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## Talk show host earns business honor

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A man who makes his living by talking was left not knowing what to say Friday night after being named Business Person of the Year at the Central Louisiana Business League's 14th annual Holiday Gala.

"Anyone who knows me, knows I am very seldom at a loss for words. ... But tonight I am speechless," said radio talk show host Tony Brown.

Brown was presented with the award at the end of the gala by Daphne R. Robinson, chairperson for the Business League

Brown is host of "Eyes Wide Open," broadcast weekdays from Jena on KAYT 88.1 FM. He credited his listeners, support from the business community and, most of all, God for the success of his call-in talk show.

He encouraged the more than 250 who attended the gala to keeping working to achieve success.

"Work hard and work to do a good job, and the by-product of that is money," Brown said.

Brown has grown his talk show to a statewide audience of 700,000 to 1 million

since its start in 2002. His show is also heard in parts of Texas and Mississippi.

Prior to the presentation of the award, keynote speaker Eugene Cornelius Jr. spoke of the need for Cenla's small-business leaders to not let barriers stop them from being successful.

"Central Louisiana, you are an example to the state on how we can get rid of color barriers. When money is on the table, everyone sees green."

Cornelius, district director for the Small Business Administration, told the audience to not be afraid of joint business ventures.

"We need to come together to take advantage of economic opportunity," he said, "No one wants a hand out, just a hand up."

The Business League is a multicultural group that focuses on the growth of Cenla's small businesses.

Martin W. Johnson, the league's president-elect, said the organization has done a lot to encourage small business growth in the past year and looks forward to even bigger things in 2006.

"There has been a lot of business growth, and we have been involved in it. We are excited about assisting in more growth and prosperity that we see coming to the area," he said.



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Sharon Swains O'Neal, who was the Central Louisiana Business League's 2004 Business Person of the Year, welcomes guests Friday to the league's 14th annual Holiday Gala. Tony Brown, a radio talk show host, was honored as this year's



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Tony Brown: "Work hard and work to do a good job, and the by-product of that is money."