

## NEWS RELEASE

### Congratulations to the 2017 Chamber Gala Awards Recipients

April 22 marks the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Business Gala Awards hosted by the Melita and District Chamber of Commerce. The hall was filled with about 300 guests attending the ceremony to commemorate outstanding businesses, service organizations, and volunteers. On its first year, the chamber received 36 nominations across the nine award categories.

The program began with chilled cocktails being served at 5:30pm. Upon entering the venue, you felt as if you were at a formal evening in the city. The hall was transformed by black and white tables adorned with stunning hydrangea centerpieces created by Blossom Boutique and the stage was dressed to impress by Camiel and Danielle Serruys. Only one short hour after guests were asked to be seated, the evening was about to get rolling. The Master of Ceremonies (MC), Camiel Serruys, owner of Chicken Chef and Gala Awards Committee Head, welcomed everyone to the Legion Memorial Hall. Attendees were asked to rise with the singing of O' Canada performed by Russell and Steward Pulinney. Afterwards, dinner was ready and Kurt Ardron was invited to say grace. The sumptuous buffet of roast beef and chicken breast was catered by Chicken Chef.

Later on, Camiel welcomed Town of Melita Mayor Bill Holden, Municipality of Two Borders Reeve Debbie McMechan, Chamber President Darren Stewart, and MLA for Arthur-Virden Doyle Pivniuk to bring greetings.

The most distinguished and highest honor award was up first. Dr. Aquilino Dizon, Jr., who has been an asset to the community, was the honored guest. Speeches were given by Barb Moir, on behalf of the entire hospital staff, past and present, and Mayor Bill Holden. Then, all the staff at the gala, together with the Mayor, Reeve, and chamber president, presented Dr. Dizon with a *Key to the Community Award*. April 22 was then declared as Dr. Dizon Day in the Town of Melita. Dr. Dizon was accompanied by his wife, Emma Dizon as he graciously received the award. Dr. Dizon said a few words and reminisced on how he got to Melita. He expressed his appreciation to his family, colleagues, members of the community, the chamber, and guests.

The rest of the Awards Program began with the announcement of the winners for the following categories:

- Award of Excellence – Delmar Loucks and Kevin Thompson
- Non-Profit Organization of the Year – Melita and Area Lions Club
- Volunteer Group of the Year – Prairie Vision Arts Council
- Tourism Event of the Year – Melita Banana Days
- Business of the Year (under 7 employees) – Redpath Funeral Home
- Business of the Year (over 7 employees) – Chicken Chef Melita
- Entrepreneur of the Year – Camiel and Danielle Serruys
- Citizen of the Year (under 20 year old) – Steward Pulinney
- Citizen of the Year (over 20 years old) – Brenda Dell

The men and women of the Melita and Area Fire Department were honored for their years of service to the community.

Once the awards portion of the evening was over, MC Camiel Serruys welcomed everyone to the dance floor to shake it up and have an enjoyable night with Live Band Armadillo. Wrapping things up at 1am, an overwhelming night was had by all. The Melita and District Chamber of Commerce was very fortunate to have a great community support system and was thrilled with an outstanding event.

List of nominations received for all categories:

**Award of Excellence**

Melita Strand Theatre, Melita Banana Days, Kevin Thompson, and Delmar Loucks

**Non-Profit Organization of the Year**

Christmas Cheer Board, Melita and Area Lions Club, Melita Banana Days

**Volunteer Group of the Year**

Prairie Vision Arts Council, Galaxy Lanes Bowling Alley, Midget Girls Hockey Coaches, Melita Banana Days

**Tourism Event of the Year**

Melita Banana Days, 3&83 Cruisers Car Show, Museum Haunted House

**Business of the Year (under 7 employees)**

Blossom Boutique, Rod's Auto, Redpath Funeral Home, Southwest Strength, The Zone

**Business of the Year (over 7 employees)**

Melita Chicken Chef Family Restaurant, Southwest Chevrolet, Melita Super Thrifty

**Entrepreneur of the Year**

Camiel & Danielle Serruys, April Barker, Curtis & Ashley Coute

**Citizen of the Year (under 20 year old)**

Steward Pulinney, Lantz Skidmore

**Citizen of the Year (over 20 years old)**

Marla Barsness, Darren Stewart, Marie Tilbury, Brittany Walker, Kurt Ardron, Trudy Dickson, Sheila Harmon, Brian Teetaert, Brenda Dell

Quotes from speeches:

"A special thank you to all the volunteers, and a lot of you are in this room here tonight, that volunteered in any way to help the town and the Municipality of Two Borders...To all of you, a very heartfelt thank you."

- Town of Melita Mayor, William "Bill" Holden

"Our heartfelt congratulations to all those being honored here this evening. Your dedication and commitment to your community is more precious than can be measured....and while tonight's honorees may be here for a number of different achievements, they share very important qualities: their belief in, their dedication to, and their continuing investment in their community. "

- Municipality of Two Borders Reeve, Debbie McMechan

“Looking at the list of nominees, one sees diversity of the business and service sector here. It speaks well of this region and its people that these businesses and organizations can thrive here. All of you are here tonight because you are leaders and because you care about the future of our community. “

- MLA for Arthur Virden, Doyle Pivniuk

Photos from the Gala Awards (from Brittany Walker)

Honored Awardee, Dr. Aquilino Dizon, Jr.



Honorees - Fire Department



Award of Excellence – Delmar Loucks and Kevin Thompson





Business (over 7 employees) – Chicken Chef Melita



Business (under 7 employees) – Redpath Funeral Home



Citizen of the Year – Brenda Dell



Citizen for the Year (under 20 y.o.) – Steward Pulinney



Non-Profit of the Year – Melita and Area Lions Club



Tourism Event of the Year – Melita Banana Days





Volunteer Group of the Year – Prairie Vision Arts Council

