

The Best of Canmore Business

BY SHARI BISHOP BOWES
PUBLISHER

Soap, cars, newspapers, dinner theatre and hardware supplies don't normally have a lot in common under normal circumstances.

As the products of some high achieving Canmore businesses, however, they all share the limelight as winners in the Canmore/Kananaskis Chamber of Commerce 2002 Business Excellence Awards. Eight awards were presented at the annual President's Gala Saturday (Nov. 1) evening at Nakoda Lodge.

Following are the award winners, with some highlights from the presentations.

Business of the Year Award: Can-Bow Motors, owned by Ken Pauls Sr.

"For 25 years it has been a mainstay of the local economy, and of the local community," said Councillor Jon Frolick, presenting on behalf of award sponsor, the Town of Canmore. "While it's never been easy to be in business in Canmore, these guys were in business when it was nigh on impossible, when the local population was small enough to make the bankers seriously question their sanity."

"They were here before the mine closed, and here when it did, when both unemployment and interest rates were in the double digits. They've watched both tourism and

construction take hold, they've watched the competition grow and still they've held on and grown with the town.

"Today it's one of the most respected businesses in Canmore, one whose name embodies fairness, service and integrity."

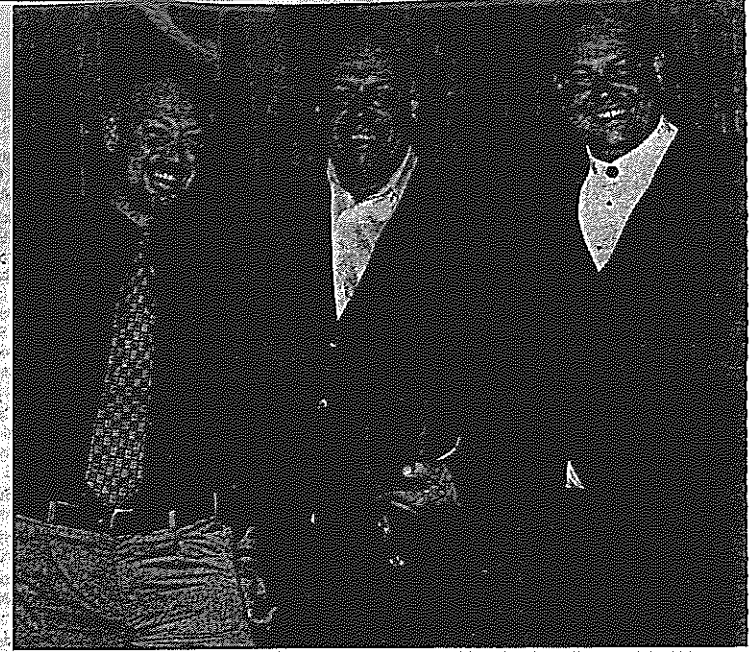
Frolick added the community owes a huge debt of gratitude to Can-Bow's owner Ken Pauls Sr., for his creation of the highly successful Canmore Trade Show.

Pauls Sr. was humble in his acceptance, thanking the community for its ongoing support and faith in his business. He called on his two sons, Colin and Ken Jr., to accept the award with him, giving each a big hug before they all took their seats again.

Service Excellence Award Retail Category: R.D. Building Supplies, owned by Rich Shellian

"(R.D. Building Supplies) offers the kind of first-name, small town service that keeps Canmore's intimacy alive," said presenter Brenda Stanton, who represented award sponsor Tourism Canmore, "with the kind of prices and selection that keeps many of our retail dollars from traveling down the road to Calgary."

Stanton said the owners and staff at R.D. Building Supplies drew kudos from the production crew filming Everwood on Main Street last spring, "exactly the kind of word of mouth we need as we pursue more movie



Ken Pauls Sr., (centre) owner of Can-Bow Motors, shares the Business of the Year Award with his sons, Colin (left) and Ken Jr. Success in business is about attitude, Ken Sr. told the crowd.

making business for our economy.

Service Excellence Award Hotel/Motel or B&B Category: The Creek House, owned by Gail Irwin and Greg Elford

The first B&B in Canmore with the coveted four-and-a-half star rating from Canada Select for service and luxurious surroundings, the Creekhouse's owners "have carefully created an environment in which the every need of the rich and famous — or merely the well-heeled — can be met," Stanton said.

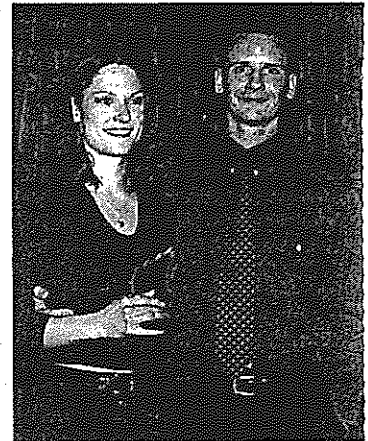
Service Excellence Award "Other" Category: Canmore Courier, owned by Mike and Louise Shore

"Our winners tonight have spoiled us," Stanton said. "They make our businesses in Canmore as responsive, or more so, to the need for quick turnaround in today's business world as those in the big city."

The Shores, Stanton added, are also major contributors to many community events, from corporate sponsorship to countless volunteer hours in local sports and athletics.

Entrepreneurial Achievement Award: Rocky Mountain Soap Company, owned by Karina Birch and Cameron Baty

"Tonight's winners are young, they're successful, they're squeaky clean, and they own one of Canada's hottest new businesses," said Teresa Mullen, presenting on behalf of award sponsor, Business Development Centre West.



Karina Birch and Cam Baty, owners of Rocky Mountain Soap Co., accept the Entrepreneurial Achievement Award.

Birch and Baty bought the company in 1999 and have since moved off Bow Valley Trail into downtown, opened a second location in Banff, started a large factory operation in Bow Meadows Crescent, and expanded their products into local gift shops and pharmacies. Rocky Mountain Soap Co. also sells their product line in Save-On Foods outlets in B.C. and Alberta, and on-line.

"With revenues that more than quadrupled

Please turn to Page 23



Susan Barry takes her seat beside husband Don after accepting the President's Award at the Chamber's Gala Evening Saturday (Nov. 2) at Nakoda Lodge. Barry is highly active in the business community, with her work as executive director of Canmore UDI.

ch and Baty have created a small soap empire, and their growth potential is virtually limitless," Mullen said. Rocky Mountain Soap Co. recently placed in on Profit Magazine's list of Canada's best start-up companies.

Small Business Award: Rocky Mountain Outlook

"Think about what your first year would be like if you'd opened your doors a week after Sept. 11," said Ron Braun, presenter on behalf of award sponsor CEDA. "Pretty hard against two well-respected competitors of long-standing in the Bow Valley, and a little more than a dream, a prayer, some interest loans and a century of collective experience among their team, our winners fought back the odds and succeeded beyond their own expectations."

The New Small Business Award goes to a business employing 10 or fewer employees.

Large Business Award: Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show, owned by partners Vijay Domingo, Ross Robinson and Jim Cooper

"Wonderful music, great family entertainment, excellent food, friendly staff — what a combination!" said Braun, presenting again on behalf of CEDA.

"The result has been a great addition to the tourism package in Canmore.... By partnering with the local hotel industry and local tourism organizations and the local attractions, they've added one more feature to the overall package it is Canmore, the destination."

The New Large Business Award is awarded to a business with more than 10 employees.

President's Award: Susan Barry

"The recipient of this year's award is a person very well known in the business community," said outgoing Chamber president Brenda Stanton. "It is a person that I have always agreed with but certainly a person that I have a great deal of respect for."

Stanton said the winner of the President's Award has been described by some as "hard-nosed" if you are going to tangle with this person on any business issue, you better be prepared with your argument or you will get

"Now the side of this person that I have known more of in the last couple of years is the warmth and caring side," Stanton said. "For as hard-nosed as this person is, there is always room for a kind word or pat on the back to someone else's life."

Barry, who was clearly surprised to receive the award, gave an emotional speech that touched on her battle with cancer this past year, and the support and caring shown to herself and husband Don. She said before being surprised with the award, she had wondered why Don had insisted on a night out with the Chamber rather than attending