



## **New Small Business of the Year – Chaplin's Confections**

The New Small Business of the Year award honors a Truro or Colchester County entrepreneur whose innovative start-up has made a significant impact in the past year, offering a unique product or service to the local community.

**We invite Curtis Tobin, representing award sponsor Community Credit Union of Cumberland and Colchester to please step forward.**

In less than a year, Chaplin's Confections has moved from being a small farm market vendor to opening a sweet storefront location in downtown Truro on Prince Street.

Best known for their fudge and Tidal Pour Soda's Chaplin's Confections has added more new products to its tasty line up including Basque Cheesecake, Seafoam Candy, Nut Brittles (peanut, maple-walnut, and amaretto), hot chocolate bombs, No Sugar Added Chocolate Bark, Beach Glass Candy (crystal candy), Scottish Tablet, Chocolate-Dipped Marshmallows.

The owners, Mitchell and Amanda Chaplin, began their entrepreneurial journey in 2021 selling duck and quail eggs, along with their fudge at the Truro Farmers' Market. In time, they decided to close the farm and focus on candy making which now has customer's bubbling over with excitement at their full-time location

Growing slow but steady in the past year, they are taking things one bite at a time, listening to customers and following buying trends, testing new products along the way.

Please join the Chamber and the Community Credit Union of Cumberland & Colchester as we congratulate Chaplin's Confectionary for receiving the 2024 New Small Business Award.

We ask Mitchell and Amanda Chaplin to please come forward.



## **Small Business Achievement Award – Truro Chiropractic**

The Small Business Achievement Award celebrates local entrepreneurs with over a decade of resilience, honoring their unwavering commitment to innovation and adaptability in the ever-evolving landscape of technology.

**We invite Lisa Poehl, representing award sponsor, Doane Grant Thornton to please step forward.**

Truro Chiropractic Clinic Inc. Established in 1993, has become a valued business in the Truro community, providing holistic care for individuals of all ages.

Under the leadership of Dr. Joanna McGowan, the clinic has evolved from a single practitioner to an experienced team of seven skilled professionals, offering services that include chiropractic care, massage therapy, acupuncture, and innovative laser treatments. With over 101 years of combined experience, the clinic not only alleviates pain but also emphasizes preventative care, ensuring the well-being of its patients.

The clinic was the first in Truro to offer Ideal Protein, Subluxation station and laser therapy.

Dr. McGowan's commitment to community extends beyond the clinic walls, evidenced by her active participation in the Rotary Club of Truro, where she has dedicated over 30 years to enhancing local lives.

Truro Chiropractic Clinic's Inc's 31-year legacy of excellence, innovative approaches, and community involvement truly sets it apart. We celebrate its contributions and look forward to its continued impact on our health and community.

Please join the Chamber and Grant Thornton as we congratulate Truro Chiropractic Clinic Inc. for receiving the 2024 Small Business Achievement Award.

We ask Dr. **Joanna McGowan** to please come forward.



## **Small Business Innovation Award – Debert Hospitality Centre**

The Small Business Innovation Award recognizes entrepreneurs in Truro and Colchester County for innovative leadership, technology utilization, and community support. Celebrating businesses over five years old, it commends those who enrich their offerings and productivity, fostering local growth.

**We invite Erin Cock, representing award sponsor, RBC to please step forward.**

Since opening in April 2002, the Debert Hospitality Centre has transformed a former military mess complex into a vibrant hub for conferences, training, and special events, showcasing true innovation and adaptability.

With a commitment to exceeding hospitality expectations, they have created an inclusive environment that prioritizes customer service and individual needs. The Centre boasts 64,000 square feet of modern amenities, including five spacious conference and banquet areas, 14 bedrooms, and a range of recreational facilities, including a pool and hot tubs. The addition of onsite and offsite catering, featuring menus crafted by three Red Seal chefs, has further diversified their offerings.

Beyond its exceptional services, the Debert Hospitality Centre actively supports local causes, partnering with organizations like the SPCA and Nova Scotia sheriffs, reinforcing its role as a community leader.

This dedication to innovation—expanding from military use to a welcoming venue for weddings, corporate training, and events—truly sets the Debert Hospitality Centre apart as a hidden gem in Nova Scotia.

Please join the Chamber and RBC as we congratulate Debert Hospitality Centre for receiving the 2024 Small Business Innovation Award.

We ask Derek Taylor and Leonard Dash to please come forward.



## **Agriculture / Agri Award – Eisses Grain & AG services**

The Agriculture Agri-Business Award recognizes outstanding efforts in sustainable farming, honoring individuals, groups, organizations, or businesses generating over 50% of their annual revenue from agriculture-related activities while prioritizing environmental responsibility.

**We invite Kathleen Mitchell, representing award sponsor MNP to please step forward.**

Eisses Grain and AG Services, owned by Mike and Amanda Eisses, is a shining example of excellence in the agricultural sector.

With over 20 years of farming experience and three years as an incorporated entity, their dedication has transformed a 1,600-acre cash crop farm into a vital resource for the local community. Specializing in corn, soybeans, and wheat for the animal feed market, they provide exceptional custom work and grain storage solutions, embodying the principles of sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture.

Employing a team of 10, Eisses Grain prioritizes employee well-being, offering competitive wages, benefits, and a supportive work-life balance. Their commitment to excellent customer service has established them as trusted advisors within the industry, fostering strong relationships with local farmers.

Through strategic diversification and smart business decisions, they have navigated a steep growth curve, becoming a reliable partner in the agricultural community.

Their contributions extend beyond farming, as they actively support local initiatives, including a local 4-H group.

Eisses Grain and AG Services stands out not only for their remarkable achievements but also for their unwavering commitment to their community and the agricultural landscape.

Please join the Chamber and MNP as we congratulate Eisses Grain and Ag Services for receiving the 2024 Agriculture / Agri Business Award.

We ask Mike Eisses to please come forward.

## **Business Growth Award –Oceanside Aviation**

The Small Business Growth Award celebrates thriving enterprises operating for over two years, showcasing tangible expansion through heightened customer base, employee growth, new products, and more. It acknowledges their commendable journey towards sustained success.

**We invite Tyler Wheeliker, representing award sponsor BDC to please step forward.**

The Debert-based, aircraft maintenance service Oceanside Aviation originally took flight back in 2004 by John Webber, operating out of Trenton, NS. For about 14 years, John led the company supported by two part-time employees. In 2018, John's son David took over operations and propelled the business forward into unprecedented growth.

In 2022, the company moved the Debert Aviation Centre, adjacent to the Debert Airport where it has continued to thrive. They have expanded services such as engine overhaul and advanced avionics installs and focused on landing new customers. David has grown the compliment of staff to eight full-time and two part-time employees.

As an Authorized Maintenance Organization serving clients beyond Atlantic Canada, David said one of the biggest challenges is employee recruitment and retention with a national shortage of qualified individuals to fill job vacancies. He has made diversity, inclusion and equity a priority and has three female staff onboard the Oceanside Aviation maintenance team.

Known for their quality, service and professionalism, Oceanside Aviation is a leader in the province's aviation industry.

David has plans to soar to new heights of success and is preparing to add Turbine Engine Aircraft to their list of offerings, pending approval by Transport Canada, as well as staff training and specialized tools. This expansion may also glide into new job creation.

Please join the Chamber and BDC as we congratulate Oceanside Aviation for receiving the 2024 Growth Business Award.

We ask David Webber to please come forward.

## Workplace Excellence Award – Maritza Nolasco

The Workplace Excellence Award celebrates a standout small business employee who consistently exceeds expectations. They excel in customer service, prioritize professional growth, and foster a positive corporate culture through teamwork, promoting a joyful and healthy work atmosphere.

**We invite Cory Helm, representing award sponsor Payworks to please step forward.**

Today are proud to honor Maritza Nolasco with the Workplace Excellence Award, a recognition that celebrates her exceptional contributions to Legends Gaming Centre over the past 12 years. As the driving force behind their catering operations, Maritza has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to excellence, playing a pivotal role in their success as the largest Bingo venue in Atlantic Canada, hosting events for over 800 guests.

Maritza's dedication is evident in her daily routine—she is the first to arrive and the last to leave, ensuring that every event exceeds expectations. Her relentless pursuit of quality and service has not only elevated their catering business, but it has tripled under her and her team's leadership.

Some of you may remember that the Chamber hosted our small business awards at Legend's last fall. We can attest to Maritza's dedication to her work as she kept a secret while she and her team made everything perfect for us. The evening before the large event, she had fallen down the stairs at her home and it wasn't until after the event was done she discovered she had actually broke her ankle!

Her manager Chris Weunsch states, "Maritza is the most dedicated employee I have ever had the privilege to work with. This recognition means so much to her and couldn't have gone to a more deserving person." Maritza embodies the spirit of excellence, professionalism, and customer service, making her a true asset to Legends Gaming Centre and an inspiration to us all.

Unfortunately, Maritza was unable to be with us today as she is attending her son's wedding.

Please join the Chamber and Payworks as we congratulate Maritza Nolasco for receiving the 2024 Growth Business Award.

We ask that her boss **Chris Weunsch** accept this award on her behalf.



## **Newcomer Business Award – Many Moods Counselling**

The Newcomer Business Award acknowledges the economic impact of a recent entrant to Truro or Colchester County, celebrating their entrepreneurial spirit and contribution to the local community. This award spotlights newcomers who've positively impacted the region's economy, enhancing its growth and vibrancy.

**We invite David Phillips, representing award sponsor, Truro & Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity to please step forward.**

Located in Tatamagouche, Many Moods Counselling, owned by Tamue Clarke provides inclusive, client-centered mental health services. Tamue caters to children and teens across Nova Scotia, addressing critical issues such as trauma, anxiety, and self-esteem. She serves diverse and underserved populations, ensuring that every individual feels seen and supported.

Tamue's innovative approach combines traditional counseling with holistic therapies, such as mindfulness practices and nature-based therapies, creating a unique and engaging therapeutic experience. By offering flexible options, including in-person, telephone, and virtual sessions, Many Moods has successfully bridged the gap in access to mental health services in rural areas, reducing barriers and financial burdens for clients.

Beyond her exceptional services, Tamue actively contributes to the community through partnerships and volunteer efforts, reinforcing their mission to empower individuals and families. As she continues to grow and adapt to the needs of her clients, Tamue stands out as an important resource in fostering mental well-being throughout the region.

Please join the Chamber and Truro & Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity as we congratulate Many Moods Counselling for receiving the 2024 Newcomer Business Award.

We ask Tamue Clarke to please come forward.



## **Tourism Business Award –Clair’s Classic Antiques**

The Tourism Business Award honors those in our Central Nova Scotia region who exemplify the art of successful tourism, transforming our area into a sought-after destination. Eligible recipients, including individuals, groups, organizations, or businesses, must generate over 50% of their annual income through tourism-related activities..

**We invite Mayor **Christine Blair**, representing award sponsor, Municipality of Colchester to please step forward.**

What’s old is new again and tourists love seeing what they can find in Great Village at Clair’s Classic Antiques, also known as the Onslow Trading Company.

Since 2000, Clair Peers has been selling antiques and collectables in Great Village and now has a shop at the former historic location of the Royal Bank in Great Village. He also does appraisals of household goods and antiques, along with household and estate liquidations.

However, stopping by Clair’s location is so much more than just seeing what’s inside. It’s an experience, a walk back in time with him always offering a story or two about the treasures on his packed-to-the-brim shelves and tables.

A steward of local history, Clair is welcoming, friendly and knowledgeable about the life and times of rural Colchester County. He is always finding new ways to upcycle worn and tired items transforming them into new, fun, usable products.

He loves to share his passion for “antiquing” with others and has even made an appearance on a nationally syndicated program Canadian Pickers, which shone a spotlight on the historic village as a picker’s paradise.

Telling stories of the past, being engaged in community development projects, supporting other antique businesses, and marketing his business on social media and other media as part of an antique-focused destination has attracted countless tourists to the village and the province.

Please join the Chamber and Municipality of Colchester as we congratulate Clair Peers, of Clair’s Classic Antiques and the Onslow Trading Company for receiving the 2024 Tourism Business Award.

We ask **Clair Peers** to please come forward.





## **Environmental Stewardship Business Award – Good Clean Farm**

The Environmental Stewardship award honors a business committed to sustainable practices. By extending resource lifecycles, maximizing their value, and promoting responsible waste management, they mitigate environmental impact. Their dedication reduces waste, bolsters resource efficiency, and safeguards against future resource challenges. Through mindful material use and emission reduction, they champion eco-conscious business practices.

**We invite Mayor George Lloy, representing award sponsor, Town of Stewiacke to please step forward.**

Established in 2015 by Brendan and Angharad Neima, this certified organic farm located in Salmon River, exemplifies the principles of low-impact farming through its innovative no-till practices and extensive use of hand tools.

Good Clean Farm stands out as the only certified organic farm in the Truro area, producing a diverse range of high-quality vegetables and lacto-fermented products. With a focus on sustainable practices, Brendan and his team use multi-cropping and crop rotation strategies, applying organic amendments to maximize the farm's productivity while preserving the ecosystem.

The farm not only prioritizes environmental sustainability but also engages with the community, participating in local farmers' markets and advocating for organic agriculture. Through a community-supported agriculture model, Good Clean Farm fosters a connection between consumers and their food, sharing the challenges and successes of each growing season.

By continually adapting to challenges and maintaining high standards for produce quality, Good Clean Farm is not just a source of fresh vegetables; it is a great example of environmental responsibility and community engagement.

Please join the Chamber and The Town of Stewiacke as we congratulate Good Clean Farm for receiving the 2024 Environmental Stewardship Award.

We ask **Brendan Neima** to please come forward.



## **Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award – Inclusive Financial Planning**

The Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion award recognizes a local business or non-profit in the region for its outstanding commitment to fostering a more accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive business community. The recipient sets a remarkable example of leadership by exemplifying excellence in achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives within their work environment.

**We invite **Randy Lindsey**, representing award sponsor Futureworx to please step forward.**

Since establishing Inclusive Financial Planning in 2022, founder, Laura Whiteland, has had a mission to reduce barriers to financial advice and has transformed the financial landscape, particularly for the LGBTQ+ community.

Inclusive Financial Planning has redefined traditional financial services by prioritizing personalized, advice-only planning. Their innovative approach ensures clients only pay for the time they use, eliminating the complexities of product sales and promoting transparency. This model not only serves individual clients but also extends support to entrepreneurs and organizations, creating a holistic suite of services tailored to diverse needs. They now offer management consulting, financial planning and consulting for businesses, bookkeeping, and HR consulting, alongside financial planning services.

Their active involvement in the community, including sponsorships and a "pay what you can" program, underscores a dedication to social responsibility and inclusivity.

Most notably they were the title sponsor for Queer Hockey NS HFX Pride Cup this year, as well as providing other financial and non-financial support to many non-profit organizations.

By fostering a welcoming environment for all, they empower clients to take control of their financial futures.

Please join the Chamber and Futureworx as we congratulate Inclusive Financial Planning for receiving the 2024 Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion Award.

We ask **Chamber Vice President Kim Boomer** to please step forward and accept this award on their behalf.



## **Small Business of the Year – Hub Tune Up**

The Small Business of the Year Award celebrates exceptional businesses with 1-20 full-time employees, highlighting their unwavering commitment to excellence within their field. Recognizing independently-owned businesses of at least 3 years, it acknowledges outstanding accomplishments in areas such as Research & Development, Company Growth, Customer Service, Products & Services, Market Development, Sales & Marketing, and Community Service. This award symbolizes the entrepreneurial spirit that thrives within the Colchester County business community.

**We invite Alana Hirtle, representing award sponsor CBDC NOBL to please step forward.**

Hub Tune Up has proudly served Colchester County and beyond since 1975, establishing a solid reputation for quality, integrity, and care of their customer's vehicles. Owners, James and Cheryl McLeod, purchased the business in 2012 and then as business revved up they took over Ellis Imports on Willow Street. The locations were amalgamated in 2018 as the Hub Tune Up we know and appreciate today. Under their leadership the couple evolved the business from a diagnostic service shop into a comprehensive automotive center, addressing all repair and maintenance needs from bumper to bumper like a well-oiled machine.

With a dedicated team of 12 seasoned technicians, Hub Tune Up prioritizes customer satisfaction, providing transparent communication and tailored solutions that respect every budget.

To keep up with the ever-changing world, they have invested in keeping up with automotive trends by searching out new suppliers, new logistics and new technology

They have started to outgrow their current space, and cogs are turning for future upgrades with the purchase of a vacant lot next door to the service centre.

Hub Tune Up is also deeply committed to community involvement, supporting local charities, sports teams, and the local Hospital Foundation. Their dedication to both customers and community sets them apart as an employer of choice in the region.

Please join the Chamber and CBDC NOBL as we congratulate Hub Tune Up for receiving the 2024 Small Business of the Year Award.

We ask Cheryl MacLeod to please step forward.

## **Small Business Start-Up Legacy Award Ashton's Garden Centre**

The Small Business Start-Up Legacy Award celebrates promising start-ups in the region with a \$2,500 cash prize and in-kind support from local businesses. Eligible applicants must be local entrepreneurs, demonstrating the uniqueness of their ventures and the positive impact the grant and support will have on local business growth and job creation.

In 2020, when the pandemic first hit and everything was starting to shut down, Michael Ashton lost his job working as a volunteer co-ordinator at a local care home. He often jokes about the fact that he was probably the only care-home worker who lost his job as others were working overtime, but since no volunteers were allowed in, it was inevitable that his position would eventually come to an end. While it was terrible news at the time, he says it was the push he needed to step out and start his own business - and so, the seed of an idea to open a garden centre was planted.

With the help of Alana Hirtle and the CBDC, Michael began the Self Employment Assistance Program, the financial assistance (and advice) this offered along with COVID-19 employment relief payments were ploughed into buying his first greenhouse and Ashton's Garden Centre was launched near Tatamagouche.

Opening during the pandemic was difficult at challenging. Sourcing suppliers, that were swamped with the increase in gardening interest due to people being stuck at home, meant many suppliers weren't accepting new customers. Then, another nursery in the area announced it was closing. This was a catalyst for Michael to bring forward his garden centre's opening by a year. In a panicked rush to be ready for the season, the greenhouse was finished just five days before opening.

Ashton's Garden Centre is about customer service and making gardening fun. The Centre has already grown from one greenhouse and one person selling a small range of summer bedding plants, to a compliment of five staff, two greenhouses selling vegetables, herbs, hanging baskets & planters, perennials, shrubs, trees and grasses, and a greatly increased summer bedding range. This year they opened a retail unit, selling garden sundries and began stocking composts and mulches. They also opened a daffodil walk - a short walk through woodland and along a river lined with daffodils, also adding bluebells to the mix. This event in 2021 attracted 50 people - in 2024 they had an estimated 2,000 people visit the walk in just 1 day.

This legacy award will assist Ashton's Garden Centre to branch out into hosting a Christmas Marlet including the sale of Christmas trees, greenery, swags and more. They will also create a magical woodland Christmas walk through the forested property increasing agri-tourism in the region.

Please join us as we congratulate Ashton's Garden Centre for receiving the 2024 Small Business Start-Up Legacy Award

Unfortunately, Michael is unable to join us today, so we ask **Alana Hirtle** to please step forward to accept the award on his behalf.

## **Exporter of the Year – Hestaband Therapeutics**

The Exporter of the Year award acknowledges outstanding Truro or Colchester County businesses that excel in exporting beyond Nova Scotia. Qualifications include demonstrated international growth and an impact on the local economy.

**We invite Matthew Berrigan, representing award sponsor Invest NS to please step forward.**

Working as an equine rehabilitation specialist since 1999, it wasn't a stretch for Christa Veinotte to develop a prototype kinesiology tape for horses as the first person in Canada trained to use it. During her career she spent time researching and perfecting a product that features a strong adhesive to suit our climate which is now used by therapists around the globe.

During the pandemic in 2020, Christa founded the company Hestaband, which means "horse tape" in the Icelandic language, naming it after the strong, resilient, Icelandic horse. Hestaband is a unique product specifically developed for use on horses and other animals. It has set a new standard in the equine kinesiology taping industry, uniquely catering to the needs of high-performance equine athletes.

The company is the first in the world to offer three tape options, a cotton, satin and lymph tape, each addressing various therapeutic needs, with innovative features that have garnered attention worldwide. This year, the goal was to demonstrate the high quality of the tapes and introduce the products to others in the healthcare community. With the help of other tapers, Hestaband was promoted in numerous events in Canada, the USA, the UK, Ireland, Hungary and Australia.

Under Christa's leadership, Hestaband has not only expanded its reach but has also fostered a strong community of therapists globally with more than 10,000 followers on her Equine Kinesiology Taping Group on Facebook.

Her initiatives in education and outreach demonstrate a commitment to collaboration and excellence bringing a Canadian innovation to the global stage.

Please join the Chamber and Invest Nova Scotia as we congratulate Hestaband Therapeutics, for receiving the 2024 Exporter of the Year Award.

We ask Christa Veinotte to please step forward.



## **Excellence in Community Development – Derado’s Pizzeria and Donair**

The Excellence in Community Development Award is designed to recognize a business, community organization or social enterprise that has made significant and notable contributions to their community (cultural, social, environmental and/or economic) and one that serves as a catalyst for positive action, exhibiting the highest standards of leadership.

**We invite Mayor Cathy Hinton representing award sponsor Town of Truro to please step forward.**

Any way you want to slice it, Derado’s Pizzeria and Donair, located on Main Street Tatamagouche, is one of the most giving, welcoming and innovative businesses in the community.

The business first opened in the village in 2007 by Wafa and Ramzi, the aunt and uncle of current owner Habib Richa. Since those early days, the business has continued to grow and thrive while continuously giving back to the rural community.

Habib generously supports local schools, sports teams, youth and senior’s groups, and provides donations to community fundraisers. When there are major snow storms and power outages, Habib fires up his ovens and keeps the community well fed.

With a staff of eight people, Habib is always investing back into the business and developing fresh new ideas. In 2019, he added a patio and became licensed to serve alcoholic beverages, adding live music and themed nights during summer months. It has become “the” place in the heart of the village that the local community gathers.

He takes pride in knowing nearly every local customer by name. When it comes to community involvement, he leads a number of activities that promote community spirit along with collaborating with other businesses. He recently launched a commercial on social media to promote the business, as well as the village, and fun mural painted on his bright building making it stand out like a beacon of friendship for all those that enter.

Habib also serves on the Tatamagouche and Area Village Commission spearheading community development.

Thank you for being a model of excellence in community development, and for showing us all how a small business can make a big impact.

Please join the Chamber and Town of Truro as we congratulate Derado’s Pizzeria, for receiving the 2024 Excellence in Community Development Award.

We ask Habib Richa to please step forward.