

## **JOHN RIESTER - 2005 AWARD WINNER – RED WING CAMPUS**

The Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical Alumni Association announced the recipient of its first Outstanding Alumnus award. The award, recognizing **John Riester**, was conferred at the college graduation ceremonies on Thursday, May 12, 2005 at the Treasure Island Resort and Casino (Indigo Ballroom) in Red Wing. Riester, a graduate of Southeast Technical's HVAC/R (Heating, Ventilating, Cooling & Refrigeration) founded Riester Refrigeration in 1975. John and his wife Vicki own and operate the family business. They have two sons, Ryan and Kevin, and one daughter, Katie.

The nominating committee chose John Riester not only for his contribution to the community in providing a valued service, but for his support of students who seek the "hands on" experience he makes available in the field. Many of Riester's employees join him part-time while they are enrolled in the HVAC program and several have stayed on permanently. Nine of ten service employees are graduates of the Red Wing program. Riester also serves on a program advisory committee and supports the college Foundation's scholarship program.

He encourages students to recognize the value of technical education. "I learned all of the skills I needed to get started through my technical education in Red Wing," he says. "This, plus the support and guidance of my instructors Terry Jesness and Tom Lawton helped me get the head start I needed to succeed. They prepared me for what I've done over the last 30 years."

The nomination committee noted his entrepreneurial talent, leadership and commitment to the hard work of a 24-hour a day, customer-service oriented business. Riester himself says that he would not have been successful without the support of his customers, employees and family. He notes the support of his early customers who were all instrumental in helping him build the foundation of his business. "They trusted me as I started out in business and have been there ever since - I enjoy my work and want to thank Southeast Technical, our customers, friends, family and community, it has been a pleasure to serve them."

Riester, an involved community member and strong supporter of the college, is also a member of several local organizations, including: the Environmental Learning Center (ELC), YMCA, conservation management and pheasants forever As a veteran of the United States Army, he is a member of the Legion and VFW. He is also a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church.