

February 18, 2004

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:00 PM, WEDNESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 18, 2004**



## **Annual Alberta Business Awards of Distinction announced**

CALGARY – Excellence in Alberta's business community was honoured as winners of Alberta Business Awards of Distinction were handed out tonight. The awards, announced at a gala banquet in Calgary, were presented to businesses in that exemplify business achievement.

Winners are as follows:

### **Agrivalue New Venture Award of Distinction**

Aliya's Foods Limited, Sherwood Park  
Sponsored by: AVAC Ltd.

### **Business Development Bank of Canada Small Business Award of Distinction**

Auto-Star Compusystems Inc., Medicine Hat  
Sponsored by: Business Development Bank of Canada

### **Alberta Human Resources and Employment Employer of Youth Award of Distinction**

McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited, Edmonton  
Sponsored by: Alberta Human Resources and Employment

### **CMA Young Entrepreneurs Award of Distinction**

Linking Moments, Calgary  
Sponsored by: CMA - Alberta and the Alberta Chambers of Commerce

### **Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction**

Syncrude Canada, Fort McMurray  
Sponsored by: Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

### **University of Alberta / TELUS Partners in Workplace Learning Award of Distinction**

Sierra Systems Group Inc., Edmonton  
Sponsored by: University of Alberta / TELUS

### **CMA Ethics in Business Award of Distinction**

TransCanada, Calgary  
Sponsored by: CMA - Alberta

### **Alberta Human Resources and Employment Employer of People with Disabilities Award of Distinction**

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities, Edmonton  
Sponsored by: Alberta Human Resources and Employment

### **Zoom Communications Inc./Jet Stream Digital Media Inc. Marketing Award of Distinction**

St. Albert CruiseShipCenters, St. Albert  
Sponsored by: Zoom Communications Inc./Jet Stream Digital Media Inc.

**Western Economic Diversification Canada's Export Award of Distinction**

BioWare Corp., Edmonton

Sponsored by: Western Economic Diversification Canada

**WCB-Alberta WorkSafe™ Award of Distinction - Small Employer**

Supreme International Limited, Wetaskiwin

Sponsored by: WCB - Alberta

**WCB-Alberta WorkSafe™ Award of Distinction - Large Employer**

Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd., Edmonton

Sponsored by: WCB - Alberta

**Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative**

**Aboriginal Relations Best Practice Award of Distinction**

TRIVERS Food Service Ltd., Edmonton

Sponsored by: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative

**Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction**

Ft. McKay Group of Companies, Fort McKay

Sponsored by: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

**Premier's Award of Distinction**

Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd., Edmonton

Sponsored by: Alberta Economic Development

"This year's nominees ran the gamut from small operations to major corporations. They show the diversity of Alberta's business community and highlight its strengths," said Irene Pfeiffer, President of the Alberta Chambers of Commerce.

The awards are hosted by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce in association with numerous corporate sponsors. "Once again we have been very fortunate in securing the support of numerous sponsors that make this program possible. We are truly grateful for their continuing support," said Pfeiffer.

Major sponsors include: Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative, Alberta Economic Development, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, AVAC Ltd., Business Development Bank of Canada, CMA - Alberta, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, University of Alberta & TELUS, Western Economic Diversification Canada, Workers' Compensation Board of Alberta, and Zoom Communications Inc./Jet Stream Digital Media Inc., along with the Edmonton Sun and Calgary Sun. Support is also provided by Calgary Economic Development, Apex Audio Visual Services and Nexus Exhibits.

- 30 -

**NOTE: A backgrounder profiling the winning companies is attached**

For further information, please contact:

Darren Reeder, Executive Director and CEO

Alberta Chambers of Commerce

Phone (780) 975-4327

# Winners

## 2004 Alberta Business Awards of Distinction

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### **Agrivalue New Venture Award of Distinction**

Aliya's Foods Limited, Sherwood Park

Noorudin Jiwani, President, 16 Employees

Aliya's Foods' Chef Bombay brand Samosas are earning a well-deserved reputation and loyal customers across North America. In business since February of 2001, the company has already manufactured over 10 million Samosas! Aliya's Foods' strategy is to become one of the leading suppliers of frozen East Indian foods in North America; a market that's potential is currently untapped. Based on data from AC Neilson for the 52-week period ending May 17th, 2003, the Samosa market has grown by 11% - growth that is predominantly driven by the Chef Bombay Brand of Samosas. With production currently hitting 20,000 Samosas per day Aliya's Foods' success is no surprise.

### **Business Development Bank of Canada Small Business Award of Distinction**

Auto~Star Compusystems Inc., Medicine Hat

Terry M. Cook, President, 28 Employees

Auto~Star Compusystems Inc. began as a home-based business in 1980, with two brothers, Hugh and Ken Arthur in Medicine Hat. Today, continued growth and success has allowed the company to become a business that employs 28 skilled people. The company is a software developer of point-of-sale software for pharmacy and grocery retailers across Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico. The Auto~Star of today looks significantly different from the company of five years ago. Faced with the same situation as other IT companies, the company decided to modify its business model. The move has been a success with Auto~Star posting an ROI of 18% versus an IT industry average of 8%.

### **Alberta Human Resources and Employment Employer of Youth Award of Distinction**

McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited, Alberta

Len Jillard, Regional Vice President, Western Canada Region

A family food experience that everyone is familiar with is also a training ground for young people looking to get a foothold in the working world. McDonald's, rated as one of the top ten employers in Canada, employs more than 77,000 Canadians! At the 55 restaurants in the City of Edmonton and surrounding area alone, over 70% of the restaurant's employees are under the age of 25. McDonald's prides itself on helping their young employees learn many of the fundamental skills that will serve them throughout their work lives such as punctuality, teamwork and communication. McDonald's recognizes that the strength of the company is its people and that is reflected in its youth employment values.

### **CMA Young Entrepreneurs Award of Distinction**

Linking Moments, Calgary

Baillie Aaron, President

This Junior Achievement Company provided a product that tapped into two current trends – candles and sushi. Linking Moments offers attractively packaged sets of nine candles handcrafted to perfectly resemble sushi. To finance their start-up, the company sold 20 shares at \$10.00 each. In their first year, Linking Moments was able to provide its shareholders with a 255% dividend. Going into the second year, Linking Moments is sounding like a corporation on the grow, with sections in their marketing plan discussing governance, workplace safety and supplier negotiation. Based on expected continued sales success, Linking Moments is projecting to be able to provide its shareholders with a 578% dividend at the end of its second year.

### **Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission - Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction**

Syncrude Canada, Fort McMurray  
Charles Ruigrok, CEO, 4,022 Employees

Syncrude acknowledged from the start that diversity initiatives were not only the right thing to do, but that they made good business sense. In 1989, the company developed a Vision and Values package that has stood the test of time. One example of Syncrude's diversity leadership is the Native Pilot Project, which was introduced to ensure that Aboriginal people in the region would benefit from employment at Syncrude. 2003 marked the 25th anniversary of that "Pilot Project". Syncrude's commitment to diversity is clear. In the words of recently retired Chairman and CEO, Eric Newell, "The day that you are really successful is the day that you don't have any programs. It just becomes the way you do business."

### **University of Alberta / TELUS Partners in Workplace Learning Award of Distinction**

Sierra Systems Group Inc., Edmonton  
Grant Gisel, President & CEO, 160 Employees

Sierra Systems is a strong advocate of continuing education for everyone including its staff. The company actively supports programs significant to the ever-evolving IT market, dedicating a percentage of their total budgets and time towards educational opportunities. Among past initiatives undertaken by Sierra Systems is an educational partnership in the NAIT Opening Doors Campaign, which will increase access to some of the best technical education in the world. Sierra Systems is also a strong supporter of the Canadian Information Processing Society ICE Conference that provides members of the IT community the opportunity to attend a variety of educational seminars.

### **CMA Ethics in Business Award of Distinction**

TransCanada, Calgary  
Harold (Hal) Kvisle, President and CEO, 1,800 Employees

TransCanada is committed to the highest standards of business integrity. In 1995, the company introduced its Code of Business Ethics, which outlines the company's ethical standards and the conduct expected of every employee at all levels. TransCanada's goal is to address ethical questions or concerns before they become serious issues. As part of the company's corporate governance process, employees are required to annually read the Code of Business Ethics and complete an online certification to confirm knowledge and compliance with its requirements. To assist employees with ethical questions or concerns the company has put in place numerous resources including a toll-free Ethics Help Line. Measures like these are placing TransCanada at the forefront of corporate ethics management.

### **Alberta Human Resources and Employment Employer of People with Disabilities Award of Distinction**

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities, Edmonton  
Bev Matthiessen, Executive Director, 11 Employees

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD) is a consumer directed organization that actively promotes full participation in society for Albertans with disabilities. Based on their five guiding principles of equality, full participation, integration, individuality and accountability, the ACCD hires people with disabilities into all available employee positions whenever possible, and strives to accommodate the needs of their employees. The ACCD also works to provide educational or improvement opportunities and are presently sending an employee with a disability to the Supervisory Development Certificate program at the University of Alberta.

### **Zoom/Jet Stream Marketing Award of Distinction**

St. Albert CruiseShipCenters, St. Albert  
Trish and John Beatty, Owners and Managers

In the past two years, St. Albert CruiseShipCenters has implemented a marketing strategy that is focused on permission-based e-marketing through their 7 Seas Club and targeted distribution of marketing materials. The overriding marketing objective is to increase market share by growing a database of qualified clients. Currently, St. Albert CruiseShipCenters 7 Seas Club has 1500 permission-based members. These members are all prospects that have requested to receive information, meaning the company is only marketing to people who are interested in cruise

vacations. Additionally, highly targeted direct mail programs are being used that are resulting in a much higher percentage of bookings. This cost-effective, highly targeted marketing is proving to be effective in driving new business.

### **Western Economic Diversification Canada's Export Award of Distinction**

BioWare Corp., Edmonton

Dr. Ray Muzyka & Dr. Greg Zeschuk, Joint CEOs, 167 Employees

Since its inception in 1995, BioWare has sold over 8 million software units worldwide! The maker of such titles as Baldur's Gate, and Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic, base their export strategy on the core value of an absolute commitment to quality. BioWare exports throughout North America, Europe, Australia, Israel, Latin America, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Japan, China and Korea. In fact, for the fiscal year ended September 2003, nearly 98% of BioWare's revenue was derived from export sales. Worldwide export of its products has led to innovations such as the simultaneous worldwide release of Baldur's Gate 2: Throne of Bhaal in six different languages - something BioWare had not done previously.

### **WCB-Alberta WorkSafe™ Award of Distinction – Small Employer**

Supreme International Limited, Wetaskiwin

Jeanette Guertin, President, 90-95 Employees

Supreme International celebrated 50 years in business in 2003. During that time the company has grown from a simple farm implements dealer to a manufacturer of farm equipment. In the mid-1990s, during a time of fast growth, the company implemented a Joint Health and Safety Committee. At that time the company recognized that their continued growth was dependent on the health and well being of their employees. This focus led to the implementation of policies such as Injury Response, Modified Work Program, and Health and Safety Enforcement. The results have been noticeable, to say the least. Over the past three years, Supreme International has reduced its Workers' Compensation premium rate surcharge by 27%!

### **WCB-Alberta WorkSafe™ Award of Distinction - Large Employer**

Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd., Edmonton

Don Oborowski, President and CEO, 332 Employees

Two serious accidents in 1995, led to the realization that Waiward Steel needed a better and more formalized safety program. Among the cornerstones of Waiward's commitment to health and safety on the job is the backing of all of the staff when it comes to safety programs. Everyone knows that at the end of the day everybody needs to go home to his or her families without incident. One of the measures of success for the programs that Waiward has put in place, is their WCB surcharge position, moving from a 40% surcharge in 1995, to a consistent 40% discount now, putting Waiward at the top of its industry.

### **INAC/AWPI Aboriginal Relations – Best Practice Award of Distinction**

TRIVERS Food Service Ltd., Edmonton

Wholly owned by ARAMARK Canada, John Dampf, COO

31 Permanent Employees, 400 Seasonal Employees

A provider of industrial camp and catering services, TRIVERS recognize the growing Aboriginal population in Canada and actively seeks those Aboriginal employees who want to become Chefs, Camp Managers and Supervisors. These positions move people out of the seasonal job market and into more permanent year-round employment. The company employs a full-time Aboriginal Affairs Coordinator and has successfully negotiated partnerships with several Aboriginal communities in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the NWT. Through these joint ventures, TRIVERS has assisted communities with equity ownership in camps, supported local businesses and made employment and training commitments. In 2003, over 46% of TRIVERS' workforce was Aboriginal.

### **Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction**

Ft. McKay Group of Companies, Fort McKay

Chief Jim Boucher, 200+ Employees

Fort McKay is a small aboriginal community 70 Km North of Fort McMurray. In 1986, the Ft. McKay First Nation incorporated a general contracting business to provide employment to band members, and to generate profits to enhance the community. Since then, the list of companies has grown to include trucking, transportation expediting and reclamation. More than 70 people

from the Ft. McKay First Nation are gainfully employed by these businesses. In addition, the band has assisted four local residents in starting up their own businesses. The Ft. McKay First Nation attributes its business success to separation of business and politics, a willingness to work with all stakeholders in the region and placing qualified local aboriginal people in positions of influence.

#### **Premier's Award of Distinction**

Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd., Edmonton  
Don Oborowski, President and CEO, 332 Employees

Two serious accidents in 1995, led to the realization that Waiward Steel needed a better and more formalized safety program. Among the cornerstones of Waiward's commitment to health and safety on the job is the backing of all of the staff when it comes to safety programs. Everyone knows that at the end of the day everybody needs to go home to his or her families without incident. One of the measures of success for the programs that Waiward has put in place, is their WCB surcharge position, moving from a 40% surcharge in 1995, to a consistent 40% discount now, putting Waiward at the top of its industry.