
BACKGROUND

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Office of the Premier

2008 B.C. ABORIGINAL BUSINESS AWARDS

The 2008 Aboriginal Business Award recipients:

Young Female Aboriginal Entrepreneur of the Year:

Cristy Johnson, Cristy's Jewelry Designs, Victoria

Cristy Johnson, from the Niaka'pamux First Nation, owns Cristy's Jewelry Designs, which offers one-of-a-kind handcrafted jewelry made of sterling silver and semiprecious stones. Operating for just over two years, Johnson is the sole proprietor of her business and handles most aspects of business operations, including design, production, marketing and sales. Her jewelry is sold to retail stores through her website and directly to customers, and most recently garnered national recognition at a major music event.

Young Male Aboriginal Entrepreneur of the Year:

Jacob Beacon, CopperMoon Communications Inc., Hazelton

For the past nine years, Jacob Beacon has developed CopperMoon Communications into the first full-service Aboriginal communications agency in Western Canada, championing Aboriginal philosophy with mainstream tools. CopperMoon provides services such as websites, books, branding, communications plans, posters, road signs and video training. CopperMoon now has representatives in three British Columbia locations and serves a diverse client base.

Business of the Year - One to Two Person Enterprise:

Tryna Gower Photography, Dawson Creek

Tryna Gower is a photographer who operates an indoor and outdoor photography studio in Dawson Creek, producing commercial work but emphasizing the artistic side of the process. Gower's business opened in 2000 and has been a great asset to the northern community ever since. The business includes a mobile photography studio that travels throughout B.C. and northern Alberta.

Business of the Year - Two to 10 person enterprise:

Chase Office Interiors Inc., West Vancouver

Chase Office Interiors Inc. is a fully integrated contract furniture company. The company services both commercial and government clients that require any combination of design services, contract furniture, installation services and overall project management. Chase Office Interiors Inc. has grown from a small West Vancouver office to now include an office and showroom in Edmonton.

Business of the Year - 10 or More Person Enterprise (tie):

BC General Contracting Inc., Westside

BC General Contracting Inc. is a civil contracting company, located in Westside, which provides excavation and installation services for commercial and municipal water projects including roads, water and sewer installation. Since its inception in 2001, the company has grown from a two-excavator company providing strictly excavation services to a 41-piece multi-faceted business. BC General Contracting Inc. is now venturing into construction of multi-family real estate development.

Business of the Year - 10 or More Person Enterprise (tie):

Tin Wis Best Western Resort, Tofino

Tin Wis Best Western Resort in Tofino is a destination resort that provides a cultural experience to guests. Owned by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, it began in 1994 as a small, modest resort and is now a popular 85-room resort. The First Nations-themed lobby and restaurant are a cultural experience of their own and the menu of the Calm Waters Dining Room incorporates traditional First Nations cuisine.

Community-Owned Business of the Year:

Metlakatla Development Corporation, Prince Rupert

The Metlakatla Development Corporation, located outside of Prince Rupert, functions as an independent business arm for the Metlakatla First Nation. The corporation, established in 1989, owns and operates the Metlakatla Ferry Services Ltd., North Co-op Ferry Services Ltd., First Nations Training and Development Centre, Grassy Bay Services Ltd., Metlakatla Forestry Corporation, Seashore Charters Ltd., and Northland Marine Sales and Service Ltd.

Joint Venture Business of the Year:

Nicola-Forest Products Ltd., Merritt (partner – Ardeu Wood Products Ltd.)

The Upper Nicola Band in Merritt and Ardeu Wood Products Ltd have been partners since 1996 in a forest licence specifically for conversion of overstocked small-diameter lodgepole pines, often seen as waste product; by harvesting and replanting them they become productive trees for the future. A First Nations' logging trucking company, road-building forestry division and silviculture operations have been created as a result of this long-term partnership.

Individual Achievement Award

Dorothy Grant – Dorothy Grant Ltd, Vancouver

Dorothy Grant is a First Nations fashion design company, established in 1992, 100 per cent owned by Haida artist Dorothy Grant. The company has a 15-year history as a successful manufacturer, retailer and wholesaler. She has built a brand that is unique worldwide and has international recognition. Her line of accessories is sold in the Smithsonian gift shops in Washington, D.C., New York City, Alaska, California and New Mexico. She was a feature designer in the Best of the West show in Turin, Italy for the 2006 Winter Olympics where she was well received by the Italian design company. The company is now poised to expand the product line via a number of licensing agreements.

Individual Achievement Award

Angelique Merasty Levac – Angelique's Native Arts, Prince George.

Angelique Merasty Levac creates one-of-a-kind birch bark art in the tradition of the Northern Woodland Cree women. In 1994, she opened a shop to sell her art and expanded over time to include masks and carvings, carved jewelry and arts and crafts of local artisans. She is one of only three remaining artists in the world who practice birch bark biting. There is a great deal of interest in her work and she travels regularly to art shows and pow-wows to sell her work and bring awareness to a dying craft.

Best of the BEST Award

Meagan Pierre – OWN Spa, Penticton

Meagan Pierre's winning business idea is to operate the OWN spa, which will provide customers in Penticton with a full array of esthetician services using 100 per cent organic natural product line. OWN means one with nature.

For more information, visit www.BCAchievement.com.

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