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Business Record

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LETTER from the EDITOR

New format, same Best of Des Moines

We've made a few changes to our annual Best of Des Moines issue, some visible, one behind the scenes, but all with the intention of bringing you a new and improved product.

The first change you've noticed by now is that we have separated Best of Des Moines into one stand-alone product. In the past, we had split the coverage and included it inside two editions of the Business Record. This change makes perusing the listing of winners easier for our readers and gives us more space in the paper to provide you with our weekly coverage.

The second change you'll see is a more visual layout that includes write-ups that get straight to the core happenings at our winners' businesses. As part of this, we combined multiple category winners into one write-up, and featured a variety of category winners with photos alone. Again, this should make for an easier read, and allow you to quickly know what new initiatives the winners have tried or plan to initiate.

The last major change happened behind the scenes. We had used a mix of paper ballots and electronic voting in the past, but this year we switched entirely to electronic voting. Each computer was limited to submitting one ballot. Though we know the results are far from scientific, the change allowed us to reach more of our readers and allowed us to improve on the integrity of the results.

We hope you enjoy the new format, and as always, if you have questions, comments or concerns, feel free to reach out directly to me.

Chris Conetzkey

Editor of the Business Record

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BEST CEO

Dave Vellinga, *Mercy*

RUNNERS-UP:

- Eric Crowell, Iowa Health - Des Moines
- Suku Radia, Bankers Trust

BEST HEALTH CARE INSURANCE PROVIDER

Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield strives to help Iowans become healthier and by doing so, reduce health-care costs. Iowa's largest health insurer recently launched a website (www.mywellmark.com) that members can personalize to monitor their health and health-care expenses. Wellmark is also a co-sponsor of the Healthiest State Initiative, a statewide wellness program. The company last year unveiled a series of internal wellness initiatives to help its employees become more fit and healthy.

RUNNER-UP:

- UnitedHealth Group Inc.

BEST PROPERTY/CASUALTY INSURANCE PROVIDER

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co. provides property and casualty insurance to more than 1.1 million Iowans, and 50 percent of the policies it issues in the state are for automobile coverage. Servicing those customers are 234 agents throughout Iowa. When disasters strike, State Farm mobilizes a specialized team equipped with wireless technology to process claims within hours.

RUNNERS-UP:

- EMC Insurance Group Inc.
- Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co.

BEST FLORIST

Boesen the Florist

Boesen the Florist co-owner Tom Boesen likes to joke that the only thing that hasn't changed since his grandfather started the business 89 years ago is that it sells flowers. More specifically, in the past couple of years, the company has focused on upping its social media presence on Twitter and Facebook to the point where "I think we're a leader," Boesen said. Still, word-of-mouth advertising is as important as it has ever been for the florist.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Hy-Vee Inc.
- Plaza Florist & Gifts Inc.

BEST BANK

BEST COMMERCIAL LENDER

BEST LARGE COMPANY WITH THE MOST PROMISING FUTURE

Wells Fargo & Co.

Wells Fargo & Co. is a diversified financial services company that employs about 13,000 "team members" in Iowa. To better assist small businesses, Wells Fargo this year launched the Business Insight Resource Center (www.wellsfargobusinessinsights.com). For consumers, Wells Fargo rolled out Way2Save, which automatically transfers \$1 to savings from checking each time a customer uses his or her debit card.

BEST BANK RUNNERS-UP:

- Bankers Trust Co.
- West Bank

BEST LARGE COMPANY WITH THE MOST PROMISING FUTURE RUNNERS-UP:

- Iowa Health - Des Moines
- Principal Financial Group Inc.

BEST COMMERCIAL LENDER RUNNERS-UP:

- Bankers Trust
- West Bank



Des Moines Golf and Country Club

BEST ADVERTISING AGENCY

BEST PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM

BEST SMALL COMPANY WITH THE MOST PROMISING FUTURE

Strategic America

Winning three Best of Des Moines awards would be a feather in the cap for any company. So would be growing 20 percent year over year in revenues and profits, which is what Strategic America did in the fiscal year that ended in June. CEO Mike Schreurs noted that in the advertising and public relations industry, innovation is constant. Beyond that, the company did a relaunch of its website and plans to launch a digital service called Metis, an online system for marketing clients.

BEST SMALL COMPANY WITH THE MOST PROMISING FUTURE RUNNERS-UP:

- Flynn Wright
- Dwolla Corp.

BEST ADVERTISING AGENCY RUNNERS-UP:

- Flynn Wright
- The Integer Group

BEST PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM RUNNERS-UP:

- Flynn Wright
- Hanser and Associates LC

BEST GOLF COURSE

Des Moines Golf and Country Club

Not a lot has changed at Des Moines Golf and Country Club – not yet at least.

Jim Cutter, general manager of the 36-hole championship golf course designed by the legendary Pete Dye, said a master plan is in place to update the course, which opened at its current location in 1968.

The comprehensive plan involves realigning some tees and fairways, adding new bunkers and changing some of the greens.

Cutter says the club's management team envisions that the plan will take four to five years to complete. But, he said, no timetable has yet been set for when the updates would begin.

The private club currently has 750 golf members and 1,577 total members for its other services.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Wakonda Club
- The Legacy Golf Club



BEST CULTURAL ATTRACTION

Des Moines Arts Festival

RUNNERS-UP:

- Pappajohn Sculpture Park
- Iowa State Fair

BEST ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

Baker Electric Inc.

In a difficult time for construction, Baker Electric Inc. has stayed busy keeping up with the needs of long-time customers and has been selected to work on a range of new construction jobs, including construction of a greenhouse and laboratories for Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. and the Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino hotel. "We're trying to stay as diverse as we can," said John Irving, director of business development.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Wolin and Associates Inc.
- ABC-Electrical Contractors LLC

BEST MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR

Baker Group

Baker Group expanded its controls division with the purchase this year of Quint-Co Inc., which has offices in the Quad Cities and Iowa City. The acquisition allows Baker Group to expand services in eastern Iowa and western Illinois. Baker Group also took on the entire Quint-Co staff.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Waldinger Corp.
- Wolin and Associates Inc.

BEST GENERAL CONTRACTOR The Weitz Co.

The Weitz Co. ranks among the giants of the construction industry, according to the Building Design & Construction trade organization, taking the No. 20 spot for contractors, No. 22 in building information modeling, No. 25 for government work, No. 31 for green construction and No. 30 for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design accredited professionals. In all, Weitz ranked 43rd or better in 12 categories.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Hubbell Construction Services
- Neumann Bros. Inc.

BEST RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE COMPANY

Iowa Realty Inc.

A real estate market that is as low as Mike Knapp has seen it can't dampen his enthusiasm for the market. "I think for Iowa Realty it has been an opportunity. It's a difficult time, but that's when people look to vendors who have a degree of reliability attached to them," said Knapp, Iowa Realty president and CEO. Houses are as affordable and accessible as they can get, especially with record low interest rates, Knapp said.

RUNNERS-UP:

- RE/MAX LLC
- Coldwell Banker Mid-America Group Realtors

BEST ARCHITECTURAL FIRM

RDG Planning & Design PC

RDG Planning & Design PC has received recognition this year for projects ranging from a bicycle bridge to a bank office. In addition, RDG was involved in the design and construction of the Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield headquarters in Des Moines, which was the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Platinum project for new construction in Des Moines and, at 852,000 square feet, is the only LEED Platinum for new construction certified office building of its size in the world.

RUNNERS-UP:

- SVPA Architects Inc.
- Shive-Hattery Inc.

BEST RECYCLING/WASTE

Metro Waste Authority

The recycling and disposal of waste materials is just the starting point for Metro Waste Authority. The organization goes way beyond the basics with programs such as the MWA Grant Program, which reimburses schools, businesses and other organizations for environmental projects. It introduces the public to its core function in an unexpected way by holding an annual "Green Run" at its landfill.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Waste Management Inc.



BEST RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Beaverdale

RUNNERS-UP:

- Urbandale
- West Des Moines



BEST SPORTING EVENT FOR ENTERTAINING CLIENTS

I-Cubs

RUNNERS-UP:

- Iowa Barnstormers
- Iowa Energy

BEST NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

United Way of Central Iowa

United Way of Central Iowa always ranks high in per-capita giving, and it's doing well among big-money donors, too. This year, United Way Worldwide honored Greater Des Moines' chapter for having the most Tocqueville Society members among 150 medium-sized cities, and also for recording the greatest net change in Tocqueville members. The Tocqueville Society recognizes donors who give \$10,000 or more annually.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Animal Rescue League of Iowa
- Children and Families of Iowa

BEST CITY GOVERNMENT CONDUCTIVE TO BUSINESS

West Des Moines

City Manager Greg Sparks has only been on the job for three months, but he has already seen why West Des Moines is conducive to business. He cites a culture of the mayor and city council saying, "We're open for business." He also credits the city's willingness to go out and talk with businesses to find out what West Des Moines can do to help them expand.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Des Moines
- Ankeny

Congrats Suku & United Way

The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines congratulates **Suku Radia**, CEO and President of Bankers Trust, for his recognition as **Best Metro Business Leader** and **Best Minority Business Leader**. Suku serves as the advancement chair on the Community Foundation board.

We also congratulate **United Way of Central Iowa** for its recognition as **Best Nonprofit Organization**. United Way endowment funds are administered by the Community Foundation.

Thank you for strengthening our community!

The Community Foundation is a donor-driven public foundation whose purpose is to improve the quality of life in Greater Des Moines through philanthropy.



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Nathan Wright

BEST SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY

Lava Row Inc.

Lava Row Inc. isn't doing exactly what founder Nathan Wright expected, but it is focused on keeping up with what clients are asking for.

Wright started Lava Row with the intent to provide digital marketing services, which the company still does. But 70 to 80 percent of its current activities, he said, involve educating and training businesses.

"We just kind of follow what companies want," Wright said. "And what they need right now is internal education across all forms of digital media, and a lot of that is tightly wrapped into social media."

That can include marketing, but it also includes things such as how to best use social media internally and how to handle crisis communication with an upset customer.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Strategic America
- Catchfire Media LLC

BEST TRAVEL AGENCY

ITAGroup Inc.

Founded in 1963, West Des Moines-based ITAGroup Inc. is not what most people think of when they think "travel agent." ITAGroup operates incentive programs that help clients increase sales, with group travel plans playing a big role in that effort. The company also offers business meeting and event planning services. ITAGroup has sales offices in large cities across the country.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Travel and Transport
- AAA

BEST COMPANY USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

DSM Daily

DSM Daily launched in February and carried out its first deal in April.

In between, the daily coupon site took to social media to try to build up a strong customer base before launching any deal with a business. That strategy worked, as the service gained 10,000 customers by the time of the first deal.

"I would say that's probably one of the most important things, to try to get people excited about the service and continuing to follow the service, too," said Jeremiah Terhark, who started the company as another business venture along with Webspec Design LLC.

He estimates that more than 50 percent of users have been recommended through Facebook or Twitter. DSM Daily also used social media to try to give the service a voice, he said, and deal with customer service issues.

It's been a success so far; DSM Daily hit 30,000 subscribers in August.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Animal Rescue League of Iowa
- Kum & Go LC

Jeremiah Terhark, Kate Altmaier



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CENTRAL IOWA'S BEST CEO: DAVE VELLINGA

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RUNNERS-UP:

- Anglo
- Jared's Galleria of Jewelry

BEST TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT DEALER

Internet Solver Inc.

Internet Solver Inc. is bringing home an award for the third year in a row. New this year is the addition of wireless telephone service, which gives customers the option of a one-stop shop to go with Internet Solver for cellphone and landline coverage. Along with that, Internet Solver introduced a feature that allows one number to reach multiple phone lines for a customer.

RUNNERS-UP:

- RSM McGladrey Inc.
- Qwest Communications International Inc. (now CenturyLink Inc.)

BEST EXERCISE FACILITY

YMCA of Greater Des Moines

The YMCA of Greater Des Moines fulfills its mission to "build character in kids, strengthen family relationships and promote healthy lifestyles" with nine locations in the metro area that serve nearly 80,000 members. In 2009, the Y opened its newest branch, a 73,000-square-foot facility in Waukee. Youth development has always been a focus of the Y, which offers 21 different programs that last year served nearly 33,000 youths.

RUNNERS-UP:

- YMCA Healthy Living Center
- Aspen Athletic Clubs

BEST COMPUTER CONSULTING COMPANY

Alliance Technologies Inc.

Alliance Technologies Inc. has noticed a shift toward businesses using cloud computing for hosted services, such as virtual servers and virtual desktop technology.

Moving to a cloud infrastructure can help businesses free themselves from managing on-site hardware and software, said Jason Lamping, marketing manager. Through Alliance's cloud solution, all of a business' data, files and applications are able to be accessed remotely and resides in Alliance's data center.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Internet Solver Inc.
- RSM McGladrey Inc.

BEST VIDEO PRODUCTION COMPANY

Screenscape Studios Ltd.

Screenscape Studios Ltd. will celebrate its 25th anniversary in the spring. The company bought a film-style camera, the Arriflex Alexa, during the past year. Founder Brad Morford said the company finds it important to have the highest-quality equipment to differentiate itself from competitors that use off-the-shelf technology. "We have just always maintained the attitude that we're going to do everything we can to lead at the high-end professional level, and not the consumer level," Morford said.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Applied Art and Technology LC
 - Blur MediaWorks Inc.
-

BEST PLACE TO BUY OFFICE FURNITURE

The Triplett Cos.

Tom Triplett says his office furniture and office supply business follows a fairly simple business plan: "We're a smaller company, so we pay attention to the details."

Triplett is vice president for interiors of the family-owned business, which was founded in 1973.

In a tight economy, the company is "just working harder at trying to win over our customers," he said. "People are paying attention to what they are spending money on. The war is over, but it's still a pretty decent bar fight."

And you'll always "bump" into four Triplett's. Tom and his brother, Tim, are vice presidents. Dad, Richard, is president and mom, Sue, is the corporate secretary and she oversees the inside operations, Tom said.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Storey-Kenworthy Co.
- WorkSpace Inc.

BEST PLACE TO BUY WINE AND SPIRITS

Hy-Vee

RUNNERS-UP:

- Ingersoll Wine and Spirits
- Winestyles





RSM McGladrey Inc.

BEST WEALTH MANAGEMENT FIRM

BEST ACCOUNTING FIRM **RSM McGladrey Inc.**

As usual, the Des Moines office of RSM McGladrey Inc. was named the best accounting firm in town – and it was selected as the best in wealth management, too. The summer's economic volatility, added to concerns about changing estate tax laws, makes this a challenging time for wealth advisers. "Those are the two topics keeping us the busiest," said Chad Tramp, the firm's director of wealth management. "We're focused on keeping our clients calm and not letting emotions take over." As for the estate tax, on Jan. 1 of this year, the federal government exempted \$5 million per individual; on Jan. 1, 2013, the law reverts to the 2001 standard of \$675,000.

BEST WEALTH MANAGEMENT FIRM RUNNERS-UP

- Wells Fargo & Co.
- DeWaay Capital Management Inc.

BEST ACCOUNTING FIRM RUNNERS-UP:

- Denman and Co. LLP
- McGowen, Hurst, Clark & Smith P.C.

BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO CENTRAL IOWA IN THE PAST YEAR

Trader Joe's

Trader Joe's was almost a sure bet to win this category, given the hype, fervor and anticipation that Greater Des Moines residents showed for the chain specialty grocery store's November opening.

In fact, about 100 shoppers arrived early and waited in their cars for the Monrovia, Calif.-based company to unlock the doors of its new West Des Moines store at 6305 Mills Civic Parkway.

What the public so desperately sought was a grocer that could supply a wide variety of beers and wines and private-label exotic foods such as dried green mangos, honey goat gouda cheese, South African Smoke spice and Apple Banana Crushers.

Trader Joe's now has more than 360 stores in 28 states; check out www.traderjoes.com to see recipes and a variety of its unique products.

RUNNERS-UP:

- John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park
- Hy-Vee Triathlon

BEST THING THAT WILL HAPPEN TO CENTRAL IOWA IN THE NEXT YEAR

Whole Foods Market

Well, Des Moines residents' thirst for food variety is certainly clear.

On the heels of Trader Joe's opening, Whole Foods Market Inc. announced in May that it would be opening its first Iowa location. The Austin, Texas-based chain offers organic fruits and vegetables, meats and specialty items and has a focus on locally grown products.

The 30,000-square-foot store will be located at Water Tower Place, 4100 University Ave. in West Des Moines.

The store is expected to open in the spring of 2012, with construction set to begin this fall. Whole Foods estimates it will hire approximately 125 people.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Iowa caucuses
- Principal Riverwalk completion

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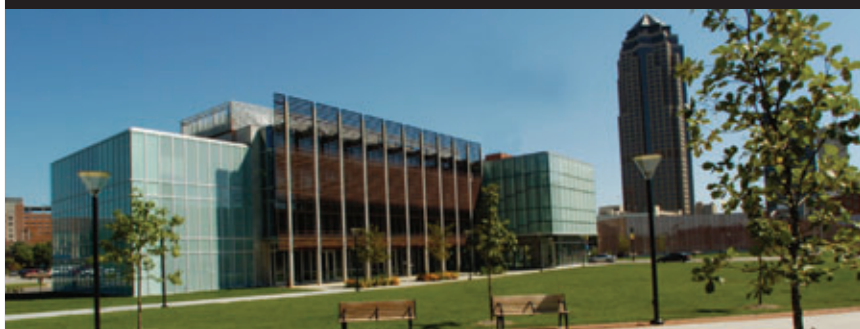


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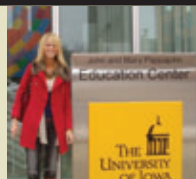
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Joe Palmer

BEST CATERER Palmer's Deli

Hot food, coming through. Joe Palmer, the second-generation owner of Palmer's Deli, sees hot entrees, not cold sandwiches, as the key to winning the catering game. "I see us doing more of that," he said. "It's not as easy to tackle a job with hot food, but we have such diversity in our menu, and that's what people like about our catering." His parents, Gayle and Carol, started the business in 1989, and now Greater Des Moines has five Palmer's outlets to choose from. If the economy cooperates, other cities might get a taste, too. "New delis are back on the radar," Palmer said. "We had talked about it before the downturn." Possible locations include the nearest big Midwestern cities – Omaha, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Chicago.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Hy-Vee Inc.
- Gateway Market

BEST AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP Willis Auto Campus

Cadillac, Lexus, Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover, Infiniti, Mini – the lineup of offerings at Willis Auto Campus is enough to make this the favorite dealership of many successful business people. Willis gains even more fans by giving back to the community with its sponsorship of the Willis Broadway Series at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines.

RUNNERS-UP

- Karl Chevrolet
- Toyota of Des Moines

BEST COMMERCIAL PRINTER Colorfx

Colorfx extended its size and reach with the acquisition of Des Moines-based Artcraft Inc. last January, and Vice President of Business Development Perry Klein said the company now is focused on being "a more complete printer." The goal is to efficiently handle "smaller, quick-turnaround jobs as well as large print campaigns," Klein said.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Garner Printing Co.
- Edwards Graphics

BEST BUSINESS TO SUPPORT LOCAL CHARITY

BEST LIFE INSURANCE PROVIDER

Principal Financial Group Inc.

Principal Financial Group Inc. is a driving force in both its mainstay businesses, life insurance and retirement plans, as well as in its support of charities in Greater Des Moines. Principal covers more than 452,000 individuals with its life insurance products, providing nearly \$135 billion in coverage. In Greater Des Moines, Principal supports the Iowa Financial Literacy Program in 13 metro high schools and sponsors the annual Principal Charity Classic golf tournament, which in the past four years has raised \$2.3 million for children's charities in Greater Des Moines.

BEST LIFE INSURANCE PROVIDER RUNNERS-UP:

- The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co.
- Aviva USA

BEST BUSINESS TO SUPPORT LOCAL CHARITY RUNNERS-UP:

- Wells Fargo & Co.
- Hy-Vee Inc.

BEST HOSPITAL Iowa Methodist Medical Center

Patients continue to expect and receive state-of-the-art care at Iowa Methodist Medical Center. Earlier this year, Iowa Methodist was named a "Blue Distinction Center" for knee and hip replacements and spine surgery by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield. In July, the hospital began using a Flash CT (X-ray computed tomography) scanner, which is 20 to 40 times faster than conventional CT scanners and significantly reduces radiation doses.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Mercy Medical Center
- Iowa Lutheran Hospital

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BEST POLITICIAN ON BUSINESS ISSUES

Gov. Terry Branstad

Gov. Terry Branstad quickly set a pro-business agenda for his administration, establishing a goal to create 200,000 new jobs in the next five years. He has advocated reducing taxes on commercial and industrial properties, which are now taxed at their full value, to 60 percent of assessed value. To improve the state's economic development efforts, he established the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress, a public-private partnership to replace the existing Iowa Department of Economic Development. Branstad fought for spending cuts to balance the state's budget, stressing the need for fiscal responsibility on the part of state government.

RUNNERS-UP:

- U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley
- Iowa Sen. Brad Zaun

BEST M.B.A. PROGRAM

Drake University

Drake University's M.B.A. program has added a focus in the past year to expand students' global perspective. The university has set up options for students to travel through some courses and had an instructor from Uganda teach an entrepreneurship seminar. Drake has also put an emphasis on connecting the theory discussed in the program to everyday applications, especially because many students are already working in full-time careers.

RUNNERS-UP:

- University of Iowa Henry B. Tippie College of Business
- Iowa State University

BEST ENGINEERING FIRM

Shive-Hattery Inc.

Shive-Hattery Inc.'s operations in Greater Des Moines have done "amazingly well during the slowdown," said Mike Kammerer, vice president and director of the local office of the Cedar Rapids-based company.

Revenues have continued to grow during the recovery, and the firm has added nine engineers and architects since the first of the year and is teaching a crew of interns the ropes in the various sectors in which the company provides services: health care, education, commercial retail, industry, government and telecommunications.

"You don't ever expect that all of those markets are going to be good at the same time," Kammerer said. "Health care and government have been good for us the last couple of years."

"Having a diverse focus has allowed us to develop some good customers."

Revenues in fiscal 2010 were \$37.7 million. Engineering News-Record ranked the firm, which has seven locations, No. 257 of the top 500 design firms in the nation.

RUNNERS-UP:

- KJWW Engineering Consultants P.C.
- Snyder & Associates Inc.

BEST PLACE TO BUY OFFICE SUPPLIES

Staples

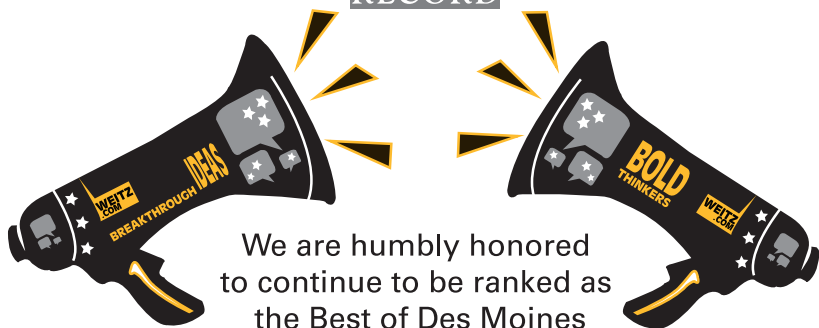
RUNNERS-UP:

- Storey Kenworthy
- Triplett



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BEST METRO BUSINESS LEADER

BEST MINORITY BUSINESS LEADER

Suku Radia

Last December, Suku Radia was inducted into the Iowa Business Hall of Fame. That doesn't mean his career is near its end, though, as he continues to play a prominent role in the business community. In October, he will be honored at the annual Glanton Scholarship Dinner. Radia became the president and CEO of Bankers Trust Co. in 2008 after several years as chief financial officer of Meredith Corp.

BEST METRO BUSINESS LEADER RUNNERS-UP:

- David Vellinga, Mercy Medical Center
- J. Barry Griswell, Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

BEST MINORITY BUSINESS LEADER RUNNERS-UP:

- Michael Sadler, Qwest (now Century-Link Inc.)
- Lu Spaine, Zumi Collection LLC

BEST WEBSITE DEVELOPERS

Webspec Design LLC

Webspec Design LLC began when founder Jeremiah Terhark was in high school. Now, five years after Terhark opened a storefront after he graduated from college, the website development company has grown 15 to 20 percent per year.

"We've just really focused the last couple years on growing our local relationships with customers, so we're at between 400 and 500 customers that we actively maintain their website," Terhark said. "A good chunk of those are in the Des Moines area."

What's especially important when it comes to serving customers is that the end goal isn't just to get the job done, he said. It's also trying to help clients grow their businesses through strong marketing from their websites.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Flynn Wright
- Spindustry Systems Inc.

Jeremiah Terhark



BEST EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM

BEST TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Palmer Group

Palmer Group recently expanded its office space in West Des Moines to accommodate its continued growth. Palmer Group, which serves more than 300 client companies with a broad range of employment services, moved in June to a redesigned space in the Colony Park Building that includes a state-of-the-art video interview room. In January, founder Austin Palmer hired David Leto as executive vice president to handle the firm's day-to-day operations.

BEST EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM RUNNERS-UP:

- Midwest Search Group
- Robert Half Finance & Accounting - a Robert Half Company

BEST TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE SERVICE RUNNERS-UP:

- Manpower Inc.
- Accountemps - A Robert Half Company

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Deborah Rinner (left) & Rowena Crosbie

BEST SALES TRAINING/EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY **Tero International Inc.**

The recession is officially over at Tero International, said company president Rowena Crosbie. "Last year was good, but there were a couple of months when I wondered," she said. "This year is steady, and international business has picked up." The Clive-based company added clients in China and Australia this year. Industry trends include a big emphasis on sales training, "which makes perfect sense after a recession," Crosbie noted, and leadership development. "Something we call 'executive presence' is getting a lot of attention this year," she said. "I think maybe the business casual trend has gone a little bit too far, and companies are trying to pick up their image."

RUNNERS-UP:

- Dale Carnegie Training
- Dardis Communications Inc.



BEST HAPPY HOUR **Johnny's Hall of Fame**

Johnny's Hall of Fame owner Todd Millang said the Court Avenue restaurant spends a lot of time adjusting to what the "crowds have been anticipating and looking for."

Those adjustments must be working, with Business Record readers giving Johnny's the nod for offering the best happy hour in the city.

Running from 3 to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, the happy hour draws a diverse audience: Construction workers mix with office workers who mix with business people.

"One thing that I like about being the owner of that place the most is that I can go in there and see families after a Cubs game sitting next to a group of legislators or businessmen in the next booth," Millang said.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Wellman's Pub and Rooftop (West Des Moines)
- Django



BEST COFFEE

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RUNNERS-UP:

- Caribou Coffee
- Friedrich's

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BEST NEW RESTAURANT

Americana Restaurant & Lounge

The goal from the start for Americana Restaurant & Lounge owner Scott Carlson and general manager Mike Utley was to have a large, eclectic menu.

The best new restaurant in Des Moines quickly became a favorite for its already distinctive menu featuring items such as fried ravioli, coconut beef short ribs, and house-baked macaroni and cheese. And soon patrons will finally get a taste of the full Americana menu.

Just a few months after his restaurant opened, Utley says Americana plans to roll out a new expanded menu at the end of September that, while not removing any items, will feature even more examples of the contemporary American food with a twist that the public adores.

The restaurant – located across from the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park at 1312 Locust St. – has also become a Saturday and Sunday morning hot spot for its brunch. It features an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet and all-you-can-drink bloody marys and mimosas for \$22.

RUNNERS-UP:

- **Gusto Pizza Co.**
- **Flour Pizza**

BEST RESTAURANT FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS

& BEST RESTAURANT FOR ENTERTAINING OUT OF TOWN GUESTS

Centro

The Orchestrate Management & Associates and George Formaro restaurant recently rolled out a new iPad service for wine offerings that operates like an electronic sommelier.

The perennial winner also is partaking in a new seasonal dining program to highlight local farmers by creating a feature menu item each week.

Chris Diebel, marketing director for Orchestrate, said the company plans to launch a new companywide Orchestrate gift card for the holidays that would work at any of its restaurants, including Centro.

BEST RESTAURANT FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS RUNNERS-UP:

- **Django**
- **801 Chophouse**

BEST RESTAURANT FOR ENTERTAINING OUT OF TOWN GUESTS RUNNERS-UP:

- **Django**
- **Tursi's Latin King**





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BEST COMPANY WORK FORCE

Mercy Medical Center - Des Moines

With more than 6,600 employees and a medical staff of more than 950 physicians and allied health professionals, Mercy Medical Center - Des Moines is one of Iowa's largest employers. Together, Mercy's employees staff an 802-bed medical center that operates on three campuses, along with more than 50 family practice and specialty clinics. For 11 consecutive years, Mercy has received National Research Corp.'s Consumer Choice Award, which recognizes the nation's top hospitals for overall quality and image.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Iowa Health - Des Moines
- Wells Fargo & Co.

BEST COMPUTER TRAINING COMPANY

Spindustry Training

When it comes to training services, Spindustry Training finds the key is in the details.

"One thing that sets us apart from our competitors is that we're able to customize the classes and training to the clients' needs," said Angela Culbertson, general manager of training. "Our clients find that is why they continue to come back to us."

Spindustry Training, which specializes in teaching business employees computer skills, is opening an office in Indianapolis to accommodate an instructor who lives in the area. The office will offer more security classes than the Clive location, Culbertson said.

The company is also putting an emphasis on opening online training classes for businesses.

RUNNERS-UP:

- New Horizons Computer Learning Centers
- Internet Solver Inc.



BEST WIRELESS PHONE SERVICE

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RUNNERS-UP:

- US Cellular
- Sprint



Steve Purcell

BEST LOCAL INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER

Mediacom Communications Corp.

Mediacom Communications Corp. provides Internet, television and telephone service in 22 states and 1,500 communities; in Greater Des Moines, the digital media company serves more than 75,000 Internet customers. "We continue to increase our bandwidth," said Steve Purcell, the Des Moines-based regional vice president. Mediacom previously boasted 12 megabits-per-second service, but last spring began to offer 50 megabits-per-second service here for both commercial and residential customers. "That's the fastest service in the community," Purcell said. The company is rolling out that same capability across the state. The National Cable & Telecommunications Association ranked Mediacom's national operation as the 12th largest in the United States as of March 2010, with 1.2 million subscribers.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Qwest (now CenturyLink Inc.)
- Internet Solvers



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RUNNERS-UP:

- Wellman's Rooftop (West Glen)
- Centro

BEST LAW FIRM

Davis Brown Law Firm P.C.

Davis Brown expanded its services in the past year by hiring attorneys to work in insurance and workers' compensation defense. The firm also opened an office in Ames. In addition, Davis Brown launched a website to help entrepreneurs prepare business start-up documents without incurring intimidating capital costs. The website is www.startuplaunchpad.com.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Belin McCormick P.C.
- BrownWinick PLC

BEST PLACE FOR AUTO REPAIRS

Westside Auto Pros

Westside Auto Pros is being remodeled inside and out, and the project should be complete this fall. The car repair shop at 1901 N.W. 92nd Court in Clive also picked up another "Top Shop" award from AAA, the national federation that focuses on the needs of drivers. Westside has received that award every year since 2002.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Willis Auto Campus
- Drake Garage

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The lobby of the Des Moines Marriott Downtown is being renovated this fall to incorporate a “great room” that will feature a new lobby bar. Scheduled to be completed by the end of the year, the renovation will make the luxury hotel and conference center an even better choice for business meetings. In 2007, the Marriott underwent an extensive \$13 million renovation that included an expanded fitness center and a large indoor pool. Among the conference center’s amenities are 15 meeting rooms totaling 25,000 square feet and complimentary wireless access in all public areas.

- RUNNERS-UP:**
- Hy-Vee Hall
 - Hy-Vee Conference Center



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BEST UP-AND-COMING BUSINESS LEADER

David Stark, *Blank Children's Hospital*

David Stark says he's "absolutely having a ball" as president and chief operating officer of Blank Children's Hospital, a role he has held for the past two years. Stark, who turned 40 in August, successfully battled colon cancer in the past year and said he feels proud to join the ranks of cancer survivors along with his wife, Becky, who overcame breast cancer last year. In the community, Stark is currently co-chairing the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Light the Night Walk, and said he plans to re-engage in some additional civic organizations soon. A Fort Dodge native, Stark earned a management degree from Iowa State University and a master's degree in health-care administration from the University of Iowa before joining Iowa Health in 1996.

RUNNERS-UP:

- Aaron Kennedy, Flynn Wright
- Tom Mulrooney, Iowa Health - Des Moines

BEST COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COMPANY

CB Richard Ellis/ Hubbell Commercial

BEST REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

BEST DEVELOPER

BEST HOME BUILDER Hubbell Realty Co.

Hubbell Realty Co. is making some adjustments in the face of tough residential and commercial real estate markets during the recovery.

Rick Tollakson, president and CEO, said revenues are down about 20 percent so far this year, but a comparison of year-to-date figures might be misleading because real estate sales in 2010, when the company had a record year for home sales, were influenced by a federal tax credit.

The company will reduce its number of construction starts by about half for the fall building season, he said.

Hubbell is in the process of determining whether to enter the senior housing market to counter slowdowns in other areas of its business.

There is a bright spot, and that is in apartments and

management. Hubbell plans to start construction on an apartment building this month that will offer rents at market rates, a sign that the market sector, which had relied heavily on tax credits for low-income apartments, is regaining its footing.

The company operates more than 2,000 apartment units in Greater Des Moines and has seen occupancy rates hit 100 percent a "couple of times" this year, Tollakson said.

Occupancy of commercial properties has been flat year-to-date, with reduced operating income.

Hubbell recently completed a second project that will be managed by Anawim Housing and is planning a third.

BEST COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COMPANY RUNNERS-UP:

- Iowa Realty Commercial
- R&R Realty Group LLC

BEST REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT COMPANY RUNNERS-UP:

- R&R Realty Group LLC
- Knapp Properties Inc.

BEST DEVELOPER RUNNERS-UP:

- Ladco Development Inc.
- Knapp Properties Inc.

BEST HOME BUILDER RUNNERS-UP:

- Accurate Development Inc.
- Kimberley Development Corp.

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Iowa Lutheran Hospital (Runner-up)

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(Runner-up)

A special congrats to the Iowa Health-Des Moines team for being the 2011 Best Company Workforce runner-up. And to Eric Crowell, David Stark and Tom Mulrooney for being recognized as outstanding leaders.

* Results are based on the 2011 Des Moines Business Record annual reader's poll.



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