



WAUBETEK
Business Development Corporation
Investing in the Aboriginal Business Spirit
A Community Futures Development Corporation



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Press Release

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2009 ABORIGINAL BUSINESS AWARDS GALA

RAMA, ONTARIO - The Waubetek Business Development Corporation hosted the 2009 Waubetek Business Awards Gala Thursday, November 12th, 2009, in the Silvernightingale Ballroom of Casino Rama.

"The event celebrates the Aboriginal Business Spirit as well as Waubetek's 20th Anniversary" advised Dawn Madahbee, General Manager of the Waubetek Business Development Corporation. "We want to recognize the contributions of Aboriginal businesses in helping to build the economy of North-East Ontario. The businesses receiving awards represent leaders in their respective fields of health services, manufacturing, financial services as well as the service sector."

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At this sold out event, Waubetek, along with more than 300 attendees, saluted four Aboriginal businesses and gave thanks to the efforts of Waubetek's founders on the occasion of the organization's 20th Anniversary. "In 1988, the founding members shared a vision. A vision to establish an Aboriginal Financial Institution that will service the Aboriginal population for their business needs", stated Dawn Madahbee, General Manager of the Waubetek Business Development Corporation.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of four awards to Aboriginal businesses in recognition of their achievements in the following categories:

- 1) **"Youth Entrepreneur of the Year" - presented to an entrepreneur who has established a successful business prior to reaching thirty-five (35) years of age.**

This year's Youth Entrepreneur of the Year award was Derek Debassige, owner of Manitoulin Physiotherapy Centre, located on the M'Chigeeng First Nation, Manitoulin Island.

Mr. Debassige is thirty-three (33) years of age he is a registered physiotherapist with the Canadian Physiotherapy Association and is also certified with the College of Physiotherapists, as an Independent practice.

Mr. Debassige, whose business has been in operation since 2007, offers physiotherapy, massage therapy and acupuncture to the public at large. The business serves the long-term

care and home-care services of First Nations, in addition to out-patient services. He has remained busy with work on First Nations stretching across Manitoulin Island and the North Shore spending a few days a week providing therapy to First Nations along the North Shore between Whitefish Lake and Mississagi First Nation. Mr. Debassige has built a solid reputation in the Manitoulin/North Shore area as a leader in Physio and massage therapy.

- 2) **"Entrepreneur of the Year" - presented to a successful business less than three years old that exhibits substantial future potential.**

The recipient of this award was George W. Sopher, owner of GWS Tree Service and Contracting, located in Parry Sound, ON. Mr. Sopher is a member of the Nipissing First Nation. He established his business in the fall of 2007. The business is a year round operation that offers 24 hour emergency services, line lot clearing, cottage watch, tree removal services, pruning/hedging, firewood sales and offers seniors discounts. GWS Tree service and Contracting is the only Native owned tree service business located in the Muskoka region. The goal of the business is to offer tree maintenance service from Sudbury all the way down to Barrie, Ontario. Mr. Sopher has come to realize that his company - made up of 2 full-time and 2 part-time employees - is filling a niche in a market that is literally covered in

trees. Mr. Sopher has managed to climb the ladder of success or tree of success in this case.

- 3) **"Business Merit Award" - presented to business people regarded as hard working and contributors to their community.**

The recipient for this award was presented to the Anishinawbek Nation Credit Union, located on the Garden River First Nation. Accepting the award was Chairperson, Wilma Bisailon. The Anishinawbek Nation Credit Union (ANCU) is the first wholly owned Aboriginal Financial Institution ever to be granted a charter by the Province of Ontario. ANCU received their charter in March Of 2000.

As a full financial cooperative, ANCU is member owned and controlled. ANCU offers many of the same products and services offered by mainstream financial institutions. The difference with ANCU is they are restricted to First Nation people residing within 300 kilometers of the head office in Garden River, or any member of a community associated with the Union of Ontario Indians.

The economic outlook of personal and commercial lending to First Nation members in Northeastern Ontario is growing exponentially. ANCU is committed to serve and strengthen the unique needs of the people who live in the First Nation communities. When you invest your money with the Anishinawbek Nation Credit Union you invest in your people,

your communities and you'll help improve the quality of life.

- 4) **"Business Achievement" - presented to a long-standing business that has provided a major impact in the community, including significant employment creation.**

The recipient for the Business Achievement award was Niigon Technologies Ltd. Located in the community of Moose Deer Point First Nation, Niigon Technologies Ltd., grew out of the shared vision of Chief J. Edward Williams and Robert Schad, President of Husky Injection Molding Systems Ltd. Niigon (an Ojibway word meaning "for the future"), is focused on the production of small, high-end products for several industries including automotive, agriculture and consumer packaging.

As the cornerstone of the First Nation's Sustainable Community Plan, Niigon is a leading Injection Molding facility that is a showplace of manufacturing automation, efficiency and environmental responsibility. The company is wholly owned by the First Nation, with all dividends being reinvested in social, environmental, wellness and infrastructure projects. A major component of this project was the creation of highly skilled, knowledge-based career opportunities on the First Nation.

Entertainment was provided by an array of local musical talents, like Keith McLeod-Shabogeshic, member of Nipissing First Nation, gave his rendition of the Canadian National Anthem. Ten year old Nicholas McGregor, who was a hit at the 2007 Business Awards Gala, graced the audience with his musical performance on the piano. Murray Sylvester, a member of Beausoleil First Nation, set the mood with the rhythm and blues. Crystal Shawanda, the winner of the 2009 Canadian Country Music Awards Female Artist of the Year and a member of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, capped off the night with her performance.

The Waubetek Business Development Corporation would like to thank all who attended and for joining as we celebrate 20 years of Investing in the Aboriginal Business Spirit. Many thanks go out to the following corporate sponsors and contributors; Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC), Casino Rama, Dreamcatcher Fund, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs-Province of Ontario, Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), Common Goals Software, Sudbury Regional Business Centre, Manitoulin Expositor, Anishinaabe Speech & Language services (Monica Nahwegahbow), Nahwegahbow Corbiere Barristers & Solicitors (Dave Nahwegahbow), United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin (UCCM), Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, R & J Fuels, R & W Enterprises (Randy & Jeanne Naponse), Wally's Septic Services & Portable Toilet

Rentals (Wallace Corbiere) and Sunset Shores Resort (Gerald and Jeanne Dumas).

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Chi-Miigwetch and much appreciation to the founding board members; the late Clayton Shawana, the late Lloyd Sampson, the late Max Assinewai, the late Margaret Shawanda, Angus Toulouse, Joseph Hare, Lisa Cywink, Loretta Roy, Wayne Kaboni, Mark Manitowabi, Harvey Trudeau, Justeen Debassige, Brian Corbiere and Lewis Debassige.