

CEG honors region's leaders who improve workforce, market

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The Center for Economic Growth's annual technology awards last month drew 250 business leaders and professionals, entrepreneurs and innovators from high-tech and related industries who are improving the labor market across the Capital Region.

"(They are) strengthening our workforce and creating new jobs and opportunities," CEG Director of Research and Communications James Schlett said.

According to CEG, awards were given in the following seven categories:

GlobalFoundries received the Economics award because it had substantial and sustained growth in sales and profitability, CEG said.

The Lift-Off award went to iSimulate. With at least \$1 million in annual revenue, the simulation technology firm has overcome initial funding barriers and demonstrated scaling of business.

Inspect Point received the Startup Star award. With less than \$1 million in annual revenue, the company is in the early startup phase. The firm was born out of the collaboration between four entrepreneurs after a friend complained about the inadequacy of inspection software.

KIRSH Helmets received the Technology Innovation award. To win, the company must develop or leverage new technology. KIRSH has doubled its staff in the past eight months, and will soon begin full production of the company's half-shell motorcycle helmets.

Plug Power received the Judges' Choice award, which goes to a company or individual who did not win a specific category award but is worthy of one. Plug Power has gone from being a research and development firm 10 years ago to now deploying more than 20,000 hydrogen fuel cells, among other accomplishments.

Michael Liehr, vice president for research at the State University of New York Polytechnic Institute and chief executive officer of AIM



Photo: Larry Rulison

KIRSH Helmets, with a product seen here, received a Technology Innovation award from the Center for Economic Growth.

Photonics, received the Technology Trailblazer award. An individual who contributes to development of the technology economy in the region through formation of new businesses, products or processes; exemplifies risk-taking entrepreneurial spirit; and has researched advancements within an industry, receives this award.

Finally, the Jeffrey A. Lawrence Lifetime Contributor Award went to Amy Johnson, entrepreneur in residence at Albany Medical Center for shaping and having a clear impact on the technology community in the region. In the 1980s, Johnson worked with Steve Jobs at Apple.