

Milton • Means Business



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

✓ A prize you can really warm up to

Beachcomber Hot Tubs owner Peter Draper (left) and Bergsma Home Décor owner Jeff Bergsma congratulate fireplace winner Linda Pickard. Ms Pickard won the fireplace in a draw recently hosted by the two local businesses.

Area businesses share expertise and knowledge

By JASON MISNER

The Champion

Saifu Mawji says he's constantly looking to better his local company, Thru-Way Trailers.

For 35 years — the last five in Milton on Market Drive — Thru-Way, comprised of between 40 and 50 employees, has been manufacturing specialized/customized trailer beds for trucks to haul heavy materials like bricks and steel.

"We're always interested in being world-class," said Mr. Mawji, the company's president. "We want to be the best in the world in trailer manufacturing."

This desire to improve his business drove him to attend a briefing held by an association called the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC) at Hugh Foster Hall Wednesday. Attended by nine businesses, the briefing was organized by the Town of Milton. The EMC, designed to share information, has more than 550 manufacturers in more than 100 communities in Ontario, including Burlington, as well as in New Brunswick.

EMC president and general manager Al Diggins said in an interview the association will hold its first official meeting May 5. Two companies have agreed to join. He invited manufacturers to come see what they think. "Come on out and give it a taste," Mr. Diggins said. "We're not out to sell anything."

In his slide presentation, he told businesses that the EMC concept sprouted when, through his business dealings, he discovered that Midland, with a population of 12,000, had 18 manufacturers and only two of them knew each other.

Eventually, the EMC grew and has created more regions along the way. Each region has a unique EMC to address the different issues that exist in each one. "Each community has its own personality," Mr. Diggins told the briefing.

When a member has a question or problem to solve, it calls a field service advisor who contacts the right member for the appropriate help. Developing trust, Mr. Diggins said, is a key factor among EMC members offering to assist each other.

Andrew Siltala, Milton's economic development officer, said he learned about EMC and thought it would benefit manufacturers in town to hear about its work. He estimates about 30 per cent of industries in Milton are manufacturers, accounting for the greatest percentage of the town's workforce.

Mr. Mawji said EMC could prove helpful.

For example, he said Thru-Way buys screws designed to drill into trailer floors made of wood from a local company. Perhaps that company will have information about a particular kind of wood Thru-way might be able to use when it constructs its trailers.

For more information, call the Town at (905) 878-7211 or visit www.excellence-in-manufacturing.org.

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Learn about international exporting

Halton Region's Business Development Centre is set to offer a spring program designed to encourage area businesses to export their products and services to international markets.

Launched in partnership with Ontario Exports Inc., Halton Region International will begin with an export fair April 22 from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Held at the Halton Regional Centre Auditorium, 1151 Bronte Rd., in Oakville, the event costs \$30 per person and will include a number of representatives highlighting the benefits of selling on a global stage.

From there, an export training program will run May 5, 11 and 18 at a cost of \$300 per company.

Limited to 20 companies, the series of three four-hour seminars is suited to businesses with little to no exporting experience, or businesses currently exporting to the United States only.

For more information on either component of the Halton Region International program, call (905) 825-6000, or visit www.haltonbusiness.com.

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