

Cory Lewis named to the Business Journal's Top 40 Under Forty.

By Scott Robertson

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For the past 16 years, *The Business Journal* has honored the up-and-coming stars of the Tri-Cities business community at an annual event called 40 Under Forty. 40 Under Forty honorees have gone on to become CEOs, managing partners, corporate board members and elected officials including several mayors, two state representatives, the lieutenant governor of Tennessee and the current US representative from Tennessee's first congressional district. This year's class is one of the most remarkable in recent memory. One significant factor in this is the size of the nomination pool, which is by far the largest in recent memory. In past years, The Business Journal received 50 to 60 nominations a year. This year's class was chosen from 103 total entries.

We thank all who submitted nominations. For those who were nominated but not honored, the official 40 Under Forty website, 40under.com is already accepting nominations for 2009. This year's 40 Under Forty celebration was held September 26 at the Millennium Centre in Johnson City. The keynote speaker was Fred "Pal" Barger. The Kingsport restaurateur told the crowd of over 250 celebrants of his own start as a young professional in the Tri-Cities, and how he grew a small fast food restaurant into a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award-winning enterprise. He also shared tips on how young businesspeople can achieve some of the same success he has achieved. Past 40 Under Forty honorees David Hite and Laura Steel Woods also spoke at the event.

Cory Lewis

Cory Lewis, founding president and CEO of TC Lewis & Co., knows what it's like to be the young professional in a room full of more seasoned businesspeople. "There have been times when I would meet with someone who would think I was the guy who offers them a cup of coffee before they meet with Mr. Lewis," he says. But now, says Lewis, he's noticing a trend that the older businesspeople are more willing to take younger businesspeople seriously. "It has been tough, but things like 40 Under Forty make it easier," he says. They're starting to listen. They used to think the under 40 generation were just slackers. Now they're starting to see the importance of new ideas." There's no doubt Lewis has garnered the respect of the business community. His real estate, construction and property management company has grown so quickly that it has hired 29 new employees this year alone.