

# Crystal Apples honor teachers

On March 13, 20 local teachers were honored at the fifth annual Tri-City Crystal Apple Awards program at the Richland Red Lion Hotel. The program was started in 1999 and has honored 80 local teachers to date for their positive impacts on the lives of students. The award is sponsored each year by the Department of Energy, Hanford contractors and more than 40 other community businesses and organizations. More than 300 people attended the event this year.

The teachers represented all seven local school districts. Kennewick, Columbia Burbank, Richland, Pasco, Finley, North Franklin and Kiona-Benton school districts all had award winners. Superintendents present cash awards along with the "Crystal Apples," certificates and other gifts.

Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, Governor Gary Locke, Congressman Doc Hastings, State Agriculture Secretary Valoria Loveland and DOE Richland Operations Office manager Keith Klein each applauded the winners by video, letter or in person.

At the end of the ceremony, a Special Achievement Award was presented to a very surprised Daryl Francis of Hanford Environmental Health Foundation for his long-standing support of education and his special focus on the Tri-Tech Skills Center in Kennewick.

"Our community and our children are indeed blessed to have such dedicated educators like these 21 individuals," said event organizer and master of ceremonies John Umbarger of Fluor Hanford.

Charter Communications is now airing the event Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8 p.m. on a local-access cable channel. ■



**HEHF's Daryl Francis accepts a Special Achievement Award.**