

Los Rios River Runners Honored Award acknowledges river rafting industry is on the tourism forefront

Taos News , Thursday, June 21, 2007

By Melody Romancito



Los Rios River Runners was honored last night at the Taos County Chamber of Commerce's annual awards banquet as Business of the Year.

Cisco Guevara, owner and founder, said, "We're very honored to receive this award. It's wonderful for Taos to acknowledge that the river-rafting business is on the forefront of what draws visitors to the area."

He talked about how tourism industry tends to treat the river-rafting industry as the "unwanted step-child."

"This award lends legitimacy to our industry. We do influence the tourism economy. We hope that by legitimizing the river-raft industry, there will be more understanding about the de-watering of the Río Grande and the unfairness of the Río Grande Compact. This compact was created in the 1930s and does not meet the needs of a modern society," Guevara said.

Pete Botting, an employee at Los Rios River Runners said, "We're thrilled about the award. The fact that we're a seasonal business makes it especially rewarding."

To be considered for the award, a business must have been a member of the Taos County Chamber of Commerce for at least one year. It must promote Taos, work for the benefit of the greater business community and have a reputation for ethical dealings, good customer service and excellent employee relations.

Guevara founded Los Rios River Runners in 1978. Today, this company is the oldest of its kind in Northern New Mexico and leads the field in developing river rafting. Los Rios River Runners offers rafting experiences – from the tumult of the famous Taos Box to a tranquil float through the Chama Río Grande.

In addition, Los Rios River Runners is part of many projects that serve the community. It donates one dollar per day of every guest's fee to river conservation, and is working with the Bureau of Land Management on a wilderness preservation scheme in the Chama Canyon. It provided services to the Santa Fé and N.M. State Police Department for search and rescue operations in the Río Grande Gorge.

Others honored at the banquet are Albert Dean of Laser Works, New Business of the Year; LeAn Clamurro of American Artists Gallery Bed and Breakfast Inn, Volunteer of the Year; SOMOS Executive Director Dori Vinella for Nonprofit of the Year; James Tedesco, marketing director of The Taos Inn as Hospitality Person of the Year; Wolfgang and Jennifer Collins of Wolfgang's Spa Works, Entrepreneur of the Year; and Taos County Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center staff won Employee of the Year.