



Former U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich (left) and his wife, Callista Gingrich (right), congratulate Bob and Stephanie Wilson of Carmi at a recent banquet in Washington, D.C. See story for details.

Carmi Oil Driller Honored By Gingrich As "Entrepreneur"

Robert L. Wilson, president and owner of Les Wilson, Inc., has been honored as the American Solutions' 2009 Entrepreneur of the Year from Illinois.

Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House and general chairman of American Solutions, recognized Wilson at an American Solutions awards dinner Sept. 23 at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, D.C.

"He talked with us for about 30

minutes," Wilson told The Carmi Times of the group of 50 state winners honored. Each winner was asked to share his thoughts with the former Speaker, and Wilson said he expressed the need for lawmakers to create incentives to encourage the exploration for oil and gas in the U.S. Gingrich said it's important that the resources already present in this country be used, as well. And he said he's looking for ideas that can be used to turn the country around.

Wilson, who runs the company his grandfather founded in 1939 and his father ran for years, said Les Wilson Inc. is now operating four rotary rigs (with a fifth likely to begin work soon) and ten service rigs in five states. The company has about 180 employees and has more than doubled in size in the last few years.

"The biggest reason we're doing so well," said Wilson, "is that I made a change in my life. I was saved and I'm now following Jesus."