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TODAY'S WEATHER



HIGH
16
LOW
5

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CHAMBER BESTOWS HONORS

OC Creative, DeKalb County Youth Service Bureau, WDKB's Shawn Lowe feted

By **KATRINA J.E. MILTON**
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DeKALB – Brian Oster credits the community as the deciding factor that led to him buying a business in DeKalb five years ago.

Oster is the creative director and president of OC Creative, an advertising agency that specializes in video production, website design and branding. On Thursday evening, OC Creative was named the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Business of the Year.

"This is the best community I've ever been a part of, and ... we're committed to the community," Oster said.

The announcement came during the annual meeting of the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce. During the virtual meeting, the recipients of the 2020 Business of the Year Award, 2021 Nonprofit Organization Award and the 2020 Ambassador of the Year Award also were announced.

After his business was announced as this year's award recipient, Oster, thanked his wife, Amy, who is the business' vice president, and his hard-working staff of nine. He described his initial reaction of winning the award as "being humble and honored, excited to continue to give back and be involved in the community."

"Let's keep turning up the needle from DeKalb County," Oster said. "DeKalb's got potential. Let's see what we can do together. ... There's so much diversity and leadership in the community. I'm excited for us as a business because we won the award, but I'm more excited to see where we as a community go in the future."

The Business of the Year Award is given to a business that has had exceptional involvement with the DeKalb Chamber and the community.

Other nominees included 94.9 WDKB Midwest Family Broadcasting, Clean USA, Gurukrupa Indian Grocery & Copy Services and Pest Control Consultants.

The 2021 Nonprofit Organization Award was given to DeKalb County Youth Service Bureau.

The Nonprofit Organization Award is given to a nonprofit that has had a significant impact to the community, including but not limited to job creation, collaboration in the community, philanthropy outside the organization, DeKalb Chamber involvement and social impact within the local



Photo provided

The team at DeKalb-based OC Creative was named 2020 Business of the Year by the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce during a virtual ceremony Thursday.

“DeKalb’s got potential. Let’s see what we can do together. ... There’s so much diversity and leadership in the community. I’m excited for us as a business because we won the award, but I’m more excited to see where we as a community go in the future.”

Brian Oster,
 creative director and president of OC Creative

community over the past three years. Other nominees included DeKalb County Community Gardens, Kishwaukee United Way, Opportunity House and Voluntary Action Center.

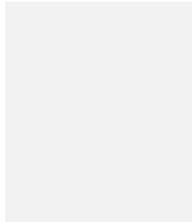
"We are honored and certainly amongst a great group of nominees," said Cydney Wessel, DeKalb County

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Mark Busch file photo – mbusch@shawmedia.com

Nicole Patterson (left) and Sha Hill, both youth and family therapists with the DeKalb County Youth Service Bureau do a little dance as they wait for their next visitor during the mental health drive-thru earlier this summer at their facility in DeKalb. Items in some of the free packages were bubbles, molding clay, calming jars, a time capsule activity and adult coloring books. The YSB was named Nonprofit of the Year by the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce Thursday.



• CHAMBER

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YSB's executive director. "It's amazing to me all the wonderful nonprofits throughout the county that really meet so many needs. Certainly, this year was unlike any other."

DeKalb County YSB is also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

"We're really taking this 50th anniversary year and an opportunity to look at what we're doing, what we're doing well, but more importantly, look at where we can go in the future," Wessel said.

Shawn Lowe, program director of 94.9 WDKB, was named the Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Ambassador of the Year.

For a list of previous years' award winners, visit the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce's website.

In his concluding speech, Matt Duffy, the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce's executive director, spoke of the difficulties and the success stories of the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Shaw Media file photo

OC Creative was named the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Business of the Year during a virtual ceremony Thursday. Brian Oster, creative director and president of OC Creative, an advertising agency that specializes in video production, website design and branding, accepted the award.

"As we look back at 2020, I think we'll all agree it's definitely going to be a year to remember," he said. "Some may think it's because of all

the challenges that the year brought; however, what I will remember most is how this community continues to respond in the face of adversity. Did

“We are honored and certainly amongst a great group of nominees. It's amazing to me all the wonderful nonprofits throughout the county that really meet so many needs. Certainly, this year was unlike any other.”

Cydney Wessel, DeKalb County Youth Service Bureau's executive director

we pivot? Yes. Was it unprecedented? Yes. Is there going to be a new normal? Yes. ... With all great challenges come great success stories. Our membership is full of those stories, and I hope those are what will continue to be shared.”

For information about the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce and to view videos created about the nonprofit organization and business of the year award nominees, visit www.dekalb.org.