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Keeping F-M's economy strong

2010 ChamberChoice Awards

Joel Jorgenson was a North Dakota State University professor when four graduate students came to him with a story. "Let's build a company, let's create great things, and let's keep it here," Jorgenson recalled them saying.

By: [Sherri Richards](#), INFORUM

Joel Jorgenson was a North Dakota State University professor when four graduate students came to him with a story.

"Let's build a company, let's create great things, and let's keep it here," Jorgenson recalled them saying.

In 2003, he founded Packet Digital, which creates power management solutions for portable electronic devices and embedded systems. It operates out of the Radisson Tower in downtown Fargo.

"We've created the coolest technology in the world, doubling the battery life of your cell phones, making your laptops last for days and weeks instead of hours," Jorgenson said Thursday as he received the 2010 ChamberChoice Entrepreneur of the Year award from the Chamber of Commerce of Fargo Moorhead.

The 13th annual ChamberChoice Awards luncheon recognized local nonprofit organizations, businesses and entrepreneurs. Ninety firms were nominated for five awards. Fifteen finalists were announced in March.

Besides Jorgenson's award, Packet Digital was a finalist for Business of the Year.

In 2009, Packet Digital was named one of nine "important new companies" in the Electronics Industry Report published by Prismark Partners. It was on Inc. Magazine's 2008 list of the 500 fastest-growing companies.

Jorgenson said his team is creating computer chips that Intel may use in its next generation of laptops. They've worked with the Department of Defense.

"We may be solving a battery problem for the soldiers, where ... their backpacks might be lightened by 12 pounds because they don't have to carry the batteries anymore. We're solving that kind of significant problem," said Jorgenson, an Erhard, Minn., native.

"We're just coming to market; we've got opportunities on the very near horizon on hearing aids and medical devices," he said. "We're just ready to launch."

Chamber President Craig Whitney said companies and organizations like those honored Thursday help keep Fargo-Moorhead's economy strong.

"Our region is one that nurtures entrepreneurship and supports its existing businesses," he said.

Project HERO, which redistributes reusable durable medical equipment and supplies, was named the Small Not-for-Profit of the Year. Bethany Retirement Living was named the Not-for-Profit of the Year. It recently added a new campus on 42nd Street South.

Pharmaceutical research company Lillestol Research LLC was named Small Business of the Year. The Fargo Jet Center, an aviation service organization, received the Business of the Year award.

2010 ChamberChoice Award winners

- **Small Not-for-Profit of the Year:** Project HERO
- **Not-for-Profit of the Year:** Bethany Retirement Living
- **Small Business of the Year:** Lillestol Research LLC
- **Business of the Year:** Fargo Jet Center Inc.
- **Entrepreneur of the Year:** Joel Jorgenson, CEO of Packet Digital LLC

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Tags: chamber of commerce, packet digital, business, fargo, moorhead, communities, chamberchoice, awards