

Hundreds celebrate business group

◆ **Sixth anniversary:** Manchester Young Professionals Network opens doors to successful ventures.

By MARK HAYWARD
New Hampshire Union Leader

BEDFORD — Although deadlines and sales quotas are on the minds of most business professionals during the workweek, that's no reason to miss the occasional midweek party.

Especially when you're young.

So thought some 200 people — most in their 20s and 30s — who attended the sixth anniversary celebration of the Manchester Young Professionals Network last night. The organization provides networking and volunteer opportunities to those who like to live and play in Manchester.

The event took place at the Bedford Village Inn. Name-tagged participants mingled and munched on fresh carved roast beef and hors d'oeuvres delivered by waitstaff. It is, according to one MYPN veteran, a far cry from early meetings, which were held in downtown bars.

"I think we've gone upscale," said Manchester resident Gray Chynoweth, general counsel and vice president of business operations for DynInc, a network service company. "We

like to be cool and we like to be classy. This is classy."

A founder of MYPN, Chynoweth received the organization's Young Professional of the Year award last night.

MYPN Chairman E.J. Powers said Chynoweth has been a key force for the organization and noted that similar young-professionals groups have sprouted in Concord, Nashua, Salem, Keene and the White Mountains.

Also last night, Public Service of New Hampshire was named Business of the Year. Paul Ramsey, vice president of energy delivery for the company,

accepted the award, noting no such young-professionals network existed when he started his career.

"We think New Hampshire is a wonderful place to work and play, raise your family and grow your business," Ramsey said.

Powers said MYPN selects businesses that improve the lives of young professionals, and PSNH has been a lead sponsor in the organization's New Hampshire Startup Challenge, which provides expertise, assistance and seed capital to startup businesses.

Both Ramsey and Chynoweth kept their remarks brief last night, and the mood was light. A birthday cake was on hand. A sound crew had intimidating speakers on hand; music

was upbeat but low.

It was the first MYPN event for Molly Rider, an office assistant at Healing Hands Family Wellness Center, and Michelle LaMarca, a makeup artist for Elizabeth Grady in Boston.

"It's great. I didn't realize so many people would be here tonight," Rider said. She said it was easy to meet and socialize with people. LaMarca had her own way to meet strangers; she eschewed a name tag.

"More people," she said, "are talking to me because I don't have one."



MARK BOLTON/UNION LEADER

Manchester Mayor Ted Gatsas, left, talks with Paul Ramsey, center, and Gray Chynoweth, right, as the Manchester Young Professionals Network (MYPN) celebrated their sixth year with a fall harvest-themed party hosted by the Bedford Village Inn last night.