

[Business of the Year]

Community partnership takes on a whole NEW level with our Business of the year for 2021. This business has been and continues to be about meeting their community where they are needed. Their heart and passion for this community are so evident by the care and exemplary customer service they provide. They extend this service and care beyond their customers and truly serve this Community. They encourage their entire staff to volunteer their time by helping non-profits with support, leadership, and many of their team sit on boards for nonprofits and education organizations in our community. They sponsor so many of our events in The Dalles but not with just a financial donation, but you will also see this team volunteering to help set up, during the event, and takedown as they are not afraid to roll up their sleeve and get things done!

The team enjoys what they do, and it shows. We have heard so many times how much this business cares about their clients and their community that they seem more like family to their customers instead of a business.

They have been a strong supporter of the Backpack program for our disadvantaged youth by collecting items but also showing up and helping to fill those backpacks that go home which helps provide food for the home. They have been seen during the colder months standing with partners and collecting items with Helping Hands. This company really works for the people in our area.

These past two years have been so different, and this business didn't hesitate to step up to the plate for our businesses all over our region. They put their team in motion at the drop of a phone call to come over to the warehouse where the PPE supplies were housed. They helped us box up PPE for each of our businesses and even helped deliver some of those orders. They even loaned equipment and tools to make the tasks have less strain on us. We can't say thank you enough to this team and business.

They helped with training to understand just what our businesses needed to do to obtain PPP, they had sessions to help businesses apply for the EIDL, and they even went one step further by supporting the nonprofits in a fashion that none of us thought possible. They had budgeted to sponsor many events during these two years, and they didn't pull their sponsorship when the events couldn't be held due to shutdowns, instead, they sent the check to the organizations and said spend it where you NEED IT!

A program that is near and dear to this business is the Warm Heart Winter Drive. This drive is to collect dollars and warm winter items to help keep our houseless warm during the cold months. The passion of this organization is to be there for everyone whether you are a customer or not.

They are active in so many efforts and we just don't have that much time this evening, but I do know that the Chamber is very proud to have them in our community and excited to honor them. It is businesses like this one that help make our community an amazing place to live and we are proud to have **Columbia Bank** as the 2021 Business of the Year!!