



The Mountain Chronicle
Ebbetts Pass Community News

On Thursday February 14th, Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch honored four local businesses with unique Valentine's Day awards. Bridges Construction, Twin Rivers Trading Post, S.N.A.C. (Sierra Nevada Adventure Company and Sustenance Books of Murphys received the "Businesses with a Heart" commendations at an afternoon ceremony at the Murphys Library.

Since 2000 E.P.F.W. has been a leader in the movement to stop the massive clear cutting operations being conducted by S.P.I. (Sierra Pacific Industries) throughout the Sierra Nevada. As part of the ongoing education and advocacy programs, E.P.F.W. in conjunction with international non-profit Forest Ethics have been signing up businesses in a 'Save the Sierra' campaign, who demand an end to the destructive logging practices and a concentration on a selective sustainable harvest practice.

Ron Szymanski, Vice President of EPFW gave a brief statement before issuing the awards. He stated that over 125 local business have signed on as well as 520 nationwide including the well known Patagonia and Working Assets. "Businesses in our area and across the nation have shown that they recognize the effects of this massive Sierra clear cutting and the urgent need to end such practices."

Rocky Bridges of Bridges Construction in Avery told the gathering of approximately 30 people that his company emphasizes recycled lumber and concentrates on limited waste. "It's not just for economic reasons," Bridges pointed out, "it's because it helps to show that construction companies can believe in and support sustainable harvest practices in our forests. We have been working on a campaign to ask other builders to boycott S.P.I. products until they adopt a truly sustainable method of harvest."

Jill Seal of S.N.A.C. in Arnold and Sonora (Sierra Nevada Adventure Company) urged other companies, including S.P.I. to find a way to "be a business with a heart and try to conduct business in a socially and environmentally responsible way. As we move more toward a tourism based economy preserving our natural surroundings is ever more impertative."

Susan Shoaff of Sustenance Books in Murphys told the group that a new business model is imperative. "It can no longer just be about profits." she stated, "A new age of consciousness where responsible forest management must happen.

SPI, the largest Calaveras landowner with approximately 74,000 acres of holdings, along with over 1.7 million acres of other Sierra Nevada counties, has shown little interest in changing their practices or responding to pressure from environmental groups. Several lawsuits including one involving EPFW are moving through the courts and any developments surrounding these issues will be released as soon as they emerge.

For more information about EPFW and to view the listing of all local businesses who have joined the Save the Sierra campaign go to www.forestwatch.org

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