

The Daily Home

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Independence Day

Townsend: A man of many words

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TALLADEGA — Can someone talk for a living? A Talladega man not only can, but has received national recognition for it.

Bryan Townsend is a professional speaker who was named in *Speaker* magazine's July/August issue as being one of the industry's top speaking professionals.

The honor came as part of the magazine's first "Who's Hot?" list. It identified 25 of the nation's best and most professional speakers in the industry. Townsend and the other recipients were selected based on their innovativeness and dynamics in shaping the professional speaking industry.

"I'm delighted they thought of me," he said. "I think I'm in there because I've been doing this for so long."

Townsend has worked as a speaker for more than 27 years. During that time, he has worked and built good relationships with numerous speakers' bureaus. He said he



Bryan Townsend

believes these relationships also played a key role in the magazine selecting him for the honor.

Kirstin Carey, chairwoman of *Speaker's* editorial committee for 2008/2009, said the magazine selected Townsend for the "Who's Hot?" list because of his longevity in the speaking industry. She said it's a difficult business to stay in, and the fact that Townsend has been able to do so consistently marked him

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as an influential member of the business.

The magazine selected candidates for the list through nominations by National Speakers Association members, industry leaders and booking agents. The 25 honorees were selected from more than 200 nominations.

"Bryan's name is one that kept coming up over and over again. People said, 'If you don't have him on the list, you need to put him on the list,'" Carey said.

Townsend gives speeches all over the country. He specializes in motivational messages and keynote addresses. He has spoken to and advised companies in a variety of industries, such as financial, agriculture, religion and government.

One of Townsend's lecturing staples is his use of humor. He uses it as a cornerstone in his keynotes and programs. Townsend said he prides himself on only using clean humor to get his messages across.

His speeches touch on a

variety of topics, including striving for excellence in business and personally, building teamwork, good customer service and business performance. He even draws on his experiences from radio coverage of the Talladega Superspeedway in his newest business program, "Stand On It!"

Townsend has built a strong reputation for his services and has become sought after by numerous companies and organizations. He has even had the distinction of being the only speaker to deliver a keynote address to the Alaska Rural Electric Cooperative Association at its annual meeting in Barrow, Alaska.

"Who's Hot?" isn't the first recognition Townsend has received for his speaking. He is a Certified Speaking Professional, which is NSA's designation for those who have proven they meet the profession's highest skill standards. He is also a recipient of the Council of Peers Award for Excellence, a prestigious award given annually to NSA

members for demonstrations of excellence. He was inducted into the NSA Speaker Hall of Fame in 1999.

Townsend said he got a start on his career in middle school. He delivered a speech to the school when he ran for student council president. He said the positive reaction and feeling he got from it gave him a good taste for public speaking.

He took his talent for addressing mass audiences further when he attended Jacksonville State University. While there, he worked as a disc jockey and provided play-by-play sports announcements. He later did commentaries on a country radio station he managed.

Today, Townsend delivers his messages with the written and spoken word. He's authored several books and written newspaper columns.

Townsend not only speaks to audiences as part of his profession, he is teacher of the Whosoever Will Men's Bible Class at First Baptist Church on North Street in Talladega.