



**FOR RELEASE**  
**Saturday, September 26 after 7:30 p.m.**

## **The Rapid City Chamber celebrates their 123<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**

Rapid City, SD (9/26/2009) – On Saturday, September 26, the Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 123<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting themed Fast and Furious. The room was surrounded with high performance cars supplied by dealerships throughout Rapid City. The night geared up with a social hour, a speeding program and was ended when Randy Hamburg of Wells Fargo, outgoing Chairman of the Chamber’s Board, passed the leadership gavel onto Al Rieman of Black Hills Harley Davidson.

The event raced by highlighting the previous year’s achievements along with those individuals who took the Chamber to the next level. The three most prestigious Chamber Awards, the George Award, the Young Professional of the Year Award and the Extra Mile Award were presented during the evening.

The first award presented was the Extra Mile Award sponsored by the Rapid City Convention and Visitors Bureau, (RCCVB). This year’s award winner was Rick Emerson for his outstanding efforts as the director for Primal Quest. But he didn’t just go the extra mile, he went a full 600 miles and designed what was heralded by producers and athletes as “the best adventure race course yet.” In conjunction with the hard work and dedication to Primal Quest, Rick has been instrumental in helping the RCCVB accomplish their goals of marketing the Rapid City as a convention and leisure destination and to promote economic growth that will enhance the area for visitors and residents.

The Young Professional of the Year Award went to Ericka Heiser from Ketel Thorsentson. This award is presented to an outstanding young professional in the Rapid City area who demonstrates vision, professionalism, and involvement resulting in a positive impact on the community. The award is sponsored by the Young Professionals Group of the Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce. Heiser has been an active member in the Rapid City Jaycee’s serving as Vice President of Management for three years, a member of the Rapid City Young Professionals Group, a member of the National Association of Certified Valuation Analyst’s and was selected for the leadership Rapid City Class of 2009. She has worked for Ketel Thorstenson since 2006 as a certified Valuation Analyst where she appraises businesses, partnership interests, closely-held corporate stock among many other services.

The last and most prestigious award of the night was presented to Karen Gunderson Olson as this year's George Award recipient for her many contributions and volunteer efforts to the community. Every year, this top Chamber award is selected by the Chamber's outgoing Chairman of the Board, (Randy Hamburg), and is given to an individual who has, over a period of time, provided leadership to our community in a variety of ways. In other words, "They didn't wait to let "George" do it, they did it themselves."

Gunderson Olson's community involvement includes serving on the following board: Allied Arts Fund, Rapid City YMCA, South Dakota Arts Council, South Dakotans for the Arts and the Rapid City Chamber's Centennial Lasting Legacy Committee. She has been honored with several awards including the Rapid City Arts Council Volunteer of the Year Award, the Governor's Arts Volunteer of the Year Award, the YMCA Leadership Award, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies-Crossing Borders Award, Girls Scouts Woman of Distinction Award, Rushmore Honors Award and the "Eyes on You" Magazine's Outstanding South Dakotans.

The Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic member supported organization dedicated to enhancing the economic well-being and quality of life in the Rapid City area and Black Hills region. The Chamber is the voice of the local business community supporting member businesses with referrals, committee support, event planning and more.

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Enclosure: Disk with digital files including photos of Annual Meeting Award Recipients

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