



For immediate release

Island Home Center & Lumber Honored with 2020 Beacon Award for Community Service

September 11, 2020 — Island Home Center & Lumber was one of 10 retailers honored as Beacon Award winners for 2020. The Beacon Awards are a premier national industry awards program developed by *The Hardware Connection* magazine and The Hardware Conference to recognize the “best of the best” independent hardware/home improvement retailers.

The 2020 Beacon Awards are sponsored by Epicor Software Corp. and Ettore Products Company, with wholesaler sponsorship support from Do it Best Corp. and other wholesalers.

The Beacon Awards, now in their eighth year, honored the Retail Beacon Award winners for each of the two participating wholesalers, plus eight winners of the Beacon Award for Community Service. Island Home Center & Lumber was honored with the Beacon Award for Community Service.

“Island Home Center and Earl Van Buskirk are more than worthy of their inclusion in this year’s class of honorees,” stated Chris Jensen, editor/founder/principal of *The Hardware Connection*, the hardware industry’s leading digital publication. “Earl’s passion for the industry is matched only by his love of the community his store serves. He defines what it means to be a beacon of hope during challenging times.”

What follows is an overview of Island Home Center & Lumber:

Vashon Island is a short 15-minute ferry ride from Seattle—a city that has been hit hard by the coronavirus. When stay-at-home orders were issued early on, Vashon Island residents focused even more on shopping local instead of venturing to the mainland.

“We’re the second-largest store on the island, and people here are very eager to support local,” states Earl Van Buskirk, who was born and raised on the island. He has owned Island Home Center & Lumber for 32 years.

When the pandemic hit, Van Buskirk had to quickly make some adjustments, even as business was taking off. He decided to take care of his 50 employees as the first priority in order to provide better service for the residents who needed them. They implemented new cleaning routines to keep staff and customers safe, doubling the outside cleaning service that came in. They put up plexiglass shields and encouraged employees to wear masks and gloves.

With all the new policies and procedures implemented, Van Buskirk further encouraged his employees to set an example as leaders in their community. “I encouraged my team to wear masks early on. Most did, then it became required. A few weeks later, it was required of customers,” he points out. “We’ve given out several thousand masks and had very few who refused to wear them.”

When local first responders were in need of masks, they donated a large quantity of their own stock. When their island needed a location to administer drive-through testing, Island Home Center donated tents so people could get tested without having to leave their cars, along with propane tank heaters and propane for the medical team. The store has hosted several blood drives in the parking lot.

Van Buskirk was surprised and honored to hear Island Home Center was named a Beacon Award winner for 2020. “Any time you’re recognized it means your team members are the reason. We’ve had our challenges this year, but they’re the ones who make my business be successful and that’s why my company has won an award,” he says.

The Hardware Connection

The Hardware Connection is the only magazine designed and distributed solely in an electronic format for independent hardware retailers. With a circulation of more than 60,000, *The Hardware Connection* has been honored with eight awards for editorial excellence in the past seven years.

The Hardware Conference

Now in its 32nd year, The Hardware Conference is the industry's largest gathering of independent hardware retailers regardless of wholesaler affiliation. Since the 2020 Hardware Conference was canceled due to the pandemic, Island Home Center and the other 2020 Beacon Award winners will be honored at the 2021 Hardware Conference in Marco Island.

Island Home Center and other Beacon Award winners were featured in the September/October 2020 issue of *The Hardware Connection* magazine. To read the full article, click [here](#). For more information on the Beacon Awards, go to www.thehardwareconnection.com.

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