

Business Excellence Award 2022 - Mastodon Ridge



The Community Credit Union Business Excellence Award recognizes a business that has exhibited visionary leadership; achieving growth by introducing new products or ideas, expansion or exportation of goods or services and valuing employees and safety in the workplace.

The business is actively involved in the community through fundraising and partnerships in supporting organizations or individuals working to better the community. It establishes partnerships and supports the local business community with leadership while actively looking to the future, focused on long-term results and job creation.

It has been 26 years since Bill Hay took on a mammoth project in Stewiacke that has shared his love of his home province in a giant way.

Mastodon Ridge came to life in 1995 with the unveiling of Melvin, a 14-foot tall, life-sized replica of a mastodon, which has become an iconic landmark along Highway 102, near Exit 11, overlooking the Stewiacke and Shubenacadie Rivers.

Bill had a desire to share his love of the province with visitors, so the discovery of mastodon bones in a nearby Milford quarry in 1991 was the inspiration for such a large idea to create a family-friendly destination while educating people about local heritage and culture.

The development of the prime tourist stopping location, has contributed to the local economy in a big way over the past few decades. First, the Hay family constructed a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant at the ridge location in 1979, then later with the establishment of other businesses the following years.

Mastodon Ridge as grown a reputation as a key tourist destination on Central Nova Scotia. During the past two years, significant upgrades were undertaken to modernize the site to be even more welcoming for visitors, improve parking and washrooms, as well as the addition of a premium 18-hole mini-golf course, a new fun fort and play area, event area,

Business Person of the Year

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outstanding contributions to the community, has an innovative spirit and has demonstrated positive social and/or economic impact on the region, while creating new employment opportunities.

This year we are pleased to honour the contributions of local developer Joe Pinto, owner of Wayside Café and the Great Village Arts and Entertainment Centre.

A life-long love of food and music has ignited Joe's entrepreneurial spirit which recently led him to restore a decommissioned church.

Born on Madeira Island in Portugal, Joe immigrated to Canada at the age of 16, landing in Canada in Montreal. By 1985, he was working as the General Manager of the Holiday Inn in Saint John, NB, the year the city hosted the Summer Games.

Around the same time, an opportunity that fit well with his passion for food and music arose, and he received a job offer to come to Truro to run the Lincoln Pub, now known as the Engine Room Pub.

He arrived in the Hubtown with his life savings of \$5,000 in his pocket, along with his wife and two children, to build a new life here.

However, soon after relocating to this area, the pub

changed hands, and Joe found himself unemployed and in search of a new job. As an immigrant to Canada, Joe firmly believed that this country is a land of opportunity for a hard worker and it wasn't long before he started a restaurant of his own and later branched into selling real estate. This was the catalyst for Joe to become a first-time landlord. Today, Joe oversees more than 300 rental units in Truro and Colchester Area. During his time in Truro, Joe has also assisted in launching five restaurants on Prince Street, which has given him great pleasure to see them grow and flourish.

One of the activities Joe is most proud of is his participation in the Guatemala Stove Project, launched in Truro about 10 years ago by a group of five business people. This Truro-born initiative has helped more than 1,000 people, and while COVID-19 halted travel to Guatemala to build the stoves on site, they were still be constructed here and shipped there for use by families in need.

The group plans to resume its work in Guatemala in March 2023 and invite others to join them.

Tonight, the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce is pleased to recognize Joe Pinto with the BDC Business Person of the Year Award.



Georg Oberprieler, CEO, Community Credit Union presents the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce 2022 Business of the Year Award to Mastodon Ridge. Accepting the award on behalf of the company was Bill Hay, proprietor. (Contributed)

trail upgrades and more. Tenants also add to the attraction including a local-focused retailer, distillery, ice cream parlor and food service, and a Visitor Information Centre. The enterprise employs between 10 and 15 people at peak season.

Bill's passion for sharing his love of Nova Scotia shines through, focusing on education with the inclusion of story boards around the property.

Another claim to add to its fame is the close proximity to the geographic point of being located half-way between the equator and the North Pole.

Bill also gives back to the community in a big way. In celebration of its 25th anniver-

sary last year, Bill donated \$25,000 to Feed Nova Scotia and hosted a weekend-long fundraising event at Mastodon Ridge, donating the proceeds to food banks in the Colchester Area.

Bill works closely with the Town of Stewiacke's Business and Tourism Committee and supports a number of initiatives to spur economic growth for the entire region. In addition, he has served on a number of business and industry boards.

Tonight, the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce is pleased to honour Mastodon Ridge with the 2022 Community Credit Union Business Excellence Award.



Great Village Legion Awards Grade 1/2 Winners in the P-3 Coloured Poster Contest Wesley Langille and Sophia Millen are presented their Certificates by Logan Spencer representing Great Village Branch Royal Canadian Legion (Contributed)

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