



PRESS RELEASE

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“The Road to the Show”

2011 Cal League Executive Awards

Oxnard, CA – The California League is proud to announce its Executive Awards for the 2011 season.



The Modesto Nuts Professional Baseball Club is the Cal League’s **Organization of the Year** for the second year in a row as they set a franchise attendance record for the 5th consecutive season. The season was highlighted by a franchise-record 14 sellouts including four of the top eight single game attendance marks in franchise history. As host of the California/Carolina League All-Star game in June, the Nuts drew the 5th largest All-Star game attendance by a California League host, trailing only Lake Elsinore ('99, '09) and Rancho Cucamonga ('96, '03).

The Modesto Nuts have consistently been a community leader in education and youth services. The annual reading program is the most popular program in Stanislaus County elementary schools with over 60 schools participating annually. In addition, the Nuts partnered with the Stanislaus County Office of Education on a Choose Civility campaign that encouraged civil behavior among students, faculty, business professionals and elected officials. For his continued support of education in the Modesto community, General Manager Mike Gorrasi served as the keynote speaker for the Stanislaus County Office of Education employee kickoff event.



Also for the second year in a row, the Lake Elsinore Storm won the award for **Excellence in Marketing and Promotions**. The 2011 season, remembered as the season of Charlie Sheen-co de Mayo, marked a successful year for the Storm with their marketing and promotions endeavors. The Storm continue to find new ways to garner attention in the media-challenged market, including a

revamped social media campaign, grassroots marketing and new and exciting promotions around the ballpark. Fans can connect with the Storm through stormbaseball.com, facebook, twitter and YouTube as well as finding front office members in the community spreading the word about upcoming promotions at The Diamond.

Storm mascot Thunder and front office members took their annual tour of elementary schools and interacted with over 65,000 students about the importance of reading and Going Green. One new daily promotion this season was Wacky Weenie Wednesday, where fans received free all-you-can-eat hot dogs with the price of admission. In addition to the new Wednesday promotion, fans were treated to great deals throughout the week at Storm games with Military Mondays, Fat Tuesdays and Thirsty Thursdays. Friday Fireworks are the most popular family nights at The Diamond with Sunday fun days providing kids a chance to run the show at the ballpark during the game and run the bases afterwards.

Memorable theme nights included separate campouts for Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and families where over 2000 fans enjoyed a sleepover at The Diamond. 80's hair metal night was a rocking success along with giveaway nights including a beanie hat, a Thunder toothbrush holder and the coveted Charlie Sheen bobblehead—as seen on tmz.com. Thunder, and the team's stable of mascots including the Grounds crew Gorilla, the Rally Cop, Scoop the ice cream cup and Jackpot the rabbit took pride in raising entertainment to a new level this season. These combined efforts by the Storm staff in marketing and promotions helped to lead to an increase in average attendance and made The Diamond in Lake Elsinore the place to be for family fun and entertainment.



Mike Gorrasi, Modesto Nuts Vice President and General Manager, is the 2011 **Executive of the Year**. He has now won the award in back-to-back years. Gorrasi completed his 11th season with the Modesto franchise and 13th overall in minor league baseball. He led the staff to the 5th consecutive attendance record while overseeing the All-Star Smash. Mike and the Nuts received great reviews for the All-Star Smash from the Modesto community, All-Star participants and executives. He was able to provide a memorable experience for players and fans while exceeding the overall budget for the event. Gorrasi engaged all members of the community including the Modesto Chamber of Commerce, City of Modesto, Modesto Rotary and Gallo Center for the Arts. An active participant in the Modesto community, Gorrasi serves on three local boards and is a frequent featured speaker at local service clubs and organizations.



The San Jose Giants Vice President of Sales, Ainslie Walter, is the Cal League's winner for the **Woman of Excellence Award**. Walter is completing her seventh season with the San Jose Giants franchise. Ainslie's chief accomplishment is the total overhaul of the San Jose Giants Group Sales Department. In the past five years, Ainslie's efforts have resulted in group sales growing from \$147,500 to \$580,000 (400% increase). Ainslie's personal sales have taken an even greater leap, from \$30,000 in her first season to over \$300,000 in 2011.

Ainslie attributes her successes in sales to taking a personal touch with fans and clients. To many, she is the face of the Giants franchise. While Ainslie focuses on group sales and ticketing, you can find her hand in nearly every aspect of the Giants operation. She has been key in developing promotional nights, from concept to execution, including the Giants Disability Awareness Night and Scout Night Campout. Ainslie is the chief liaison

to Minor League Baseball's marketing department. You can even catch Ainslie on the field, coordinating pre-game Baseball Buddies program and the ever popular Smash for Cash promotion.

Cal League President, Charlie Blaney, stated: "The winners of these four prestigious League Awards were voted by their peers in the league, and they have all been submitted as the Cal League's Nominees for National Honors to be awarded at Baseball's Winter Meetings in December. The Cal League is very proud of our four winners."

About the Cal League:

The California League was founded in 1941 by a combination of Major League and Pacific Coast League clubs. The League currently has 10 teams and plays a 140-game season starting April 7, 2011 with the regular season wrapping up on Labor Day. Over the years, the California League has produced 14 Hall of Famers, 14 MVP winners, 17 CY Young recipients, and has 31 Rookie of the Year awards. The California League has become the premier Class "A" League in Minor League Baseball. See today's Minor League stars on their way to becoming tomorrow's Major League legends taking the field for the Bakersfield Blaze, High Desert Mavericks, Inland Empire 66ers, Lake Elsinore Storm, Lancaster JetHawks, Modesto Nuts, Rancho Cucamonga Quakes, San Jose Giants, Stockton Ports and Visalia Rawhide.

2011 Cal League Sponsors:



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