

*For Immediate Release:
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MEDIA RELEASE

Chamber of Commerce Announces 2007 Business Excellence Award Recipients

Kitchener, ON – On Thursday, February 23, 2007, close to 900 people honoured the exceptional contributions of 53 individuals and organizations who were nominated for Business Excellence Awards at the Chamber's annual gala. Nine recipients were announced.

2007 Business Excellence Award Winners

Business Leader of the Year Award (<20 employees): Stemmler Meats & Cheese

Business Leader of the Year Award (+20 Employees): Miller Thomson LLP

Michael R. Follett Community Leader of the Year Award: Fred Kuntz, formerly of The Record

Environment Award: Enermodal Engineering Ltd.

Innovation Award: Christie Digital

Volunteer of the Year Award: Tim Sothern, BDO Dunwoody LLP

New Member of the Year Award: Baker Investment Group Inc.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award: John Baker, Desire2Learn Inc.

Workplace Training Award: Lutherwood

This year the Chamber made a special recognition in the Innovation category to the Centre for International Governance Innovation and its IGLOO initiative.

The Chamber has now opened nominations for the 2008 Business Excellence Awards which will be taking place on Thursday, February 21, 2008.

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For further information contact:

Todd Letts, President & CEO

Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce

(519) 576-5000

Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce 2007 Business Excellence Award Recipients

New Member of the Year

Baker Investment Group Inc.

Rick Baker, President

Sponsored by Cowan Benefits Consulting

Baker Investment Group Inc. joined the Chamber in September 2006 and is involved in a number of committees including the Energy & Environment Forum, Networking Breakfast Series, Chamber Leadership Group, Environment Committee and the Chamber Young Professionals.

Not only has this organization dedicated its time through its committee work but has also given financial support through its sponsorship of the Networking Breakfast Series and the Energy & Environment Forum. It provides complimentary daily issues of Energy Elite, an e-news publication to all members of the Energy & Environment Committee and in 2006, sponsored chamber memberships for students in the Masters in Business, Entrepreneurship & Technology programme at the University of Waterloo.



Volunteer of the Year

Tim Sothern, Partner, BDO Dunwoody

Sponsored by McDonald Green

Tim Sothern has demonstrated a commitment to his community through his leadership in reinventing the Committee Leadership Group and as a facilitator of their meetings.

He has been a member of the volunteer and member services committee since 2004, most recently as Chair. He has helped with the organization of our New Members Welcome and has spoken on behalf of our volunteers and volunteering at the Chamber at the event. He attended many events in the past year including the Chamber Annual General Meeting, Networking Breakfast Series events and the Annual Curling Bonspiel.

In addition to his volunteer work with the Chamber he has also made contributions of time and energy to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the United Way and as Chair of the Board of ROOF (Reaching Our Outdoor Friends), providing encouragement through his leadership and direction to ROOF during a time of intense challenge and change.



Innovation Award
Christie Digital
Gerry Remers, President and COO
Sponsored by C.B. Richard Ellis

Christie Digital is setting the standards by which digital technology revolutionizes the cinema industry in the US and around the world. They have established a reputation as the world's single source manufacturer of a variety of display technologies and solutions for cinema, large audience environments, control rooms, business presentations, training facilities, 3D and virtual reality simulations and media. Their client base includes Universal Studios, Sony Pictures, Disney and Twentieth Century Fox. The employee base has grown significantly from 160 in 1999 to 350 in 2007 and this company continues to provide a challenging and stimulating work environment that is productive and personally rewarding for staff winning them the honour of being named by the Financial Post as one of the 10 best companies to work for in 2006.



Workplace Training Award
Lutherwood
John Colangeli, CEO
Sponsored by Conestoga College & Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

A key part of Lutherwood's strategic plan is a focus on Leadership and Staff capacity. This company has developed a very effective Performance Appraisal system as well as Annual Performance Appraisal Information Sessions for staff. This type of innovation in staff training does not go unnoticed and in 2005, this organization was recognized as one of the Top Ten Best Small and Medium Employers in Canada and placed second in North America as a winner of the 2005 HR Service Excellence Award.



Young Entrepreneur of the Year

John Baker, President & CEO, Desire2Learn Inc.

Sponsored by the Centre for Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology

John Baker raised a lot of eyebrows when he started his company right out of university. He was told it would be unlikely he would find financial backers. His persistence, vision, positive attitude and hard work paid off. It enabled him to grow from 1 to 150 employees, with an increase in sales of 2100% over the past five years.

With numbers like these, there are few skeptics now. His strength as an entrepreneur speaks for itself. With more than 4 million users in over a dozen countries, his company is a leader in providing innovative e-learning solutions. They empower clients to accomplish their vision of delivering the most effective learning environments possible.

From providing a scholarship at the University of Guelph and supporting local charities, such as Junior Achievement and Heartwood Place, to providing at-cost technology to charities such as the Ontario AIDS network and working with the University of Ottawa to apply e-Learning to a medical school in Rwanda, this young entrepreneur has given back to the community at large. At the age of 29 he is already an accomplished technology entrepreneur and is regularly sought out for speaking engagements at conferences around the world.



Business Leader of the Year (< 20 employees)

Stemmler Meats & Cheese

Kevin Stemmler, Owner

Sponsored by Lutherwood

Stemmler Meats & Cheese started business in 1985 in the family garage and with a small retail outlet at the local farmers market. Since then they have grown substantially, and have recently moved to a new location. Their business tripled in size from their previous location which has allowed them to be more innovative in their approach to their clients.

Through a partnership with the Ontario Independent Meat Processors Association, their processing plant is being used as a showcase demonstrating innovative ways to increase the safety in food handling to other small processors. Their products have won several provincial awards in the category of “innovative ready to eat”. They have led the industry in their introduction of products catering to dietary restrictions and health conscious consumers.

They were the first in their industry to use reverse osmosis water in the production of their meat products. They were the 2006 winner of the “Retailer of the Year for Waterloo Region” as sponsored by the Junior Achievement and the Royal Bank of Canada. They also won an award in October 2006 from the local chapter of The Canadian Celiac Association.



Environment Award
Enermodal Engineering Ltd.
Stephen Carpenter, President
Sponsored by Union Gas

Enermodal Engineering Ltd. is an industry leader in sustainable design, energy efficiency and LEED building design. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

In 2006 they were awarded the “Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Pollution Prevention Award” and the “Green Toronto Awards – Green Design for the Toronto Botanical Gardens”.

As an engineering consulting firm, they have served as consultants for ten LEED buildings which is more than any other firm in Canada and are currently working on over 80 buildings seeking a LEED rating. Locally, they have been involved with the Region of Waterloo EMS facility’s achievement of LEED Gold status. They provide training seminars to building professionals to increase awareness of sustainable design options.

This engineering consulting firm provides innovative solutions to reduce the environmental impact, energy and resource consumption of building designs. Some of the buildings they are currently working on include the Waterloo Police Headquarters expansion, the Challenger Motor Freight Office, the Cambridge Civic Administration building, the Waterloo Library, the YMCA, St. Mary’s Hospital and the Kitchener Public Library Centre Block Development.

Their workplace motto is to walk the walk and talk the talk, demonstrated by the fact that their building energy use is 70% below that of a typical new Canadian office building. From office coffee that is certified organic fair trade to a \$1000 incentive offer to any of their employees installing a solar energy system on their home. They truly set the example in energy conservation and preserving the environment.



Michael R. Follett Community Leader of the Year Award
Fred Kuntz
Formerly with The Record
Sponsored by 105.3 Kool FM

Fred Kuntz has demonstrated his appreciation for his community through his outstanding participation serving on the boards of several service groups in the Waterloo region including the Waterloo Art Gallery, the Rotary Club of Kitchener, and the Salvation Army Community Advisory Board. He is known for his passionate speeches about the importance of thinking and acting regionally, and he’s a good sport, having been mercilessly roasted at last year’s United Way celebrity roast.

He was instrumental in the launch of Grand Magazine and Rex Magazine while serving as Publisher of The Record, a position he held for 5 years before moving on to a position as editor-in-chief of the Toronto Star in 2006. During his tenure at the helm of the Record, it was awarded a Michener Award, one of the highest distinctions in Canadian journalism.



Business Leader of the Year Award (+ 20 employees)
Miller Thomson LLP
Lorelei Graham, Partner
Sponsored by Laurier School of Business & Economics

Miller Thomson LLP has been in Waterloo Region for almost 150 years and has worked with clients representing almost every sector of the Southwestern Ontario economy. The partners and staff of this firm collectively serve on over 70 boards of directors.

Recognized as being among the leading lawyers in Canada by Lexpert and the American Lawyer Guide, their marketing department has also been recognized by the Law Journal as one of the best. They've recently moved to new offices at the Accelerator Centre and have started MTech, a program which aims to help growth-oriented technology companies.

Miller Thomson is known as one of Canada's most respected national business law firms, offering a complete range of business law, advocacy and personal legal services. They have developed tailored legal services focused on intellectual property and have established solid business protocols in a variety of areas.

The contribution of Miller Thomson throughout the decades has helped many organizations grow in our region. The firm itself has grown along with its community.

