

Chamber announces Business Achievement award winners

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Staff Writer



DICK SPEAR—Employee of the year

received a big one when he was named the Chamber's 2006 Employee of the Year.

Spear, the Town's senior supervisor of Public Works, was thrilled to receive the honour.

"I had no idea," said Spear, a 26-year Town employee. "Something nice is really good to hear."

In his letter nominating Spear, Councillor Bryan Lewis called him a "great ambassador" for the Town of Halton Hills "who attends to details in a quiet professional manner."

Spear's job is to oversee all the Town's public works from pothole repair to ditching issues to tree and road maintenance.

"I can honestly say that I enjoy my job," said Spear, who worked himself up the ranks from labourer to his current job.

Civic Pride

MacKinnon Family Funeral Home in Acton is the recipient of the Chamber's Civic Pride Award.

"Bob and Margaret (MacKinnon) take great pride in keeping their grounds in immaculate condition," said Acton BIA co-ordinator Josey Bonnette in her nomination letter. "They decorate their establishment according to the seasons and during the Halloween season they even participate in the Acton BIA Halloween Haunted House by donating a coffin for use in the funhouse."

She also said the MacKinnons are active in the Acton community.

Bob said they were surprised to win the award.

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Superior Glove Works Ltd. president Tony Geng says they are really proud of their community. The feeling appears to be mutual as the longtime Acton company was named the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce 2006 Business of the Year earlier this week.

Other recipients of the annual Business Achievement Awards were: Employee of the Year— Dick Spear; Civic Pride— MacKinnon Family Funeral Home; Entrepreneur of the Year— Nancy Wilkes of Acton Optical and Junior Achievement Volunteer of the Year— Virginia Hornby of CPI.

Geng called the award a "tremendous honour."

"We're very excited about it. It was a complete surprise.

"We hope that we are good corporate citizens— we try," said Geng. "We can't imagine being anywhere else than here in Acton."

Superior Glove Works earned the award for its longevity in town— it's set to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2010— its link to the town's strong leather heritage and for what it gives back to the community.

The company has been in Acton since 1910 when it was known as Acton Glove. The name was changed to Superior Glove Works in 1961 when Frank Geng, a tanner from Edmonton, moved to Acton and purchased the business.

At 79, he is still involved but has cut back to a couple of hours a day, leaving the operation to his sons Tony and Joe (vice-president).

Tony Geng says the company currently employs 65 people in Acton and 35 at its Newfoundland plant. Many of them, he said, are long-timers with the company that makes, or has made elsewhere, approximately 2,000 different styles of gloves, mostly sold directly to factories, industry and for medical and dental uses.

He estimates the company sells hundreds of millions of pairs each year— ranging from cotton, leather, to plastic and latex gloves mostly in Canada and the U.S., but also throughout the world.

"We try to always stay ahead of the trends," said Geng, stressing the importance the company places on research and development.

In one area of the Acton plant 300 robots are used to make seamless knit gloves— one every two minutes.

In a nomination letter from Acton BIA co-ordinator Josey Bonnette, it was stressed that Superior Glove participates in the community.

"They donate gloves every year to the Town of Halton Hills Earth Day as well as the Downtown Acton Clean Up Blitz, including schools in the Halton Hills area," said Bonnette.

She added the company also donated gloves to volunteers during the 9-11 crisis in New York, supports minor sports in Acton, Acton Leathertown Festival and was a large contributor to the 3 Musketeers Skateboard Park.

The company has also been growing. It recently opened a warehouse in Edmonton and expanded its Acton plant by 16,500 sq. ft. Geng said it is set to grow by that much again this year.

Employee of the Year

Dick Spear is used to hearing complaints from residents about potholes or their streets not being plowed

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