

Dear Members,

Our theme for our Annual Awards Luncheon last week was “Heroes.” We honored three businesses, and one business leader, Holly’s Hearing Aids, Kirtland Re-Habilitation and Care, Marous Brothers, and Terry Kilbourne from Tec, Inc. I am certain that all four faced obstacles in growing their business but with much commitment and tenacity over the years, they overcame many challenges, inspired others, chased opportunities, generously gave to others, and successfully grew their business.

What is the definition of a hero? One definition is someone who is selfless, a genuinely good person, someone who causes change and someone who inspires others. Our award winners are heroes, and you are too! Many of you were essential businesses during COVID which was tough as you navigated the many challenges and unknowns to provide critical services to your customers. Those of you who were not considered essential did not want to let your customers down and with many obstacles, were still able to find creative ways to serve them. Sadly, there are a handful of members who went out of business during this time, but remarkable that over 500 members sustained or even did better during the pandemic. Last, but not least, we had members who opened their business right before the pandemic began and were able to sustain their business over two years of tough times!

And our hero list continues to grow. The Chamber of Commerce is doing many ribbon cuttings this year for new businesses, something we have not seen much of over the past two years. These ribbon cuttings are so inspiring to be a part of! Many of these new business owners have worked for others and have now taken the brave step out on their own.

Lastly, at our annual luncheon I shared some statistics from our 2021 fall membership survey to show how successful many of our members were in the midst of the pandemic in 2021:

27% of our members experienced the best revenue they ever had

51% of our members experienced revenue that was better than a year ago

**78% of our members did better than the previous year or experienced the best revenue they ever had in 2021!**

Cheers to all of our heroes!