

Chamber salutes local business successes



Photo by Melanie Bell

By Mark Pavilons

Momentum in King is building and the King Chamber of Commerce is enjoying the ride.

Local success stories were showcased last week at the 9th annual business awards dinner, held at Nobleton Lakes.

Robin Priestly noted the Chamber itself has had a busy 2016 with events, forums and business openings.

Chamber president Tom Allen added success for small business doesn't come easy. Local business owners not only have to look after the bottom line, they have to look after the community. The Chamber's corporate sponsors are vital to events like the business awards.

There are some "awesome businesses in King," and award recipients ran the gamut of new and long-serving operations.

"It so nice to see businesses thrive ... some over generations," he said.

Award Recipients

The Excellence in Small Business Award (1-10 employees) exemplifies attributes of community involvement and commitment to the development of business in King Township. It consistently exhibits social and business responsibility and character attributes in their business and social dealings.

Sean Stephens, on behalf of TreeFrog, presented the award to Design on King.

Design on King opened in May of 2015 in King City to serve the design needs of King and the surrounding areas. This store is a new concept for a Benjamin Moore Paints store, offering full interior design services within a décor store. This family run business is owned and operated by Marcy Nemes, an accredited Interior Designer with 28 years design experience, along with her husband, Andy Nemes, a sales and marketing professional with over 30 years paint experience serving home owners and contractors. Their son Adam is heavily involved in the business when he is not attending his university classes, Rachel helps with buying products for the teenage demographic, and Evan is already on his way to being the future CFO. Business has been quite strong for Design on King, allowing the business to add a second full time designer, a store manager and two part-time staff.

The Excellence in Large Business Award (15+ employees) recipient willingly supports business owners and the community through participation and sponsorship of both community and business activities.

Maria May of Seneca presented the award to Mike Foley, of Foley Restoration.

"Our lives are defined by how we spend our time and what we choose to do each day." That quote sums up the essence of who Mike Foley is.

Mike has lived in King Township for over 35 years with his lovely wife and four successful children. He has worked in the

insurance restoration industry for over 30 years and, 25 years ago, he had a goal to successfully establish and run his own restoration company to assist those in uncontrollable situations.

With his passion for the business, Mike has built a strong team within his company and strived to turn every negative situation into a positive outcome. Even through times of industry challenges or adversity, Mike's resilience and positive attitude have enabled him to lead his team over the hurdles in his path and to become stronger from the experience. His loyalty and dedication to help others is remarkable. Mike has volunteered his time and resources on numerous occasions to provide assistance to the local community and businesses in any way possible.

The Sustainable King Award goes to a business that participates in environmental leadership on a personal and/or professional ongoing basis. This business shows a commitment to the environment through their actions and ongoing efforts to educate, inform, and lead by example demonstrating environmental leadership and responsibility.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini presented the award to Bill Eek, of Eek Farms.

Bill is a 3rd generation Holland Marsh farmer. His great uncle, William Valenteyn, was one of the first pioneers breaking the Marsh in 1934. Bill has spent his entire life at the current home on Strawberry Lane. He owns and operates a 65-acre farm in the Holland Marsh growing carrots and onions commercially.

Bill gives freely of his time to those in need, currently (and for the last 20+ years) serving as the president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Bradford Conference; he makes a few trips each year to the Minden food bank to provide them with fresh vegetables and non-perishable food items, toys etc.; he supplies fresh vegetables from his farm to the Bradford Helping Hand Food Bank weekly (or as required); at Christmas, Bill procures the fruits and vegetables through local packing houses for the nearly 200 families who receive Christmas baskets; when asked by King Township Food Bank, has been more than willing to provide fresh vegetables.

Bill also serves as vice-chair of the Holland Marsh Joint Services Board (King Township rep); and is also a York Region police volunteer at the King Township Community Policing Centre in Schomberg.

The Excellence in a New Business Award recognizes a business that has been established for a minimum of 2 years and has demonstrated notable achievements within the Township of King such as: growth, customer service, innovative ideas, community involvement.

The award went to Wild Wing King City. In March 1999 Wild Wing took flight with a humble grassroots beginning in small town Sunderland, Ontario. Since then Wild Wing has become one of the fastest growing family restaurant franchises in Ontario. Their growth has been attributed to providing the freshest quality food, the best customer service, and the most unique atmosphere. Their award winning chicken wings are served in 101 flavours. Other menu items are sure to curb your appetite. All of the restaurants are locally owned and operated by people who take pride in supporting their communities. Wild Wing restaurants are dressed up as old time saloons with pine covered floors and walls covered in chicken wire.

The Entrepreneur of the Year Award goes to an individual with vision, creating a unique business that may accomplish an outcome that changes the way business has been done until they created their manner of practice. They show growth in their business and overcome obstacles while creating a special niche within their business sector.

Mike Foley, of Foley Restoration, presented the award to Darlene Rupke of Seasons Floral Studio.

Darlene is passionate about all things that grow. Darlene's career began in 1992 and has evolved and added many industry awards and magazine features to her professional portfolio.

Seasons Floral Studio opened in 2005 as a retail floral shop. Now, Seasons is recognized for trend setting style, educating and inspiring all things floral in their beautiful Schomberg Studio.

The People's Choice Award, sponsored by the King?Weekly Sentinel newspaper, is a special award. It goes outside the Chamber, encouraging the public to vote for their favourite business that has shown outstanding customer service, growth, best business practices and community involvement.

Zach Shoub, general manager of the Weekly Sentinel, presented the award to John Ciarallo of John's No Frills in Nobleton.

Ciarallo has been with Loblaw companies for 36 years. His career has included various Store operation management positions, as well as regional and district store operations specialist roles. John has traveled throughout Canada successfully establishing various corporate and franchise Store formats on behalf of Loblaw. In 1998, John decided to venture into his own No Frills store franchise in Thornhill, which he successfully operated until the opportunity presented itself in 2012 to open the store in Nobleton. John is a huge supporter of local charities and causes and is a regular contributor to the King Township Food Bank.