support of the schools and the community and the work ethic here that I think is very strong."

Though he's been formally named an important figure in the Twinsburg business community, Felber feels the award is a reflection on not just him, but many dedicated parties within the community.

"I do plan to keep expanding both businesses," Felber said. "The recognition really... yes it's a milestone, but it's just a piece of paper. All the memories, all the work that goes into it, not just money but all the people who pull for the community that people don't know. If anything, it gives recognition to all the groups, all the people that do so much for the community. The next for me is to get my kids out of seventh grade, keep preparing them the best we can and just try to enjoy the ride." **TB**



2012 Business Person of the Year, Robert Felber accepts his award.