

Carleton Place chamber recognizes and honours local business community

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The Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce held its fourth annual Business Awards of Excellent Gala on Oct. 21. The People's Choice Award went to the Ginger Café and its owner Tiffany Nixon (second from left). Wishing Nixon well were, from left: chamber board vice chair Sherry Crummy, chair Donna MacDonald and vice chair Greg Smith. – Tara Gesner/Metroland



The Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce held its fourth annual Business Awards of Excellent Gala on Oct. 21. The award for community involvement went to Valley Granite & Tile and owners Lisa and Brad Occomore. Congratulating the duo is chamber board chair Donna MacDonald. – Tara Gesner/Metroland



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The Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce held its fourth annual Business Awards of Excellent Gala on Oct. 21. Entrepreneur of the year accolades went to Stalwart Brewing Company. Accepting the award was co-owner Adam Newlands. He is pictured with chamber board chair Donna MacDonald. – Tara Gesner/Metroland

The Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce held its fourth annual Business Awards of Excellent Gala on Oct. 21. The award for excellence in customer service went to Rental Village, for continuing to demonstrate a high level of commitment to customer service and satisfaction. Accepting the award were owners Mark and Terry Monette. They are pictured with chamber board chair Donna MacDonald. – Tara Gesner/Metroland

To be recognized at this event is the highest form of achievement in volunteerism and business excellence.

The Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce held its fourth annual Business Awards of Excellent Gala on Oct. 21. The sold-out event took place at Stonefields Event Destination in Beckwith, celebrating truly amazing individuals and businesses in the community.

Owing to the year 2016 marking the chamber's centennial, "this is the most memorable gala event in our chamber's history," chamber board chair Donna MacDonald said.

On Friday night, awards were handed out in six categories: Business/Business Person of the Year; Community Involvement; Excellence in Customer Service; Employee of the Year; Entrepreneur of the

Year; and People's Choice. Winners were voted on by the chamber's membership, with the exception of one – People's Choice. This new award was open to public voting.

"I am excited to report we received 46 nominations this year for our awards," MacDonald said, "and the enthusiasm surrounding the awards tells me business people in Carleton Place want to recognize success." "It also tells me we have some exceptional companies providing services and products worth celebrating," she continued.

The winners



Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Limited was named the chamber's 2016 business of the year, with former board member Dwayne Acres accepting the award from last year's winner Dena Comley of The Granary.

"Thank you very much," Acres said. "I am filling in tonight for general manager Eric Bjergso," he continued. "Our company's annual general meeting is being held in Winnipeg and half of our staff is there."

Chamber board vice chair Greg Smith noted Canadian Co-operative Wool

Growers Limited was selected for its excellence in business operations, including financial management, environmental practices, customer service, sales and marketing.

Too, "it has a strong track record of community involvement and support," he said.

Before announcing the winning business, Comley noted, "This company has called Carleton Place home for many years, and a loyal and dedicated staff of local employees is its greatest asset."

"Employee turnover is very low, and it endeavours to have the right product at the right price," she continued. "Offering exceptional customer service, sales in 2016 are targeted to exceed \$10 million."

In addition to Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Limited, other nominees in this category were Luxart Homes Inc., Michel Germain Parfums Ltd., McNeely Medical Clinic Family Health Group, Mitchell's Independent Grocer, St. James Gate, Stonefields Event Destination and Unposed Photography.

Entrepreneur of the year accolades went to Stalwart Brewing Company. Accepting the award was co-owner Adam Newlands. Presenting him with the trophy was Tina Stevens, the general manager of Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation.

Stalwart Brewing Company, located at 10 High St., is committed to brewing big flavours and never compromising taste. In addition to Newlands, the company has three other partners – Phil Kelsley, Ed McKinley and Nathan Corey.

Not only has the business opened within the last five years, “it has shown the ability to create a business concept and implement it effectively,” chamber board vice chair Sherry Crummy said.

She added, “The business owners show leadership and focus and have the strength to fight any obstacles put in their way.”

“As the new kids in town we really appreciate the warm welcome,” Newlands said. “Thank you.”

The other nominees in this category: Harmony Dawn McGrath of Urban Ocean; Jan Kittle of The Pickle Dish Quilt Shop and Studio; Tiffany Nixon from the Ginger Café; Volundur Thorbjornsson of CP Rentals and Property Management; and Winston and Tara Miller from Winston Miller Construction.

There was a tie in the employee of the year category, with Sharon Sinfield from Metroland Media presenting trophies to Jamie Duchemin of St. James Gate and Jennifer Irwin of the Carleton Place & Beckwith Heritage Museum.

Sinfield described Duchemin as “high spirited, organized and caring, as well as someone who always motivated and passionate about her role.”

“I really appreciate this,” Duchemin said. “Thank you.”

“I want to thank my amazing staff,” she added. “They deserve this as much as I do.”

Sinfield noted Irwin possesses many outstanding qualities, in particular “her professionalism and willingness to sacrifice her time to help others.”

“Thank you so much,” Irwin said. “It is nice to be recognized.”

“I am so lucky because I love what I do,” the winner added, “and therefore I spend way too much time doing it.”

The other nominees in this category were as follows: Alison Stolz, TD Canada Trust; Heather McCormick, Accountapotamus Inc.; Joy Noel, The Granary; Laura Bennett, Canadian Career Academy; Travis Kozey, JDS Enterprises Inc.; and Wayne Leroux, CP Rentals and Property Management.

Stephanie Brown and Steve Malenfant of Stonefields Event Destination presented the award for community involvement to Valley Granite & Tile/Lisa and Brad Occomore.

“The business owners are constantly supporting community events and charities as well as initiating new ones, making this area a better place to live,” Brown said. “They are the most kind, caring and generous people we know.”

In one of the most heartfelt acceptance speeches, which earned a standing ovation, Lisa stated: “This all started for me...I remember being a little girl and finding out one of my friends was going to be in for a pretty rough Christmas. So I went to my dad and his friends at the legion and collected \$300 in one day. I took that and turned it into Christmas presents. It was a feeling I will never forget, a feeling I do not ever want to lose.”

The other nominees in this category drew high praise from Lisa and Brad for always supporting their events. They were: Bean Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd. (Keith Bean); Carleton Place Terrace by

Symphony Senior Living (Liz Taylor); Law & Orders (Jamie Law); The Marketing Station (Lisa Strangway); and Carleton Refrigeration, Heating and Air Conditioning Ltd. (Roger Holmes).

Keith Bean of Bean Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd. presented the award for excellence in customer service to Rental Village, for continuing to demonstrate a high level of commitment to customer service and satisfaction. Accepting the award were owners Mark and Terry Monette.

“This is not something we expected but thank you,” Mark said. “It is a great honour.”

“We love to serve people,” he added, “and we see a lot of our customers here.”

Other nominees in this category: Ottawa Mortgage Brokers, Donna MacDonald (Donna MacDonald); Genumark (Alexis Sanchez); JDS Enterprises Inc. (Jason Steacy); Regional Plumbing and Water Treatment (Rob Bradley); Seamless Auto Care (Shawn Greenberg); and Temple’s Sugar Bush (Charles Temples and Susan Snyder).

Smith and Crummy presented the People’s Choice Award to the Ginger Café. Accepting the trophy was owner Tiffany Nixon.

This new award was created to mark the chamber’s 100 years, Smith noted, and “it goes to a business that is seen as a leader in the community, delivers a high level of customer service and is an innovator in their field.”

Voting for this award was done exclusively through social media – Facebook.

“The intent was to engage the public, getting them to help us recognize a local business they love and support,” Smith said.

“Thank you to everyone who voted for us,” Nixon said.

She noted, “The café’s staff and customers make each day so much fun to go to work.”

Other businesses nominated in this category: Bean Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd.; Gilligallou Bird Inc.; The Granary; Kitchen, Bath and Interiors Ltd.; Sara Grace Petrunewich RMT; Seamless Auto Care; Stonefields Event Destination; Urban Ocean; Temple’s Sugar Bush; and Waterfall Wedding and Event Catering.

Gala festivities also included a cocktail reception, three-course dinner, live entertainment, table favours, photo booth and more. Too, it was an opportunity for the chamber to say goodbye and give thanks to one of its own – Catherine Kuhn – after a handful of years with the organization. Kuhn is leaving the chamber to work with Gilligallou Bird Inc. in Almonte, as the business prepares to take its operation nationally.

The night’s key sponsors were Accountapotamus (reception), Bean Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd. (presenting), Carleton Place Terrace by Symphony Senior Living (wine), Metroland Media (presenting), Rental Village (event), Stonefields Event Destination (presenting), Thomas Cavanagh Construction Ltd. (music), Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (event) and Unposed Photography (photography).

In closing, MacDonald thanked everyone for coming, and she stressed the importance of business owners to the community.