

Finalists Announced For 2018 BE Awards at Jan. 25 Gala

Businesses From Communities Across Vancouver Island Named To "All Star" List

VICTORIA – Now it's up to the judges.

There are 88 finalists – one of the largest number of finalists ever – for the 18th Annual Vancouver Island Business Excellence Awards, set Thursday, Jan. 25 at the **Delta Ocean Pointe Resort** in Victoria.

"There are some spectacular success stories shared by companies that were nominated for this year's BE Awards, and the judges are working hard to determine the winners," notes **Mark MacDonald** of **Business Examiner**, which coordinates the annual celebration of the best of the best in Vancouver Island business.

Black Press is a Platinum Sponsor of the BE Awards this year, and **RBC Royal Bank**, **Grant Thornton LLP**, **Shaw and Liquid Capital West Coast Financing Corp.** are the event's Gold Sponsors. Category sponsors are **Coastal Community Credit Union**, **Helijet**, **Island Savings Credit Union**, **Grieg Seafood** and **Invest Comox Valley**.



"It's like an 'All Star' list of businesses that have enjoyed great success over the last year," MacDonald adds. "As is usual, nominations are virtually split between south of the Malahat, throughout greater Victoria, and north of the Malahat, all the way to Port Hardy and the West Coast."

Finalists from each city:

■ **Port Hardy**

Cove Adventure Tours, Kwalilas Hotel, Tex Electric.

■ **Campbell River**

Beach Fire Brewing, CR Animal Parties, Marine Harvest Canada, Steve Marshall Ford, Tremain Media Inc.

■ **Comox Valley**

Blinds & Bubbles Boutique, Dale Roberts Notary, Strong Hearts Fitness, Tree Island Gourmet Yogurt, Cumberland Crate Co.

■ **Parksville-Qualicum Beach**

Bayview Custom Motorcycles, Bread & Honey Food Company, Close to You Ladies Fashions, M & N Mattress Shop Ltd., Nurture Collective, Alcove Homegrown Living, Arbutus Dental Clinic, Qualicum Beach Inn, Salt and Harrow (French Creek), Mid Island Computer Enterprises (Nanose Bay).

■ **Port Alberni**

Coulson Ice Blast, Port Posh Wash, The Blue Marlin Inn, Totem Tree Service.

■ **Tofino-Ucluelet**

Long Beach Lodge Resort, Norwoods Restaurant.

■ **Nanaimo**

Alair Holmes, Baby Salsa Mexican Restaurant, Butler Wilson Quality Construction, Coco Cafe, Datum Point Studios, Excalibur Custom Homes, Foley Dog Treat Company Inc., Harris Mazda,

Hearthstone Artisan Bakery, Lan-son's Drywall, Maffeo Salon and Day Spa, Mazzei Electric, Mid Island Co-op, Nori Sushi, Pheasant Hill Homes, Resonance Software, SignAge, Snip 'n Stitch, Tilray, Tim's Automotive Repair & Used Car Sales, VMAC.

■ **Ladysmith**

49th Parallel Grocery, April's Tack Boutique.

■ **Chemainus**

Riot Brewing Co.

■ **Cowichan Valley & Malahat**

Creative Woodcraft, Made to Last Building & Renovations, Alinea Legal Coaching, Malahat Chalet.

■ **Greater Victoria**

Balance Home Cleaning, Big Wheel Burger, Clinic 805, Comfort Keepers, Dodd's Furniture, Eagle Wing Tours, Engaged HR Inc., First Light Technologies, Freshworks Studio, Home Care Assistance Victoria, Maple Leaf Adventures, Mike Geric Construction, Nu-View Homes, Pain Free Tax & Bookkeeping Service, Soare Contracting Inc., Victoria Eye

Surgery, Wade Roberst Plumbing, Waymark Architecture, Western Interior Design Group Ltd., Tudor House Liquor Store (Esquimalt).

■ **Sidney**

Brentwood Bay Resort & Spa, Hook & Hook Renovations, VRX Ventures.

■ **Sooke**

Saltwest Naturals Inc., Seafloa Skincare, The Stick in the Mud Coffee House, West Coast Heeler Pack, Westcom Plumbing and Heating.

■ **West Shore**

Alpine Auto Repair & Tirecraft, Cascadia Liquor Langford, Colwood Dental Group, Juan de Fuca Veterinary Clinic.

Tickets to the event are \$125, and it typically sells out early, so tickets can be purchased through www.businessexaminer.ca/events.

There are still a few category sponsorships available for the event.

For more information, contact MacDonald at 1-866-758-2684 ext. 120 or email: mark@businessexaminer.ca

Making Dough from Dough: Foley Dog Treats Bag Success with Quality

Best Friends deserve the best. Many pet owners agree, which is why Nanaimo-based Foley Dog

Treat Company is a dramatic local success story. Over the past eight years, the company has grown from a home-based,

tucked-in-the-basement business to an international supplier of quality dog treats in Canada and the U.S.

Foley is now completing the certification to expand into the European Union.

Foley wants the Foley Dog Treat Company to transform the pet treat industry. She believes owners deserve safe treats for their pets. That means treats made from quality, human-grade ingredients.

She isn't alone. Her success is riding – in part – on a growing wave of pet owners who don't want to play Russian roulette when dispensing treats. Tragic reports of dogs dying from unknown ingredients used in the loosely regulated pet treat industry, combined with frequent recalls of pet products after those deaths, confirm the need for caution.

"The dog food and treat industry is riddled with unhealthy treats," Foley said. "Foley Dog Treats has a following of people who were looking for healthy products and couldn't find them."

When pet owners choose Foley's dog treats, they get more than an excited pooch. They are assured locally sourced, real food baked into scrumptious nibbles. The treats are grain-free because dogs can be allergic to wheat and gluten upsets their stomachs. Instead, she uses chickpea flour, which adds additional protein, and flax. All products are preservative-free.

She doesn't use chicken because many dogs are allergic to it. Instead she uses human-grade, hormone free meats including bison, venison, duck, beef, elk and turkey. Even kale makes it onto the ingredient list.

Foley's Nanaimo-based production plant resembles a bakery for humans: clean and organized with giant mixers, dough rolled out by hand, cutters, and closet-sized ovens with roll-in baking racks. The company employs 10 people.

The plant can produce 22,000 bags of dog treats a month, which equals "a lot of happy dogs," Foley said. A year ago she was supported by Community Futures in expanding her operation. She has now almost outgrown her 2500 square foot space and is preparing to expand again.

She attributes her company's success to basics. "I offer a really high quality product. I don't skimp on ingredients, and I deliver it at a decent price." She feels this should be the standard for dog treats, instead of an exception.

"I make dough from rolling dough," she quips.

Pet food quality is a widespread issue because the lucrative product is dominated by four to five large companies. Although different brand names may be used, the product inside is produced in the same few factories. This is why recalls often spread across multiple brands.

Regulation is almost non-existent. "There is no regulation of dog treats in Canada and dog food must only meet minimal agricultural feed quality standards," Foley says. For pet owners who want to ensure their pets receive quality food, the only option is to seek out smaller scale providers who choose to produce good quality food.

Foley produces three brands of treats for dogs: FoleyBites, Dog'n It, and Vitality Dog. She also distributes West Coast Canine Life, a Canadian-made high quality dog food.

As the owner of two dogs, Foley understands why owners want the best for their pets. Her dogs often join her in the front office, which is warmed by the aromas flowing from the back shop ovens. "They're the happiest dogs on earth."

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