

Ernst & Young celebrates Prairies finalists for 2009 Entrepreneur Of The Year[®]

Firm says today's entrepreneurs are tomorrow's market leaders

(Calgary, 7 July 2009) Entrepreneurial-minded companies are growing with incredible speed and quickly entering into the ranks of the world's largest corporations, Ernst & Young said today when unveiling this year's finalists for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year Awards.

"Our Prairies finalists this year have accomplished a huge feat — growing their businesses, creating new jobs and building their communities — all despite a turbulent economy," says David Boomer, Director of Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year for the Prairies region.

Historically, economists, academics and industry leaders have agreed that recessions foster the innovative thinking synonymous with entrepreneurship. As referenced in Ernst & Young's latest white paper, *Entrepreneurship and innovation*, many of today's most recognizable brands were actually born during recessions. Many of these so-called "downturn babies" now have market capitalizations in the hundreds of millions, or even billions, of dollars.

"There's no question that innovation stimulates economic growth, and it's become clear that now is the time to capitalize on entrepreneurial thinking," says Boomer. "Those entrepreneurs who seize opportunities can ignite a spark, and help propel our economy forward."

A recent Ernst & Young survey, *Seizing opportunities*, shows many entrepreneurs already have the right idea. Ninety-three percent of respondents said that, despite the economic downturn, they are broadening their customer base and entering new markets.

"It's reassuring to see that many of our Prairies entrepreneurs are already looking ahead and moving forward," Boomer says "No matter how big or small your company, you should never lose your entrepreneurial focus. By building the right corporate culture, even large corporations can think outside the box and drive new ways of doing business."

The Entrepreneur Of The Year Awards recognize the spirit and contribution of entrepreneurs here and around the world. The Canadian program is in its 16th year of honouring the country's most impressive entrepreneurs from all areas of business.

The Prairies winners will be announced at a banquet in Calgary on October 15, and the overall winner will represent the region at the national banquet held in Vancouver on November 24.

The 2009 Prairies finalists for Entrepreneur Of The Year are:

Business-to-business products and services

John Wilson

H. Wilson Industries Ltd. | Fort McMurray, Alberta

wilson-industries.com

Construction company that provides municipal paving and surface, sewer and water, excavation, site grading, sand and gravel, concrete works, and snow-clearing services.

Wade Miller

Pinnacle Staffing Solutions | Winnipeg, Manitoba

pinnaclestaffing.ca

Fast-growing North American executive and professional search firm.

Randy Gee

Randy Gee Holdings | Calgary, Alberta

flynca.com

Owns or partially owns businesses that serve unique needs of the oilfield services industry, particularly in the Fort St. John region, including airline charter, platform piles, tool rentals, real estate and construction.

Business-to-consumer products and services

David Farran

Associate Veterinary Clinics Ltd. | Calgary, Alberta

associatevets.com

Owns and operates chain of small animal veterinary clinics and hospitals.

Bryan King

High Speed Crow Inc. | East Selkirk, Manitoba

highspeedcrow.ca

Wireless broadband internet service provider in rural Manitoba.

Minh Ngo

Memory Express Computer Products Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

memoryexpress.com

Computer and electronics retailer catering to both consumer and corporate clients.

Robert Brisette

Petland 1009833 Alberta Ltd. | Winnipeg, Manitoba

petland.ca

Retailer of pets and pet supplies and franchising Petland stores.

Cleantech

Mark Montemurro

Alter NRG Corp. | Calgary, Alberta

alternrg.com

Delivers clean, efficient alternative energy solutions that are environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

Christianne Carin

EarthRenew Organics Ltd. | Calgary, Alberta

earthrenew.com

Develops, patents and commercializes technologies for electricity generation, heat processing, fertilizer manufacture, water desalination and water treatment for mine tailings and industrial lagoons.

Evan Chrapko, Shane Chrapko

Highmark Renewables Research L.P. | Edmonton, Alberta

highmark.ca

Transforms residues from agriculture and food processing into valuable renewable energy and other renewable products.

Jode Himann

Nemalux LED Lighting Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

nemalux.com

Develops LED lighting products designed for areas where water, vibration, maintenance, temperature or other hazardous environments negatively affect conventional illumination.

*Emerging***Carolyne McIntyre, Jodi Willoughby**

Crave Cookies and Cupcakes Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

cravecupcakes.ca

Bakers of cookies, cakes and cupcakes from family recipes.

Jean St-Onge

Icon Stone & Tile Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

iconstonetile.com

Natural stone fabrication and installation business that develops custom stone products, ceramic and porcelain tiles, faucets and sinks.

Gord Leder

Leder Steel Ltd. | Edmonton, Alberta

ledersteel.com

Manufactures and assembles structural steel buildings.

Linda Maslechko, Mona Rae Peterson

Triple Flip Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

tripleflip.ca

Designer and retailer of clothing for active pre-teen girls.

*Energy services***Ron Carson**

Carson Energy Services Ltd. | Lampman, Saskatchewan

carsonwelding.com

Provider of pipeline and facilities construction and maintenance services to companies in the oil and gas industry in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

Brent Erickson, Todd Guy, Brad Turnbull

Independent Electric & Controls Ltd. | Drayton Valley, Alberta

iecgroupp.ca

Electrical, instrumentation and automation contractor serving the oil and gas, mining, commercial and lumber industries.

Ronald Shannon, Stephen Smith

Strike Energy Services Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

strikeenergy.com

Private, employee-owned company that provides pipeline and facility construction and maintenance, high-density polyethylene, electrical and instrumentation and fabrication services to the energy industry.

David Tuccaro

Tuccaro Group of Companies Inc. | Fort McMurray, Alberta

tuccaroinc.com

Provides a wide range of services in support of the oilsands industry of northeastern Alberta.

Energy technology

Brian Taylor

Detection Technologies | Calgary, Alberta

detection.com

Provider of compressor optimization and fleet management to the natural gas industry worldwide.

Dwight Loree

GASFRAC Energy Services Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

gasfrac.com

Technology well-fracturing company that has developed a proprietary new technology, the Vantage™ Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Fracturing Process.

Dan Themig

Packers Plus Energy Services Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

packersplus.com

High-value provider of technology-based solutions to the oil and gas industry. Specializes in open-hole, HPHT, high-pressure retrievable packers, and specialty tools.

Manufacturing

Mogens Smed

DIRTT Environmental Solutions Ltd. | Calgary, Alberta

dirtt.net

Manufactures movable walls that replace drywall and studs, and are reconfigurable for office changes.

Judy Quigley, Ron Quigley

Gunnar Manufacturing Inc. | Calgary, Alberta

gunnar.ca

Manufacturer and distributor of commercial office furniture and movable walls.

Robert Bertram

Ideal Products of Canada Ltd. | Edmonton, Alberta

idealproducts.ca

Manufacturer of metal jacketing products for industrial insulation.

Russ A. Edwards

WGI Westman Group Inc. | Winnipeg, Manitoba

westmangroup.com

Operates manufacturing, sales and distribution facilities in 24 centres in Canada and the US, maintains dealer networks across North America, and has a worldwide customer base.

Professional/financial services

Michael Mezei

Mawer Investment Management Ltd. | Calgary, Alberta

mawer.com

Manager of investment portfolios for individual and institutional investors for more than three decades.

Rick Skauge

Olympia Trust Company Corporation | Calgary, Alberta

olympiatrust.com

Non-deposit-taking trust company that offers services in health care, registered plans, shareholder services and foreign exchange.

Larry Shumka

SCM Insurance Services | Edmonton, Alberta

scm.ca

Canada's largest independent supplier of claims management services for the insurance industry.

Charlie Spiring

Wellington West Holdings Inc. | Winnipeg, Manitoba

wellingtonwest.com

Provides full-service brokerage, financial planning, asset management and capital markets services.

Social

Kori Chilibeck

Earth Water International Ltd. | Edmonton, Alberta

earthwater.ca

Bottled-water company that gives 100% of net profits to the United Nations Refugee Agency to provide clean drinking water to refugees around the world.

Glori Meldrum

Little Warriors | Edmonton, Alberta

littlewarriors.ca

National charitable organization focused on the education and prevention of child sexual abuse.

Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year is sponsored nationally by Global Television Network, *National Post*, *La Presse* and RDI. Prairies region program sponsors are the *Calgary Herald* and *Business in Calgary*.

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