

National Republican committee honors local businessman

BY DAVID HAYES

Gary Flanzer thought he was just building a home business from an untapped potential in the online community.

The Issaquah resident's entrepreneurial exploits into online mortgage brokering, instead, caught the attention of the national Republican Party.

The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) recently named Flanzer as a recipient of the 2005 Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal.

"It certainly was a surprise to me," Flanzer said. "I've been involved, if not actively, sponsoring pro-business agendas and less government. I guess the Republican Party gives this award, looking at small business people who are able to compete as an entrepreneur. So, they reward the small businesses that are able to look like they're big."

U.S. Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-N.Y.), chairman of the NRCC, said, "Mr. Flanzer has long supported Republican ideals, like debt reduction and tax reform as they relate to the growth and stability of small business in this country. I look forward to Mr. Flanzer's continued participation as a key member of the committee and offer my congratulations on the award."

Flanzer, 45, originally from the East Coast, has lived in Klahanie the last 15 years. He began his career as a Web page designer. He designed a page for a mortgage broker and made the career change to that field, bringing his Web design experience to create his own site, 425.com. While Flanzer said politically he does enjoy helping out with elections, at conventions and meetings, he figures the Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal was more for recognition for his Web-based business than his support for the party. Specifically, Flanzer is able to help customers apply online for a mortgage throughout the United States.

"The entire business paradigm is changing so radically from the brick and mortar office building to the virtual office," he said. "It has lower costs and is far more reading than it used to be. And it's the small businesses that are employing a lot of people."

Flanzer figures he inherited the conservative viewpoint from his uncle, who ran for state comptroller in New York.



BY GREG FARRAR

Gary Flanzer, who runs an online mortgage brokerage from his home, displays the 2005 Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal he was recently honored with for his business entrepreneurship.

"The reason I like conservatism is it not just offers more choices, but it requires people to take more personal responsibility in the world and with their personal actions," Flanzer said.

But during the political season, Flanzer admitted he enjoys listening and meeting candidates from both sides. He'll frequently sign in to live chat groups online to hear from all viewpoints.

Those who are selected to receive the Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal are invited to participate in periodic strategy briefings to provide input on economic and tax issues, as well as how to build broad-based support for conservative initiatives within the business community. Recipients are also permanently listed in the ranks of the Republican Honor Roll at the NRCC headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Flanzer said he's excited to be invited to a forum to provide feedback at an awards dinner later this year in Washington, D.C.

"They feel that a lot of small-business people are too busy to be involved in politics," Flanzer said. "This award is a way to interest those who would otherwise not be involved in politics."

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