

E-Day celebrates entrepreneurs, advocates

Crown Point – The region’s entrepreneurial energy was on display as the Northwest ISBDC team welcomed the E-Day Class of 2022 at the awards luncheon event.

“It’s an honor to celebrate our entrepreneurs today as we have been for more than 30 years,” said Rachel Clapp-Smith, interim dean at Purdue University Northwest.

“Entrepreneurs are the fabric of our community. What we are doing today is an important activity in establishing and strengthening our entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northwest Indiana. I hope you walk away feeling inspired.”

In its 31st year, the Entrepreneurial Excellence or E-Day Awards honor entrepreneurs and advocates who have impacted the region not only through their company’s contributions, but also through their service to Northwest Indiana communities.

“When I talk about the smallest of the small: How many of you knew here in Indiana that over 85 percent have under 25 employees? This is who we at the SBA recognize as the smallest of small right here in Indiana,” said Geri Aglipay, regional administrator of the Great Lakes Region of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

“Events like these are very vital because this is an opportunity for all of you to convene and connect around what makes America grow, build wealth and are the backbones of not only the neighborhoods that you raise your families in and that you work in but the economic engines right here in the state of Indiana – and that’s small business owners.”

The winners are selected by the E-Day Steering Committee from the community’s nominations, except for the Lifetime Achievement Award, which the committee members determine based on a lifelong impactful career.

The 2022 honoree was Linda Woloshansky, who spent her career in the workforce development, economic development and education fields. She retired in 2021 from the Center of Workforce Innovations in Valparaiso.

“I am humbled and honored to accept this award. I have attended this event for more than 20 years, and I have always been inspired and awed by the award winners – that makes today even sweeter for me,” she said. “Entrepreneurship is not for everyone, but it is for people like you here in the audience. People who have tremendous passion for their ideas and their products and their companies - who embrace long hours, sleepless nights and postpone vacations realizing that is the price they pay to actualize their dreams.

“It is for people who know time invested in the decisions made in the beginning are critical to a company’s future. It is for people who are courageous enough to take risks and it is for people who know that opportunities don’t just happen, but that you actually do create them.”