

Local

GRADD awards honor Mattingly, Higginbotham

✍ By Renee Beasley Jones Messenger-Inquirer

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At its 49th annual dinner Monday night, the Green River Area Development District honored two Owensboro leaders.

Independence Bank President Darrell Higginbotham earned the Charles Reid Regional Citizenship Award, which recognizes a resident who plays a major role in regional development efforts.

And Judge-Executive Al Mattingly received the Wendell H. Ford Regional Legislative Leadership Award for his work with legislative issues that benefit the citizens of the GRADD region.

"We do this annually to recognize folks who do a lot of things behind the scenes," said Jiten Shah, GRADD's executive director.

When Mattingly sees a regional problem, he often asks how Daviess County might help, Shah said.

"(Mattingly) does not see the political party line. He does not see the county line. He does not see the city line," Shah said.

Shah praised Higginbotham's community-minded spirit.

"He's been a great leader," Shah said. "He doesn't care who gets the credit as long as citizens get the service."

In 2011, Higginbotham joined a team effort to bring attention to senior hunger and helped start the Feed Seniors Now food drive, which has gathered more than 20 tons of food and provided meals for nearly 1,500 senior citizens.

Also, Higginbotham reads to Estes Elementary School children weekly. This academic year marks his fourth as a reader.

"We love him," said Shari Flagg, Estes Elementary principal. " ... He develops amazing relationships with children. He loves our Estes kids as much as we do."

Higginbotham said he was honored to win a leadership award named after Charles Reid, one of the founders of Independence Bank. "It's a humbling award to receive," he said.

But leaders don't achieve alone, he said.

"I am very fortunate to be surrounded by talented and dedicated (Independence Bank) employees who are ... involved in many organizations throughout the community," Higginbotham said.

The Feed Seniors Now project was a team effort that involved many employees from his bank.

Mattingly was shocked to learn he won a GRADD award. He had no idea he was being considered. "I am humbled and honored," he said.

He was selected, in part, for his efforts to reorganize and refocus county government.

Also, Mattingly's collaboration with regional and statewide governments made him a standout. For example, he worked out a deal in which Daviess County provides animal shelter services and jail facilities to McLean County, a partnership that benefits both counties.

Additionally, he worked with the city of Henderson regarding its transfer station and disposal of its solid waste.

On the state level, he has been active in the Metro Alliance for Growth.

Mattingly echoed one of Higginbotham's comments. "No one does anything by themselves," Mattingly said.

He credited county commissioners and his staff for much of his success.

Other GRADD awards went to the city of Henderson for many community projects, including its City Vision plan, and to Webster County Judge-Executive Steve Henry, who demonstrates outstanding regional leadership.

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Darrell Higginbotham



Al Mattingly