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Winston minister receives statewide recognition

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WINSTON — A Winston Baptist minister has received statewide recognition for spearheading civic projects over the past decade.

Community Baptist Church Pastor Steven Schenewerk was named the outstanding adult volunteer of the year Friday at the Governor's Volunteer Awards Luncheon in Salem.

"When I was selected, I was flabbergasted," Schenewerk said Tuesday.

Schenewerk was nominated by Gillian Wesenberg, director of the Douglas County Commission on Children

& Families, and Linda Cline, a grant coordinator with the Winston Area Community Partnership.

Wesenberg said Schenewerk has been instrumental in numerous civic projects, including efforts that resulted in a \$4.8 million community center for Winston.

"He's one who's very well versed, well read and cares about issues about kids and families. He literally practices what he preaches," Wesenberg said.

Schenewerk, 54, has been pastor at the Winston church since 1991.

He said he stepped up his involvement in the community after two boys died within weeks of each other in 1999 — one by suicide and one in an accident.

"It was a galvanizing event. It caused people to say, 'Wait a minute. This is the kind of thing that happens in a big community, not a small community in Douglas County,'" Schenewerk said. "It kind of propelled me into a whole new world."

Schenewerk turned the church parking lot into a skate park and became the first president of the Winston Area Community Partnership.

The movement to make Winston a "fun place to live with lots of activities" has involved hundreds of volunteers over the years, he said.

"It has made a significant difference in the livability of Winston," Schenewerk said. "It's an ongoing project. It's not perfect, but we're better than we were 10 years ago."

More than 400 people attended the luncheon sponsored by the Oregon Volunteers Commission for Voluntary Action.

In accepting the award, Shenewerk thanked his wife, Cindy; son and daughter-in-law, John and Kalaya; and daughter, Megan, for their support.

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