

PRESS RELEASE

TOP 5 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 14TH ANNUAL SMALL BUSINESS BC AWARDS

January 23, 2017 – Vancouver: Small Business BC, the province's premier resource for entrepreneurs, and the Insurance Bureau of Canada, asked British Columbians to nominate their favourite small businesses for the 14th Annual Small Business BC Awards between October 1 and November 30, 2016. This year, 699 nominations from 72 communities across the province and over 32,000 votes were received.

The Small Business BC Awards is the largest small business awards competition in the province. These awards recognize the outstanding achievements of British Columbia's entrepreneurs and celebrate the contributions new and existing businesses registered in B.C., with fewer than 50 employees, make to their local communities and the global economy.

Those who activated their communities and received the most votes between October 1 and November 30, 2016 were named the Top 10 Semi-Finalists on December 12, 2016 and invited to submit a more detailed application. These applications were used to decide the Top 5 Finalists in this year's competition.

These outstanding businesses will now face a Dragon's Den-style panel of business experts who will determine the winner in each category:

<p>PREMIER'S PEOPLE'S CHOICE <i>Presented by the Province of British Columbia</i></p> <p>Beachcomber Coffee Company Inc. – Gibsons Picnic Charcuterie – Tofino Sea To Sky Air – Squamish Vintage and Restoration Love – Dawson Creek Wheelhouse Brewing Company – Prince Rupert</p>	<p>BEST APPRENTICE TRAINING <i>Presented by ITA and Kwantlen Polytechnic University</i></p> <p>Harbourview Autohaus Ltd. – Nanaimo Heidout Restaurant and Brewhouse – Cranbrook Ironside Design Manufacturing Inc. – Chilliwack Northern Legendary Construction – Charlie Lake Rambow Mechanical Ltd. – Kelowna</p>
<p>BEST COMMUNITY IMPACT <i>Presented by Vancity</i></p> <p>Greater Vancouver Lice Clinic – Maple Ridge Cowichan Energy Alternatives – Duncan Fraser Lake Dollar Store and Corner Store – Fraser Lake Lighthouse Labs – Vancouver Rainbow's Roost – Kamloops</p>	<p>BEST COMPANY <i>Presented by Sage</i></p> <p>Dalex Auto Services – Fort Nelson Nucleus Networks Inc. – Vancouver Rocky Point Ice Cream Inc. – Port Moody Vernon Teach and Learn Ltd. – Vernon Wholesale Furniture Brokers – Kamloops</p>
<p>BEST CONCEPT <i>Presented by Rogers Communications</i></p> <p>Canada's Best Apps – Whistler Infuse I.T. VinStream – Kelowna Lil Worker Safety Gear – Comox Studio Robazzo – Victoria Wine Crush Market – Penticton</p>	<p>BEST EMPLOYER <i>Presented by TruShield Insurance</i></p> <p>Aequilibrium Software Inc. – Vancouver Central Kitchen - Bar – Kelowna RDC Fine Homes Inc. – Whistler Valley Acrylic Bath Ltd. – Mission VictorEric – Vancouver</p>
<p>BEST IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR <i>Presented by Small Business BC</i></p> <p>FreshWorks Studio – Victoria Country Chic Paint Ltd. – Duncan Lilian Cazacu Notary Corporation – Langley Nirvana Foods Inc. – Richmond Trademark Factory – Vancouver</p>	<p>BEST INNOVATION <i>Presented by BC Innovation Council</i></p> <p>Mazu – Kelowna IT Glue – Vancouver Terramera – Vancouver The Alinker – Richmond Two Hat Security – Kelowna</p>
<p>BEST INTERNATIONAL TRADE <i>Presented by UPS Canada</i></p> <p>CPE Systems Inc. – Burnaby Fusion Brand – Vancouver Mountain Coffee Ltd. – Delta Numpfer – Vancouver Wize Monkey – Vancouver</p>	<p>BEST MARKETER <i>Presented by Yellow Pages</i></p> <p>The Argosy – Prince Rupert JY Knows It Business Consulting – Surrey K'pure Naturals – Mission Loulou Lollipop – Richmond The Henna Hut – Penticton</p>

Pitches will be held in-person at Small Business BC in Vancouver between February 6-14, 2017.

The winners will be announced at the 14th Annual Small Business BC Awards Ceremony at the Pan Pacific Vancouver on Thursday, February 23, 2017 during an evening drinks, appetizers and networking with 500 BC business owners, industry influencers, government officials and special guests.

Recipients of Small Business BC Awards will be recognized with the Premier's Prize in the amount of \$1,500 cash, a one-year all-access pass to Small Business BC education, resources and experts, and one-on-one business mentorship with notable advisors from the award sponsors.

More details on the Small Business BC Awards and Small Business BC Awards Ceremony can be found at www.sbbcawards.ca.

Quotes

"Small businesses are the backbone of Canada's leading economy, responsible for creating over a million jobs in B.C. That's why we worked hard to become the most small business-friendly jurisdiction in North America. Congratulations all the Top 5 Finalists for being recognized as innovative, responsible pillars in their community." – **Premier Christy Clark**

"Small businesses account for 98% of all businesses in B.C. – they drive the economy and create jobs for British Columbians. All the Top 5 Finalists for the Small Business BC Awards should be proud that their communities voted them into the top spots! Congratulations to all the Top 5 Finalists in the Small Business BC Awards." – **Hon. Coralee Oakes, Minister of Small Business, Red Tape Reduction and Liquor Distribution, Province of British Columbia**

"We saw an incredible level of participation in the Small Business BC Awards this year with 699 nominations from 72 communities across the province. We're proud to acknowledge all companies who participated and would like to congratulate all those who made it into this year's Top 5 as Finalists in the competition. These entrepreneurs are helping build a vibrant economy in B.C. and the Small Business BC Awards are the best way to celebrate and acknowledge their success and contribution." – **George Hunter, CEO, Small Business BC**

"These are very impressive finalists and just another example about why IBC is proud to once again sponsor the Small Business BC Awards. On behalf of IBC, I congratulate all the finalists and wish them continued success as they move forward into the next round of this year's competition." – **Bill Adams, Vice-President, Western and Pacific, IBC**

"Congratulations to the Top 5 Finalists in the Best Innovation category. To build a successful company, entrepreneurs need access to talent, capital and markets. BC Innovation Council connects companies to all three of these needs through initiatives like our Regional Innovation Opportunities tour, Investment Showcase at the #BCTECH Summit, our province-wide BC Acceleration Network and through our support of events like the Small Business BC Awards." – **Carl Anderson, President and CEO, BC Innovation Council**

"We're looking forward to meeting all the nominated employers for the Best Apprentice Training Award this year. Small businesses make up a large portion of B.C.'s economy and this community plays an important role in ensuring that skilled trades apprentices are getting the right hands-on experience on their apprenticeship journey. We're excited to partner with Kwantlen Polytechnic University to recognize an employer that is doing their part to training B.C.'s trades industry." – **Gary Herman, CEO, Industry Training Authority**

"..." – **Salvador Ferreras, Ph.D., Provost and Vice-President Academic, Kwantlen Polytechnic University**

"Sage is very excited for the opportunity to present the Best Company Award at the Small Business BC Awards Ceremony this year. On behalf of Sage I would like to congratulate the Top 5 Finalists chosen to proceed to the next round. We look forward to meeting each of the finalists to learn more about their various achievements, and to celebrating their commendable contributions to industries and communities." – **Paul Struthers, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, Sage Canada**

"A small business is only as strong as the people behind it and that's why being an inspiring, fair and dedicated employer is so important. Each of the Top 5 Finalists for Best Employer at this year's Small Business BC Awards illustrates this concept perfectly. Congratulations to all finalists!" – **Mike Gaba, Manager, Business Development, TruShield Insurance**

"UPS Canada is pleased to be a part of the 14th annual Small Business BC Awards and would like to congratulate the top five finalists in the Best International Trade category. We're looking forward to expanding our footprint within the province of British Columbia and educating businesses on the continued opportunities available within international markets." – **Paul Gaspar, Director of Small Business, UPS Canada**

“Small businesses are the drivers of the local economy, they innovate to create new products and services, generate jobs and help our communities thrive. We congratulate the Top 5 organizations along with those who were also nominated for the impact they are making in the communities where we live and work.” – **Catherine Ludgate, Manager, Community Investment, Vancity**

“Yellow Pages wishes to congratulate this year's Top 5 Finalists. BC has some successful entrepreneurs, and we're pleased to participate in recognizing their success and contributions to BC's local economy.” – **Sonny Magon, Senior Sales Manager, Yellow Pages**

Media Contact:

Mark Blendheim

Communications Manager, Small Business BC

Direct: 604-775-5607

blendheim.mark@smallbusinessbc.ca

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 Insurance Bureau of Canada

Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) is the national industry association representing Canada's private home, auto and business insurers. Its member companies make up 90% of the property and casualty (P&C) insurance market in Canada. For more than 50 years, IBC has worked with governments across the country to help make affordable home, auto and business insurance available for all Canadians. IBC supports the vision of consumers and governments trusting, valuing and supporting the private P&C insurance industry. It champions key issues and helps educate consumers on how best to protect their homes, cars, businesses and properties. P&C insurance touches the lives of nearly every Canadian and plays a critical role in keeping businesses safe and the Canadian economy strong. It employs more than 120,000 Canadians, pays \$8.2 billion in taxes and has a total premium base of \$49 billion.