

Entrepreneur of the Year Award — presented to an individual who is recognized for outstanding achievement in starting, taking over, or substantially changing an independent profit making business venture while exhibiting a high level of leadership, creativity and sense of community.

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Businesses honoured for achievements

Several local businesses were among the 12 honoured at the South Simcoe Business Awards Oct. 30.

"It's always important to recognize excellence. Those businesses set the standard, (and) they are willing to encourage all business in South Simcoe to raise the bar," said Nottawasaga Futures CEO Valerie Ryan.

The awards were presented by Nottawasaga Futures, and were judged by 24 community leaders from across South Simcoe.

Locally, Carline Automotive Services from Alliston won the Business Excellence Award and Bye Bye Birdie Goose Control in New Tecumseth won Entrepreneur of the Year.

Moondance Organics of Utopia won the Agricultural Award. The business was profiled as the Alliston Herald's Farm of the Month in 2007. The Promotion and Advancement of Literacy Award went to Alliston Kumon Centre.

For the Quality Awards, Sports Medicine in Angus won for Small, TD Canada Trust in Alliston won for Medium and Ken and Bonnie's Beeton Foods won for Large.

Botanix Living Landscape in Adjala-Tosorontio won the Customer Service Award.

"I was quite surprised to receive it, and honoured at the same time, because you put all these years working in your community, and we've got such pride in the community, to have it come back to you, it's a nice feeling," said Rose Marie Bowen, from Carline.

She and her husband Ed have operated the Alliston business since 1974. For the first 24 years, they worked on mufflers only, but have expanded the business to include complete automotive services. Bowen credits their longtime success to the importance the company puts on customer service and the dedication of the employees.

"(It's) being honest, being open, and doing whatever it takes to make people happy," she said.

For Sherri Hall, owner of Bye Bye Birdie, winning the Entrepreneurial Award was very exciting.

"I'm very proud. It's a wonderful achievement to win an Entrepreneur Award - it makes it a lot more personal," she said.

Hall's employees use specially trained dogs to help keep geese away from beaches, parks and commercial property. Her clients stretch across Simcoe County and further, including Magna International in Newmarket. The company also provides animal control service for many municipalities, including New Tecumseth.

For Hall, the award was particularly encouraging, after a fire at her home and business in February killed 16 dogs. She said she has managed to carry on and thrive by maintaining a positive attitude.

"Every negative has an equal positive," she said.

In all, Nottawasaga Futures received nominations for 248 different businesses. Those nominations were whittled down to 58 for the judges to choose from.

Ryan said that along with the businesses themselves, the judges looked at the community participation of the owners, including work with local organizations and contributions to charities. She said giving time or money to those charities is an important part of doing business.

"I think that the rewards are multiplied - they are being a part of the community," said Ryan.

The awards were presented at the new Innisfil Municipal Building.



Sherri Hall, centre, accepts the award for Entrepreneur of 2008 Award at the South Simcoe Business Awards Oct. 30, 2008