

## **40<sup>th</sup> LADCO Annual Meeting** **December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Over 250 LADCO members and guests were in attendance for the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> in the Radisson Hotel Ballroom. This year's meeting was made possible thanks to the continued co-sponsorship of Xcel Energy and Dairyland Power.



**Tom Still, President of the Wisconsin Technology Council served as keynote speaker.** Tom's presentation "*Trends and Technology and Venture Capital: A Wisconsin Perspective*" focused on the strengths of Wisconsin's economy as well as challenges that can be addressed to propel us even further. Technology-based economic development will be key to augmenting the strong manufacturing economy that Wisconsin still enjoys. Still praised the La Crosse Area for its commitment to collaboration which is imperative to success in today's fiscal

environment.



**The 2011 LADCO Distinguished Service Award was presented to Mr. John Hansen (right) by LADCO Executive Director James Hill (left).** John's career has been dedicated to building successful businesses in the La Crosse Area, across Wisconsin and throughout the United States beginning with the founding of the first Kwik Trip store in 1965 and continuing with a variety of business enterprises today as part of Nesnah Ventures. John Hansen is also a strong family man, a community volunteer, philanthropist

and a man of deep religious convictions.



**The 2011 LADCO President's Award was presented to Reinhart FoodService Chairman Mark Drazkowski (left) by LADCO President David Oelkers (right).** Mark has led the growth of Reinhart FoodService for over 33 years. It is a company that today operates 27 distribution centers, employs over 4,600 nationwide (170 corporate employees in La Crosse, not including the distribution operations) and now does over \$5 billion in sales per year. The President's Award specifically recognizes Mark's efforts in

retaining and growing Reinhart FoodService's corporate operations at 100 Harborview Plaza in Downtown La Crosse for at least the next ten years.



Jerry Miller, Mayor of Winona and Chairman of the MN High Speed Rail Commission was also on hand to provide an update on higher speed and more frequent rail service along the Empire Builder Route between Chicago and the Twin Cities via La Crosse. Miller reported that MN Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration have designated the Empire Builder Route as the preferred route for higher speed rail at what time in the future its implementation does move forward. Miller also reported the MN DOT and WI DOT are partnering with communities along the corridor to complete a study to determine the feasibility of adding an additional train traveling in each direction

each day between Milwaukee and the Twin Cities. LADCO has led the advocacy efforts for high speed rail since the mid 1990s and has served as the facilitator of the Empire Builder Rail Coalition.