

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 Tamagouche.

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



Alana Hirtle accepted the 2024 Small Business Start-Up Legacy Award on behalf of Michael Ashton, Ashton's Garden Centre from retiring Executive Director, Sherry Martell, right. Unfortunately, Michael is unable to join us today. (Contributed)

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.

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.

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.



Dr. Joanna McGowan, - Truro Chiropractic accepts the Small Business Achievement Award from Lisa Poehl, representing award sponsor, Doane Grant Thornton. (Contributed)

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. The award was presented by Lisa Poehl, representing award sponsor, Doane Grant Thornton.

2024 Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce Small Business Awards

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.

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,



Mitchell and Amanda Chaplin, Chaplin's Confections accept the new small business award from Curtis Tobin, representing award sponsor Community Credit Union of Cumberland and Colchester. (Contributed)

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. The award was presented by Curtis Tobin, representing award sponsor Community Credit Union of Cumberland and Colchester.

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.

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.



David Webber, right, Oceanside Aviation, accepts the 2024 Growth Business Award from Tyler Wheeliker, representing award sponsor BDC. (Contributed)

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. He award was presented by Tyler Wheeliker, representing award sponsor BDC.



Every business has a story.
Let's write your next chapter together.

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