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John J. LaCarte

Recognized for Edward R. DeVoge Horizon Award

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for the Washington County Chamber of
Commerce

Running a successful business and earning recognition for one's community involvement is a significant honor, but the 2007 Edward R. DeVoge award winner believes that it is the people in our lives who make all good things possible.

When John J. LaCarte accepted the Edward R. DeVoge Award at Southpointe's Hilton Garden Inn on Wednesday, Nov. 7, during the annual Washington County Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet and Business Exposition, he compared his life to that of George Bailey, the main character in the movie "It's a Wonderful Life."

LaCarte, 40, is the president of Model Cleaner, Uniforms and Apparel LLC, a family-owned dry cleaning, uniform and apparel company in Charleroi.

"George and I have a lot in common," said LaCarte. "We both wanted to go out and see the world... I've been doing that from Charleroi for 28 years now."

LaCarte points out that much like George Bailey, he used to think that success and happiness would come for him outside of Charleroi, which for George Bailey, happened to be Bedford Falls. He reminded the audience of how thanks to an angel, Bailey learned that if he didn't exist in his town, many lives would have been unhappier without his presence.

"Charleroi is my Bedford Falls," said LaCarte.



John J. LaCarte, president of Model Cleaner, Uniforms and Apparel LLC.

He commended his parents, grandparents, brothers, wife and his children for teaching him about life and business and for supporting him through the early years when times were tough and he often second-guessed his decision to leave PNC Financial Services in Pittsburgh to run the family business.

The Edward R. DeVoge Award recognizes a business leader who is 40- years-old or younger, who has achieved a high level of success that is uncommon for relative career experience. The award is named in memory of Edward R. DeVoge, who was a lifelong business and civic leader and a longtime member of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He was known and respected for his encouragement and mentorship of young professionals.

LaCarte has grown the Model Cleaner Business significantly over the years. He supervises all aspects of the dry-cleaning and industrial laundry business including production, sales and customer service. In order to add volume to the existing dry cleaning business, LaCarte began a uniform rental program and has increased operations to nine locations throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania West Virginia and eastern Ohio.

The Charleroi native is also the president of LaCarte Development Company which has been instrumental in developing tracts of land for residential and industrial use in Speers Borough and Rostraver Township.

The husband and father of two young children also volunteers as Chairman of the Board and Audit Committee Chairman for First Federal Savings Bank in Monessen and he serves on the Board of Trustees for the Charleroi Recreation Board and the Mon Valley YMCA. LaCarte is also the treasurer of the Middle Monongahela Industrial Development Association.

Since LaCarte took on the family business, Model Cleaners expanded its number of employees to 200 and boasts more than \$10 million in revenue.

“It is such an honor to be a part of this community,” said LaCarte. “Here, people know you and they are rooting for you. This is a place where people want you to be successful...just like George Bailey discovers, ‘no man is a failure who has friends.’”