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## Americollect was named the Large Business-Industry of the Year. Kevin Crawford, left, presents the award to Kenlyn Gretz, company president. / Sue Pischke/HTR



Kenlyn T. Gretz, president of Americollect Inc., right, was named the Large Business-Industry of the Year posing with award sponsor Kevin Crawford of Orion Energy Systems, Inc., during the 95th annual dinner and meeting of The Chamber of Manitowoc County at the Holiday Inn in Manitowoc on Tuesday.

MANITOWOC — Americollect Inc. was named the Large Business-Industry of the Year at Tuesday night's 95th annual dinner and meeting sponsored by The Chamber Manitowoc County, at the Holiday Inn.

"Our consistent growth since 1964 is a compliment to Americollect's hardworking teammates and our unique sales approach when speaking with customers, which we call the 'Win-Win Collection Concept,'" said Kenlyn T. Gretz, president.

He purchased the collection agency in 1999 after serving as manager since 1988. Under Gretz's leadership, the business has grown from 12 to nearly 90 employees and has increased new business listings 30-fold.

"We have grown by continuing to provide value to everybody we encounter, whether that is a client or a consumer struggling to pay their bills," Gretz said.

He said the company believes in nepotism, in the sense that "when you find somebody good, hire their brothers and sisters. We have a lot of hard working people."

Gretz thanked his wife, co-workers and his parents, "who taught their six boys about integrity ... teaching us by example."

Americollect moved into its current 8,400-square-foot office building in the city's I-Tec Park in 2007. This spring, it will break ground on a 9,600-square-foot addition.

It serves clients headquartered in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota, including major utility companies as well as 49 hospitals.

He attributed personnel and fiscal growth to "the culture we have grown over the years. Our teammates own this culture."

Through the direction of its employees, Americollect donated to 52 nonprofits last year. It has an internal fund enabling employees to ask for needed financial help for their families in circumstances such as loss of job, unexpected debt, car breaks down or severe illness.

Also nominated for the Large Business-Industry of the Year award, sponsored by Orion Energy Systems, were Color Craft Graphic Arts, Federal-Mogul Powertrain Systems, Insulation & Supply, Jagemann Stamping Company, Manitowoc Tool & Machining, NextEra Energy Resources Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Red Arrow Products, Schaus Roofing & Mechanical, and Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry.