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EDGE Award winners named [9:23 p.m.]

FARMINGTON - Automation-X Corp. and Envirotech were named winners of the 10th annual Economic Development, Growth and Excellence Awards on Thursday, throwing a spotlight on two local employers. Automation-X focuses on oil and gas well automation services, selling everything from solar batteries to gauges. The company employs about 17 at its retail store and warehouse at 620 S. Carlton in Farmington, and approximately 47 company-wide.

Automation-X's local office ships out 30-70 packages per day to customers. The company's major San Juan Basin customers include ConocoPhillips and XTO Energy.

"I don't feel like I can take credit for it," said co-founder and co-owner Dan Schultejan. "It takes a community to raise a business."

Schultejan said the company is looking at expanding internationally, particularly in the Russian Federation.

Incorporated in November 2004, the company has its headquarters in Lander, Wyo., where Dan and Alexandra Schultejan live. But Automation-X's main operations are run out of the 26,000-square-foot Farmington location.

Envirotech won this year after also being nominated in 2010. The company provides environmental consulting services for the oil and gas industry and other customers. Founded in 1989 by Morris Young, the company has about 90 employees in Farmington.

Envirotech netted more than \$8 million in revenue each of the last two years. The company is located at 5796 U.S. Highway 64 in Farmington.

"I was so pleased to just be nominated," Young said.

The business also responds to sites of hazardous materials, such as the recent crash of a fuel tanker on U.S. Highway 550 just north of the Colorado border, and the discovery of methamphetamine materials in Farmington.

"We do a lot of different things," Young said.

The awards are organized by the San Juan Economic Development Service. Nominations are accepted and nominees are interviewed by SJEDS Director Margaret McDaniel, who forwards the information to a panel of judges.

The judges award points based on five categories: producing goods or services locally for export outside the region, providing jobs with above-average wages, producing goods or services that otherwise would have to be imported to the area, growth in annual revenue or employees and providing leadership in business ethics, customer service or corporate citizenship.

Jaynes Corp. won the first EDGE Award in 2002. Last year, three companies won: BHP Billiton's New Mexico Coal unit, Jack's Plastic Welding and Raytheon's Dine facility.

Keynote speaker Barbara Brazil, deputy secretary, of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, praised the "gut-wrenching fortitude it takes to start and keep up a business." She said Gov. Susana Martinez's administration is working to clear hurdles for entrepreneurs.

Sally Burbridge, mayor of Aztec and president of SJEDS' board, said companies need to keep looking ahead despite the tough economy.

"We have a long road ahead of us, the times are trying and we're all feeling it," she said. "But it's the opportunities ahead that we need to grab onto."

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