

# 2006 FINALISTS



**Deloitte.**



The 27 companies profiled in the following pages are Colorado's best-of-the-best. They are the finalists of the 2006 Top Company awards program, Colorado's most prestigious business award.

Top Company is a difficult competition to win. Companies must first self-nominate, as dozens of Colorado companies do every year. Deloitte, a long-time event sponsor, then evaluates all nominations and selects finalists in nine business categories based on:

1. Financial performance.
2. Excellence in one or more operational aspect of their business.
3. Community involvement.

A panel of business and civic leaders then convenes to sort through information provided by

Deloitte – and vote to select winners from the companies profiled herein. The 2006 panel:

- Ralph Peterson, Chairman & CEO, CH2M Hill
- Dana Crawford, Chairman, Urban Neighborhoods
- Brian Vogt, director, Office of Economic Development & International Trade, State of Colorado
- April Thayer, president, Thayer Media
- Bowen Banbury, president, DocuVault
- Greg Baldwin, president, Baxa Corp.
- Robin Wise, president and CEO, Junior Achievement
- Bart Hammond, vice-president, EMC Corp.

Winners will be announced Sept. 21 at an awards luncheon at the Denver Center for Performing Arts. Call (303) 662-5308 for more information.

**TOPCOMPANY**  
COLORADO'S MOST COMPETITIVE BUSINESS AWARD

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**UMB**



## TOP COMPANY FINALISTS

## TECHNOLOGY/MEDIA/TELECOMMUNICATIONS

## NAVSYS CORP.

NAVSYS Corp. provides hardware and software design and systems for GPS products. But these aren't the gadgets that recreational hikers carry with them next to their cell phones and Clif Bars. "We're building very specialized systems, more high-end customized products," says CEO and founder Alison Brown. The company currently is working on a smaller GPS device that would be the size of a wrist-watch and would use less battery power than current versions.



"Military customers are very interested in that, to keep track of military personnel," says Brown, who started the company in her home in 1986. Employees worked in her Colorado Springs basement until moving to an office in 1990. A few years later the company moved into its current 25,000-square-foot office, engineering and lab space.

The research and development division focuses on continued research activities, such as presenting papers. The product division promotes the company's products, such as GPS receivers, GPS inertial products and simulators.

Today most of the company's revenues come from government contracts, through grants from the Small Business Innovative Research Program (SBIR). Brown, a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for the U.S. Air Force, was named the 2002 Businesswomen of the Year by the National Republican Congressional Committee.

## FINANCIAL SERVICES

## PINNACOL ASSURANCE

In 1915 the Colorado General Assembly created the State Compensation Insurance Fund to provide workers' compensation insurance to every worker in the state. A few decades and several name changes later, Pinnacol Assurance had a \$500 million deficit. The company worked to improve its customer service and clients' workplace safety, and the efforts worked: in 2005, Pinnacol sent \$55 million in general dividend checks to 55,000 qualifying businesses across Colorado.



President and CEO Ken Ross says he wasn't responsible for the turnaround, since he joined the company in September 2005. "It was a combined effort, team-based and team-focused, that helped turn around the company culture and helped us climb out of this financial deficit," Ross says. Pinnacol sent another round of dividend checks totaling \$57 million in May 2006. The savings in workers' comp claims came as a result of additional education for clients. Pinnacol brought in 24 safety consultants who conducted safety seminars and other educational services.

Pinnacol, which offers only workers' comp, has a 50 percent market share in Colorado; Hartford, AIG and other competitors share the rest. In 2000 Pinnacol launched a foundation giving college scholarships to kids whose parents died or were severely injured in workplace accidents. In 2006 the company granted \$142,000 to 49 students. "We do that regardless of who the insurance company was," Ross says. "We take applications from all over."

## TOURISM/HOSPITALITY

## POLK MAJESTIC TRAVEL GROUP

Robert Polk, CEO of Polk Majestic Travel Group, isn't worried about losing business to Internet travel sites. He says most of his company's clients are companies that send their staff on business travel. "We are finding more and more that the corporations that have gone online say, 'We just really don't like this. We don't pay our people to be travel agents,'" Polk says.



Besides, he says, corporate travel agents do

more than book flights. They also run reports, so clients can see how much that 15-person trip to New York cost last month. "We have some in-house IT people who develop all sorts of things customers need," Polk says.

A few years ago Polk Travel merged with Majestic Travel, which was owned by Andrea Shpall. Today Polk Majestic Travel is a woman-owned company, and Shpall is president. "Majestic had a very strong leisure-travel business, and the Polk side is corporate, so we fill in each other's blanks well," Polk says. Today the company has 400 clients.

The Denver-based company has 100 employees, and about half work from home using what Polk calls a "very advanced phone system." He's optimistic about the company's future. "Today looks good and tomorrow looks better," he says. "We're growing rapidly. There is always going to be a need for travel."