

EMERALD AWARDS Eugene Chamber developed program to recognize businesses for sustainable practices

By Ilene Aleshire

The Register-Guard

A real estate firm, a medical practice, a biotech firm and a firm that specializes in recycling equipment were honored Wednesday evening at the fifth annual Emerald Awards.

The Emerald Award for Community Caring was given to Windermere Real Estate Lane County, which was described as having “a long-standing tradition of giving back to the community and supporting local organizations such as HIV Alliance, Looking Glass, Committed Partners for Youth and Northwest Youth Corps.”

In 2006, Windermere was ranked sixth in Oregon for corporate foundation philanthropy by the Portland Business Journal, with contributions totaling nearly \$500,000, according to the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, which presents the awards.

The Emerald Award for Environmental Values went to Slocum Orthopedics, P.C. The chamber said Slocum’s “commitment to sustainability reflects a fundamental principle of the Hippocratic Oath, which is to protect patients from harm.”

Slocum recycled 85 percent of the deteriorating buildings that were demolished when it constructed its new building on Coburg Road, the chamber said. The building also received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design silver certification.

The “environmentally conscious construction practices” also earned Slocum Orthopedics the Mayor’s Sustainability Award in 2007, the chamber noted.

The Emerald Award for Growth was given to Bulk Handling Systems, which makes and sells recycling sorting machines around the world.

“Bulk Handling Systems is committed to doing business in Eugene,” the chamber said. “Company revenues have grown from \$12 million to \$40 million since 2006. Its employee base has doubled to 136 since 2007. This growth and commitment to Eugene was affirmed with the announcement that the company will build a new 80,000-square-foot factory on West 11th Avenue.”

The Emerald Award for Innovation went to MitoSciences Inc, a biotech company founded by two scientists at the University of Oregon. The company’s products enable researchers to monitor the health and function of mitochondria — the energy centers of cells — and have implications for developing new drugs and fighting diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

Since its founding in 2003, MitoSciences Inc. “has partnered with some of the best research facilities in the country, such as Mayo Clinic and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, to develop the very first generation of testing to address autism in children,” the chamber said.

PeaceHealth was previously announced as the winner of the chamber’s second annual Business of the Year award. PeaceHealth has served the area since 1936 and grown to be Lane County’s largest employer with an estimated 6,000 people, the chamber said.

“PeaceHealth recently moved into the new \$547.6 million Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend and is now preparing to invest \$97 million in renovation of its PeaceHealth University District campus,” the chamber said in announcing the award. “In addition, PeaceHealth gives back to the community through charity care and in direct support of numerous community organizations.”

The chamber developed the awards to honor businesses that contribute to community vitality and quality of life by implementing sustainable business practices. Several hundred business people and government officials attended the ceremony Wednesday.