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Locals named tech award winners

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The Southwestern Virginia Technology Council held its annual awards banquet, tech expo and awards ceremony Oct. 25, with Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade Jim Cheng as the keynote speaker to an audience of more than 150.

AWARDS

- The High Tech Green Award went to Thompson & Litton for the installation of the largest solar thermal system in Virginia at the New River Valley Regional Jail. It is one of the largest round mount solar thermal projects in the southeastern United States.
- The High Tech Economic Development Award winner was Crutchfield Corp. in Wise. Crutchfield continues to help bring national recognition to the region in the area of technology. Known nationally as a top tier tech company in the arena of consumer electronics, Crutchfield once again won BizRate.com's "Circle of Excellence" Platinum Award for performance and customer service. Of the 5,000 online retailers in the Bizrate network nationwide, Crutchfield stands alone as the only one to win the "Circle of Excellence" Platinum Award for 12 consecutive years.
- The President's Award went to NASA DEVELOP from Wise, which has been aligned with the NASA DEVELOP national program for 12 years. In addition to the primary scope of the earth science research, NASA DEVELOP scholars volunteer their time to work with middle and high school students to do high power sports and research rocketry, pilot lessons to understand commercial aviation, astronomical observations at the University of Virginia's College at Wise.

With the assistance of the technology council, NASA DEVELOP scholars, alumni and local mentors worked together to facilitate a teaching from space event with the International Space Station astronauts, which included live appearances by NASA astronaut Leland Melvin and Anousheh Ansari, the first female private space explorer. Some 5,000 students gained insight with several museum-quality NASA exhibits at UVa-Wise and Mountain Empire Community College.

- Russell County Public Schools won the High Tech in Education Award for its work in putting an experiment onboard the International Space Station along with two student designed mission patches through

the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program.

- The High Tech in Small Business and Entrepreneur Award was presented to Coburn Creative of Glade Spring for its nontraditional advertising/media design/development firm whose award winning business has seen 600 percent growth since 2007.
- The High Tech in Government Award went to Tazewell County Virtual Marketing Assistance Partnership. The VMAP program provides a free marketing service to businesses of Tazewell County by utilizing social media and other outlets.
- The High Tech in Innovation/Entrepreneur of The Year Award went to Evatran. Evatran is the manufacturer of Plugless Power, the world's first "hands-free" charging systems for electric vehicles.

Awards banquet sponsors were Bristol Virginia Utilities, Center for Innovative Technology, Crutchfield Corp., Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, UVA-Wise and Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator.

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