

20 Under 40: Ryan Cardwell



STEVE DAVIS/The Register-Mail | Purchase this Photo Ryan Cardwell is the owner and executive chef at Iron Spike Brewing Company and is recipient of the 20 Under 40 award.

Posted Jan. 3, 2016 at 4:31 AM - The Register Mail
(<http://www.galesburg.com>)

GALESBURG — This week's recipient of the Young Professionals of Galesburg and the Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce's "20 Under 40" award to be profiled is Ryan Cardwell, owner and executive chef at Iron Spike Brewing Company.

According to his nomination, Cardwell is worthy of the honor due to the establishment in 2014 of the new restaurant concept for Galesburg ... "and the community has benefited."

Iron Spike Brewing Company provides a menu that is created based on his background as a chef and craft beer brewed in house.

"It is great feat to take an iconic building as the old fire station and creating an atmosphere for all ages," his nomination states. "Ryan leads his staff efficiently and is always re-inventing the dining experience."

Here's more about Cardwell, in his own words:

Q. What do you do in your current position?

A. As the chef and owner of Iron Spike my current position covers a lot of ground! I am involved in almost every aspect of the business. This includes daily line cooking, doing dishes behind the bar, and brewing beer. I'm a hands-on person and I find myself working wherever a set of hands is needed. So if that's cooking, hosting, brewing, bartending, dish washing, accounting or landscaping that's what I do. My current position includes a little bit of everything, which allows me to experience every part of Iron Spike.

Q. How are you involved in the community?

A. The biggest impact I am having on the community is through my brew pub, Iron Spike. We're still relatively new in town and get people from out of town frequently. While locals know Iron Spike was the old fire station and then the community center after that, not all newcomers do. It's always great to give customers a bit of Galesburg history with their meal. On top of that, we are approached almost every day with opportunities to give back to the community. As part of this town, we do our best to say yes every time. Along with the gift baskets given to local benefits we have had the opportunity to donate or aid multiple groups, including: Shave for the Brave, Knox County Humane Society, Discovery Depot, Costa Catholic School, Project Dog Park, Galesburg Public Library, Fish Food Pantry, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Knox County, Boy Scout Troop 233, Salmon Beyond Borders and many other local organizations. It has been a great experience integrating Iron Spike into this community.

Q. Of what achievement are you most proud?

A. There are many things in my life I am proud of, and of course the success of my business is one of them. More importantly I am proud of the impact Iron Spike has been able to make in the community. I believe we have made a positive impact on downtown Galesburg and I am excited to see what the future holds. It has been a fantastic opportunity to see this vision come to life, as well as see it flourish with the help of everyone in Galesburg.

Q. What advice do you have for other young professionals?

A. Never underestimate the effect one person is able to have on the entire community. The notion that one person cannot affect change is just not true, we can be seen every day. We have so many talented individuals in Galesburg, all filled with talent and creativity. You shouldn't doubt yourself because that next push could open that door you've been waiting for. There are a number of young professionals, some nominated for this award, and many not, proving this every day. Do your best to involve yourself in as much as you can. Networking and shaking hands can get you a long ways in a town with a tight knit community like ours.

Q. What's the most important thing people should know about your community?

A. There is opportunity around every corner! Our community will support much more than people think. We're a relatively small community, which means we can all work together to work on what we want to see in our town. It's time for everyone to put the negativity aside, look at what can and will be, and focus on the things that make our Galesburg great.

Ryan Cardwell; Age: 31, Residence: Galesburg, Profession: Owner/Executive Chef at Iron Spike Brewing Company, Education: Williamsfield High School '02, Le Cordon Bleu Chicago '06

About the award

The Young Professionals of Galesburg and the Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce have launched the “20 Under 40” award.

This award honors 20 individuals under the age of 40 considered to be “movers and shakers” in the community.

Honorees will be profiled each week through Jan. 31, 2016, in The Register-Mail. They will be included in a special supplement in February 2016, in addition to being recognized at the chamber’s annual dinner to be held in February 2016.

The 20 honorees are judged on their outstanding career achievements and community impact. A panel of judges evaluated each nomination on information provided in the following categories: Reason for nomination, career achievements/special awards and recognition, community involvement, volunteerism and community service leadership skills.