Chamber award recipients leaders in the community

BY SHELBY LINDRUD
silindrud@wctrib.com

WILLMAR — The Willmar Area Lakes Chamber of Commerce recognized three community and chamber leaders during its annual meeting and appreciation lunch Friday.

Melissa Sorenson, Jennie-0 Turkey Store, received the 2015 Emerging Young Leader Award. The award goes to an individual younger than 40 years of age and who shows outstanding leadership that benefits the community.

Sorenson earned the award due to her work with Vision 2040, neXt, Leadership 2040, WE/Lead and she chairs Goal 4 of Vision 2040 — Next Generation Leadership.

A graduate of Willmar Senior High School, was involved in the community at the early age of 5, helping her parents compile welcome packets and set up community events. She has also volunteered at her local church, the YMCA as a youth mentor and with Vision 20/20. Sorenson works as an accounting specialist at Jennie-0 Turkey Store and lives in Willmar with her husband and their two children.

Sorenson was nominated for the award by Thomas Gilbertson, Laura Larson and Joanna Schrupp. In her nomination, Sorenson commented on Sorenson’s constant working toward improving the Willmar Lakes Area. Schrupp wrote in her nomination for Sorenson that she feels Sorenson will never be done contributing to the community.

"Her personality and work ethic is such that she will always push the envelope, but always in the best interest of the community and the people who live in the community," Schrupp wrote.

The "MILO" Award, named for long time Chamber volunteer Milo Halberg, was awarded to Joanna Schrupp, who oversees business development for the MinnWest Technology Campus.

The "MILO" Award recognizes local business people, 40 and older, who are leaders in volunteerism, show dedication to the Chamber and provide community leadership and involvement.

Schrupp grew up and lives in Willmar, with her husband and three children. She graduated with a degree in business administration from Mayville State University in Mayville, North Dakota.

She has served on the YMCA Board, Chamber Board, Grow Minnesota Committee, served as chair of the Willmar Gymnastics Booster Club along with service on the Vision 2040 Steering Committee. Schrupp is also a mentor for young leaders in next ahd for students in the KCEO program.

Paula Bredberg nominated Schrupp for the "Milo" Award, saying she has been very important in work to bring Willmar forward in areas like economic development.

"Joanna really does have a finger on the pulse of our community. She has networks and connections throughout our city; our county and our state," Bredberg said in her nomination.

Dr. Dale Lauer; director of the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory in Willmar; is this year’s recipient of the Exemplary Leadership Award. The award goes to a person who has achieved recognition in their chosen field and made significant contributions to it.

Glenn Leitch and a team from Jennie-0 nominated Lauer due to his response during the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreak last summer.

"He was forced to reprioritize his life around HPAI and spent many nights and weekends helping the industry sort through issues. Has the poultry industry not had the full support of the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory, we would not have been able to recover as fast as we did," Leitch said in his nomination of Lauer.

Lauer is a graduate of the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine and arrived in Willmar in 1987 when he took on the position as supervisor of the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory. He has received additional awards from Minnesota Turkey Growers Association and the North Central Avian Disease Conference for his work in the poultry industry.