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## Local companies honored with 2007 EDGE awards

*Dorothy Nobis The Daily Times*

FARMINGTON — Aztec Machine and Repair/Cranes and Material Handling, PNM San Juan Generating Station and BP America San Juan Performance Unit South were honored Thursday evening as **EDGE Award** winners for their contributions to the business community and the local economy. The three companies landed the Economic Development Growth and Excellence Awards from a field of nine nominated economic-based companies in San Juan County. The annual awards are given by San Juan Economic Development Service.

Aztec Machine and Repair started in 1997, with hydraulic repair, machining and welding fabrication. Cranes and Material Handling was added in 2005, to sell, inspect and service cranes.

Not just another successful business, Aztec Machine and Repair/Cranes and Material Handling employees know that doing business is only part of a company's participation in the community. The staff of both companies take part in the San Juan Regional Medical Foundation's Annual Walk-a-Thon, help with youth sports and support high school rodeo.

"I want to thank whoever nominated us and for choosing us," Aztec Machine's Tim Montoya said after accepting the **EDGE Award** at San Juan College. "This is a great honor for me tonight. Both companies are doing well and growing, like most of us (businesses) are. But business wouldn't be what it is without my employees. Good employees are hard to find and I have good employees."

PNM San Juan Generating Station began its service to the community in 1971 as Albuquerque Light & Ice. New Mexico's largest publicly traded company, San Juan Generating Station has increased production through improvements in equipment and processes. Partnering with San Juan College, the company supports programs at the college that provide better training of workers.

The company is instrumental in the Helmets to Hardhats program, provides educational grants and is a partner in the San Juan College School of Energy.

Russell Huffman accepted the **EDGE Award** on behalf of PNM. Huffman extended his thanks to SJEDS for supporting the business community and for working to attract new industry to the area, to San Juan College for providing classes that produce a quality workforce, and to the community for supporting local businesses.

"That's the valuable part of what makes Farmington a perfect place to live and work," Huffman said. "We appreciate being part of this community. We're proud of the work we do and of the people we work with."

BP America San Juan Performance Unit South has operated in San Juan County since the 1950s. BP recently provided funding to San Juan College to create a new program that will help educate students through simulation animation, providing a creative approach that brings the field into the classroom.

Corporate giving at BP is guided by a committee of employees who determine how funding will be distributed. BP employees also are involved in the McCormick Elementary School Big Brothers/Big Sisters program.

"I looked at the list of the other nominees and I thought how phenomenal the group we have here in our community is. I congratulate all of the nominees," Kelly Hart said. "This is a distinguished award and I appreciate the support of the community and our corporation."

The EDGE Awards were created in 2002 to recognize local businesses for their excellence in economic development. Businesses that export goods and services out of the area, bring in new dollars and contribute to the community's economic vitality are eligible for nomination, said Margaret McDaniel, executive director of San Juan Economic Development Service. Awards are presented to companies for demonstrating excellence in categories that include export, economic wage, import substitution and leadership.

Nominees for the awards, in addition to the winners, included Animas Environmental Services, Bearcat Drilling, Manufactured Stone, Morningstar Minerals, Nott Ltd., and TRC Construction.

Master of Ceremonies Eric Fisher, managing editor of The Daily Times, congratulated all of the nominees.

"You are all winners," Fisher said. "Thank you for your contributions to the economy of San Juan County."

While the stars of the show were the winners, Dr. Lowell B. Catlett provided the keynote address. Catlett is a Regent's professor at New Mexico State University and is the dean and chief administrative officer for the College of Agriculture and Home Economics.

Catlett elicited laughter while offering his appreciation for the community of San Juan County.

"You can judge a people by how they treat strangers," Catlett said. "I have always been treated as a friend and a family member. I'm always glad I'm here, which is a tribute to this community."

Catlett said the vibrancy of a community can be measured in the businesses that make up the heart of the community.

"This is a vibrant community. You understand the core values of the community and the economic benefits (of it). You can be very proud of what you've got and what you've sustained.

"Your community is who you have and what you sow," Catlett added. "This is a darned fine community."

Nearly 200 people attended the sixth annual EDGE Awards at the college's Henderson Fine Arts Center.

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Photo: Kelly Hart, left, of BP America San Juan Performance Unit South, Tim Montoya, center, of Aztec Machine and Repair/Cranes and Material Handling, and Russell Huffman, right, of PNM San Juan Generating Station, accepted Economic Development Growth and Excellence Awards on Thursday night at San Juan College.

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