

February 19, 2010

Recipients of 2010 Alberta Business Awards of Distinction



Excellence in Alberta's business community was celebrated tonight as the winners of the 19th annual Alberta Business Awards of Distinction were announced at a gala in Edmonton.

The winner of the **Premier's Award of Distinction**, the evening's most prestigious honour, was **Savanna Energy Services Corp.** of Calgary. The following is a list of the other 10 recipients:

Aboriginal Woman Entrepreneur Award of Distinction

The Imagination Group – Calgary

Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction

Canadian Pacific Railway – Calgary

Employer of Persons with Disabilities Award of Distinction

The Home Depot – Calgary

Employer of Youth Award of Distinction

Peter Kiewit Sons Co. – Edmonton

Small Business Award of Distinction

Airworks Compressors Corporation – Edmonton

Aboriginal Relations – Best Practice Award of Distinction

Syncrude Canada Limited – Fort McMurray

Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction

Seven Lakes Oilfield Services – Cold Lake

Marketing Award of Distinction

Francomedia.com – Calgary

Youth Entrepreneur Award of Distinction

Enviro Foam Insulation – Raymond

Export Award of Distinction

MEGGITT Training Systems Canada – Medicine Hat

NOTE: A backgrounder profiling the winning companies is attached.

For further information, please contact:

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Recipients

2010 Alberta Business Awards of Distinction

Aboriginal Woman Entrepreneur Award of Distinction

Awarded to an Aboriginal woman entrepreneur who exemplifies effective leadership, innovation, and a commitment to enhancing the well-being of the Aboriginal community.

The Imagination Group – Calgary

Alberta employees – 5

The Imagination Group of Companies is a multi-faceted business that combines three distinct Aboriginal-themed operations developed by owner and CEO Marie Delorme. NATION Imagination – The Aboriginal Gifting Company is a full-service promotional products and corporate gifts supplier, representing the work of more than 35 Aboriginal artists. The products are used by over 200 corporations and are found in more than 250 retail locations in Canada. The newest addition to The Imagination Group is Authentically Aboriginal. This unique business involves an online registry to authenticate Aboriginal art and culture, including a national certification mark for Aboriginal art. Marie's third business, The Imagination Group, provides consulting services, including long-range planning and day-to-day business issues to corporations, governments and Aboriginal organizations.

Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction

Awarded to an organization that embraces diversity in its workforce, encourages respect and inclusion, eliminates discrimination and barriers, and helps create welcoming and inclusive workplaces and communities.

Canadian Pacific Railway – Calgary

Alberta employees – 3,650

Canada's railway industry has faced challenges attracting a diverse workforce because it is a traditionally male-dominated, 24/7 operating environment. Yet Canadian Pacific (CP) has taken significant strides to attract a diverse workforce. CP's initiatives date back to 1986 when it implemented strategies to identify and eliminate barriers to employment equity and diversity, and create a respectful and inclusive workplace. CP is particularly proud of its progress in the representation of women, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and visible minorities. Its Employee Relations group directs the diversity program, which includes a Racism Free Workplace Strategy, ongoing internal training and awareness on discrimination, Cross-Cultural and Aboriginal Awareness Training, and five diversity and employment equity advisory panels with the mandate to identify barriers and raise awareness of diversity.

Employer of Persons with Disabilities Award of Distinction

Awarded to a business demonstrating creative leading-edge practices in hiring, training, and developing employees with disabilities.

The Home Depot – Calgary

Alberta employees – 3,400

In 2008 The Home Depot set out to build a workforce with the same diversity as the communities it serves. It initiated the Orange Embrace program to remove attitudinal barriers by promoting diversity and inclusion among all people. A year after launching Orange Embrace a survey saw 8.4 per cent of its workers indicate they had a disability. The impacts of employing persons with disabilities on the organization have been broad and profound. Safety, for instance, has been increased for all employees when seeking to improve work practices for certain individuals. Adapting workspaces for employees has also resulted in increased accessibility for its customers. The overall work environment has been positive because all employees feel accepted and valued for their own unique abilities.

Employer of Youth Award of Distinction

Awarded to an organization that has demonstrated outstanding achievement in hiring youth and providing them with career-oriented opportunities.

Peter Kiewit Sons Co. – Edmonton

Alberta employees – 831

Peter Kiewit Sons Co. not only constructs highways, bridges, airports and hydroelectric plants, it's also built a strong workforce by hiring and training young engineers ever since the company began working in Canada almost 70 years ago. Kiewit Western Canada has grown tremendously in the last five years and it could not have done so without young, dedicated employees. Programs tailored to young workers include a management style that seeks input from youthful employees and a "living, breathing" informal mentoring process that is part of every manager's role. The company also has a strong tradition of training through its Career Development Program. Although training its young engineering recruits involves a significant investment, Kiewit learned decades ago that the long-term pay off is huge.

Small Business Award of Distinction

Awarded to the small business that best reflects the outstanding spirit and success of the province's small business community.

Airworks Compressors Corp. – Edmonton

Alberta employees – 5

Airworks' self-powered, diesel air compressors have already revolutionized Alberta's heavy industry, and the company has more "world firsts" ready to roll out. Airworks manufactures compact diesel truck-mount air compressors which run off a vehicle's engine to run air tools, hydraulic systems and generators. These efficient compressors replace large, inefficient tow-behinds or a separate service truck that had to operate at an increased idle to power the tools. Airworks' system ties into the truck's fuel and cooling systems, providing a fuel savings of about 75 per cent and reduced carbon emissions. The five-year-old company has a staff of five, who are encouraged to participate in charitable and community events with one day paid leave and matching donations.

Aboriginal Relations – Best Practice Award of Distinction

Awarded to a non-Aboriginal business that demonstrates outstanding achievement in Aboriginal relations, including economic development, employment and training, and Aboriginal community support.

Syncrude Canada Ltd. – Fort McMurray

Alberta employees – 5,400

Syncrude is a pioneer in building relationships with Aboriginal communities, and it's still forging new ground with its investments in training and education for youth. Not only are these investments the "right thing" to do, the company gains because it's developing a skilled labour pool in its remote area. Syncrude's success is evidenced by the 447 Aboriginal employees who made up 8.1 per cent of its workforce in 2008. The company seeks Aboriginal contractors and gives them preference where possible, and has donated \$5 million to Fort McMurray's Keyano College, \$2 million of which will go to a program that will enable Aboriginal students to prepare for trades. On a community level, in 2008 alone Syncrude invested \$6 million in local Aboriginal communities.

Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction

Awarded to a First Nation's-owned business that demonstrates outstanding achievement in business and has incorporated entrepreneurial and cultural concepts into its operation for long-term success.

Seven Lakes Oilfield Services – Cold Lake

Alberta employees – 60

This business has carved out a niche in its area by becoming the only First Nation providing oilfield services to Imperial Oil in waste management, scaffolding and general labour duties. Seven Lakes has a qualified pool of labour from which to draw because it has the capacity to hire from any of the Treaty Six First Nations in northeastern Alberta. The population base is approximately 12,000 people and at this time Seven Lakes' employees are 78 per cent Aboriginal. Seven First Nations are represented in the business, and the First Nations culture is incorporated into the company's business planning, management and operations. Seven Lakes also participates in many cultural events in the First Nations communities.

Marketing Award of Distinction

Awarded to the organization that has best developed and implemented a successful marketing strategy that has had a significant impact on the organization.

Francomedia.com – Calgary

Alberta employees – 10

Francomedia.com, a "creative services and idea fulfilment" company, sought to recession-proof its operations by nurturing existing clients with continued good service with the hopes they would also refer others, and seeking new customers with playful and creative marketing concepts. The campaign began with a direct marketing approach and special packaging promotional piece that showcased Francomedia.com's capacity for graphic design and illustrated its team's creative abilities. Francomedia.com kept spreading the news through every other available venue, including its website, mail inserts, speaking engagements, corporate blog and Twitter. The campaign worked – Francomedia.com not only increased its existing client work, it saw its new business jump by one-third and it even added staff, all with a fairly inexpensive campaign.

Youth Entrepreneur Award of Distinction

Awarded to a young entrepreneur who best exemplifies the qualities of effective leadership, innovatively applied know-how, and excellent potential for growth, and who shows a level of social, cultural, and environmental awareness.

Enviro Foam Insulation – Raymond

Alberta employees – 23

A four-brother team from Raymond, population 3,200, had a construction and renovation company when they discovered a Canadian-made insulation product made of soya oil and recycled plastics. The brothers decided to brand the product Enviro Foam and sell it to their Lethbridge-area customers. Enviro Foam was such a hit that by the end of the year they were working across the province and couldn't keep up with demand. The Baines then decided to franchise the popular product. Today, they have more than 30 franchise locations across the country and plan to expand to the U.S. and Australia. The Enviro Foam team promotes a fun, relaxed work environment, with each team member scheduling EMT (education, meditation, training) time during every work day.

Export Award of Distinction

Awarded to the organization that has demonstrated outstanding achievement in exporting products or services outside Canada's borders.

MEGGITT Training Systems Canada – Medicine Hat

Alberta employees – 43

MEGGITT'S military clients are among the most demanding in the world and its high-tech robotics are extremely technical. Perfectionism is mandatory for MEGGITT because this southern Alberta company develops and supplies unmanned vehicles and target drones, such as a pop-up helicopter target, a realistic tank target called the Badger, and the Hammerhead, a sea surface target. Although relatively small, MEGGITT has built its success by selling into niche military and law enforcement training markets around the world. It invests heavily in research and development to meet its customers' continually changing needs. Its clients include the Canadian Armed Forces, Britain, the U.S., Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Australia, Norway, Greece and Israel. MEGGITT is a not-for-profit enterprise that has become an important and innovative player in its region's economy.

Premier's Award of Distinction

Awarded to company that best exhibits outstanding achievement and leadership in Alberta, and demonstrates ongoing, consistent involvement in community events and organizations. All finalists from each category were automatically eligible and considered for this award.

Savanna Energy Services Corp. – Calgary

Alberta employees – 2,600

Savanna Energy is a world-class contract drilling and well servicing company that provides safe, efficient and cost-effective energy services for the petroleum and natural gas industry throughout Western Canada and the United States. People, technology, service and vision are all vital to Savanna, but its greatest strength is its pioneering approach to doing business. Savanna's successful partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities are examples of innovative thinking that benefits all parties. These industry-leading Aboriginal partnerships have brought First Nations communities into the Western Canadian energy industry as meaningful players, and Savanna is steadfast in its belief that they are critical to its own success. Importantly, Savanna's commitment to the Aboriginal communities in which it works includes extensive support at a community level.