

NEMIROC honors Besser

Customer of the year goes to Fiber Char

By YVONNE SWAGER

News Staff Writer

An annual North Eastern Michigan Rehabilitation and Opportunity Center breakfast ceremony Wednesday honored Besser Company as employer of the year and Fiber Char as customer of the year.

NEMIROC is a local business that employs a high percentage of individuals with disabilities and produces raw lumber, wood-on-paint sticks, rulers, yard sticks, pullets and vinyl floor mats. Because the purpose is to provide employment for those with disabilities, programs through NEMIROC place workers in other area businesses whenever possible.

James Krueger, director of purchasing at Besser, said the company has been doing business with NEMIROC for more than 10 years. He said the company began using NEMIROC personnel for small hand operations and now also hires them for janitorial services.

"They come out every night at 5:30 p.m. and completely clean



ABOVE: Mike Bagulesch, vice president of Fiber Char, and his associates accepted the customer of the year award from Scott McClintic of the North Eastern Michigan Rehabilitation and Opportunity Center at Wednesday's ceremony.

RIGHT: Accepting the NEMIROC award for Employer of the Year on behalf of Besser Company was James Krueger, director of purchasing. The award was presented by Marc Homant at Wednesday's ceremony.

our offices. If we want something extra, they're more than happy to do it," Krueger said. "It's just a good relationship. They're providing a service that's much more affordable, and we're providing a service for them as well."

Fiber Char has purchased from NEMIROC since 1986. Vice President Mike Bagulesch

News Photos by Yvonne Swager



produce quality product. Freight is a significant amount of our cost. If we can keep the money local, we like to do that."

NEMIROC depends on product sales within the community to provide jobs for those with disabilities, according to Howard French, chief executive officer. He said Furniture Business International, owner of major furniture brand names, has been closing American production plants and manufacturing in China.

"About 28 percent of all furni-

ture makers in the U.S. are laid off," French said. "It went from 90 percent made in America to 90 percent made in that other country."

Chile is the main competitor for sale of small wood products, and French said that country sells for 30 percent less.

"We have been able to maintain sales, but we've had to drop our prices," he said.

Yvonne Swager can be reached via e-mail at yswager@theadpnews.com or by phone at 354-3111 ext. 315.