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ACCA-AZ recognizes member contributions, awards scholarships during annual dinner

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The Air Conditioning Contractors of America Arizona state chapter affiliate (ACCA-AZ) held its reception and annual dinner on Nov. 2, and also began a new tradition—giving out student scholarships.

“A lot of times students would finish a program and not have the tools or boots they need and would go work at a fast food restaurant, or somewhere else,” said Executive Director Antoine Coffier, “so we wanted to give them a leg up when graduating.”

To help the students start their careers, ACCA-AZ awarded three graduating seniors with \$500 during the annual dinner. The students were Bob McConaghy from Gateway Community College, Scott Castro from Arizona Automotive Institute and Matthew Vondra from Refrigeration School, Inc. They were selected based on their need and the essays they submitted.

This year’s dinner was held at the Hilton Airport Phoenix Hotel and served 160 members and guests. A live jazz band entertained those who attended and Jim Weiers, Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, gave the keynote speech.

“It was kind of like a history lesson,” Coffier said. “He kind of talked about just the makeup of the legislature.”

He added, “He talked about the employment act, which will go into



The ACCA-AZ Contractor of the Year award winner was Thom Palmer of Palm Aire. From left, ACCA-AZ Executive Director Antoine Coffier, Thom Palmer, ACCA-AZ President Louis Hobaica (Hobaica Services) and Incoming President Corky Pond (Climatec).

effect January 1st.”

Coffier said Weiers was very approachable and walked to different tables to shake hands with members and answer questions.

In addition to the education guests received at the dinner, the association made sure to honor those who made the year possible.

ACCA-AZ recognized each board member and five committee members with plaques to thank them for volunteering. Affiliate Member of the Year was given to Julie DeTienne of Cue Financial, Volunteer Member of the Year was given to Tarilyn Schimke of Midstate Mechanical and Contractor Member

of the Year was given to Thom Palmer of Palm Aire.

“We do 12 major events and over 50 seminars a year,” Coffier said. “A lot of man hours goes into putting them on and we couldn’t do it without our volunteers.”