

In Saint John, New Brunswick a new spirit of business celebration is gaining momentum. A city which proudly boasts three of the 26 fastest growing companies in Canada, Saint John is solidifying its mark in business history.

Recognizing the remarkable contribution of the companies that fuel the local economy, the Saint John Board of Trade — representing over 600 companies and 900 business representatives — is saluting its best in business with the Outstanding Business Achievement Awards.

Joe Levesque is the chairman of the organizing committee for the 1991 Outstanding Business Achievement Awards and also New Brunswick manager for Corporate Communications Ltd. Levesque believes the awards program is very significant to the port city: it provides a two-fold value. "It's a way for the Board of Trade to recognize our own," he explains. "And it's proving to be extremely useful for the nominees, the finalists, and the winners as a marketing tool...giving them a third party, independent endorsement of their efforts." And being employed with a company which itself completes both internationally-acclaimed and award winning work, he states that "this is very valuable!"

Levesque also reports that the local business organization is committed to the continual development of the program. In fact, the growth of the awards program is due to the momentum developing, he says; and now, with a bit of history behind the program, both members and non-members anticipate the affair with keen interest. He also explains



By:  
Brian  
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# OUTSTANDING



Top: Outstanding Business Achievers: Angus Beattie (l), president of Beattie Construction Services Ltd., and Kim Hunter (r) president of Hunter Marketing and Communications Ltd., proudly display their 1991 Outstanding Business Achievement Awards with Saint John Board of Trade president Skip Cormier following the awards dinner last fall. Brian McLaughlin photo.

Bottom: Business gathered for outstanding profiles: Nearly 250 local business people and politicians gathered in Saint John, New Brunswick last November to view the profiles of six of the port city's best in business. Brian McLaughlin photo.

# BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PROGRAM



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the awards are even important for those who have not been nominated because many businesses simply like to find out if they are doing business with the winners. Essentially, "people like to be associated with successful companies."

Successfully developed from smaller awards programs which the Board started in 1985, the current program involves at least five-months of advanced planning by the organizing committee. Members of last year's committee, along with Levesque, included Stephen Clarke, a chartered accountant and partner with Doanne Raymond; Herb Duncan, president and owner of Fundy Computer Services Ltd. — a 1990 Outstanding Business Achievement Award Winner; Dan LeBlanc, an economic development officer with the City of Saint John; Richard Maxwell, a project manager with Datacor Atlantic Inc.; and Darryl Goyetche, general manager for the Saint John Board of Trade.

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The awards are presented to local companies which have displayed outstanding business achievement in sales growth, innovation, entrepreneurship, marketing, excellence in employee relations, outstanding community relations, employment growth, and other notable accomplishments. Nominations are called for at the end of each summer; and, from these, six finalists are chosen to receive recognition, which involves media attention and audio-visual profiles during the night of the awards dinner, held each fall. Finalists for 1991 included Hughes Surveys and Consultants Ltd., Hunter Marketing and Communications Ltd., and Wayside Industries (1983) Ltd. — in the category of \$5 million or less in sales, 50 or fewer employees; and Beattie Construction Services Ltd., Grannan's Enterprises and Meridian Construction Inc. — in the category of \$5 million or over in sales, with more than 50 employees.

Levesque points out the judges for the 1991 awards competition were "extremely impressed" with the nominees because of the number of activities, diversity of business ventures, many extracurricular activities, and the achievements in other areas they have accomplished.

Consequently, Hunter Marketing and Communications Ltd. and Beattie Construction Services Ltd. were chosen as the winners for the list of finalists.

Kim Hunter, president of Hunter Marketing and Communications, says, "winning the award has been a tremendous morale booster" for her six-year-

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old company. She confesses that because her company is so young they did not expect to win. And because Hunter Marketing and Communications was "up against some formidable competition," she says, "winning was beyond belief...absolutely wonderful!" Leading a company which offers complete services in in-house, pre-press capabilities to produce brochures, newsletters, direct mail, and point-of-purchase articles, advertisement, along with other printed materials, the 33-year-old executive acknowledges that winning "will definitely add in helping our company as it continues to grow in the future."

Notwithstanding future acknowledgements for the company's winning, however, recognition from the local business community started the moment Hunter's firm was chosen as a finalist. Receiving over 100 congratulatory letters and flowers from clients and other local businesses, Hunter says, "that kind of support was simply marvellous."

As a former finalist in the Board's Business Owner of the Year competition — which was ultimately incorporated into the Outstanding Business Achievement Awards in 1990 — she admits that the program has improved tremendously. In fact, she says she now feels the two programs are totally different. "Looking at the Outstanding Business Achievement Awards, you can see how the program has grown each year and matured." Furthermore, she states "it is absolutely good for business...to be recognized for the work that local businesses are doing."



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Darryl Goyetche reiterates the same message: "We believe it is as important in the business community to recognize success, as it is to recognize success in arts or any other human endeavour." In fact, he says since the awards were broadened in scope to more adequately reflect the entire Saint John business community, it has increased the programs profile and appeal. At the awards dinner last fall, nearly 250 local business people and politicians gathered to view finalist profiles and hear the address of guest speaker, Donald Osborne, president and chief executive officer of Maclean Hunter Ltd.

In addition, those who gathered for the celebrations also heard an inspirational winning speech from Beattie Construction president, Angus Beattie. Addressing a crowd which represented everything from small- to large-sized businesses, Beattie challenged business leaders to become ambassadors for economic and regional development.

Pondering the foreseeable exodus of manufacturing companies from Ontario, as "disgruntled business owners" look to the United States as a place to relocate their economic machines, he said the Atlantic provinces, especially

New Brunswick, have excellent attributes that would appeal to any business interest. It offers a stable work environment, lower cost of labour, lower cost of land, an available skilled workforce, good infrastructure (8-hours drive from Boston), a well managed provincial government, regional incentives, and a high quality of life.

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Expressing gratitude for receiving the award and crediting the "strong team" contribution of his employees for his company's successful growth, Beattie exclaims, "The best thing I ever did was set up a business here!" Moreover, employing up to 65 people during peak periods and equipped with a strong stra-

tegic business plan, Beattie Construction is rapidly scaling the construction industry summit. Just last summer, the company ranked within the Top 26 fastest growing companies in the nation, according to Profit Magazine.

Furthermore, Beattie also foresees new opportunities for Saint John's economy. Inevitably, there will be a shift from east-west trading patterns to north-south links, he believes. And "it is going to be a great opportunity for us in the '90's...because we are in a position, logistically, to take advantage of market opportunities in the eastern seaboard of the US, as well as being an eastern port of call for the economic union in Europe — for Europe '92."

Indirectly, Beattie believes the Outstanding Business Achievement Awards fosters a positive message to business outside the region. He says the awards program creates a renewed feeling about the local business community. "The awards convince us that this is a great place to run a business," he points out, "and when you believe that, it is much easier to communicate this message to those from outside the community." And, for this reason, he states "the awards are an excellent idea." **LB**

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