

24th ANNUAL

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Friday, October 31, 2014

Celebrating Aboriginal Business 24th Annual NADF Business Awards

THUNDER BAY, ON: On Thursday, October 30, 2014, Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF) hosted the 24th

Annual NADF Business Award - Canada's longest running Aboriginal business awards program - to celebrate Aboriginal business in northern Ontario. Eight award recipients were recognized for their achievements and contributions to local and regional economies at a gala dinner at Thunder Bay's Valhalla Inn.

Brian Davey, Executive Director, "This evening's award recipients are a testament of the contributions that Aboriginal business makes to the economy of Northern Ontario. There are many opportunities out there, and it is our hope that by celebrating their achievements it will encourage Aboriginal entrepreneurs, especially those aspiring entrepreneurs, to look around their community and the region for business opportunities. We have seen an improvement in Northern Ontario's economy and are seeing more participation by our Aboriginal communities and members in the business world, as we have seen here tonight."

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund was pleased to welcome Mr. Ovide Mercredi, former Regional Chief and National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and co-presenter Samer F. Salameh, CEO, Azteca Telecom and TotalMovies, to provide a keynote address to the 180 guests in attendance.

Since, 1991, this non-profit event has been a fundraiser for the Dennis Franklin Cromarty Memorial Fund: a bursary fund for post-secondary students seeking academic achievement, and the NADF Sponsorship Fund: a fund established by NADF to respond to sponsorship and donation requests, and provide humanitarian assistance to aid in disaster and crisis relief.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Youth Entrepreneur of the Year
Businesswoman of the Year
Businessman of the Year
Building Communities

Corporation of the Year
Executive of the Year
Partnership of the Year
New Business of the Year

24th ANNUAL NADF BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS

BUSINESSMAN OF THE YEAR

Award Sponsored By



Jason Thompson
Superior Strategies

A member of the Red Rock Indian Band, Jason Thompson is the co-owner and operator of Superior Strategies, First Nation owned that offers quality management consulting and training services. Superior Strategies specializes in the delivery of successful project management, human resource, business and economic development solutions. Superior Strategies provides these services to a variety of different sectors operating in northern Ontario, including corporations, government, business, not-for-profit entities and First Nations and Aboriginal organizations.

With over 17 years of business and management experience, Jason is a skilled executive, visionary entrepreneur and an adroit trouble-shooter. He has had the opportunity to work with some of the most advanced businesses in the forest and construction industries and has spent time in the public arena, serving three terms on Band Council. These work experiences have allowed Jason to broaden his skills which he applies to his business.

Always demonstrating strong leadership skills throughout his career Jason realized the importance of building and maintaining a successful team. This was most evident where his team played a role in the start-up of a new sawmill complex on the Fort William First Nation. Never settling, collaborative, out of the box thinker are a few adjectives that can be used to describe Jason. His commitment to continuous improvement and superior performance are second to none.

Presented by: Brad Martin, President, Bearskin Airlines

EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Award Presented By



Darlene Angeconeb
A/Executive Director
Equay-Wuk (Women's Group)

Darlene has worked for fifteen (15) years with Equay-wuk (Women's Group) and has been the Acting Executive Director for Equay-wuk (Women's Group) since early 2014. Over those fifteen (15) years, Darlene has held several positions with the organization, including Project Leader for the Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program.

Darlene has dedicated her entire career to empowering the women of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and has facilitated a number of workshops on this subject, including self-government and leadership. She

was instrumental in establishing the Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Women Council to represent the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Women at the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chief's Meetings. Darlene has devoted her career to increasing women's participation in self-government and governance and in June 2005 Equa-Wuk was presented an Honorable Mention Award from the Ontario Federal Council (OFC) in recognition of the accomplishments of the Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program. Through the Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership project, Darlene worked to increase the number of Aboriginal women in leadership positions, facilitating and promoting leadership to the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Women.

Darlene is currently a Mentor for Aboriginal Women with PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise and is also a member of the Coalition for Healing and Reconciliation (Indian Residential Schools) in Sioux Lookout. Darlene regularly donates to the Second Chance Pet Network and to the Sioux Lookout Out of the Cold Shelter and was also selected as a Judge for the Aboriginal Music category at the 2012 Juno Awards.

Darlene has overcome many challenges, including the Relocation Program and residential school, yet she maintains a positive attitude and demonstrates great leadership through her work and accomplishments.

Presented by: Arlene Meekis-Jung, Board Chair, Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Award Sponsored By



Moose Cree Group of Companies

Accepted by Derek Chum, President of the Board of Directors

In the early '80's, Moose Band Development Corporation was incorporated after several years of Moose Cree First Nation attempting to create economic wealth for the community through its own economic development arm. The corporation initially started with very little funds but was soon employing staff, acquiring some property within the community, and began to undertake projects within the community.

The Corporation, after focussing on economic opportunities within its community recognized that in order to prosper, it would have to venture further afield, and in 2003 it acquired CS Enterprises from a local logging contractor, a privately held company focussed on road construction and forestry operations within the Cochrane District in Northeastern Ontario.

Subsequent to the acquisition of CS Enterprises, the corporation recognized an opportunity to get into the tourism industry and Kesagami Lake Lodge, a remote 4 star lodge located on Kesagami Lake within Kesagami Provincial Park, was acquired.

Moose Cree First Nation was given the opportunity to acquire Cochrane Air Service given that the outpost camps were spread throughout the Moose Cree Territory and would create the opportunity for Moose Cree to benefit from its territory. In 2013, Cochrane Air Service acquired an additional 11

locations from competing outfitters making Cochrane Air Service the largest remote tourism outfitter in North America catering to a client base of more than 600 customers annually.

In 2010, Moose Band Development Corporation through its subsidiary company, CS Enterprises, entered into discussions to acquire the woodlands operation from Resolute Forest Products. In June 2010, under a newly formed company called 3 Nations Logging, the first forestry contract was signed. Today 3 Nations Logging, the backbone of the corporation, is considered the primary supplier of round wood to the Tembec Sawmill in Cochrane, Ontario delivering in excess of 250,000m³ of wood. Some 25 years after its inception, Moose Band Development Corporation has grown to become one of the largest and best logging contractors in the region with an experienced work force and staff. The company is primed to expand its forestry base.

In 2014, after more than 30 years, the Moose Cree First Nation and the corporation amended its relationship to one of a limited partnership and the name changed from Moose Band Development Corporation to the Moose Cree Group of Companies LP.

The Moose Cree Group of Companies has over the course of this past year provided community in several different ways through a Forestry Training Program, Summer Student Employment, donations to various events within and outside the community and employment opportunities for members of Moose Cree First Nation as well as non-native staff.

Presented by: Travis Boissoneau, Director, Neegani Investment Management Fund

CORPORATION OF THE YEAR

Award Sponsored By

ONTARIOPOWER
GENERATION

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Telecom Centre Inc.

Accepted by Bruce Sakakeep, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Economic Development Manager

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Telecom Centre Inc. was incorporated in April 2004 as a business venture under Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Economic Development Corporation to provide telecommunications needs for the community.

Since its inception KI Telecom Centre Inc. has expanded its services to include:

1. Cable television comprising of 48 mainstream channels, including one channel for local programming and broadcasting, one channel strictly for local announcements, and one channel dedicated for KI Chief and Council meetings. The local programming provides historical and educational material for the youth particularly related to our cultural way of life as indigenous people. Video recordings are made related to hunting, fishing and trapping including a “how to” in properly skinning game to preparing traditional foods for consumption.
2. Internet services, along with provisions of supplies and equipment associated with technology, recently upgraded internet equipment to accommodate the fibre optic cable systems, providing the community with access to the World Wide Web.
3. Cell phone system including providing cell phones and phone cards for sale.

The business provides full time employment for three (3) people and one (1) part time position including hiring a student during the summer months.

KI Telecom Centre Inc. contributes to community events, including being a major contributor for Homecoming 2014, supporting local fundraisers, and contributing to spiritual events such as summer camp meetings, gospel jamborees and community gatherings.

KI Telecom Centre is presently looking at the possibility of expanding its services and has recently completed a feasibility study and business plan to explore these additional services.

Sponsored by Aaron Del Pino, Senior Manager, Integration Services Ontario Power Generation

NEW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Award Sponsored By



Stanley Bluecoat Sunset Lodges Bed and Breakfast

Sunset Lodges Bed & Breakfast, now in its fourth year of operation, started with the intention of helping to address the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation shortfall with accommodation.

In 2011, Stanley proposed an adventure to build a three (3) bedroom lodge in the community. The project started with the support of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, creditors and lenders, and with a heavy investment from Stanley. The company jumped into the unknown and where others had mostly failed in the past.

Business went so well with the 3-bedroom Sunset Lodges Bed & Breakfast in the first 2 years of operation that Stanley dreamed of expanding and began to seek support and funding to construct a new building in the community. With the help of local entrepreneurs, outside technical expertise and engineering, Stanley's dream was drafted on paper. His original timeline to complete the project, but after submitting requests for grants and loans, he was able to complete the building one year, and in 2013, Stanley opened a six (6) bedroom building to the public.

Stanley's extreme hard work, and personality to match, Sunset Lodges has received acclamation and is the only accommodation provider in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation.

Sunset Lodges Bed & Breakfast has provided accommodations to many visiting VIP's over the past four years, including a Royal Visit from the Countess of Wessex, wife of Prince Edward, the youngest son of the Queen and Prince Philip. Stanley is proud to have hosted such a distinguished guest since this was the first royal visit since the signing of the Treaty in 1929.

Presented by: Herb Zoebell, Regional Director/Senior Commercial Account Manager, RBC Royal Bank

BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Award Presented By



Josee Racicot Kokom's Bannock Shack

Bannock is on the menu at a Dryden restaurant. Josee Racicot is co-owner of "Kokom's Bannock Shack" and was recently highlighted in the National Post as one of Canada's top food stops. Josee is a member of Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation, and she and her husband, Bruce Dowzwell, are co-owners of the renowned eatery that is known far and wide for their mouthwatering homemade cooking.

The entire menu consists of mouthwatering dishes made out of bannock - from Bannock Dogs to deep fried Mars Bars wrapped in bannock, to the famous Moose Balls (bite-size deep fried bannock balls sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar, and topped with homemade caramel sauce).

Prior to opening Kokum's Bannock Shack, Josee and her husband had been truck driving for 10 years. Looking for a change in careers, the couple turned to entrepreneurship. They purchased a camper and retro-fitted it into a mobile kitchen and officially opened for business in May 2012 and has been a regular sight at pow-wows and events in the region. Their mobile kitchen is still making the rounds but, in October 2013, Kokum's Bannock Shack expanded to include a 60-seat sit-down and take-out restaurant in Dryden's Golden Mile Plaza on Highway 17.

Kokom's Bannock Shack success has been featured on CBC Radio, CBC News, the Dryden Observer, CKDR (Dryden), Q104 (Kenora), Red Lake newspaper and also the winner of the 2014 Dryden Chamber of Commerce 17th Annual New Business Excellence Award.

Presented by: Arlene Meekis-Jung, Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund Board Chair

PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

Award Presented By



Joe and Linda Fiddler Sandy Lake Motel

Whenever you want warm and clean accommodations with home cooked meals and a friendly atmosphere in Sandy Lake First Nation, you should contact Joseph and Linda Fiddler, proprietors of the Sandy Lake Motel. Joseph and Linda Fiddler are the epitome of a perfect partnership. They are husband and wife team and parents to three adult children that all help to provide top-notch service at the motel.

This active partnership has successfully operated the Sandy Lake Motel since July 1995, and as a result, they have not had to request any additional financing since opening and have been the ideal business model for on-reserve entrepreneurship.

Prior to starting up the Sandy Lake Motel with his wife by his side, Joseph had been employed by the Sandy Lake First Nation in several positions. Through his various roles with the First Nation he was able to accumulate a vast amount of valuable experience that has helped propel him in his business operations.

Linda is a 'hands-on' mother, and anyone who has raised children, knows that caring for three children is no easy task, one that needs astute management and organization skills in order to run a good household. It isn't hard to tell that these diverse skills, coupled with their enthusiasm and great chemistry, is part of the reason for the success of the Sandy Lake Motel.

In November 2010, Joseph and Linda acquired the "bunkhouse" next door to their motel from the Sandy Lake First Nation, thereby expanding their operations. The "bunkhouse" now renamed the "Annex" is used primarily to house contractors working in the community.

Coming in 2012, Joseph and Linda will be expanding their accommodation offerings to their guests. Construction is set to begin on a new eight unit motel that will provide guests with private suites and washrooms, and even though their motel is expanding, Joseph and Linda will be there to greet their guests offering the same "customer-first service" they have built their reputation on. The expansion is a new eight (8) room building which boasts private rooms and they call this new addition "The Sandy Lake Suites".

Presented by: Arlene Meekis-Jung, Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund Board Chair

YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Award Sponsored By



Matthew Gladu
M² Carpentry

Matthew Gladu, is a member of Sandpoint First Nation. Matthew has been employed in carpentry for 10 years and has been a certified red seal journeyman carpenter for the past five (5) years.

At the age of 21 Matthew moved to Calgary and that was where he began acquiring his residential carpentry skills framing houses. After dedicating many hours in the residential industry, Matthew jumped at the opportunity to work in industrial carpentry on the "Jackfish Project" in northern Alberta. There he applied his learned skills and acquired new skills of the trade. Upon completing that project Matthew relocated to Canmore, Alberta to frame the Spring Creek Mountain Village Condos in the Rocky Mountains, acquiring commercial carpentry skills.

After completing the condos Matthew returned to Calgary and enrolled in the Red Seal Journeyman's certification at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Upon successfully completing the program, Matthew returned to Thunder Bay with his family where he started taking on contracts of his own with homeowners and local businesses, including The Foundry, Naxos Grille and The Bean Fiend.

Under his business name, M2 Carpentry, Matthew applied his timber framing carpentry skills to construct residential properties. He successfully secured a contract with Outlast Frames to build custom

timber frame homes and has built five (5) custom timber frames homes. The relationship with Outlast Frames continues and they still have a great working relationship.

Matthew has gained a strong reputation and his business is achieved great success. Matthew attributes much of the quality to work to having a strong crew who continue to do immaculate work for their clients. M2 Carpentry sets their goals and aspirations high and continues to achieve them.

Award Presented by: Peter Hinz, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines

ABOUT NADF

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund is a 27 year old non-profit economic development agency providing financial assistance (commercial loans, equipment leasing and grants), resource sector support and business counseling services to Aboriginal businesses, on and off-reserve, across northern Ontario (Treaty #9, #3, #5 (Ontario portion), and Robinson-Superior 1850 Treaties). With over 130 years of combined expertise, \$26 million in issued loans and over 500 businesses and 2,000 jobs created in the region, NADF's goal is to empower northern Ontario's growing Aboriginal population through entrepreneurship, by being a one-stop shop for all their business needs.

Please direct all media inquiries to Brian Davey, Executive Director

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For more on Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund and the 24th Annual NADF Business Awards, please visit www.nadf.org