

THE ISLAND



Builder R. Randy Lee addresses guests after receiving an award during the Staten Island Economic Development Corp.'s award luncheon in Tavern on the Green, Manhattan.



Lynn Rossi presents Borough President James Molinaro with a lifetime achievement award on behalf of the SIEDC.

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/MICHAEL McWENEY

## SIEDC bestows on 3 lifetime achievement honor

BP, attorney and builder receive awards from the 11-year-old agency during luncheon in Manhattan

By REGINALD PATRICK  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

The Staten Island Economic Development Corp. yesterday presented lifetime achievement awards to Borough President James Molinaro, attorney and builder R. Randy Lee and Consolidated Edison for their part in helping keep the borough's business climate vibrant.

Starting with about \$50,000 in seed money, the 11-year-old agency is now a multimillion-dollar operation.

Executive director Cesar Claro made reference to its dramatic growth during the awards luncheon, held at the Tavern on the Green in Manhattan. He noted that Molinaro, Lee and Con Edison — all founding members — have combined over the years to funnel some \$1.5 million to the economic development push.

The luncheon, the third time the corporation has presented lifetime achievement awards since it was created, drew a cross-section of the local business, not-for-profit and civic community, who praised the honorees.

"They're movers and shakers on Staten Island," said Joseph Libassi, chairman and founder of Victory State Bank. John Amodio, vice president of Commerce Bank, singled out Molinaro for praise.

"He deals directly with the community, rather than trying to impose things from the outside," Amodio explained. "And that goes for issues ranging from the Fresh Kills park proposal to the Charleston development."

Now in his second four-year term, Molinaro wondered aloud whether the award meant his work is done. "Because I just feel like I've still got a lot to do," he said.

Molinaro said a central part of his effort to keep the fire lit under the economy are the regular meetings held at Borough Hall to make sure new businesses — whether large or small — know that local government is on their side.

"I meet with new businesses every three months," Molinaro explained. "We give them encouragement that we're going to help them."

Molinaro has championed state-sponsored economic development zones and was instrumental in convincing firms like Adco Electric to remain on Staten Island and Visy, a paper recycling firm, to relocate here in the 1990s.

Developer Lee, of Lee & Amtzis in Graniteville, said the mission is to keep the Staten Island economy growing, creating "jobs and opportunities."

"I just feel really honored getting this award," said Lee, chairman of the Building Industry Association.

In accepting the award for Con Edison, Aubrey Braz, a vice president for the utility's Staten Island area, said, "It's good to be recognized for our contribution. We believe in the economic vitality of this community."

Washington Mutual was the presenting sponsor for this year's program.

Previous winners include Guy Molinari, former Mayor Rudy Giuliani and KeySpan.

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