



# Growth Association presents awards; welcomes new board members

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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The annual River Bend Growth Association honored some key business organizations, an ambassador of the year and welcomed a new group of board members on Thursday night at the Lewis and Clark Community College Commons.

The Commons was packed to capacity with the dinner, which featured a well-received meal and some inspirational speeches by several of the recipients.

Riverbender.com's Patrick Schwarte was honored with the Ambassador of the Year award, the organization's top honor for the person who participates and accumulate the

most points over the year. Points are earned by participating in activities and recruiting new members to the association. Schwarte is a advertising and website sales representative for Riverbender.com.

The River Bend Growth Association also handed out some Chairman's Awards to: Raging Rivers, represented by Scott Adams and Donna Smith; Tom Long and Vern Van Hoy, local entrepreneurs and civic participants, and Mulberry Partners, the company that built Trailblazer Commons at Lewis and Clark Community College. The Small Businesses of the Month were also recognized. Karen Cooper of Illinois American Water accepted the gavel from John Keller of Carrollton Bank to be the Chairman of the Growth Association's Board of Directors for 2015. Keller was saluted and given a special clock as a gift for his year of service.

**Board members nominated for next year with terms ending 2017 are:**

Dale Blachford, Liberty Bank

Jennifer Jacobsen, Argosy Casino

Scott Reichmann, Barber Murphy Group

Rob Schwartz, TheBank of Edwardsville

Augie Wuellner, Alton Securities Group

**Board members up for re-election for their second three-year term.**

Jeff Allsman, Village of Bethalto

Tom Berry, Sandberg Phoenix and Von Gontard

Mike Farrell, Helmkamp Construction

Mike Fitzgerald, Scheffel Boyle

Kevin Hamilton, Carpenters Local 664

John Keller, Carrollton Bank

Steve Thompson, CNB Bank & Trust

**Outgoing Board members who served the organization are:**

Cas Sheppard, Sheppard, Morgan & Schwaab

Al Suguitan, Greater Gateway Association of Realtors

Martha Warford, Beverly Farm

Dwight Werts, Werts Welding & Tank Service

Ed Kasten, Liberty Bank

