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When the LaFontaine Family Amphitheater was going up in Central Park, Dave Janette didn't hesitate to volunteer his company's service.

And when a construction accident in downtown Milford nearly caused a wall at Smoke Street BBQ to collapse in October – something public safety officials said would have brought down live wires and caused a domino effect on surrounding buildings – Janette rushed to the scene and quite likely saved the day.

Those reasons, said Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce President Chris Baker, are just two examples of why Janette and Son's Excavating of Milford was chosen as the Chamber's 2015 Business of the Year.

"We had a number of nominations and some great choices this year," Baker said, noting the Chamber's full board confers on the decision each year. "Janette and Sons came out on top. They do a ton in the community, they've been around for a long time, they're well known and we're happy to have them as our choice this year."

"Dave also puts in countless hours volunteering to run the beer tent during Milford Memories," Baker added. "They really rally around community events."

The business

Janette and Son's business was started by Dave Janette's grandfather. In 1952, his father, Frank Janette, took over leadership of the company and began manufacturing and installing concrete septic tanks and drain tiles before branching into residential and commercial excavation.

Today, the company offers not only multiple expanded services, but also helps set standards and provide leadership in the industry.

Next month, Janette will speak at an industry conference in Lansing. He's been followed and featured in trade publications, and in 2008, Dave Janette, along with a fellow local contractor, assembled the 30-plus member Oakland County Septic Installers Association.

Since then, the group has worked to bring industry codes in Oakland County to the higher standards of those in surrounding areas.

All the while, Janette still makes time to step up and volunteer when his expertise is needed.

"They give their time freely and have jumped at any opportunity to support the community," said Milford Village Manager Christian Wuerth, who also sits on the Chamber board. "I think the businesses that see themselves as part of the broader picture are always the stronger businesses. They're not just located here; they see themselves as part of the community, and there's value in that."

'A heck of a thing'

But for Janette, pitching in and helping out is just the right thing to do.

"I love my town, I really do," said Janette, who grew up in Milford, graduated from Lakeland High School in 1980 and later built a home across the street from his parents, where he and wife Patti raised their own family and still live.

"This is a tight knit community," he added. "I always believe you help out where you live; we're supposed to take care of each other."

But to be publicly recognized and honored for the extra efforts wasn't something Janette was expecting. Or seeking.

"I was caught off guard by the whole thing," he said. "I'm kind of humble. I'm not one who likes a spotlight on me; I just like helping people."

"But it's a heck of a thing to be honored that way," he added.

Janette and Sons will be recognized at Saturday's Christmas Parade, as well as the Dec. 5 Chamber Holiday Gala.

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