

BUSINESS TIMES[®]

April 6-12, 2012

Serving Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties

Vol. 13, No. 5



STEPHEN NELLIS PHOTO

AppFolio co-founder Klaus Schauer will be honored at The South Coast Business & Technology Awards in June.

Technology awards unveiled

Honors go to AppFolio, Cottage Health, Houweling's

By Stephen Nellis
Staff Writer

Two awards dinners that draw hundreds of attendees and raise money for scholarships are set to honor the region's top technologists and businesspeople in coming months.

The South Coast Business & Technology Awards, which raises funds for the Santa Barbara Scholarship Foundation, is set to take place at Fess Parker's DoubleTree Resort on June 14 in Santa Barbara. The Business and Technology Partnership at CSU Channel Islands, which raises funds for scholarships at the school, will hold its annual leadership dinner on April 19 at the Embassy Suites in Oxnard.

Here's a closer look at each awards dinner.

SOUTH COAST

The South Coast Business & Technology Awards, an event that draws about 600 guests each year, will honor the following: The nonprofit technology

group MIT Enterprise Forum, excellence in service; AppFolio co-founder Klaus Schauer, entrepreneur of the year; commercial laundering firm Mission Linen, company of the year; and former Amgen director and biotech expert Fred Gluck, pioneer award.

Schauser, on of the co-founders of Expertcity, which was acquired by Citrix to become Citrix Online, said entrepreneurialism is all about "finding a need in the market and satisfying it." At Expertcity in the late 1990s, he and his co-founders built a system where consumers could submit a tech support problem and receive bids for solving it from countries such as India. It turned out that the software the firm had built to connect the users to prospective tech support bidders was of much more interest to the market, and the product became GoToMyPC, for connecting to a desktop computer from afar.

With his current firm, Schauer decided to use the web-based software model to service a business "vertical" with one-stop-shop business process software. AppFolio found its sweet spot with small

to mid-sized landlords and property managers. They needed something better than pencil and paper for managing rental applications, collecting rent and managing repair requests, but they were over-served by bigger, more complicated software. Appfolio supplies an easy-to-use web-based version for a low monthly fee.

"Large enterprise applications really require lots of consultants to make them work. It's very complicated," Schauer said. "Small companies often barely have an IT administrator. On the other hand, there's tremendous value for them in business process software. If you don't have it, then looking head 10 years, you can't compete."

Being cloud-based from the start means Appfolio can integrate new devices easily. For example, it now features an iPhone application that lets property managers take photos on the go with the phone's camera during apartment inspections.

"Our customers don't feel the difference" of using a web-based application, Schauer said. "But they do feel the difference if their PC crashes.

They do feel the difference if they need to work from home."

CSU CHANNEL ISLANDS

This year's awards dinner will recognize Ron Werft, president and CEO of Cottage Health Systems, as community leader of the year; Casey Houweling of Houweling Tomatoes as technologist of the year, and Blake Gillespie, an associate professor of chemistry at the school, as faculty leader of the year.

Cottage Health has teamed with CSUCI's nursing program to try to meet the need for more nurses in the region. And Houweling has built an advanced tomato hothouse in Camarillo that runs on solar power to grow tomatoes year round with minimal waste and energy use.

"Our goal here is to make sure people go for locally produced, safe, healthy food from farms that provide jobs to California people," Houweling told the Business Times earlier this year.

For details on how to attend on April 19, visit http://www.csuci.edu/btp/btp_leadership_dinner.htm.