

2 Valley entrepreneurs are awarded grants

By Patricia Villers
Register Staff

Two Valley businesswomen on Tuesday received the 2006 Women in Networking Entrepreneurial Grants from the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Mary Jane Paris of Shelton and Therese Kennett of Oxford were each presented with a \$500 grant at a holiday luncheon at Homewood Suites by Hilton in Stratford.

Paris owns Positive Impact Consulting Services in Shelton and said she is "so honored" to win the grant. "I'm living the dream," Paris said, of having her own company. She launched her business last March.

"My focus is on the positive workplace," Paris said. She works with leaders of companies, managers, supervisors and customer service employees, she said.

Paris, who has more than 25 years of business world experience, said one of her goals is "fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace."



Paris

She has worked in human resources and recruiting and in training and development in many companies, she said.

Her Web site is at www.posimpact.net.

Kennett, owner of R Way Signs, a display sign company, also said she was thrilled to be recognized by the women's organization.

"It's quite an honor to get the grant and become part of the network," said Kennett, who is pregnant with her third child. "To belong to a group like this

will be great."

"I started the business when I had my firstborn," she said.



Kennett

"That was more than seven years ago."

Kennett runs the business from her home. It offers a variety of sign services from graphic design, manufacturing magnetic signs to vehicle pin

striping, she said.

She gets help in the business from her husband, Fritz Kennett, who has a full-time job, she said, but the company is "95 percent" her. The company's Web site is www.rwaysigns.com.

The Women in Networking group is one of five leads groups affiliated with the Shelton-based Greater Valley Chamber of Com-

merce.

Jennifer Bull, chairwoman of the WIN group, said in a prepared statement, "We are pleased to continue the legacy of awarding annual grants to well-qualified entrepreneurial women in the Valley."

Bull added, "For the second year in a row, our Almost Autumn Wine Tasting at Jones Winery in Shelton raised thousands of dollars."

She said excess money from the event will be used as seed money to start a named fund affiliated with the Valley Community Foundation.

The grant is distributed from funds received from membership dues and fund-raisers the group has organized.

WIN has donated \$3,500 to the program, which offers money to women ages 18 or older in Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Shelton.

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