

Southern Arizonans win big at state Innovation Awards

Inside Tucson Business

Southern Arizonans won big at the annual Governor's Celebration of Innovation Awards. Indeed, only three business finalists from this part of the state did not win awards – and one of those went to another finalist from here in the same category.

More than 1,200 people attended the gala called the state's Academy Awards of Technology. It was held Dec. 7 at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale and put on by the Arizona Technology Council and the Arizona Department of Commerce.

Award winners from Southern Arizona were:

Innovator of the Year

Award - Startup

MSDx, 9040 S. Rita Road in the University of Arizona Science & Technology Park, is a biosciences firm developing a first-of-its-kind blood test to diagnose multiple sclerosis.

Innovator of the Year

Award - Small Company

Paragon Space Development Corp., 3481 E. Michigan St., an aerospace engineering and technology firm providing highly-specialized and innovative space and underwater life-support products.

Innovator of the Year

Award - Academia

University of Arizona Phoenix Mars Mission.

William F. McWhortor

Community Service Leader

of the Year Award

Bob Horn, president of Horn Business Consulting, for his community work in developing Southern Arizona small high-tech businesses.

Ed Denison Business

Leader of the Year Award

Vicki L. Chandler, director of the UA's Bio5 Institute, for her work bringing together the disciplines of agriculture, medicine, pharmacy, science and engineering at the UA.

Teacher of the Year Award

Timothy J. Barry, a science teacher at Salpointe Catholic High School, 1545 E. Copper St.

Future Innovators

(each student wins \$1,000)

William Guarino, now a college freshman, for his engineering project while at Salpointe titled "A Lighter Metal: High Cycle Fatigue Strength of a new AZ91D-F Magnesium/7075-T651 Aluminum Composite."

Niles Frazier, now a college freshman, for his cellular and molecular biology project while at Tucson High School titled "Optimization of Sense-RNAi Efficiency."

The other finalists from Southern Arizona were:

Global Solar Energy, a producer of thin-film photovoltaic solar cells that can be made into a variety of products to capture solar energy, in the category, for the Pioneering Innovation Award that went to Iridium Satellite, in Tempe.

Raytheon Missile Systems for the Innovator of the Year Award among large companies, which went to Intel Corp.'s facility in Chandler.

Bio5 Institute at the UA for Innovator of the Year in academia, which, as noted earlier, went to the UA's Phoenix Mars Mission.

The Governor's Celebration of Innovation was established in 2003 to recognize local business for their contributions technology.