

Public defender named 2005 citizen of the year



Tom Hanlon receives the Dade City chamber's award for his "totally selfless" behavior.

By MOLLY MOORHEAD, Times Staff Writer
Published October 14, 2005

SAN ANTONIO - He gave his chain saw and his time to hurricane victims and told no one.

He helped organize a benefit for a sheriff's deputy critically wounded in Iraq, in addition to his full-time job as Pasco's top public defender.

For these reasons, the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce named Tom Hanlon the citizen of the year for 2005.

"He doesn't tell anybody about it," said Kathy Britton, the chamber's incoming president. "To me that's citizenship. It's totally selfless."

After last summer's hurricanes, Hanlon, 52, spent time in southwest Florida cleaning up debris. Then this year, he traveled to the northern gulf coast and helped restore a damaged house.

Last month, Hanlon helped put together a steak dinner for the family of Marine Josh Cooley, a Pasco sheriff's deputy who has been recovering from injuries received in July from a roadside bomb in Iraq.

The chamber honored Hanlon and others at its annual banquet Thursday evening at Tampa Bay Golf and Country Club.

Carolyn and Michael Hodges, who own Hodges Family Funeral Home, were honored as business leaders of the year. The Dade City Business Center, located in the former Pasco Beverage plant, is large business of the year. South Branch Ranch received small business honors.

Pasco-Hernando Community College's East Campus Student Government Association, which provides

volunteers to numerous causes, is the civic organization of the year. Eugene Smith of Dade City Realty is chamber member of the year.

And Charlotte Kiefer, a past chamber president and citizen of the year winner, received the Richard Tombrink Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Charlotte really has devoted her life to making Dade City a better place," Britton said. "Dade City is really in her heart."