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Popular Chamber Director Receives Business Award

By Cathy Tyson



Jay Lifson Photo Andy Scheck

Known for his good humor and boundless energy, Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, was awarded the Marquis Business Person of the Year award at a celebratory dinner event at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. By all appearances, Lifson's the most popular man in Lafayette. Beyond the charm however, is a dedicated, successful leader of the Chamber since 2005, who has increased membership by 42 percent and increased revenue by 65 percent.

In years past Lifson would disqualify himself, but this time around his objections were overruled. Kicking off the tribute/roast with "hip hip hurray for Jay," Mo Levich led a packed house to honor the man who brings residents together with the Chamber-sponsored Art and Wine Festival, the Reservoir Run, Rock the Plaza, as well as the "Shop Lafayette First" campaign, and efforts to save the twinkle lights.

Family, friends and a veritable who's who of Lafayette movers and shakers raised a glass to the man of the hour. His friend for over forty years, Mac Carey lauded him as having "the rare quality of making those around him better. Everybody loves Jay." A parade of speakers highlighted his finer points including his love of the Grateful Dead, enthusiasm, and civic pride. Even a group from the City's

Planning Department joined the fray with a hilarious top ten list; they bestowed upon him the first ever Honorary City Planner award.

The star of the night that literally sang Lifson's praises was City Manager Steven Falk, who stripped off shirt and tie in favor of leather jacket, t-shirt and funky wig for his own version, with adjusted lyrics, of the Bob Dylan classic, "Like a Rolling Stone." Clapping and singing along, the audience chimed in on the chorus, "How does it feel? To be right at home, to be so well known, to sit on that throne, like a Jay Lif-son."

When asked for a comment, Lifson replied, "How about the 'Hippie-Jock' -as my dear friend Mac Carey put it - makes good! I was able to share a very special evening with my father, mother, family, friends and the wonderful people in Lafayette. The kid whose parents were told every year at report card time, 'He has so much potential, if only he applied himself,' got a chance to make his family proud. I am one of the lucky people who enjoys what they do, every day."

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