



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Exceptional Groups, Companies and One Inspiring Individual Honored by SOREDI's Prosper Awards

Three companies, one exceptional group and a particularly inspiring individual were honored at SOREDI's 2019 Annual Meeting, held June 27 at Ashland Hills Hotel in Ashland.



Tenacity Award: Pictured here, SOREDI Board President, Steve Vincent with Paul Anderson, General Manager, Rogue Truck Body

Each year, SOREDI recognizes companies and groups in our region that exhibit the qualities of Collaboration, Prosperity, Tenacity and Ingenuity. These are the defining characteristics that SOREDI recognizes as vital to successful business growth in our region.

This year's Tenacity Award went to Rogue Truck Body. Headquartered in the small, unincorporated community of Kerby, with an additional location in Cave Junction, the founders of Rogue Truck body moved here from California nearly thirty years ago, striving for a better life. After more than a decade of growth and expansion, they struggled to keep their doors open in 2008. Due to sheer determination, the owners resolved to navigate out of the recession with

a handful of employees. Their trust in their excellent product and satisfied customers kept them in good stead. After the recession, orders poured in and they rebounded into a company that is stronger than before, with 73 employees in Southern Oregon. SOREDI was able to help them with an Enterprise Zone application and gap financing, so their new expansion has added 28,000 sq. ft. of production space.

HerdDogg received the 2019 Ingenuity Award, for their technological advances in the area of herd management. This ingenious solution involves smart ear tags, called DoggTags, and mobile receivers, DoggBones, that monitor the health and activity of livestock. The DoggTag reads biometric and activity



Ingenuity Award: Pictured here, SOREDI Board President, Steve Vincent with Beth Hammar on behalf of HerdDogg

data from each animal, every few minutes. The receiver downloads the tag data and uploads it to an app that is accessible by the livestock owner. This allows herds to graze freely, avoiding invasive testing, while keeping livestock owners informed about herd health and the well-being of each animal in real time. These products are now being used all over the world, covered by two US patents.



Prosperity Award: Pictured here, SOREDI Board President, Steve Vincent with Elizabeth Fugas, President & Founder of Rising Sun Farms

The 2019 Prosperity Award went to Rising Sun Farms, recently named one of the top 5000 fastest growing, privately held companies in 2018, by Inc. Magazine, for its growth between 2014 and 2017. One of only three Southern Oregon companies to make the list, Rising Sun Farms experienced 146% growth in that time. What began with a couple making a few pesto sauces in 1984, grew into a 35 person company with 25 unique products and over 100 national and international awards. Their mission from the beginning, to provide healthy food, utilizing the highest quality clean ingredients, while supporting organic and sustainable agriculture, has only grown more vital over the years. Now their products are available in retail outlets such as Whole Foods,

Safeway and Albertson's. Many of their products are used in commercial prepared foods. If you've had a pesto sandwich from Starbuck's lately, you've been a part of Rising Sun Farm's prosperity.

This year's Collaboration Award was received by a group, the Southern Oregon Higher Education Consortium. Organized in 2018, this initiative began with a casual lunch and emerged with a vision to serve the region by uniting their efforts around "growing our own" workforce in Southern Oregon. Led by the Presidents of Klamath Community College, Rogue Community College, Southern Oregon University and Oregon Tech, this consortium has streamlined their class offerings and the ability of students to transfer credits in order to ensure businesses will have the prepared workforce they need in order to thrive. Their combined programs boasted 26,700 degree seeking students in over 200 programs, along with 100 certificate and apprenticeship programs.



Collaboration Award: Pictured from left to right, Dr. Sue Walsh, Provost & Vice-President of Academic Affairs at SOU, Dr. Cathy Kemper-Pelle, President of RCC, Dr. Nagi Naganathan, President of Oregon Tech, Dr. Roberto Gutierrez, President of KCC and Steve Vincent, SOREDI Board President

Hal Jones, Pathways Coordinator for the Medford School District, was honored with SOREDI's 2019 Inspiration Award. Over the last year, Hal has gone above and beyond to be supportive of helping business and



Pictured here, SOREDI Board President, Steve Vincent with Hal Jones, Medford School District Pathways Coordinator

industry with a strong workforce pipeline now and for future years with his engagement with the Business Education Partnership and SOREDI Quest. SOREDI's Quest initiative was an effort aimed at connecting Southern Oregon high school students with local companies, so that young people would know that there are solid careers available for them upon graduation. It was a multi-phase project that needed a champion to help work out the complexities, communicate with teachers, connect with students, appeal to sponsors and reach the community. Hal was up to the challenge and enthusiastically coached SOREDI staff, teachers and students to success. His unwavering support, attentive communication, and positive attitude has been nothing short of inspirational to SOREDI staff. His service to the school district continues to prepare students for bright futures year after year.

About SOREDI: SOREDI is a private, membership-based, non-profit organization, governed by a board of directors. Its nine-person staff is charged with local business expansion and new business recruitment efforts, financial assistance to start-up companies through its business loan fund, and management of Enterprise Zones in Jackson and Josephine Counties. The agency was formed as a regional economic development agency in 1987. Learn more at <https://www.soredi.org>.