

Consumers help pick Best in Business awards

You've seen the commercials on TV: "Such and such, a recipient of the Best in Business award ..."

So, who named these businesses the "best"?

"It's from an online survey of consumers who are asked to nominate businesses," said John Gaylor, head of the Best in Business Award Association's

Huntsville office. "From there, we start a selection process that can take from 8 to 10 months.

"This isn't a popularity



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contest where the one with the most votes wins. We don't say winners; we say recipients."

The association is basi-

cally a marketing organization with the businesses as its clients, and there are 42 categories for the awards. A list of the 2010 award recipients follows:

■ Admiral Cleaning & Restoration; Alabama Foundation Specialists; Alabama Hearing Associates; All Needz Rental Center; Annette Hale's Indoor Comfort Systems; Dr. Anthony Toney; Audio Visual iP Solutions; Bragg's Furniture; Breland Homes; Brooks Lock & Key; C and

K Roofing & Construction; Creative Catering; Cycle Nation of Huntsville; DATAC Computers & Services; DogWatch Hidden Fence of North Alabama; EnviroSafe; ESBS Tree Services;

■ EyeCare Associates – Drs. Sullins, Lee & Sullins; 1st Family Mortgage Co.; Flint River Animal Hospital; WZDX-TV Fox 54; Green Light Advertising; Heart of the Valley YMCA; *Inside Huntsville* and *Just For Women* magazines;

James Family Law, P.C.; Kemp's Flooring; Kirkland Custom Cabinets; Knology; Ledford's Landscaping; Leigh Ann Tyler – State Farm Insurance; Millar Chiropractic & Nutrition Center; Mr. Electric; Natural Stone Concepts; Osborne's Jewelers; Rosenblum Realty; Sound Depot; The Masters; The Wine Cellar; Valley Title and Closing Services; Visiting Angels Senior Homecare;

See McLAUGHLIN on C2

McLaughlin

Continued from page C1

Wayne's Environmental Services; and Woody Anderson Ford.

Gaylor said the first criteria in the selection process is the business has to have a satisfactory record with the Better Business Bureau.

"We want to make sure they pass muster with the Better Business Bureau," he said. "I go on their website all the time to check up on the businesses."

Michele Mason, president of the Better Business Bureau of North Alabama, supports that step of the vetting process.

"Based on what they've described to us, they have a very thorough process to check out the companies before making the awards," she said. Mason also said the Best Business Association has been accredited with the bureau since May 2008.

"Michele was the first person I went to when we started," Gaylor said. "We wanted them to be aware of who we are."

Though the businesses must be in good standing with the bureau, Gaylor said they don't necessarily have to belong to

the bureau or even the Chamber of Commerce.

The business owner also goes through a personal interview, Gaylor said.

"We ask about customer service, pending litigation, liability," he said. "We check on hiring practices and even sometimes ask if they drug test their employees.

"There's a lot of checks and balances."

As part of the interviews, Gaylor said they would ask home inspectors to check on builders or go to general contractors about plumbers. They would also check with the state medical board about physicians.

"We try to be as fair and judicial as possible," he said. "And, in most cases, it's obvious (why certain businesses were selected)."

Gaylor also said he's proud of the recipients because of their reputations and respect from the business community.

"One is a national franchise award-winner, one has been a longtime family business and another was cited for its work with youths," he said. "We're very proud of our people."

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