

Chamber recognizes local businesses with awards, accolades

By Mark PavilonsEditorLocal JournalismInitiative Reporter

Local businesses and their dedicated teams were in the spotlight last week, during the Excellence in Business Awards ceremony, hosted by the King Chamber of Commerce. The elevated annual gala was by far the best, presented by a bevy of Chamber volunteers. MC Elvira Caria said local businesses give life to the community and each one is instrumental to King's success. Chamber President Michelle Frauley said the event is about celebrating the people who make King what it is – our small business owners, our farmers, our creators, our innovators, and every person who wakes up each day and pours their heart into building something in this community. "As president of the Chamber, I can honestly say this year has reminded me more than ever that business is deeply personal. It's sacrifice, passion, sleepless nights, family support, risk, resilience, and pure drive." Frauley also praised the efforts of the "incredible team" on the Chamber board, who "give their time to lift this Chamber and this community forward. This is not a solo effort – this is shared work. And I am truly grateful to serve alongside all of you." She also singled out the Chamber's Manager of Member Services, Mercedes Lato, for her dedication and all of her hard work in helping to elevate this signature event. "Your commitment and professionalism truly shine through tonight." This year, the Chamber implemented a new process for the awards, including application forms and site visits. Judges included Michelle Frauley, Chamber president; Bianca Cirella, King's manager of economic development; Morri Guido, Ace Performance, and Chloe Thurston, Pine Farms Orchards. "Over the last few weeks, I've had the opportunity to visit so many of our finalists, and I was deeply moved. Hearing the stories behind what you've built – the challenges, the creativity, and the heart that drives it all – reminded me of just how special this community is," Frauley said. "And truly, everyone here tonight is a winner. Even being nominated is an incredible accomplishment – it means that someone, or perhaps many people in this community, saw your value, your impact, and the difference you make every day." When I look around this room, I see inspiration. I see people who care about their work, their neighbours, and the future of King. Every one of you contributes to the strength, spirit, and success of this community – and tonight, we celebrate you. "Congratulations to all our finalists and award recipients – you make King proud." King Mayor Steve Pellegrini said the 17th annual event recognizes the importance of celebrating businesses – not just for their economic impact, but for the spirit of growth, resilience, and community they foster in King. Each award category reflects the diverse strengths and values that make King a spectacular place to live, work and invest. King Township has proudly supported the Business Awards in partnership with the Chamber since its formation in 2008, marking 17 years of collaboration and shared commitment to recognizing excellence in our business community. This year also marks the Township's 12th year in sponsoring the Sustainable King award and our 4th year as a presenting sponsor for the awards. King has welcomed more than 10 new businesses in 2025, each bringing fresh energy and opportunity. The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) program also continues to support businesses in the Village Cores and rural areas, with over \$47,000 invested in 2025 to enhance storefronts and facilities, strengthening our sense of community and attracting new customers. "In the face of the economic uncertainty 2025 has brought, I want to reaffirm the Township's commitment to supporting the 1,500 plus businesses in our community," he said. "Through an enhanced Economic Development Consultation service, our Economic Development team is available to provide guidance on export programs, funding opportunities, and business support resources." The upcoming update to the Township's Official Plan will also drive additional economic growth by creating new employment lands, he noted. "These initiatives support sustainable growth and ensure King remains a thriving and investment-ready community for business." He congratulated all of the award recipients and nominees: "your achievements are a testament to your passion, innovation, and resilience. Thank you to each of you for your dedication, hard work, and contributions to King." The awards portion of the evening was launched, in fine style, with the presentation of the Morning Youth Grants, financial awards to young, local entrepreneurs. On hand to receive their awards were Hudson Tognarell (Electrify Health) and Benson Muzychka (TeachLynx). The businesses nominated in each category are featured in short video presentations on the Chamber's website. Visit <https://www.kingchamber.ca/awards> for their stories. Joining them on stage were the award sponsors, Mayor Pellegrini, Frauley, King Vaughan MP Anna Roberts and Ryan Raymond, Chamber vice-president. Nobleton Optometry (Diane Contino) won the Excellence in a Small Business award. The runners-up were The Wellnest Family Clinic and Nobleton Family Dental. King Theatre Company (Steven Flowers) took the Excellence in a New Business honours. Euro Market Cafe and Schomberg Brew Works were the other finalists. HosPall Homecare (Michelle and Bruce Frauley) took the Volunteer of the Year Award. Sherwood Farm Retreat

and Lisa Pace Photography were the other finalists. Round the Bend Farm (Brian and Sue Feddema) won two awards ? Sustainable King and Agricultural Award. Competitors for the honours were (respectively) Guaranteed Roofing, Essential Soils Solutions, Nobleton King City Garden Club and Pine Farms Orchard. Haven Greens (Jay Willmot) took home the Excellence in Large Business award. Other contenders were King Animal Hospital and Seneca Polytechnic. The Blue Marble Academy (Savita Despot) won Entrepreneur of the Year, beating out Historia Cantina and EB Medical Aesthetics. Schomberg Dental & Orthodontics (Sonia Reis and Dr. Amanda Bianchi), took home the People's Choice Award, presented by Mark Pavilons, editor of the King Weekly Sentinel. Schomberg Dental supports the community with weekly door prizes from local businesses, sponsorships, attendance at events and more. Other finalists were Schomberg Foodland and Storica Design Studio.