



105B Walker Street, Truro, NS, B2N 4B1

For immediate release

News release

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Truro and Colchester Awards Gala showcases business resiliency

‘We are going to be stronger and better than ever’

TRURO – A phoenix rising from the ashes will be a prominently displayed feature at the new NovelTea book store and café when it reopens later this year.

Café owner Vonda Hazard was the guest speaker at the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala, held online on April 27, and spoke about the challenges her small, family-owned business faced during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. These difficulties were further compounded in September when the business was completely razed by fire.

She said it was during this devastating time she realized the business, which had been operating in downtown Truro for six years, was so much more than a physical meeting place.

“I remember just that realization, that the building of NovelTea was gone but the spirit and community of NovelTea was more alive and stronger than it had ever had been,” said Hazard. “We knew that we hadn’t just built a business but we built this community of support and love around us.”

She said it’s acts of kindness and a rally of support that make it possible to get through any tragedy.

“Businesses, we are still in the thick of this,” said the small business owner. “Know that your business is not just a service that you are offering to this community, but that you actually are a part of the fabric of the community. That what you offer to the community is a human touch. You offer kindness and that your customers notice.

“I truly believe as we go forward into 2021, that not just NovelTea, but all of down town Truro, all of the town of Truro, all of Colchester County, all of Nova Scotia, we are all going to rise like a phoenix out of these ashes. We are going to be stronger and better than ever.”

Due to COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, the Chamber cancelled its annual gala, a traditional April event, and moved the celebration online for 2021.

“It was important during these turbulent times for business that we not only try and host a gala for members, but try and shine a light of hope for all those in attendance,” said Chamber President Matthew Mossman. “We also wanted to continue to set the example of how successful virtual events can be so members could join us safely from their homes or offices.”

During the evening celebration, Mossman presented Past-President Ron Smith with a plaque recognizing his two terms serving on the Board of Directors from 2019 to 2021.



Two local businesses were also recognized during the inaugural virtual Awards Gala. They are Carter's (Truro) Limited Paints, receiving the Community Credit Union Business Excellence Award and Karen Baillie of Elegant Steps, receiving the BDC Business Person of the Year.

"Being in business for 131 years is truly commendable and Carter's Paints has certainly been able to adapt to change and we have seen them grow over time," said the President "Their business not only supports Colchester County but regionally as well, and has helped Colchester have its place on the business map.

"Our Chamber is proud to share our anniversary of 131 years with Carter's Paints."

He said Karen Baillie was a perfect choice for the Business Person of the Year award recognizing her leadership in the community, willingness to advocate for local business and desire to help others in any way she can.

"Elegant Steps has been a staple in our community since the early 90's and her dedication, not only to the success of her business, but helping with the success of those around her is commended."

The Chamber represents more than 450 businesses in the Truro and Colchester region. The 2021 Awards Gala can be viewed on the Chamber's YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZAi2vepchg&t=881s>

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Cutlines:

Past President Award

Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sherry Martell presents the Past President award to Ron Smith who served as president from 2019 to 2021. Submitted photo

Vonda Hazard, owner of popular downtown Truro café and book store NovelTea, was the guest speaker at the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce's 131st annual Awards Gala, held on April 27 online. Submitted photo

Business Excellence

George Oberprieler, left, CEO of Community Credit Union Truro, presents Jeremy Carter, of Carter's (Truro) Limited Paints with the 2021 Business Excellence Award during the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce's annual Awards Gala held on April 27. Submitted photo

Business Person of the Year

Karen Baillie, left, owner of Elegant Steps on Inglis Place, receives the Business Person of the Year Award from Michelle Bursey, senior account manager of BDC Truro, during the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce's annual Awards Gala held on April 27. Submitted photo



Past President's Award



Vonda Hazard, owner of Noveltea



Business Excellence



Business Person of the Year