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And the winner is... TrueNorth (x4)

WINNER IN FOUR CATEGORIES

BEST INVESTMENT SERVICES | BEST LIFE INSURANCE PROVIDER
BEST PROPERTY/CASUALTY PROVIDER | BEST PHILANTHROPIC "GIVING" CO.

TrueNorth Companies

500 First St. SE, Cedar Rapids | www.truenorthcompanies.com

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TrueNorth Companies' achievement in winning four 2014 Best of the Corridor categories indicates the company is on course, according to CEO Duane Smith.

TrueNorth, a financial services company based in Cedar Rapids, received more votes than any Corridor company in four categories: Best Investment Services/Firm, Best Life Insurance Provider, Best Property/Casualty Provider and Best Philanthropic "Giving" Company.

The company had previously been named Best Insurance Agency six times before the category was changed this year.

The corporate mission of TrueNorth is "to assist companies and their people with protecting and maximizing assets, resources and opportunities." It uses what the company calls an "entrepreneurial platform" to attract, develop and coordinate the high-performing talent that makes it happen.

Producers who sell products and services lease onto the TrueNorth brand, receiving professional support in such areas as marketing, technology, human resources and legal affairs that allow them to concentrate on the customer side of their business.

The success of that strategy shows in the numbers. TrueNorth Companies' revenue grew 55 percent from 2011-2013, including 35 percent in 2013 alone. In 2014, Mr. Smith said the company is on track to achieve revenue growth of 20 percent.

"It's a result of the collaborative and innovative focus we have to attract talent and help innovate for our clients," Mr. Smith said.

TrueNorth offers integrated solutions for clients in such specialized fields as transportation, construction and professional liability.

The construction group, for instance, provides services ranging from bonds and contract reviews to online certificate management and safety program design.

Mr. Smith said the company is being built on four pillars: profitable operations,

- 2** Times Best Investment Services
- 1** Time Best Life Insurance Provider (new category)
- 1** Time Best Property/Casualty Provider (new category)
- 1** Time Best Philanthropic "Giving" Company

client experience, dynamic culture and business development. Progress in each of those areas is carefully tracked.

"We define it, measure it and manage it," Mr. Smith said. Employees literally know the score, because they get scored on each of the four categories.

TrueNorth Companies has about 250 employees, with around 150 in Cedar Rapids, and the remainder in about a dozen other locations. The company continues to grow at a rapid pace, and is on track to reach its goal of \$1 billion in annual sales by 2020.

In 2012 alone, TrueNorth acquired over a half-dozen businesses, opened a location in Fort Worth, Texas, and expanded through partnerships in Des Moines and the Quad Cities.

TrueNorth has Iowa locations in Cedar Falls, Des Moines and West Des Moines, in addition to its Cedar Rapids headquarters. Outside of Iowa, the company has three Texas locations in Arlington, Fort Worth and Dallas, and locations in Brentwood, Tenn.; Longmont, Colo.; and Overland Park, Kan.

Strategic initiatives in 2013 included the introduction of wealth management services within its Financial Strategies division.

Mr. Smith was not surprised that True-



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The 14 TrueNorth Companies employees pictured participated in the 2013 Especially for You Race Against Breast Cancer, one of many employee efforts that contributed to the 2014 Best Philanthropic "Giving" Company honors for the Cedar Rapids-based financial services company.

North was voted a leader in philanthropy. The company regards philanthropy as an investment in the same light as investing in its people and capital projects. It will yield dividends in the years ahead for both the community and the company, Mr. Smith said.

"We feel giving back and being good community citizens is a big element of corporate culture," Mr. Smith said. "Culture is as important to us as profit."

TrueNorth's community giving program has contributed to more than 50 nonprofits in the last 12 months, Mr. Smith said, from United Way to the planned Prospect Meadows baseball complex in Marion.

In May, TrueNorth was ranked 20th in the Corridor Business Journal's ranking of the Corridor's Fastest Growing Companies.

Mr. Smith said the company is proud that the honor made TrueNorth the first "triple crown" winner of three CBJ competitions: Fastest Growing Companies, Largest Privately Held Companies and Coolest Places to Work. CBJ