

Chamber recognizes the best in business for 2013

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By **LISA TALLYN**
Staff Writer

And the winners are...

Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce announced its 2013 Business Achievement Award Winners Monday with the Business of the Year Award going to Georgetown's Canadian Tire.

Other recipients are: Michael Carter of Carter Farm Market (Entrepreneur of the Year), Town of Halton Hills Maintenance Co-ordinator Grant Harris (Employee of the Year) and BRC Canada (Green Award).

Canadian Tire Associate Dealer Tomas Kase said he was shocked and surprised to hear the store had been named Business of the Year.

"I think it's a pretty big deal. There are a lot of businesses in town that provide great service to the community so to be chosen as the top, that's pretty significant," said Kase.

Kase added he was proud of the store's more than 70 staff members (25 who work there full-time).

"If the staff didn't do what they do, day in and day out— looking after the customers— the customers would go somewhere else," he said.

For nearly 30 years Kase has been the owner of the store, which has been at its present location (315 Guelph St.) since 1995. Before that, it was located where the Beer Store and LCBO are, next to Georgetown Marketplace.

Kase said since opening at its current location the store has gone through a couple interior refreshes and one major expansion that saw it grow from 28,000 to 52,000 sq. ft.

"Just like everything else, it evolves," said Kase. The business has been very supportive of community projects and causes over the years.

"If the community is good to the businesses, then it's up to the businesses to give back where it's needed," said Kase.

Canadian Tire has been a big supporter of Georgetown Hospital, pledging \$100,000 to its ER expansion in 2011. Last year it pledged \$25,000 to the Stay Home and Play Arena campaign, and this year pledged the first \$20,000 in the Community Cycling Challenge in aid of the Georgetown Hospital Campaign.

It also supports Georgetown Bread Basket and sponsors numerous sports teams, the Big Daddy Festival and Lions Club Parade. The store has also been recognized for the success of its local Jumpstart program.



Entrepreneur of the Year: Michael Carter of Carter Farm Market.



Employee of the Year: Grant Harris of the Town of Halton Hills.

Photos by Ted Brown

Employee of the Year

Grant Harris was taken completely off guard when he learned he was the Chamber's pick for Employee of the Year.

"I definitely didn't expect it," said Harris, Maintenance Co-ordinator/Civic Centre at the Town of Halton Hills for the past nine years. He's also responsible for maintenance at several other Town buildings including Hornby Community Centre, three buildings in Cedarvale Park and Norval Community Centre.

"It's never a dull moment. Every day's a different day. There's no monotony to it," said Harris.

More than 100 people signed the nomination form for Harris, with one nominator stressing his "customer service skills are second to none" and praising him for his hard work ethic.

Harris, who previously worked on the line at Chrysler and in building maintenance for Canadian Airlines before starting the Town originally as an arena operator, considers everyone at all the facilities his customers, "including the mayor, councillors and senior management."

Entrepreneur of the Year

Mike Carter of Carter Farm Market is excited to be named Entrepreneur of the Year, but admits he doesn't really feel he deserves the recognition

But, he adds, he was "honoured," and that it "gives some reward to all the efforts you put in."

The market is an on-farm, locally focused café and boutique specializing in field fresh produce (much of it grown right on the 105-acre Carter Farm), honey and preserves, gourmet food items and baked treats. The Market's Bluebird Café offers soups, sandwiches, and seasonal patio BBQ food.

Carter, whose family has a long history in Norval, had been operating a roadside market at the Carter farm, 9880 Winston Churchill Blvd. for a few years but last summer decided to open as an indoor/outdoor farm market/café that operates year-round.

"We try to carry anything we can locally," he said.

While there picking up fresh items, people can visit the farm's animals including alpacas, horses, ponies, sheep, goats and chickens.

Green Award

BRC Canada has been named the Chamber's Green Award winner for its strong commitment to the environment in all aspects of its business.

The Armstrong Ave. company designs and manufactures workstations and case goods for both large and small companies. Under the direction of President Bill Melnik it has embarked on environmental policies that are incorporated into all of the company's products and manufacturing process.

The company has also recently installed one of the largest rooftop solar panel arrays in southern Ontario that will generate 365 megawatts of power each year and have a life expectancy of 30 to 50 years.

Based on the success of the solar installation Melnik started Canadian Solarform Ltd. which will sell and install solar systems.

BRC vice-president of sales Steven Geiger said, "We are proud to have been selected for the award. It's great BRC is being recognized for its investment to the environment."

The Chamber will honour the recipients Oct. 30 with a dinner at Glen Cairn Golf Club at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$65 per person. Call 905-877-7119 or email mary@haltonhillschamber.on.ca.



BRC Canada president Bill Melnik.

File photo

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