



## **News Release**

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*For immediate release*

### **Regional Business Leaders Celebrated at Annual Awards**

*Grande Cache June 18, 2009...* The fifth annual Celebration of Success for the Grande Alberta Economic Region (GAER) gathered municipal and business leaders from the region to toast another year of accomplishments.

The evening profiled 11 business and farm families from the GAER region which have been recognized in their own municipalities for outstanding accomplishments. Each one was nominated by their respective Chamber of Commerce or Municipal Council for a Regional Business Award of Excellence. These awards recognize and celebrate the outstanding contributions of business to the economic development of the region, now and into the future.

Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation who has consistently emphasized economic development as a means to improve his people's standard of living spoke to the crowd of over 100. Under his direction, the Osoyoos Indian Band in British Columbia has become a multi-faceted corporation that owns and manages nine businesses and employs hundreds of people.

Robin Campbell, West Yellowhead MLA, joined GAER Chairperson Glenn Taylor in handing out the awards.

The Grande Alberta Economic Region's successes of the past year were highlighted in Taylor's closing address. Said Taylor: "One of our fundamental accomplishments is the collaboration and cooperation that now exists between communities that once viewed each other as competitors. GAER is recognized for our solution-focused, cutting-edge leadership and our desire to shape our own destiny."

Commenting on the award recipients Taylor stated "As I look at the names of the organizations and the people that are here tonight representing the best of what our region has to offer, I can't help but be excited for the future of our region. The efforts that you have put into growing your businesses and your farms, while at the same time growing your communities, are truly commendable."

For more information on GAER, please visit [www.grandealberta.com](http://www.grandealberta.com). Any media inquiries and request for photos of award winners can be directed to the GAER Office at:

780-723-7706 / 1-866-723-7706

E-mail: [info@grandealberta.com](mailto:info@grandealberta.com).

List of 2009 Small Business and Farm Family Winners are attached.

### **Regional Business Awards of Excellence Recipients June 18, 2009**

#### **Brazeau County...Art and Sharon Breitkreuz, Arsha Blonde's (Farm Family)**

Art and Sharon started the business in 1991. They work showing their cattle. They mainly sell bulls but also sell some cows. They belong to the Alberta Blonde Association. Art and Sharon are the Farm Family for Brazeau County.

#### **Drayton Valley... Jim and Susan Arts, M&M Meat Shop**

Jim and Susan are pleased to be second generation business owners in Drayton Valley. They are pleased to be associated with a great Canadian company.– M & M Meat Shops. They employ a staff of five. Jim and Susan received the Business of the Year Award from the Drayton Valley and District Chamber of Commerce.

#### **Edson... James Kazoleaus, Mountain Pizza and Steakhouse**

Mountain Pizza and Steakhouse received the Business of the Year Award from the Edson and District Chamber of Commerce in 2008.

#### **Grande Cache... Gerald and Paula Huppe. Sports Traders**

Gerald and Paula opened Sports Traders in 2008. They offer both new and used sporting goods. They also offer rentals of bicycles, kayaks, tents and skis. Another part of their new business is a pro shop offering skate sharpening and bicycle repairs. They operate with a staff of three. The Grande Cache Chamber of Commerce named Sports Traders the Small Business of the Year.

#### **Fox Creek... Jim and Dianne Ahn, The Pizza Joint**

The Pizza Joint was established in 2008 by Jim and Diane Ahn. With a staff of ten people they offer a take out pizza service. To assist local teams in the town, the Pizza Joint makes pizzas that are named after local teams. Each team for one month of the year has a pizza named after them. The team receives a donation of \$1.00 per large pizza sold during their month. The Fox Creek Chamber of Commerce awarded the Pizza Joint the Small Business of the Year Award.

#### **Hinton...Garth and Elaine Lund, Lindsay and Todd Sim, Ponchos**

The business started in July 2004 as George's Steak & Pizza. Then in April 2009 they transformed the restaurant into Ponchos. They changed their decor, menu and brought in two Mexican chefs and with a staff of nine started serving Authentic Mexican Cuisine. They won the 2008 Business of the Year award from the Hinton and District Chamber of Commerce and the 2008 Business of the Year Award from Rob Merrifield.

#### **Jasper... Bernhard Schneider (GM), Jas-Day Investments Ltd., Mountain Park Lodges**

Mountain Park Lodges has been in business since 1967. They have five full service hotels, two attractions, Pyramid Riding Stables, and part ownership in Ski Marmot Basin that employ 280 and 300 employees. Mountain Park Lodges received the 2008 Small Business of the Distinction Award from

the Jasper Tourism and Commerce. They also won the 2009 Environmental Stewardship Award and numerous Menu Awards—Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association.

**Mayerthorpe... Terry and Lisa Johner, Mayerthorpe Mini Mart.**

Terry and Lisa started Mayerthorpe Mini Market in August 2007. With a staff of ten they offer convenience items, grocery items, ice cream, fireworks, lottery tickets, a cash machine, coffee and cappuccino, and slushies. They also have a kitchen offering fresh wraps, sandwiches, burgers and fries. Terry and Lisa were very surprised to win the Mayerthorpe and District Chamber of Commerce's Small Business of the Year Award, being it was their first year in business. It gave them the confidence to know that they were doing something right. They have also been very fortunate to have excellent staff.

**Whitecourt... Norm and Michelle Simard, A&W Restaurant/Tags Food & Gas**

Norm and Michelle employ 40 people and first started their business in 1995. A&W Restaurant and Tags Food & Gas won Whitecourt and District Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award. Other awards they have received include: the "Award of Excellence Double Diamond Club" A&W in 2007, Award of Excellence in Drive thru Sales, business of the year in peace River in 1999, and Award of Small Business Award of Distinction in 2008.

**Woodlands County... John and Mabel Baxter, Whipple Tree Ranch (Farm Family)**

John and Mabel have been married and have farmed for 40 years as of 2008. They are proud to be part of five generations of farming in Whitecourt since 1920. They have two children, a daughter Fay McLaughlin (Rob Nickel); a son Robb (Nadine) and five grandchildren who are all involved in the ranch which has grown from two quarters to a ranch of about 4500 acres. They raise between 300 and 400 head of cattle (cows & calves). They are involved in the community in various functions such as Agriculture Society, Fish & Game Assoc., Youth Group, Schools, MADD, Grazing Advisory Committee, TRL Gas Board, Rural Electrification Assoc., Friends of Whitecourt, Fun Hockey, Mission Trail Committee, and 4-H. They have hosted hay rides and wiener roasts for Whitecourt Mini School for 18 years. John and Mabel were very surprised and honored to be chosen for the 40th Year of Northlands/AMA Farm Family of the Year awarded by Woodlands County.

**Yellowhead County...David and Louise Baudin (Farm Family)**

David and Louise have been farming since 1979 on a mixed farming operation consisting of commercial cattle and cereal crops. The Baudin Family farm employs four people. In addition to being the Farm Family for Yellowhead County, they have completed their Environment Farm Plan and Louise just received her five year pin for Yellowhead Gas Board of Directors.

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