

Commerce

Senger named Builder of the Year 2007

by Jim Fossett

CLE ELUM – The Central Washington Homebuilders Association (CWHBA) announced their Builder of the Year 2007 Award.

The awardee was selected on Jan. 18 at the Clarion Hotel in Yakima, during an annual meeting held to install CWHBA officers.

From a field of 223 CWHBA members, Steve Senger of Senger Construction in Cle Elum was declared the winner.

A call to the CWHBA's Executive Officer Carly Faul last week shed light on selection criteria.

"We evaluate a candidate's community service and outreach activities," said Faul. "We also look at work accomplished on private property rights, affordable housing, the environment, and membership recruitment. We also assess a candidate's proactive involvement with politics and the legislative cycle."

Faul noted Senger is usually the first to call and offer help.

"For example," she said, "when we appealed to the membership for anyone interested in donating Christmas toys for families in need, Steve was the first to volunteer. He's been donating toys for the last two years."

In another example of Senger's humanitarianism, Faul said he donated labor, financial assistance, and help acquiring building materials to a woman whose husband suddenly died.

"A Washington couple,"

Faul said, "were in the middle of building their dream home when the woman's husband died. Senger immediately offered help. He wasn't even involved with that project."

A good year

"It's been a good year for builders," Senger said. "The snow's slowed us down a little, but everyone is gearing up for a busy 2008."

Senger specializes in vacation and retirement homes and indicated he has several projects in progress.

"We're doing some framing up at Suncadia, and," he laughed, "we're trying to get a roof on a home in Hyak, if you can believe it. We're also doing a timber frame near the Yakima River, off the Golf Course Road exit."

"I can't say it enough," he said, "the local economy is great. We're getting calls for new homes every single week. My competitors are saying the same thing. Everyone's got a full plate this year."

Twelve a Year

Senger said he's been in construction for 33 years and maintained his business as a family operation.

He moved his office to Cle Elum nine years ago from Mill Creek.

His oldest daughter, Terri runs the office. Lori, another daughter, is the project manager.

Senger's wife Sandy, operates Sandy Senger Real Estate, and also does the books for his construction company.

"We build about a dozen homes per year, give or take,"

Senger said.

A Glimpse into Senger

The first impression of Steve Senger leaves most people with the impression that he is apparently a happy man, unaffected by the hectic demands of his business.

"When you get up in the morning," he smiled, "you have two choices. You can hit the 'up button' or the 'down button.' I choose to hit the 'up button.'"

When asked how he found his life's path, he winked, "As a kid, I was the biggest fort builder West of the Mississippi River. After the military, I started at Boeing and hated it. I started work in the dark, and left home every night in the dark. So, I quit."

"I was told that construction, at the time, was a good way to make a living, so I began with a shovel in my hand, making \$4 dollars an hour, and worked my way up. Went to school nights to get a construction technology degree."

With his growing business, Senger still finds time to volunteer.

"I'm president of the CWHBA Homebuilders Association-Kittitas County Chapter," he said, "president of the Kittitas Built Green Association, and president of the Kittitas Chapter of the CWHBA. I keep busy."

As he explained, it is his belief that building a dream home shouldn't be a nightmare for clients, rather – it should be an adventure.

Some of the leading edge extras Senger's firm provides are Web Cams at all construction sites, which enable his



STEVE SENGER owner of Cle Elum's Senger Construction was recently named CWHBA's 2007 Builder of the Year.

Jim Fossett photo

clients to logon to the Internet anytime they like and – participate in "their adventure."