

Buckhead business group hands out annual awards

By Everett Catts

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The Buckhead Business Association handed out its 2010 awards today at its annual luncheon at the Atlanta History Center in Buckhead.

The Buckhead Business of the Year Award went to the St. Regis Atlanta, a luxury hotel and condo building that opened in 2009. It won over finalists Fab'rik, a boutique, and Bistro Niko and Holeman & Finch Public House, both restaurants.

Charlie Crawford, president, CEO and chairman of the Private Bank of Buckhead, received the Bullish on Buckhead Award for his 5-year-old bank's success despite the poor economy.

"I'm honored," said Crawford, a 1995 graduate of Leadership Buckhead, an offshoot of the association. "I was surprised. But it's an organization I've been involved with for a long time. ... I think I'm proud of the team at the bank."



Staff / Nathan Self

From left, Charlie B. Crawford Jr., president, CEO and chairman of the Private Bank of Buckhead, receives the Bullish on Buckhead Award from Buckhead Business Association President Lolita Browning-Jackson.

Charlie Loudermilk, founder and chairman of Buckhead-based Aaron's, earned the Buckhead Beautification Award. The longtime Buckhead resident and community supporter was honored for revitalizing the old Coca-Cola Roxy Theatre into the new Buckhead Theatre, which opened in May after undergoing a two-year, \$6 million renovation.

Loudermilk could not attend the luncheon, so his son Robin accepted the honor on his behalf.

Pizzeria Venti, co-owned by Terry Moon and Brian Lackey, won the Buckhead Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The restaurant opened two years ago and gives back to area charities and schools.

"It's awesome. It was a surprise," Moon said of the award. "I don't know how to say this, but we do what we're supposed to do, and that's how you get recognized sometimes."

Heather Wright, the association's 2010 president, said the organization has a retail committee that keeps up



with local businesses and their impact on the community. The committee recommends nominees for the annual awards.

“Frankly it was a difficult decision, but we like all of them,” she said of the Business of the Year finalists.

Wright also talked about the other honorees.

“With Pizzeria Venti, we felt like they deserved so much [recognition],” she said, adding the Entrepreneur of the Year Award was reintroduced to honor the restaurant.

Regarding the St. Regis, Wright added, “We just felt like it was their commitment to the community. They are involved in the community. [General Manager] Simon [Rusconi] is really committed to really build [the] St. Regis brand in Atlanta. [Like] last year, all the businesses [nominated] were great.”

During the luncheon, Wright passed the gavel to Lolita Browning-Jackson, this year's president.