

Barnhart to continue a tradition of excellence

Mark Barnhart's wait is almost over. It couldn't come at a better time.

The 2020 recipient of the Blair County Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award for Business Excellence is, technically, its 2021 recipient as well. Thanks to Covid-19, Barnhart has experienced three postponements of an award ceremony that has traditionally moved forward like clockwork.

"It has not been the best of times," he wearily acknowledges.

The Owner and Chairman of the Board at NPC, Barnhart will be the 19th Blair County business leader to be honored for lifetime achievement.

"He's a tremendous innovator who is constantly looking for ways to take his business in directions that address opportunities," explained Chamber Board Chair Richard Fiore, Jr. "Mark has expanded NPC's mission in a number of creative ways."

Barnhart has also been a noted philanthropist although



Mark Barnhart is shown in 2013 giving a testimonial for Business Excellence honoree Ben Stapelfeld. This year, Stapelfeld will be providing a testimonial for Barnhart.

much of what he has done has been under the radar.

"People would be amazed to know how much Mark Barnhart and NPC have done, particularly to benefit young people," Chamber President Joe Hurd pointed out. "Just ask a few of the school district administrators

in our county because you're not going to hear Mark talk about it."

The Chamber created the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002 to recognize business leaders who have made a difference in the community for an extended period of time. The first re-

cipient was the late Ernie Wissinger. The most recent one was the late Rex Kaup.

"Great similarities," Hurd admitted. "Our honorees have all been people who have not only been successful in the business realm but have also made our county a little better. Mark Barnhart

Award Recipients

2002 Ernie Wissinger	2011 Barry Smith
2003 G. William Ward	2012 Fred Imler, Sr.
2004 Steve Sheetz	2013 Ben Stapelfeld
2005 Don Devorris	2014 Bill Thompson
2006 Bill Campbell	2015 Tim Sissler
2007 John Wolf	2016 Marty Marasco
2008 Lee Hite	2017 Harry Sickler
2009 Don Detwiler	2018 Ann Benzel
2010 Michael McLanahan	2019 Rex Kaup

fits well into that group and there will be others in future years who bring those same qualifications."

The Chamber's Business Excellence Dinner will be held on October 18th at The

Casino at Lakemont Park. The event includes a reception that begins at 5:30 p.m., followed by a dinner at 6:45. For reservations, visit the Chamber Website at www.blairchamber.com.

Driving range brings 'A' game to area golfers

"Golf wasn't meant to be frustrating. Instruction provides confidence, improved technique and results."

John Madey knows of what he speaks. He has been intimately involved in one aspect or another of the golf business for the past 40-years. A technician in the healthcare field and an adjunct professor at both Saint Francis University and Mount Aloysius College, Madey brought his knowledge and expertise to a sport that not everyone views with the same level of sophistication.

"I have a science background so my major focus is on technology, especially regarding high-end and radar launch monitor systems, comprehensive selection of fitting tools, shaft analysis and golf simulation packages," he pointed out. "The quality of these systems and instruments have grown immensely over the years. With simulation, we can club fit and teach year-round."

Fortunately, Madey has created the ideal environment for that to happen. In 1988, he purchased Kiraly's Golf Shop from his father-in-law, Frank Kiraly. In 2000, he purchased 40 acres of land in Hollidaysburg and developed Blair County



John Madey knows golf and he knows golf equipment. His business, Blair County Golf and Driving Range, is a popular destination.

Golf and Driving Range, which opened in 2001.

"We are a comprehensive Golf Center," Madey explained. "We focus on wholesale/retail golf sales, custom club fitting, golf instruction and golf repair service. The driving range includes both grass and covered tee areas with numerous range targets. We're open dawn to dusk throughout the year."

Blair County Golf and Driving Range is not only a destination for local golfers, nearly 60% of its business

comes from outside the county. Most of those are seeking custom club fitting and golf instruction. The reputation of the business is well-documented.

"We've won numerous club fitting awards from major manufacturers and have been inducted into Callaway Golf's Sales Hall of Fame," Madey disclosed.

Like most "non-essential" businesses, Blair County Golf was shut down for an extended period of time during Covid-19. Madey has seen

an upside after reopening.

"We saw a dramatic increase in youth and women at our driving range," he admitted. "Every day the range was packed with both experienced and new golfers. As in most outdoor industries, people have discovered how much fun golf can be. In my many years of golf, these are among the more positive developments I've seen."

(Blair County Golf and Driving Range has been a member of the Chamber since 2002.)

SETTING THE PACE

Eva Eagler Chamber Ambassador

1. Title and place of work: Director of Sales at the Fairfield and TownePlace Suites by Marriott Altoona PA.

2. Years with current position: Two years at current hotel and 7 years as a Director of Sales for Marriott.

3. Positions held in the Chamber: Chamber Ambassador and member of the Hotel/Attractions Roundtable.

4. Family: Husband Scott - been together for 24 years, Dog Semmy, Parents Tony & Colleen - they have been married for 51 years, Brother Tony, Sisters Kathy & Karen, 7 nieces & nephews, 6 great nieces & nephews.

5. Community organizations: Altoona Rotary, Blair County Chamber, VFW Auxiliary, Legion Auxiliary, Hospitality Professionals, Global Hotel Sales & Marketing Professionals, Marketing Consultants, Sales Marketing and Revenue Technology Professionals.

6. Hobbies/leisure: Gardening, reading and cooking.

7. Education: Bachelors in Communications, Public Relations and Advertising from University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown.

8. First job: Waitress in high school at Pagano's Family Restaurant and Ice Cream stand — they had the best fried chicken!

9. I would like to be known for: Kindness, generosity, loving and helpful. Someone who did the best she could and used her talents to inspire and empower others.

10. Business role model: Stephanie Linnartz, presi-



dent of Marriott International, Inc., the world's largest hospitality company. She was named to the Forbes CEO 2021 list of up and coming leaders. Was named one of 30 Influential Women in Hospitality in 2017 and one of 2018's top 100 Women in Brand Marketing. She has been a speaker at the World Economic Forum and a sought after speaker at global industry events.

11. Your thoughts about the Chamber: It's a great investment for small businesses. An excellent opportunity to get to know other businesses and resources in our community. You can mentor or be mentored by other businesses - learn from their experiences as well as bounce ideas off each other. The Chamber strengthens current businesses and brings in new ones. The strength of your business is tied to, or influenced by, how well Blair County is doing.

12. Your thoughts about Blair County: Blair County is a beautiful city with mountains and forests. There is plenty of amusements, recreation, sports and history for adults and children of all ages to enjoy. There is always something fun and exciting to experience in Blair County!

AT THE CHAMBER

It's Happening

■ Andrae Holsey, the new president of the Blair County NAACP will be the speaker at Wednesday's Chamber Executive Roundtable Breakfast at the Blairmont Club. Holsey will outline his vision for the organization and suggest ways that the business community can be involved.

■ The Chamber's Board of Directors will meet on Thursday at the Devorris Center for Business Development. The Board will continue to consider recommendations from the Finance Task Force on possible changes to programs and events.

To register for Chamber events go to www.blairchamber.com.

■ The next Chamber "Business After Hours" will be held on September 23rd from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Appalachian Running Company in Altoona. To make reservations call the Chamber at 814-943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

■ The next informational meeting regarding a Chamber trip will be on September 28th at 6:00 p.m. at the Devorris Center. The meeting, done in cooperation with Ketrow KURTZ Travel, will outline the trip to Iceland that will take place in October of 2022.

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