

## PRESS RELEASE

**WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2018 SMALL BUSINESS BC AWARDS**

**February 24, 2018 – Vancouver:** The winners of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Small Business BC Awards were announced last night at the awards' glamorous gala celebration. Out of 50 small businesses that made it to the finals, 10 walked away with a coveted award.

Small Business BC, in partnership with Canada Post, is proud to have hosted such a successful sold-out event. Over 600 attendees gathered at the Vancouver Convention Centre yesterday for the awards' 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being the largest provincial small business awards competition and to honour the hundreds of nominees who were involved in this year's contest.

The celebrations included two cocktail networking receptions, a three-course gala dinner, and the awards ceremony, hosted by Erin Cebula and an esteemed panel of sponsors. Attendees included the Minister for Jobs, Trade and Technology, Bruce Ralston, Assistant Deputy Minister Gerry Salembier, MLA's Rick Glumac, Joan Issacs and Jordan Sturdy, numerous Mayors and elected officials, and hundreds of small business owners and supporters.

"The awards were a roaring success," said Small Business BC CEO George Hunter. "We had an incredible sold-out crowd and shared an evening filled with inspiration and celebration. This year's competition recognized a truly diverse collection of B.C.'s small businesses and we look forward to next year's event."

"It was an absolute pleasure to meet and celebrate such talented and hardworking business owners," said Lise Côté, General Manager of Consumer and Small Business Marketing at Canada Post. "The innovation and tenacity shown by all the winners is something everyone should strive for – they are truly inspiring. And as an organization, Canada Post is proud to be part of recognizing these entrepreneurs."

The Small Business BC Awards is a celebration of B.C.'s small businesses, their achievements, and their contributions to local and global economies. This five-month long competition began in October, when over 600 small businesses from 61 communities across B.C. were nominated.

The category winners were awarded the Premier's Prize in the amount of \$1,500 cash, a one-year All-Access Pass to Small Business BC education and experts, and the honour of being named one of B.C.'s top businesses.

"The Small Business BC Awards are a demonstration of the strength of B.C.'s small business sector," said Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology Bruce Ralston. "As this year's contest shows, our province is privileged to have a diversity of innovative entrepreneurs working hard to create good jobs, build better communities, and grow a sustainable economy throughout our province."

Nominations for the 2019 Small Business Awards will open in October, 2018. Nominations are open to the public; more information can be found at [sbbcawards.ca](http://sbbcawards.ca).

This year's Small Business BC Awards Gala was held in conjunction with the [Open for Business Awards](#), which not only celebrate B.C.'s local small businesses, but also the communities that they reside in.

The winning businesses of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Small Business BC Awards are as follows.

<p><b>PREMIER'S PEOPLE'S CHOICE</b> <i>Presented by the Province of British Columbia</i></p> <p>The Gibsons Butcher, Gibsons</p>	<p><b>BEST APPRENTICE TRAINING</b> <i>Presented by ITA</i></p> <p>Northern Legendary Construction Ltd., Fort St. John</p>
<p><b>BEST COMMUNITY IMPACT</b> <i>Presented by Vancity</i></p> <p>Recycling Alternative, Vancouver</p>	<p><b>BEST COMPANY</b> <i>Presented by Sage</i></p> <p>Wicks Electric Inc., Vancouver</p>
<p><b>BEST CONCEPT</b> <i>Presented by Rogers</i></p> <p>Sea to Sky Removal, Squamish</p>	<p><b>BEST EMPLOYER</b> <i>Presented by TruShield Insurance</i></p> <p>Imperial Custom Wood Finishing Ltd., Abbotsford</p>
<p><b>BEST IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR</b> <i>Presented by Small Business BC</i></p> <p>FreshWorks Studio, Victoria</p>	<p><b>BEST INNOVATION</b> <i>Presented by Western Economic Diversification Canada</i></p> <p>AVA Technologies Inc., Vancouver</p>
<p><b>BEST INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b> <i>Presented by UPS Canada</i></p>	<p><b>BEST MARKETER</b> <i>Presented by KPU</i></p>

Ironsides Design Manufacturing, Chilliwack

Two Wheel Gear, Vancouver

### Award Sponsor Quotes

“Congratulations to all of the hardworking entrepreneurs and small business owners who have been nominated for the Small Business BC Awards, and to AVA Technologies – winners of the Best Innovation Award, presented by Western Economic Diversification Canada. Together, your hard work and dedication will drive growth, create well-paying middle-class jobs, and demonstrates the strong culture of innovation for which British Columbia is known. I wish you all tremendous success as you continue your important work.” – **The Honourable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons**

“We would like to congratulate the winners of the Small Business BC Awards this year for going over and beyond in contributing to our local economy, and for being an inspiration to aspiring entrepreneurs in the region. As a long-time advocate for business builders in BC and beyond, we believe small businesses are the powerhouses in our communities that need to be recognized and celebrated. We will continue to be in their corner supporting them through their business journeys, so that they may flourish doing what they do best.” – **Paul Struthers, Executive Vice President and Managing Director at Sage Canada**

“Apprenticeship is essential in trades training and it wouldn’t be possible without employer champions that are hiring and training the next generation of tradespeople in BC. In sponsoring SBBC’s Best Apprentice Training Award, we are celebrating the winner as well as all the nominees across the province, as they are all doing their part in ensuring that BC’s skilled trades continues to grow strong. Congratulations Northern Legendary Construction Ltd. on your well-deserved award. Keep up the great work!” – **Gary Herman, CEO, Industry Training Authority.**

“Small businesses have the ideas, unique offerings and determination to grow beyond our borders. UPS Canada is proud to be a part of the 15th Annual Small Business BC Awards, and continue to support the international growth of Canadian small businesses. Congratulations to the winner in the Best International Trade category, Ironsides Design Manufacturing.” – **Paul Gaspar, Director of Small Business at UPS Canada.**

“Two Wheel Gear exemplifies the key to getting results. They have unequivocally demonstrated that effective marketing is a conversation that leads to a mutually beneficial relationship. Two Wheel Gear has found uniquely creative ways to engage their customers.” – **Wayne Tebb, Dean of KPU School of Business**

“Again this year, Vancity is delighted to support the community impact award category. We were pleased to see the commitments to positive community impact of all the nominees!” – **Catherine Ludgate, Manager of Community Investment at Vancity**

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### About Small Business BC

[Small Business BC](#) provides entrepreneurs with the information and guidance necessary to build a solid foundation for their business. Through a wide range of products, services, education and resources there’s a piece that fits with every business. No matter what stage or what skill level, when an entrepreneur finds themselves asking “How do I...?” Small Business BC is the one to call.

### About Canada Post

[Canada Post](#) is Canada's primary postal operator, providing service to more than 16 million addresses and delivering nearly 8.4 billion items in 2016. They are committed to providing innovative physical and electronic delivery solutions that create value for customers, small business and Canadians.

### About the Province of British Columbia

[The B.C. government](#) recognizes that small businesses are the heart and soul of our communities, and the backbone of our economy. Small business plays a vital role in developing both the economic and social fabric of our province. The Small Business Branch, through the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology, is committed to supporting and developing small businesses throughout the province in every stage of the business lifecycle. It’s part of our goal to make B.C. the most small-business friendly jurisdiction in Canada.

### About the Small Business Roundtable

The permanent [Small Business Roundtable](#) was established in 2005 to engage in a dialogue with small business owners to identify the key issues and opportunities facing small businesses in British Columbia, and to develop recommendations for small business and government on strategies to enhance small business growth and success.