

# Awards recognize the best in Park City's service industry

Lodging association prez: 'The feel was really inspirational'

Bubba Brown, The Park Record

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When the Park City Area Lodging Association began planning its inaugural Black Diamond Awards in October, the organization's leadership had high hopes the event would be a success. On Wednesday, with more than 150 people gathering at Montage Deer Valley to celebrate the best Park City's service industry has to offer, it was clear that goal had been achieved.



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Claudio Reyes, left, manager of Newpark Resort Hotel & Conference Center, and Jeff Bennett, former president of the Park City Area Lodging Association. Reyes received the Manager of the Year award at the association's inaugural Black Diamond Awards, held Wednesday at Montage Deer Valley. (Photo by Adam Martinson)

"For us that's a huge number," said Chris Eggleton, president of PCALA. "That's definitely more than we were expecting."

Nominations for the Black Diamond Awards were open to both members of the industry and the public throughout December. The PCALA received more than 75 nominations -- representing 39 different companies -- in seven categories designed to recognize people who excel behind the scenes but are vital to the local lodging industry.

Eggleton said the people working behind the scenes in the lodging industry seldom get the recognition they deserve for fostering Park City's renowned hospitality. So to put on an awards event for them was gratifying.

"We're totally reliant on them to deliver this experience that perpetuates us to the success that Park City's seen over the last 30 years and will hopefully continue to see," he said. "We're thrilled to put on a ceremony that recognizes those individuals that are working day in, day out. It was really great to congratulate the award winners. The tone and the feel was really inspirational and there was a lot of gratitude."

Claudio Reyes, a Chilean immigrant who has been in Park City since 1996, won Manager of the Year and said receiving the award felt like being "dressed in gold."

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"It was a big surprise for me," he said. "I was the lucky one to get some recognition of all the people working in Park City."

One aspect that made the awards special, Eggleton said, was the diversity of the people they recognized, which was representative of the Park City service industry as a whole.

"When you looked across the room, you didn't just have people in suits and ties," Eggleton said. "You could see the diversity. You definitely had some of the administrative roles and general managers, but then you saw line cooks and chefs and housekeepers in their uniforms. To be able to bring all levels of an industry together and celebrate our successes was great."

Also encouraging was the fact that nominations were not merely comprised of companies voting for their own employees. Eggleton said participants seemed genuinely excited about recognizing people who are truly deserving of it.

"There were a lot of cross nominations," he said. "So a nomination was coming from one company, maybe a service provider, on their experience with a different company they work with or that they got to see. So it wasn't self-serving, where everyone was voting for themselves. That really felt great."

#### **The winners of the Black Diamond Awards:**

**Lodging Front of House:** Connie Williams, Park City Lodging

**Lodging Back of House:** Nora Lucero, Montage Deer Valley

**Food and Beverage Front of House:** Dean Severson, Canyons Resort

**Food and Beverage Back of House:** Nick Lees, Edge Steakhouse

**Manager of the Year:** Claudio Reyes, Newport Resort Hotel & Conference Center

**Vendor of the Year:** All Resort Group

**Double Black Diamond Inspiration Award:** Bob Wheaton, Deer Valley Resort



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