

News and Public Relations

MINNEAPOLIS - If capitalism is a symbol of evil in some eyes, it can be a beacon of hope. Take, for example, the movement toward sustainable wood, which is taking off these days, thanks to commitments by companies like Home Depot. What makes it real are the sustainably managed forestlands run by businesses like the Collins Companies. This Portland, Ore., firm with revenues of \$200 million has been practicing responsible forest stewardship since 1939 and was the first privately owned company to begin having its forestlands certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as sustainable. Its multi-layered, biodiverse forests support bald eagles, black bears, wild turkeys, blue heron, and endangered red-banded Goose Lake Trout.

That's just one example of the kind of responsible - and successful - business practices celebrated by the Annual Business Ethics Awards, announced today by Minneapolis-based Business Ethics, a 15-year-old publication about corporate social responsibility. The Collins Companies won an Award for Environmental Excellence.

Here's another example of capitalism's shining side. Chatsworth Products Inc. of Westlake Village, Calif. has been 100 percent employee-owned since 1991 and is known for its remarkable practice of doing profit-sharing equally with all employees. "We believe that everyone was instrumental in creating the profit, so let's share those slices equally," says president Joe Cabral. "Production workers like knowing they get the same amount as somebody in management. And sometimes that profit-sharing check can be 25 percent of a production worker's yearly income." For its deep-seated commitment to employee ownership - which Cabral promotes inside and outside the company - Chatsworth won this year's Award for Employee Ownership.

An Award for Corporate Citizenship went to the Timberland Co., based in Stratham, N.H. for its innovative new City Year New Hampshire program launched last year, which made Timberland the first company to house a youth corps right inside corporate headquarters. "Our employees can offer them things like resume-building workshops and seminars on different career paths," said Elise Klysa, senior manager of social enterprise. "For us, it offers an injection of enthusiasm to have so many idealistic young people working at our headquarters."

The Premier Sponsor of the Business Ethics Awards is The MONY Group. Additional support was provided by Baxter, Devry, Sonoco, SAIC, and Blue Ridge ESOP. Selection of winners is made by an independent panel of judges. For the full story, see www.business-ethics.com.