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Banquet honors two minority business leaders

By CHRIS WINSTON
Business Editor

Beverly Foster-Blackley and James Tolbert Jr. will be honored this week for their work at the annual Minority Enterprise Development Awards Banquet.

Foster-Blackley, an agent with State Farm at 2811 Reidville Road in Spartanburg, was named Minority Business Person of the Year by the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce's Minority and Women Business Development Committee, organizers of the dinner.

She said she would accept the honor with appreciation and gratitude.

"All that I am or ever hope to be comes from the Father who receives

all the credit for anything I say or do that is good," said Foster-Blackley, whose mother and sister also work at the State Farm office.

Foster-Blackley is a member of the board at the Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium and Bethlehem Community Center.

Tolbert, director of small business development at Michelin North America, was named Minority Business Advocate of the Year.

Roger Stone, with Greenville's Minority Sales Corp., said Tolbert is "one of the most sincere, effective and tireless advocates of minority and women owned businesses."

"Jim and Michelin have proactively encouraged the formation of minority-

owned firms which have created jobs in the Upstate."

Prior to becoming director of small business development in 1999, Tolbert was in sales with Michelin for 17 years and was a marketing manager for four years, working particularly with co-op advertising programs.

He also served 30 years in the U.S. military.

The banquet will be held Wednesday at the Piedmont Club. Ray Hood-Phillips, chief diversity officer of Spartanburg-based Denny's, will be the guest speaker.

The committee's mission is to help minority and women owned businesses grow and develop. Activities include a mentoring program, quarter-

WANT TO GO?

The annual Minority Enterprise Development Awards Banquet begins at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Piedmont Club and the dinner follows at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person and reservations can be made by calling the chamber at 594-5031.

ly seminars on topics such as taxes, arranging financing and marketing, and an annual panel discussion featuring successful women business owners.

Chris Winston can be reached at 582-4511, Ext. 7267, or chris.winston@stj.com.