

## Ravinia business awards program set for November

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Winners of the the business district improvement contest sponsored by the **Ravinia Neighbors Association** will be announced at 6 p.m. Nov. 2 at Ravinia Bistro, 581 Roger Williams Avenue.

Mayor Daniel M. Pierce will present the award. The event is from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and will include, possibly, other city officials involved with city improvement programs.

“Every business is invited to the award ceremony,” said Don Miller of the association. “This thing has gotten so exciting.”

Miller said there are about 52 business and property owners who can participate in the association’s building improvement competition. Of that group, 21 already have chosen to participate and 11 others are considering involvement.

Miller said, “It’s the carrot and stick approach. We’re only using the carrot; we don’t have a stick.”

City council member Mari Barnes, co-owner of The Custom Framer, 479 Roger Williams Avenue, has helped promote involvement by encouraging participants to use a city grant program for business improvements.

The city puts aside \$20,000 a year for local business improvement grants. Barnes said.

According to Barnes, business and property owners can apply for grants, large or small, to help make improvements. In addition, two local banks are prepared to offer low-cost interest loans for improvements supported by the city.

Steven Hamel is chairman of the Business and Economic Development Commission for the city, the group monitoring the business grant program.

He said the aid program can help with costs for sign, entrance, landscape, or complete remodeling improvements. Applications can be as much as \$5,000. At the present time, three grants have been issued.

He said the application process is simple. Business or property owners who might be interested can obtain more information through the city manager’s office, (847) 432-0800.