

BUSINESS: Nominations open for additional awards

Strawberry Festival, duck company being honoured by chamber

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The Strawberry Festival has been named non-profit of the year by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

"Nothing symbolizes a not-for-profit organization working for the benefit of the Whitchurch-Stouffville community (better than the Strawberry Festival," Edward Nelles, executive director of the chamber, told The Sun-Tribune.

Two of the three non-competitive award winners were announced during a press conference at Willow Springs Winery Monday afternoon.

"It was a wonderful surprise," said Shaen Armstrong, outgoing chairperson of the Strawberry Festival.

"It couldn't happen without the history and guidance of those people who have been around for a long time" volunteering with the committee, she told The Sun-Tribune.

This past festival brought 30,000 people to downtown Stouffville, according to Mr. Nelles and put the municipality on the map.

"We love to recognize people who haven't been recognized before. ... Yes, it's high-time they get recognized for their contribution to the community," Mr. Nelles told The Sun-Tribune.

The legacy award winner was King Cole Ducks.

"We just try to be good people, do the right thing," Debbi Conzelmann, CEO of the family-owned and operated company, told The Sun-Tribune.

Ms Conzelmann noted that although it is a multi-generational company started by her grandfather in the 1950s, all of their employees are like family and that is what has led to their worldwide success.

For all they have achieved, Ms Conzelmann said the Warden Avenue-based operation does try to fly under the radar because "agriculture isn't always welcome in an area where the population is becoming more metropolitan".

The third non-competitive award is for lifetime achievement, which will be handed out at the awards banquet, Nov. 12 at Stouffville's Royal Canadian Legion.

Nominations for the competitive categories — best new business, small and large business, young entrepreneur and employee of the year — are being accepted until Sept. 27.

There are about 800 businesses in Whitchurch Stouffville so "we would expect at least half that number to be nominated," said Karen Cashin, chair of the awards' committee.

For more information on nominations and tickets, go to <http://whitchurch-stouffville.ca/>

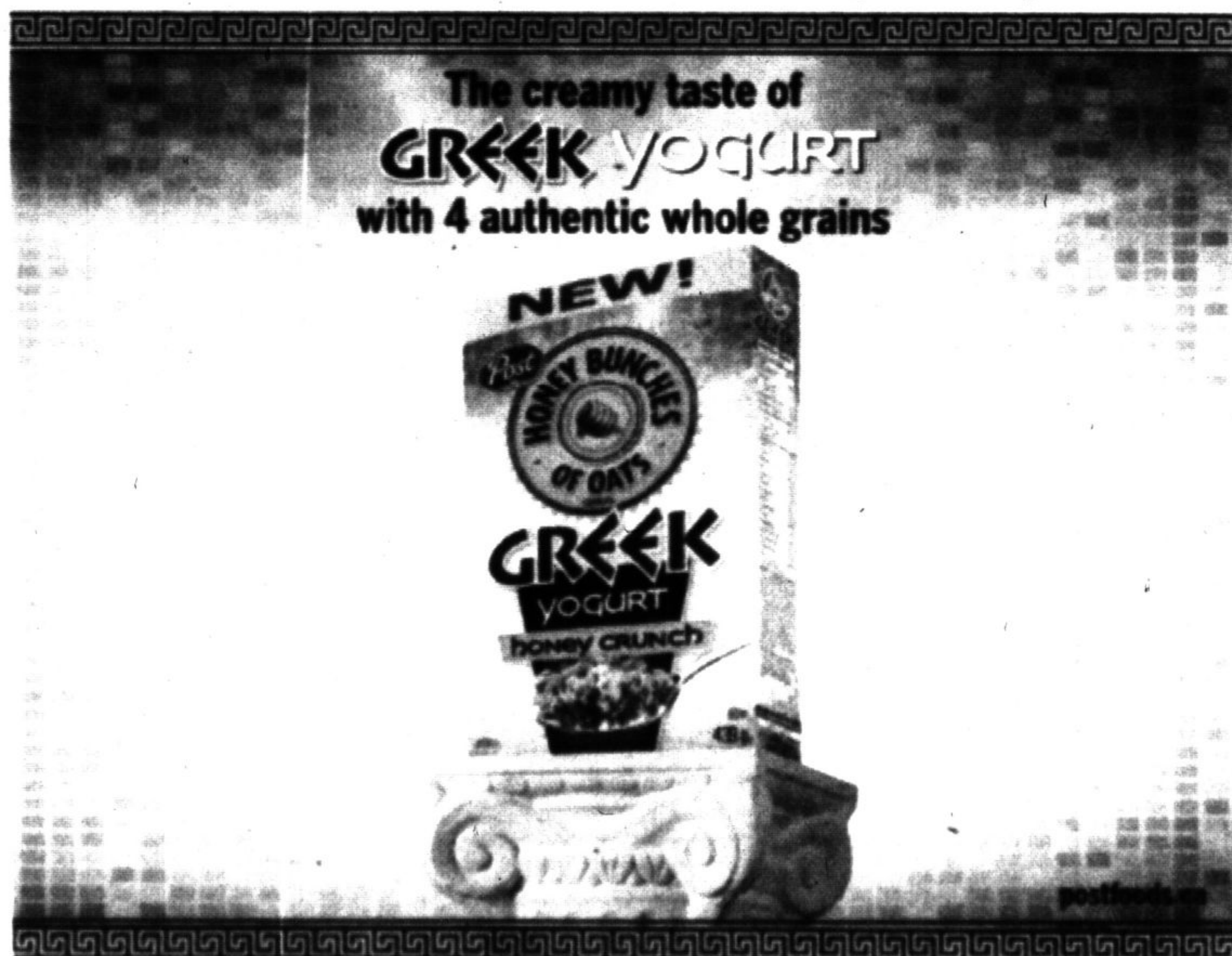


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Edward Nelles, executive director of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce, joins award winners Shaen Armstrong, chairperson of the Strawberry Festival Chair, and Beddi Conzelmann of King Cole Ducks and Karen Cashin, chairperson of the chamber's business awards committee, at Willow Springs Winery Monday.

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