

4 rural Utah tech firms honored

Deseret Morning News

Four rural Utah technology firms recently were honored by U.S. Sen. Bob Bennett and the state's Smart Sites program.

Winners of the first-ever Excellence in Rural Technology Awards were:

• **Best Rural Technology Newcomer** — NWB Technology of Brigham City.

NWB is a limited liability corporation owned by the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation that is involved in DVD creation and client relationship management. The company is engaged in a Department of Justice language translation project relating to homeland security.

Other finalists in the category were The Illusion Academy of Mt. Pleasant, Sanpete County, involved in cartoon animation and illustration, and Longs Digital Solutions of Hurricane, Washington County, involved in systems support and digital conversions.

• **Best Rural Technology Product** — Steton Technology Group of St. George.

Steton's software helps quality and safety specialists monitor adherence to guidelines and regulations. Inspectors can now perform their inspections utilizing software installed on a handheld computer device and then upload the results, from anywhere in the world, into Steton Quality Suite.

Other finalists were Information Connections of Logan for DVD authoring software and LearnKey of St. George for online expert e-learning software.

• **Best Small Rural Technology Firm (Not More Than 25 Employees)** — Footprints of Moab.

Footprints provides custom business software development. It also is involved in its own kindergarten reading initiative and sponsorship of Junior Engineering Day at HMK Intermediate School. The company grants employees paid time off to volunteer at local schools, provides free computer classes to members of the community and distributes free CDs when new computer viruses are identified.

Other finalists were Davasi Consulting of Brigham City, which does software development, and Longs Digital Solutions.

• **Best Large Rural Technology Firm (Over 25 Employees)** — LearnKey.

LearnKey provides e-learning technology, online learning and self-paced training courses. The company provides the remote-learning platform for the Utah Smart Site Program and has donated more than \$400,000 of computer training materials to the initiative. Its Online Expert courses have trained 1,600 rural Utahns, including 230 individuals from low-income families. They were also instrumental in the creation of Tuacahn High School's computer learning center.

Other finalists in the category were Information Alliance/Information Connections of North Logan, involved in customer relationship management and

DVD authoring; Steton Technology Group; and Uinta River Technology of Fort Duchesne, a tribally owned information technology firm.

Nominations were submitted electronically on the Utah Smart Sites Web site. The winners were decided by Utah Smart Sites, Utah Information Technology Association and Wasatch Digital IQ Magazine.

The awards were presented in Richfield during the Third Annual Rural Business Conference, hosted by Bennett and the Utah Rural Development Council.

"The Excellence in Rural Technology Awards are a great opportunity to recognize Utah companies who exemplify the value of integrating new technologies into their businesses," Bennett said in a prepared statement. "The four award winners and the finalists have proven that operating from a rural location will not prevent them from competing in an increasingly global and high-tech marketplace."