

For Immediate Release

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**Woodbury Chamber Names Citizen, Business and Educators of the Year
Winners to be Recognized at Annual Gala and Silent Auction set for Jan. 25, 2008**

WOODBURY, Minn. (Jan. 2, 2008) – The Woodbury Chamber of Commerce has named its annual award recipients. HealthEast’s Roger Green is Citizen of the Year, Outback Steakhouse is Business of the Year, Diane Koschak from Valley Crossing Community School is Elementary Educator of the Year, Dr. Craig Butler from New Life Academy is Outstanding Secondary Educator, and Cathy Habas and Jill Slaton make up the Outstanding Educational Team from Valley Crossing. Friends, family, co-workers and fellow community members will gather to honor and recognize these outstanding leaders during an awards ceremony at the sixth annual gala and silent auction, set for 6 p.m. Jan. 25, 2008, at the Prom Center in Oakdale. *The Sky’s the Limit* is the theme for this year’s event.

“Gala plans are coming together nicely,” said Gala chairperson Greg Watson, with ARC Builders. “Wonderful silent auction items are arriving daily at the Chamber office, and this year’s grand prize drawing is a complete get-away package for four in beautiful Siren, Wisc. Menu selections include Tuscany Stuffed Chicken, Beef Tenderloin, Red Snapper or Stuffed Portobello Napoleon. Guests will enjoy the unique musical style of *Bellatrex*, an ensemble affiliated with Woodbury’s K&S Music Conservatory, during the silent auction and dinner.

“On behalf of the Chamber, a sincere thank you goes to our headline sponsor Anchor Bank. Additional sponsors are Meshbesh & Spence, Ltd., Associated Bank and ARC Builders, Inc. Without their generous support, this exciting, fun event simply could not happen.”

To donate silent auction items of \$50 or more, contact Nancy Kennedy at 651-578-0722 or **chamber@woodburychamber.org**. All donors will be recognized in the program and on bid sheets. Gala tickets are \$50/person or \$400/table, and can be obtained by calling Nancy Kennedy in the Chamber office. Formal invitations have been mailed to Chamber members, however, the entire community is welcome to attend.

About the Winners (as indicated on nomination forms)

Roger Green – Citizen of the Year

Over the years Roger has served the City of Woodbury on several commissions including affordable housing and the community land trust. He is currently Chair of the Economic Development Commission. Roger brings a strategic perspective to everything he touches. His position at HealthEast allows him to give back to the community. Roger has been active in the Woodbury Chamber and was Board Chair in the early ‘90s. He always comes forward to volunteer at events such as the Woodbury Country Mile, Boy Scouts of America, Southeast Area YMCA and his church, just to name a few. Roger has been a Woodbury resident for many years.

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Outback Steakhouse – Business of the Year

Outback Steakhouse has demonstrated first-hand in giving back to our community. They have partnered with various organizations in helping them raise money by hosting meals at their Woodbury location, with the proceeds going to each organization. Examples of this include the Woodbury Royalty, a group walking for Breast Cancer, and a Relay for Life Team, just to name a few. During Woodbury Days, all profits from their involvement go to the American Red Cross. Owner Ed Weibal gets involved with employees in organizing events and selling tickets.

Diane Koschak – Elementary Educator of the Year, Valley Crossing Community School

Diane Koschak is a music teacher who impacts the lives of many students. She is the epitome of teaching, always making it fun and doing it well. The rapport she builds with students, and thus the respect she earns, is impressive. The performances and concerts she coordinates expose young learners to the arts and provide the opportunity for them to learn how to conduct themselves on stage, sing proudly, to work within a group, and speak in front of an audience. The performances are always very successful and build community and tradition. She also provides leadership to the school's Peace Committee. Diane has been a vocal music educator for 22 years, serving 12 at Valley Crossing. She is active in several metro vocal ensembles, including Minnesota Chorale.

Dr. Craig Butler – Outstanding Secondary Educator, New Life Academy

Known for setting high standards, this science teacher can also bring complex topics and theories to a level of understanding for all students. Butler's character exemplifies a great role model, both in and outside the classroom. He builds relationships with students, and cares about their futures as he engages them in discussions about college and career choices. Butler is involved in extracurricular activities at school, tutors students and supports the school's National Honor Society. As a community member, he is involved in his church, while reaching out to an inner city Spanish-speaking church. He is frequently found at school supporting students at many of their events.

Cathy Habas and Jill Slayton – Outstanding Educational Team, Valley Crossing

This pair of Special Education teachers was nominated by a parent who is appreciative of the above-and-beyond effort they given resulting in the growth and development of their child. "They have taken my child from a troubled and lost first grader who could not read and had poor social skills, to a wonderful, reading, socially accepted, adaptable second grader. Habas and Slayton are bright and cheery. They start everything with a positive, and show students they are valued and appreciated." The child's success is attributed to their diagnosis, and adjustable IEP, daily communication and advocating for him to all of his teachers.

About the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce

The Woodbury Chamber of Commerce is an association of local businesses organized and committed to promoting Woodbury's economic, civic, commercial, cultural, industrial and educational interests. Its mission is to be a leader in promoting the spirit of our city and helping to enhance a progressive business environment as well as to serve as the business voice of Woodbury. Together, it strives to make Woodbury a better place to live and work!