

October 26, 2015

For Immediate Release

Businesses shine gold at 2015 ABEX Awards

Businesses from all across the province gathered in Saskatoon on October 24 to celebrate entrepreneurial success at the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's ABEX Awards, presented by Connexus Credit Union – and at the end of the evening, the Weyburn area shone the brightest, taking home three of the 11 ABEX awards, as well as a national Junior Achievement award.

As well as taking home the Marketing Award, Minard's Leisure World of Weyburn received the Business of the Year Award.

"While all of the Finalists were very deserving, Minard's won out as Business of the Year. They're a cornerstone business in their community, and known province-wide for quality and service," said Steve McLellan, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber.

P.A.R Contracting of Weyburn won the Community Involvement Award, for demonstrating exceptional performance in community support.

For the first time in ABEX history, the awards evening was augmented by student achievement; students from Weyburn Comprehensive's Palatable Projects Junior Achievement company were on hand to receive the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Company of the Year Award from the province's Minister of Education, the Honourable Don Morgan. This award is presented to only one JA class in Canada each year.

Inducted into the Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame at the award was Graham, a construction company with an 89 year history in the province.

"Since it started in Moose Jaw in 1926, Graham has worked in all areas of the province, working on projects from small construction ventures to major undertakings such as the Regina Bypass. As a construction leader, and because it gives back to the province and its residents, the Sask Chamber felt it was a natural to be included in the Business Hall of Fame," McLellan said.

R. J. (Bob) Schutzman, Director of Environmental Affairs – Canada with EVRAZ Inc. NA received the Roger Phillips Chamber Builder Award for his 25 year involvement with the Saskatchewan Chamber, during which time he made significant contributions toward the work of the SCC Environment Committee.

"Bob's contributions to the Sask Chamber, and particularly his expert technical advice, have allowed us to make great strides over the years with our environment portfolio. We truly appreciate his efforts, and feel he is deserving of the Roger Phillips Award," McLellan said.

Joel Teal was on hand to accept the Business Leader of the Year Award. Having worked in the province's housing industry for four decades, Mr. Teal also has an impressive history of contributing to the province through volunteer efforts. Currently, Mr. Teal serves as Board Chair for Information Services Corporation, as well as a member of the Saskatchewan Roughriders Football Club.

"Joel's contributions to the province, through his work in the housing industry and on boards, has changed the landscape of Saskatchewan. We are very proud to have presented him with Business Leader of the Year Award," McLellan said.

In addition to the Business of the Year, Hall of Fame and Roger Phillips Chamber Builder Award, 11 ABEX category awards were presented to the pool of 58 finalists this year.

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For further information, contact:

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2015 ABEX WINNERS

Innovation – Bioriginal Food & Science Corp., Saskatoon

Sponsored by Innovation Saskatchewan

Bioriginal Food & Science Corporation of Saskatoon is a global leader in delivering omega solutions that help its customers anticipate market demand, and compete in the health and nutrition space. For over 20 years, the company has been a pioneer in omegas, developing proprietary processes and innovative market driven omega solutions to make lives healthier.

Joe Vidal, President

306.975.1166

Community Involvement – P.A.R Contracting, Weyburn

Sponsored by BHP Billiton

Ron and Patty Evans of Weyburn started PAR Contracting Limited in 2006 as a sideline to earn some holiday money. Today, Par Contracting provides a range of vegetation control and lease maintenance services, but it is what it provides the community that makes it stand out. PAR gives back in numerous ways, making it possible for future generations to achieve their goals and dreams.

Ron Evans, President

306.458.2800

Community Cornerstone – Midwest Furniture & Appliances, Lloydminster

Sponsored by SaskEnergy

Ken and Elaine Lawrence have operated the “go to” furniture store in Lloydminster for nearly 15 years. Midwest Furniture and Appliances provides its customers with a high level of service and integrity, with a complete and trusted selection of high quality furniture and appliances. The Lawrences and their staff believe that giving back to the community through donations of time and money is one way of thanking and supporting their city. Countless auction items and door prizes have been provided over the years. Organizations that have received support include The Interval Home for women, Slim Thorpe Addiction Recovery Centre, the Regional Health Foundation, Frenchman Butte Museum, Olive Tree Soup Kitchen and Thrift Store, and Pleasantview Bible Camp to name a few. The Lawrences ask their employees to submit proposals for charities which they feel should receive donations, making the ‘give’ a very personal one.

Ken & Elaine Lawrence, Owners

306.825.7283

Export – CanMar Grain Products Ltd., Regina

Sponsored by Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership

CanMar Grain Products Limited of Regina developed its state of the art cleaning and roasting plant to supply food grade, ready-to-eat roasted flax and fruit flavoured flax products after a buyer from Japan suggested they roast flaxseed to compete with sesame seeds. The result is a high quality product for both the ingredient and retail human food markets.

Cecil Werner, CEO

306.721.1375

Growth and Expansion – TA Foods, Yorkton

Sponsored by PFM Capital Inc.

TA Foods Limited is a Yorkton area bulk and retail supplier and distributor of whole and milled flax seeds and oil. The company, owned by Mike and Terry Popowich, has grown from seven employees to twenty two staff members, and has increased revenue by over 300 per cent, due to wider sales markets (both exports and domestic) and innovation.

Terry Popowitch, President

306.782.8804

Marketing – Minard’s Leisure World

Sponsored by Handy Special Events

Minard’s Leisure World of Weyburn sells more than just RVs – they sell the RV lifestyle. Committed to topnotch product selection, a sales approach that puts customers before commission, and great service, the company writes and voices all of its own radio ads in-house, and holds the extensive “Dreamin’ of Summer” Sale in February and March at EVRAZ Place in Regina.

Gene & Susan Minard, Owners

306.842.3288

New Venture – W Bridals ~ Curvy Couture, Saskatoon

Sponsored by The Saskatchewan Ministry of the Economy

Canada’s only plus-size specific bridal boutique, W Bridals Curvy Couture was created in recognition that there was an underserved element in the bridal industry, and that women of larger stature needed more options in wedding shopping. Today, customers travel from across the prairie provinces to Saskatoon, in order to find their dream dress at W Bridals.

Kimberley Camboia, President

306.652.2320

Priority Focus – Display Systems International Inc., Saskatoon

Sponsored by Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority

Located in Saskatoon, Display Systems International Incorporated, or DSI, is the third largest provider of scrolling TV listings in North America. DSI and its founder Dale Lemke mentor young entrepreneurs, actively working to build the province's innovative ecosystem. They have also co-founded organizations to assist youth with Saskatchewan startups.

Dale Lemke, President & CEO

306.934.6884

Service – North Ridge Development, Saskatoon

Sponsored by Canalta Hotels

Located in Saskatoon, North Ridge Development Corporation has since 1983 provided its clients with quality homes and exceptional service. The company's customer service process is founded on quality, trust and guaranteed peace of mind, with at least 10 trade-related inspections, a final quality assurance inspection of over 300 items and on-demand warranty services for the first year of ownership.

Walter Mah, President

306.242.2434

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award – Steve McKenna/McKenna Distribution, Luxury Granite and R&M Flooring

Sponsored by Cameco

By age 30, Steve McKenna had successfully started two companies in Regina, McKenna Distribution Limited, and Luxury Granite. The most recent expansion, R&M Flooring, based in Waterloo, Ontario, occurred in 2014. Driven, ambitious, knowledgeable and passionate, Steve strives to be a positive influence in the community he serves.

Steve McKenna, President

306.359.7755