



Pat Schwarte captures second consecutive Ambassador of the Year Award

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GODFREY - Pat Schwarte is a man who truly has the **RiverBend Growth Association** at the foremost of his mind.

Schwarte captured the **Ambassador of the Year Award** for the second consecutive year at the RiverBend Growth Association's Annual Dinner on Thursday night at Lewis and Clark Community College

The Alton man has nothing but respect for **RBGA President Monica Bristow and her Growth Association** staff.

"I am convinced that the RiverBend Growth Association is a top tier driver of commerce and economic development in the region and that we represent all the members," Schwarte said.

Pat is a lifelong resident of Alton, living just two doors down from where he grew up on Prospect Street. He graduated from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville with a Bachelor's in Management Information Systems and has worked in information technology sales for more than 20 years. He has been with RiverBender.com as an Account Manager since March of 2012. He now also represents the company with its RiverBender.com affiliate – Edglentoday.com Pat is married to Jennifer and they have one daughter, Grace. Grace is a junior at Marquette Catholic High School.

Schwarte said winning this year's award was easier than last year.

"The more I learn about the Growth Association, and the more I see its impact on our members and the region as a whole, the more enthused I am to participate in RBGA events and promote the organization as a tool to use to become a successful business," he said.

Ambassador of the Year is chosen based on a "participation" point system where points are earned for attending events and recruiting members. Schwarte said the key to winning back-to-back awards is that RiverBender.com/Edglentoday.com allows him to participate in RBGA events during working hours. John and Dawn Hentrich own and operate the two websites.

"I'm also blessed to have a wife who doesn't mind sharing me with the Association when I attend evening events," he said. "The Growth Association chooses who they'd like to become an ambassador. In 2013 they approached my boss, John Hentrich, and after describing what was expected of an ambassador, asked if he'd be willing to have one of his employees participate."

Schwarte added: "So working for a top-notch destination website, surrounded by a team of talented journalists, artists, sales people and support staff is the key to my success and to becoming an ambassador. Watching the success of both sites from the 'inside' is

gratifying, because I know how much work goes into standing up a pair of fresh and informative websites.”

Asked how much he thought the Growth Association helped the region, Schwarte said: “I believe the RBGA plays an important role in the region’s economic growth. In the Growth Association, members have a conduit to state, regional and local governments officials, meaning that when deciding on a particular bill or piece of legislation, governmental members know where Growth Association businesses stand on the matter. Facilitating relationships between Association members often bear fruit as well.”

It seems the Alton man was destined to be an account manager and involved with RBGA as an ambassador because of his outgoing personality.

“I’ve always been an outgoing person and having grown up in the Alton/Godfrey area, I know a lot of people,” he said. “However I have to acknowledge the influence former Director of Member Services Joell Aquirre played in my success with the Growth Association, Joell took ‘outgoing’ to a whole new level.”

“I absolutely think every business in the region should be a member of the Growth Association because of the member-to-member benefits and the benefit of having an organization to advocate for each individual member if need be,” he said.



