

2021  
*Truro & Colchester*  
*Small Business Awards*

**Jennings Family Receives  
 Agricultural / Agri Food Award**



Greg Mosher representing MNP LLP presents the MNP LLP sponsored Agriculture / Agri Foods award to Blake Jennings representing Blake's Pumpkin Jungle and Bayview Poultry Farms Ltd. at the Truro & Area Chamber of Commerce small business awards ceremony on October 21. Blake told the audience he is the 5th generation to be involved in the farm and the 6th generation is due in December. During the photo taking ceremony Blake said staff were loading their 18th transport trailer of pumpkins for Sobeys and this year they had shipped in excess of 50,000 pumpkins (Rees Photo)

This award recognizes an individual, group, an organization or business where the principles of running a successful agricultural or related operation are applied and result in a thriving and environmentally friendly endeavor. The enterprise must derive more than 50 per cent of its annual revenue from agricultural related activities.

For more than 130 years, Jennings's farm has operated on the Shore Road in Masstown. In the early years, the farm experimented in all areas of agriculture, including a variety of animals and crops, settling on dairy and eggs in the mid-1900s. In 1992, the farm was divided with one branch of the Jennings family taking the dairy farm and the other, now owned by Glen Jennings and assisted by his son Blake, focused on egg production.

In the 1990s, pumpkin patches were introduced, and under Blake's leadership, the "Pumpkin Jungle" has grown in popularity as a fall destination for locals and tourists alike. Pumpkins

are grown on 70 acres supplying Sobeys Atlantic Canada.

Egg production has grown to 14,000 layers and 14,000 replacement pullets annually.

The business has been a pioneer of renewable energy, first with the introduction of wind turbines in 2007, with the construction of a new, state-of-the-art facility powered by 90 solar panels eliminating a barn housing 11,000 layers from the grid.

The farmers are already looking to consider a possible expansion of the solar project and increase the land base for pumpkin and squash production.

The Jennings family has always been a strong community supporter, donating eggs to school breakfast programs, helping with events and local projects, and fundraising for various causes such as Chantelle's Cystic Fibrosis Pumpkin Blast event happening at the farm on Oct. 23- 24.

They are proud of their farm heritage and welcome visitors to see their operation.

*Truro & Colchester*  
**CHAMBER**  
*of Commerce*

**AA Warehouse Wins Newcomer Business Award**



Ernest Korankye, representing award sponsor Truro & Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity Please join the Chamber and Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity presents the Newcomer Business Award to Mavi Singh of AA Warehouse, Esplanade, Truro at the Truro & Area Chamber of Commerce small business awards ceremony on October 21. (Rees Photo)

square feet for display space. On the second day, his doors opened, a business in the neighborhood requiring a continuous supply of quality safety footwear for its employees connected with him, and a new long-time business relationship began enabling the business to grow.

Since that time, Mavi has grown his inventory selection to include good-quality Italian lady's footwear, purses, belts, and wallets. A skilled woodworker, he has used his talents to build raw-edged wooden shelves adding to the unique ambiance at his shop.

He said the diversification of his stock helped increase his customer base, and the store's footprint in Downtown Truro has grown to 1,100 square feet.

While COVID-19 had an impact, Mavi, the store's only staff, remained open without the benefit of any government funding programs. He said support from his landlord enabled him to keep the doors open in tough months, and his loyal customers kept coming in to shop. Things are looking up as sales are increasing by about 40 per cent this year over last and new customers continue to stop by.

The store was also recently used as a film location for production by Jonathan Torrens.

He recently launched a new website supported by the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce E-Commerce program. The business continues to grow its client base here, and he and his wife are taking English as a Second Language course to improve written communication with their customers.

A new award this year is the Newcomer Business Award. This award recognizes the contribution to the local economy by a business that has opened in Truro or Colchester County by an individual who has moved to the community in recent years and who is not an original resident of this region.

Mavi Singh was born and raised in Panjab, India, until the age of 15, when his family left to relocate to a dairy farm in Italy. For the next 20 years, Mavi worked on the farm, honing his dairy farming skills that eventually led him to move to a farm in Prince Edward Island in 2012.

In Canada, he realized his desire to be an entrepreneur. After spending five years on the farm in PEI, he began planning to open a safety footwear business with support from a new friend on the island. He moved his family to Bible Hill in late 2017 and soon after launched his new career path selling Italian-made safety footwear from a mobile store, carrying 21 styles of boots. However, after spending 25 days on the road and only receiving one sale, he knew he had to change his plan to make the business work.

By October, he found a location on the Esplanade and set up his business AA Warehouse in a small storefront, featuring Italian brands Grisport and Snickers workwear, with just 200

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