



COVER STORY

THE BACHER. THE BAKER. THE HOMETOWN HARLEY MAKER.

JAIME LEICK TEXT LAUNCH PHOTOGRAPHY

PATTI BACHER, SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Walk into most any chamber event, and you can expect to see her there. Patti Bacher has numerous volunteer commitments, and helping develop the business community is one of the most prevalent.

Bacher has chaired the chamber's business expo committee for 10 years, which starts planning in July to make the spring function a success. She's also a member of the chamber board and has mentored two participants in the Youth Entrepreneur program.

Bacher says that participation in the chamber has been a good learning experience for her. "It's helped me grow a lot," she says. "In a small company you don't necessarily see everything you get exposed to being on a board with larger companies."

Outside the chamber, she's volunteered with Junior Achievement, teaching a 13-week class at Washington Middle School for six or seven years.

Beyond the business community, Bacher is dedicated to her church and is significantly involved in its Lithuanian mission projects. She'll make her sixth trip to Lithuania this August, helping to organize youth activities and trip logistics. In previous years she's been part of business development efforts there. Bacher's family also hosted a Lithuanian student in their home this past year. The Green Bay West Rotary Club provided assistance to bring the young man here to study.

Bacher also serves as treasurer and communications merit badge counselor for a local scout troop. "I inherited the scouts because I'm a Mrs. and a mom," she joked. And she helps out with her church's senior high youth group on Wednesday

The 2005 Small Business Awards, held June 28, 2005 at the KI Convention Center, once again honored the best of the best with awards ranging from Small Business Person of the Year to Growth, Special Accomplishment, Cornerstone and Entrepreneurial Growth. Held each year during Small Business Week, the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Small Business Awards give a nod to local entrepreneurs and their drive for success. This year, three local businesses were also honored with State of Wisconsin Small Business Awards – a testament to our great city.



PATTI BACHER

BACHER COMMUNICATIONS INC.
SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

nights. "I like working with the teenagers," Bacher said, "because they keep things real. They don't have an agenda. They don't have a to-do list!"

With all those activities, it hardly seems possible that Bacher would have time to run a growing, successful company. She and her husband Timm own Bacher Communications Inc., a full-service communications company. She is responsible for managing the finances, human resources, and customer service side of the business.

"Every day you just look at the highest priority and go from there. Remember that if you've got your priorities in line everything else seems to fall in place," she says.

The couple started the firm in 1992, one day before their youngest daughter's 4th birthday. Their oldest child, Erich, works with them in the business as a technician now. Daughter Lindsay is in college. Kari, the youngest, is in high school and is enjoying her first summer job outside the family business.

"The only way that Timm and I are able to do the things we do is because of the support of each other and our kids," Bacher adds. "There's a good unit there."

Bacher Communications is 14 employees strong and growing. It has a customer base of more than 1,200 clients throughout Northeastern Wisconsin, and this past spring it launched a new security division.



SCOTT BUSHKIE

CORNERSTONE BUSINESS SERVICES

EMERGING SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

SCOTT BUSHKIE, EMERGING SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR FOR THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Scott Bushkie, president of Cornerstone Business Services, was recently recognized as the Emerging Small Business Person of the Year for the state of Wisconsin. Given by the SBA, the award recognizes consistent growth and innovation as well as community contribution.

Founded in 2001, Cornerstone Business Services has quickly grown into one of the largest business brokerage firms in Wisconsin. The company has more than 20 employees, with offices in Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Detroit, and sales have doubled nearly every year since inception. Bushkie's growth strategy remains aggressive, with plans to add three new locations a year for the next five years.

An independent thinker, Bushkie broke with the tradition of main street business brokerage. He built a firm that sets itself apart by serving lower middle market clients, or those with business values between about \$1 million to \$10 million, with the same dedicated service and comprehensive sales process typically found only in large merger and acquisition (M&A) firms.

What Bushkie saw was that while most large private companies do sell, many small- and mid-sized businesses are needlessly closed or liquidated. According to the SBA, owners of about one-third of small firms said their firms were still successful at close. Bushkie aims to change those statistics.

"It's sad for me to think that so many people put in their blood, sweat, and tears to create a living for themselves, but in the end they don't know what they have. They're potentially leaving hundreds of thousands of dollars on the table that could have improved their quality of life or their children's lives," he explains.

In high end M&A, advisors will typically work with just a few clients and will provide services for an extended period of time while their business is for sale. When Bushkie chose to work in the \$1 to \$10 million niche, he chose to serve these small and mid-size companies with the same quality and service given to larger business owners. By bringing those dedicated and comprehensive sales services to smaller business owners, Cornerstone provides them successful sale rates on par with larger companies. Cornerstone has a closing rate of 76 percent compared to the industry average of just 20-30 percent.

The company has certainly faced challenges. Shortly after it opened, the nation entered an economic recession that significantly threatened the company's success. At low points in the year, Bushkie and his two employees were serving just one client. Ownership transitions can take months or years to complete, and revenues are collected at the end of a completed transaction. Cash flow, then, is a challenge for any business brokerage firm.

During his acceptance speech Bushkie expressed his gratitude to Dick Pigeon and the lenders at Citizen Bank who recognized the inherent value

and potential of his business model. They provided a line of credit that resolved cash flow issues and made his vision possible.

KENT NELSON, 2005 FINANCIAL SERVICES CHAMPION

Kent Nelson, owner of QuickStart Inc., was one of three area SBA award winners. He was recognized as the 2005 Financial Services Champion. The Menasha-based company specializes in helping businesses obtain financing.

Among other small business consulting services, the company helps clients create a business plan, understand the lending process, and investigate financing options.

Nelson says the main reason so many small businesses fail is that they don't have a business plan. As a consequence, these new business owners don't truly identify how much money they'll need to run a viable operation.

An entrepreneur with a strong idea may not have too much trouble getting a \$50,000 loan to start a business. Many borrow based on the equity in their homes. However, six months later some entrepreneurs find themselves in trouble. They've run through all their start-up funds, but their business isn't yet generating enough funds to support itself.

"The working capital is what kills people a lot of times," Nelson says. "We help people ensure they have enough capital not only to start the business but to make sure they can keep it going." →

→ Besides financing for new businesses, QuickStart assists entrepreneurs looking to purchase, expand, or refinance an existing operation.

Nelson worked as an accountant before getting the entrepreneurial bug himself about seven years ago. He began doing QuickBooks consulting and came to realize how many business owners really needed help with financing.

"They would put money on credit cards or borrow money in the wrong way," he adds.

For entrepreneurs looking to start a business, Nelson can help identify more creative financing options.

"They don't think outside the box about how to keep the costs down," he said. "People tend to want to purchase everything, and they typically want to purchase new stuff."

For people with limited financial wherewithal, Nelson might suggest leasing a facility or finding a business partner.

"Maybe they're looking at buying an existing business, and maybe they can buy on land contract. There's a lot of options that many people aren't aware of."

Nelson didn't officially dedicate himself to the business until he incorporated in 2001. Today he

has three full-time employees and is planning to open a Green Bay location this summer.

"It's just very satisfying to help a business get started," he explains. "When I drive down the street I can look at a business and know they probably wouldn't be there without our help."

Moreover, Nelson says he's having fun. "Doing taxes isn't quite as exciting as getting someone a million dollar loan," he says.



JERRY MADER, ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH AND 2005 WISCONSIN SMALL BUSINESS JOURNALIST

It was May 2003 when the first issue of *The Business News* was released. Since then the paper has grown more than half again in size, and its success has spurred the creation of at least one other publication.



Jerry Mader had been working for a business journal publisher for about 17 years. He was visiting friends in Green Bay when he discovered the region didn't have its own business newspaper.

Having helped his employer with start-ups in three other areas, Mader knew the sort of market research and numbers he needed to crunch to see if a similar publication would be viable.

The more I looked into it, the more I was surprised there wasn't already a business newspaper here," he says.

Mader left his home in Cincinnati, moving his wife and two sons with him, and set about establishing himself and a newspaper in Northeast Wisconsin.

"I'm in a business where you become real local, real fast," he says. "Winning this award brought this home."

When the first issue of *The Business News* was released, it had just 28 pages and initial distribution was free. Mader's goal was to reach 6,000 paid subscribers, a measure he surpassed before the paper was even a year old.

Today the paper has a paid circulation of more than 8,000. It has grown to 40 pages an issue, an increase driven by advertising demand.

Mader began investigating the idea of a second Business News, one for the North Central region, in the spring of 2004. Only one year after launching the Northeast version, both Mader and his editor, Larry Desch, began getting inquiries from businesses outside the region.

"I started compiling a list and Larry started compiling a list," Mader says. "The idea caught fire very quickly."

The first issue of the North Central paper was distributed in January 2005. The 36-page paper comes out once a month and is still in the free distribution phase.

Mader enjoys being in the position to chronicle other people's success. "It is so interesting to me to be in a business where I can learn about lots of other businesses," he says. "It amazes me the ingenuity that people have."

Mader has just begun investigating the market for a third business newspaper, this time in West Central Wisconsin. The paper would cover an 11-county area from Eau Claire to the north and La Crosse to the south. He's also been considering a bilingual English/Spanish newspaper that would cover the Northeast region and Sheboygan County. "If we can get the sponsorship to commit to it, we'll do it," he adds.

In addition to receiving the chamber's Entrepreneurial Growth award, Mader was also recognized by the Small Business Administration with the 2005 Wisconsin Small Business Journalist award.

RENARD COUNTRY ELEGANCE CATERING INC., GROWTH AWARD

Tom Englebert recaps a typical morning for Renard Country Elegance Catering: Staff arrives by 5 a.m. and starts preparing for breakfast deliveries. Soon afterward they start in on lunches for the five different cafeterias they serve including Schreiber Foods and Georgia-Pacific. At the same time, staff may be prepping for anywhere from eight to 15 different luncheons that can easily run 50 people or more per group. And that's just before lunch!

When asked how they coordinate all that activity, Englebert laughed. "Practice."

Weekends – when they are busy catering weddings, company picnics, and other special occasions – are their busiest time. Englebert says they'll be serving events every weekend from mid May through mid October. "We start early and go 'til late at night," he says.

The company was founded in 1984 by Claudette Renard, Englebert's mother-in-law. Renard is mostly retired now, and Englebert runs the business along with his wife, Denise.

Englebert said winning the chamber's Growth award meant a lot to Renard.

"It's a big deal for her," he says. "It was a hard go the first year. To see that it's gotten to the point where someone recognized it; it meant quite a bit."

The company already has the staffing and equipment to handle significant events, including company picnics with as many as 3,000 to 5,000 employees. It has large-capacity trailer grilling equipment and can offer outdoor pig roasts, corn roasts, or other specialty menus.

Englebert attributes the company's success to quality ingredients and good customer service.

"We use all homemade recipes," he explains. "And someone from our family is going to be working with a customer somewhere along the line to make sure everything gets taken care of right."



The caterer's popularity is showing. This fall it'll move into a new, larger facility in the Green Bay industrial park. Englebert says it's outgrown its Cedar Street location.

"There's no room for equipment," he says. "No room for day-to-day jobs. Everyone wants everything at the same time."

The company has 22 employees and has been averaging about 15 percent growth annually since its inception. The move will not only make the caterer more efficient but should facilitate additional growth, allowing it to serve more events and larger functions.

BADGER ROLL & MACHINE LLC, GROWTH AWARD

Bob Lenius says his team doesn't give 100 percent. They give 1,000 percent.

"A lot of people through my time always said 100 percent-plus," Lenius says. "Well 100 percent-plus is just doing the day-to-day. A thousand percent is going above and beyond the call of duty."

For Lenius sometimes 1,000 percent means as much as 16- or 24-hour days, or more. On one recent Saturday in June, a customer called in with an emergency breakdown. Lenius was at the shop that night, helping to unload the damaged machinery. He →

→ had a team lined up and was back in the shop by 7 a.m. Sunday morning, and the repaired equipment was out the door to the customer by 5:00 a.m. Monday morning. Lenius didn't head home himself until early Monday evening.

"To get the business to where we need to be, means you must do whatever it takes. Value added, quality, customer-oriented business — that is what it takes. It if takes 1,000 percent to be successful, you have to do that," he says.

Lenius is one of three owners of Badger Roll & Machine LLC along with partners Charles Ellingson and Michael Reymont. Bader Roll provides manufacturing and maintenance services to users of embossing and calendar rolls for the paper industry. It also provides dynamic balancing and repair services for a variety of other markets. It has several large capacity cranes, including one 40-ton hoist, that enable them to take on large-scale projects the smaller machine shops can't handle.

The company originated as O&E Machine. It was started by Bob Ellingson, Charles Ellingson's father. In the 1970s, Paper Converting Machine Company (PCMC) bought O&E and operated it as a separate division. By the end of 2000, PCMC was downsizing and closed O&E as part of that effort.

The three partners, who had all worked for O&E, made an offer to purchase the business. It was a year before the deal was finalized. In the meantime, the company sat dormant.

"The customer base was gone," Lenius explained. "It was like a start-up business."

They reopened the company under the name Badger Roll & Machine in December 2001. They had three partners, two employees, and no work. They spent the first week cleaning the machines, making sure all the equipment was in good working order, and calling their former customers. Little by little, jobs started coming in. Today, some former customers call and never realize the business had been closed.

Badger Roll & Machine has realized incredible growth by increasing its market and recapturing business from past customers. Sales increased 84 percent between 2002 and 2003 and again by 41 percent between 2003 and 2004. And, even though the company increased its equipment investments, pre-tax profits still increased by 272 percent from 2003 to 2004.



Lenius says he can't explain profit increase. He's too busy focusing on customers to worry about why the numbers look the way they do. Their lender, David Loritz from Associated Bank, nominated them for the award.

"I was really surprised," Lenius says. "At the same time, it tells me that our peers see we're moving in the right direction and doing the right thing."

MALCORE FUNERAL HOMES AND CREMATORY, SPECIAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

There's a fifth generation at the helm of Malcore Funeral Homes and Crematory. In a time when few businesses make it past the third generation, that alone is enough to qualify the business for a Special Accomplishment award.

Ben and Joe Malcore serve as funeral directors along with their father, Dan Malcore. Both sons waited until their college years before deciding to join the business.

"Family has always been important to us," explains Joe. "I thought it would be nice to work in a small business atmosphere and be able to work with family."

As Joe tells the story, it was his father who really kept the family in suspense. The youngest of three brothers, Dan Malcore was his father's last hope for a family succession. After much deliberation Dan did agree to take on the family business, a decision that "brought great relief to grandpa," Joe says.

But keeping the family involved through five generations is just one hurdle Malcore Funeral Homes has overcome. While the business was still young, Bill Malcore and Charles Dupont, the original founders, felt they had overextended themselves by building their Baird Street location. They even talked to St. Peter and Paul Parish, across the road, about purchasing the building to use as a convent.



“The church said, ‘Keep your faith. This is going to last. It’s going to make it,’” Ben recounts.

Indeed they did. In the late ‘70s, Malcore Funeral Homes was the first facility in Green Bay to offer a crematory, and for many years provided those services to much of Northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula. In 1998, they opened a second location on West Mason and became the only funeral home in the area to offer an on-site lunch room. The west-side facility is also the largest funeral home in the Green Bay area.

The company strives to remain on the cutting edge, offering a comprehensive Web site including a tool that allows friends and family to send e-mail condolences. Using another form tool, site users can fill in vital information to assist family members in the event of their death. The form collects information about work, community service, and other details that would be included in a death certificate or obituary. This is helpful because many times children don’t know all of the details of their parents’ lives.

Working under the family name, the Malcores are always cognizant of the impression they leave with their guests. Malcore Funeral Homes have always been Malcore owned. Dan says, “Now that my sons, Ben and Joe, have joined me, it will remain in our family.” “Obviously every funeral we do, we’re putting our name out there. It means a lot to me,” Joe adds.

But beyond their name, the Malcores remain sincerely vested in providing caring assistance to the families they serve.

During his acceptance comments at the awards ceremony, Dan Malcore thanked the people of Green Bay for giving them “the privilege of taking care of their families during such a difficult time.”

The Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce is not the only organization who has recognized this family’s outstanding accomplishments. In May, they received the Wisconsin Family Business of the Year – Compassionate Family award.

McCoy’s Harley Davidson, Cornerstone Award

Ken McCoy is a soft-spoken, humble man. Ask him to talk to you about his business, and he’ll most likely tell you about his customers. “Our customers are our biggest asset,” he says.

McCoy’s Harley Davidson is a long time supporter of the local H.O.G. (Harley Owners Group) club. This year the group raised \$93,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and McCoy says money is still coming in. The June 6 charity ride drew more than 1,700 riders. A volunteer committee works year-round to plan the annual event.

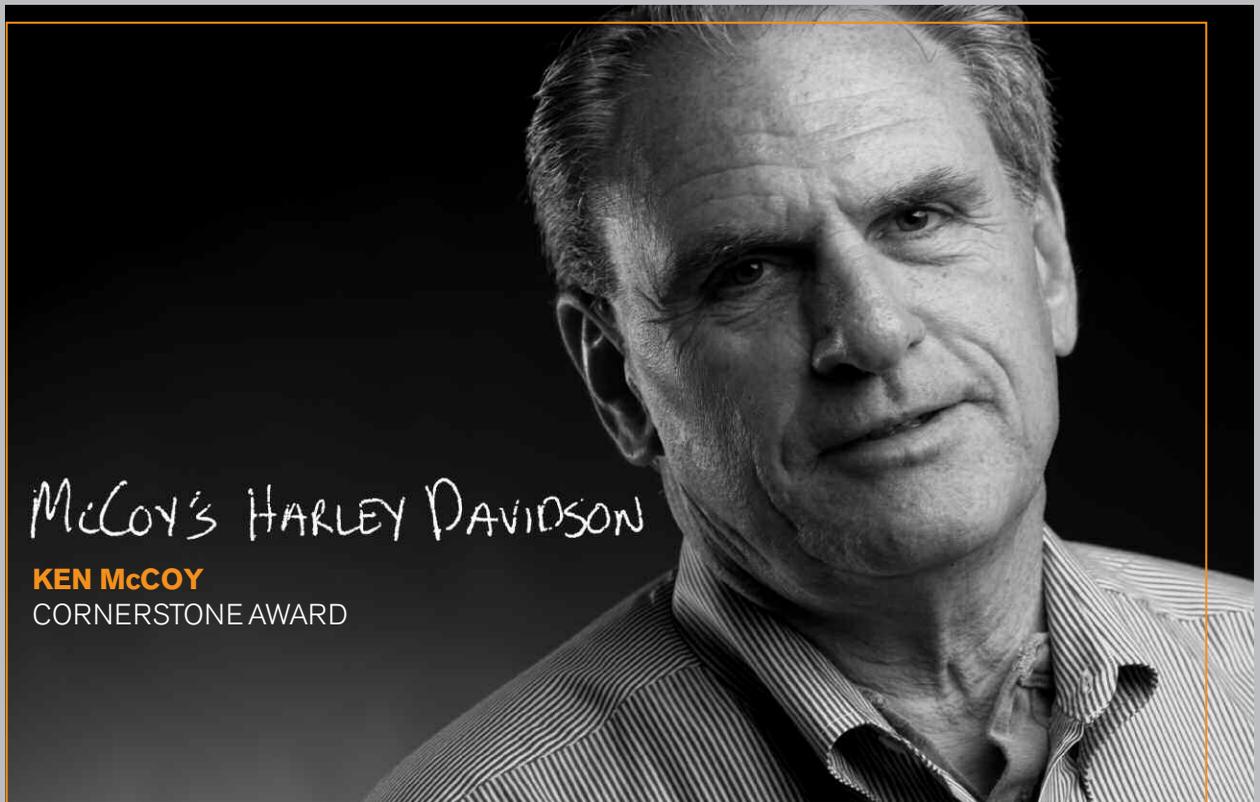
“They argue, and they talk about different ways of doing things, and they make it a better event each

County Library, and various other causes. A wall of McCoy’s Velp location is covered with recognition plaques, certificates, and thank-you notes from various groups.

“The motorcyclists do more than they have to, and they have fun doing it, too,” McCoy said.

McCoy’s has been in business for 37 years. It started with just two employees and sold 45 bikes a year. Today the company sells more than 400 bikes annually. It has three locations and more than 25 employees, some with close to 20 years of service. Sons Kip and Tom have also joined the business and daughter Cory helps out part-time. McCoy says he’s also been looking at further expansion, this time in the Bay Park Square area.

McCoy attributes its success to basic integrity.



year,” McCoy says. McCoy himself is so dedicated to making the event a success, he’s even sent committee members to Los Angeles to participate in its MDA ride, the largest in the nation.

Jim Junion, the group’s historian, says McCoy provides a lot of support for the event and helps recruit other businesses and organizations including his Optimist Club to help out with the event.

“He’s willing to work with people all the time to promote these rides for fundraisers,” Junion says. “He really goes out of his way to get other businesses involved.”

Besides the MDA, the Green Bay H.O.G chapter supports the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Howard-Suamico Optimists, the N.E.W. Zoo, the Brown

“We care about civilization and humanity,” he says. “We put fair prices and do everything correctly.”

Junion says McCoy stocks a large selection of bikes on his shop floors, and knowledgeable staff are always on hand to answer questions. He says McCoy runs a good business, and people have a lot of respect for him.

“He’s a very caring guy, and he means well, and he likes to see the community do well,” Junion says. 🏆