

Quake volunteers receive Aptos chamber awards

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APTOS — The quake of '89 shook volunteerism in this town into action. It was this very spirit that was honored Friday night when the Aptos Chamber of Commerce 1989 woman and man of the year awards were announced.

The surprise recipients, Suzanne Gamble and John Fisher, were honored for their contributions to individuals and businesses rendered helpless after the Oct. 17 temblor. Sales of artist Gamble's poster of the epicenter raised \$15,000. Fisher was instrumental in getting Rotary International to donate \$1 million, \$600,000 of which went directly to this area.

Normally the 1989 awards would have been presented by the outgoing chamber president. But the 1989 president, Bob Bailey, is hospitalized with an illness.

Despite losing her inventory, Gamble devoted time after the quake getting donations to cover the production costs of the limited-edition, museum-quality poster. She then offered the poster at no cost to the Aptos Chamber of Commerce, the Santa Cruz Downtown Association and the Watsonville Chamber of Commerce to sell through local businesses.

Aptos-area Supervisor Robley Levy commented, "It seems to me that Suzanne has put her art where her heart is and we all benefited."

John Hibble, co-director of the Chamber with his wife Karen, noted that Suzanne "would pick up the project and run with it" when they became too busy with other business.

It was this same combination of monetary and personal help that earned Fisher recognition. The day



Suzanne Gamble
Poster raised \$15,000

after the quake, Fisher, a retired PG&E manager, went throughout Aptos turning on gas. He also helped people move out of their damaged homes and relocate.

In the weeks afterward, Fisher logged 4,000 miles distributing the money he helped get from Rotary International. He is a former district governor of Rotary and former chamber president.

Rotary International, along with the Capitola/Aptos Rotary and the Aptos Lions Club, were given special recognition for their financial contributions after the quake. The Lions Club gave \$150,000.

Other special awards were presented to two businesses — Seascape Village, a new shopping center built by Holcomb Construction, and Aptos Center, which was recently remodeled and landscaped by Lomak Property Group.

The organization of the year award went to the Aptos High Sports Foundation for providing



John Fisher
Instrumental in raising funds

the high school with \$60,000 for athletic programs. The foundation also has raised money for major improvements such as the football field lights.

Paul Bailey of the foundation accepted the award.

Erik Johnson, owner of Erik's Deli Cafes, received the award for business of the year. In presenting the award, chamber director Dick Jamison noted that the 17-year-old business "is an exceptional example of one that has been very successful in a business sense and very successful in a community service sense."

Among the approximately 25 community services the deli provides is the free barbecue it serves to 500 senior citizens each year.

All award winners also were given commendations from the state Assembly and Senate, the county Board of Supervisors and the U.S. Congress.