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## WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR THE 32ND ANNUAL NADF AWARDS

[www.nadfawards.com](http://www.nadfawards.com)

**Timmins, Ontario:** The Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF), in partnership with Perimeter Aviation, proudly announces the winners of the 32nd Annual NADF Awards, Canada's longest-running Indigenous awards program. After last hosting the awards in Timmins in 2018, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and NADF is thrilled to bring the awards back to Timmins for this year's celebration. The event took place on Friday, October 18, 2024, at the Porcupine Dante Club, where 160 guests gathered to honor the remarkable achievements of Indigenous individuals and businesses that have made significant contributions to their communities and the economy.



32<sup>nd</sup> Annual NADF Awards [[download image](#)]

This year, six new award recipients joined the legacy of over 30 years of recognition, bringing the total number of honorees to 199 over 32 years. The awards celebrated excellence across six categories: Partnership, Startup Business, Young Entrepreneur, Small Business, Excellence in Leadership and Business Excellence.



Gerry “The Big Bear” Barret  
[\[download image\]](#)

The evening included a gala dinner and entertainment by acclaimed Indigenous comedian Gerry 'The Bear' Barret, offering an uplifting and inspiring celebration. Brent "Mooselegs" Edwards served as Master of Ceremonies, bringing his unique humor and charm to the event.



Brent “Mooselegs” Edwards  
[\[download image\]](#)

## 32<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL NADF AWARD RECIPIENTS

### **PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR: TAKWATA NPLH DRILLING LIMITED PARTNERSHIP** **Award Sponsored By: Ontario Power Generation**

Established in 2024, the Takwata NPLH Drilling Limited Partnership is a groundbreaking collaboration between the Taykwa Tagamou Nation, which holds a 51% stake, and NPLH Drilling, led by Chief Bruce Archibald and Dana Blaquiére-Norkum, CEO, NPLH Drilling. This partnership embodies Indigenous economic empowerment, fostering economic growth and sustainability that resonates within the Taykwa Tagamou Nation.

A key highlight of this partnership is the five-year contract with Agnico Eagle for diamond drilling at the Detour Lake mine. This collaboration aims to enhance mineral production and supports Agnico Eagle's vision of increasing output to one million ounces annually by 2030. Central to the partnership is a commitment to economic empowerment through responsible resource development, ensuring that initiatives align with the values of the community. This

focus on sustainable opportunities not only benefits the community but also paves the way for future generations.

The partnership is distinguished by its dedication to environmental stewardship, prioritizing sustainable practices in all drilling operations. This commitment reflects a respect for the land and a desire to preserve natural resources for the community's well-being. Additionally, the partnership emphasizes cultural preservation by aligning its activities with community priorities, honoring the rich traditions of the Nation, and fostering pride among its members.



**L to R: Gabriella Desmarais, Indigenous Relations & Community Engagement, NPLH Drilling, Chief Bruce Archibald, Taykwa Tagamou Nation [\[download image\]](#)**

A noteworthy achievement announced in August 2024 is the partnership between Takwata NPLH Drilling Limited Partnership and Northern College that offers tuition-free Diamond Drilling Common Core Basic Training for ten (10) Taykwa Tagamou Nation community members. As the partnership unfolds, discussions are already underway to expand the program for a second intake during the winter semester.

Takwata NPLH Drilling Limited Partnership serves as a powerful model for Indigenous economic empowerment, demonstrating how impactful business arrangements can benefit both the community and the industry. By capitalizing on emerging opportunities, this partnership ensures that the interests and cultural heritage of the Taykwa Tagamou Nation remain at the forefront of its operations, creating a brighter future for all involved.



**START UP BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: GARRET AND CONNOR CRAWFORD, CRAWFORD MECHANICAL LTD.**

**Award Sponsored by: Neegani Investment Management Inc.**



**L to R: Brian Davey, Managing Director, Neegani Investment Management Inc., Connor Crawford, Garret Crawford [\[download image\]](#)**

Crawford Mechanical Ltd. (CML) was established in Timmins, Ontario, in 2022. Despite being a relatively new company, it has quickly built a positive reputation for its high-quality HVAC services, including heating, cooling, and air quality solutions. Owners Garret Crawford and Connor Crawford, both proud members of the Taykwa Tagamou Nation, lead a skilled team dedicated to delivering quality workmanship, earning them strong recognition within the community.

Crawford Mechanical is committed to supporting First Nations and northern communities, prioritizing sustainable practices and fostering the development of future HVAC professionals. Garret is actively involved in various initiatives aimed at enhancing community well-being and promoting economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples. Under his leadership, CML strives to build lasting relationships within the community while maintaining a focus on exceptional service.

CML is transforming the HVAC industry by offering competitive pricing to First Nations communities, including Mattagami, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Attawapiskat, and Moose Cree. With a workforce comprised of 66% First Nations individuals, Garret is passionate about empowering local communities through quality workmanship and sustainable practices.

Crawford Mechanical specializes in a diverse range of mechanical services catering to residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. From HVAC installations to comprehensive building maintenance—including construction and road development—the company excels in delivering top-notch solutions. CML is also TSSA registered, ensuring compliance with safety and regulatory standards in the industry.

The company is dedicated to environmental sustainability, actively working to reduce its ecological impact by managing resources wisely and utilizing renewable energy. CML seeks to go beyond compliance by finding innovative ways to protect nature, support biodiversity, and address climate change. Through these efforts, the company aims to create a better world for future generations and contribute positively to its communities.

In addition to mechanical services, CML offers cost-effective branding and marketing services tailored to enhance visibility and drive sustainable growth for its clients. The branding and marketing team helps businesses stand out professionally and secure valuable service contracts by creating polished brand images that provide a competitive edge.

At Crawford Mechanical, success is seen as a result of teamwork. The collaborative approach fosters strong relationships with clients, allowing the company to deliver tailored solutions that meet individual needs.

### **YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR: DUSTIN AND HOPE WESLEY, UNIGLASS PLUS ZIEBART Award Sponsored By: TD Bank**

Dustin Wesley, a member of Moose Cree First Nation, is the proud recipient of the Small Business Award at the 32nd Annual NADF Awards, a recognition that underscores his dedication to excellence and innovation in the automotive service industry. His entrepreneurial journey began with a modest investment of just \$2,000, starting out of his garage. Through hard work and determination, Dustin transformed his small venture into Uniglass Plus Ziebart, a flourishing business that now generates an impressive \$1.4 million annually, all within a span of just four years.

At the core of Dustin's business philosophy is a simple yet powerful principle: to operate his company in a manner that reflects the treatment he would expect as a customer. This commitment to honest customer service, coupled with a focus on quality workmanship, has propelled Uniglass Plus Ziebart to become the leading provider of windshield repair and replacement, detailing, and rust protection services in the City of Timmins. Dustin believes that creating a welcoming and friendly environment for clients is essential to building lasting relationships and fostering community trust.



**L to R: Jett Lafantaisie, Regional Manager – Ontario, TD Bank, Dustin Wesley, Hope Wesley**  
[\[download image\]](#)

In September 2023, Dustin faced a life-altering challenge when he suffered a brain aneurysm. During his recovery, his remarkable wife, Hope, stepped in to lead the business, taking charge with zero automotive experience. Together, they exemplified resilience and teamwork, navigating the complexities of running a business in a time of personal adversity. Their shared commitment to their vision has been instrumental in maintaining and growing the business.

As a testament to their success, they recently expanded their operations into a new 5,000 sq ft building on Riverside Drive, which allows them to serve their clients better and accommodate a growing team of employees. This expansion reflects not only their business growth but also their commitment to supporting the local economy by creating job opportunities.

Dustin's story is one of perseverance, innovation, and community spirit. Through Uniglass Plus Ziebart, he continues to contribute to the economic landscape while inspiring others in the Indigenous business community to pursue their dreams and overcome obstacles. His journey is a reminder that with passion, hard work, and unwavering support from loved ones, anything is possible.



**SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: EMILY-ANN DESCHAMPS, PINE MEADOWS PET RESORT**  
**Award Sponsored By: Agnico Eagle**



**L to R: Robert Ferguson, Emily-Ann Deschamps, Colin Ashton, Deputy General Manager, Agnico Eagle** [\[download image\]](#)

Emily-Ann Deschamps is a member of Fort Albany First Nation and is the dedicated owner of Pine Meadows Pet Resort in Timmins, Ontario. With a deep passion for animal care and a commitment to providing exceptional service, Emily-Ann has transformed Pine Meadows into a welcoming haven for pets and their owners. Her approach is guided by a clear mission: “To provide excellent animal care in a pet-friendly atmosphere while ensuring our customers, both pet and owner, receive excellent service in a safe environment.”

Since taking over the business in August 2022, Emily-Ann and her team have cared for hundreds of dogs, creating positive and lasting memories for each of their furry visitors. Under her leadership, Pine Meadows Pet Resort has become a trusted name for quality pet boarding, where animals enjoy a safe and engaging environment during their stay.

Beyond offering exceptional care, Emily-Ann is dedicated to making a difference in the community. Pine Meadows Pet Resort works closely with several rescue organizations, helping to find permanent homes for dogs in need. Through these partnerships, they have assisted in rescuing dozens of dogs from First Nation communities such as Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Moosonee, and Moose Factory, contributing to their safe relocation and adoption.

Emily-Ann's vision extends beyond the day-to-day operations of her business. She believes in creating a space where every dog is treated with the love and care they deserve, and where their owners can feel confident and comfortable, knowing their pets are in good hands.

**EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP: DEREK ARCHIBALD, DEPUTY CHIEF TAYKWA TAGAMOU NATION**  
**Award Sponsored By: Hydro One**



**L to R: Christina Reynolds, Senior Manager, Indigenous Relations, Hydro One, Derek Archibald**  
[\[download image\]](#)

Derek Archibald, Deputy Chief of Taykwa Tagamou Nation, exemplifies a forward-thinking and collaborative approach to governance. He and his dedicated team have built impactful partnerships with industry leaders such as Canada Nickel, Agnico Eagle, and Takwata NPLH. These alliances have secured meaningful economic development projects that prioritize both community growth and environmental sustainability. By ensuring that initiatives within the Nation's Traditional Territory are conducted responsibly, Derek and his team remain committed to generating tangible benefits for the community.

Derek plays a crucial role in promoting Indigenous partnerships, emphasizing community involvement at every stage of project development. Beyond economic negotiations, he actively seeks opportunities to create long-lasting benefits for future generations, including securing funding and forming partnerships to enhance community infrastructure and support a variety of social programs.



As a strong advocate for community well-being, Derek has helped oversee essential projects, such as the Veronica S. Archibald Healing and Cultural Learning Lodge, which is set to open in 2025. This facility will serve as a vital resource for addressing mental health and addiction challenges. The Youth Centre, which completed construction in March 2024, is designed to foster engagement and growth among younger generations, ensuring they have access to the resources and support they need to thrive.

In the area of renewable energy, Derek and his team have been instrumental in the \$2.04 million Community Solar Microgrid project, expected to save the community approximately \$4 million in electricity costs over the next 30 years. This initiative aligns with TTN's commitment to promoting clean energy and achieving net-zero electricity by 2030.

Derek's commitment to community extends beyond economic and social initiatives. He is an active participant in recreational hockey, coaching both the Cochrane Crunch Junior A team and U13 rec hockey team, demonstrating his dedication to youth development through sports.

Derek Archibald's leadership and collaborative efforts, including the partnership with Takwata NPLH, have positioned Taykwa Tagamou Nation as a leader in sustainable development. His approach continues to drive positive change, paving the way for a brighter future for the Nation and its people.

#### **BUSINESS EXCELLENCE: NIIWIN GENERAL PARTNERSHIP INC.**

##### **Award Sponsored By: Perimeter Aviation**

Niiwin General Partnership Inc. is a leading First Nation-owned contractor operating primarily in the Timmins area of Ontario. Established in 2014, Niiwin was formed through the collaboration of four First Nations: Flying Post, Matachewan, Mattagami, and Apitipi Anicinapek Nation (formerly Wahgoshig First Nation). This partnership is supported by a Resource Development Agreement with Newmont Gold Mines (formerly Goldcorp), which aims to foster economic and business development opportunities.

Niiwin offers a wide range of services, including general contracting, project management, surface excavation, and environmental reclamation. This diverse offering has enabled the company to enhance local employment and training initiatives significantly. Their commitment to economic growth and environmental sustainability is evident in projects like the reclamation of historical mine properties.

Niiwin's mission extends beyond the immediate needs of the mining sector; it emphasizes long-term development for First Nation communities. Through ongoing collaboration and consultation regarding current and future mining operations, Niiwin ensures that resource development benefits are shared equitably among all participating communities. The company prioritizes safety and responsible business practices, reflected in its mission statement: "Work Safe, Home Safe."



**L to R: Leeann Organ, VP of Network, Perimeter Aviation, Calvin Goerk, General Manager, Niiwin General Partnership Inc. [\[download image\]](#)**

Since its inception, Niiwin has achieved notable milestones, becoming Timmins' third-largest contractor in under a decade. The company provides reclamation, general contracting, project management, and material movement services to mining and heavy industry businesses. Significant projects include the reclamation of the Broulan tailings facility, which stabilized tailings and improved water filtration while employing an average of 30 truck drivers and equipment operators. Another key project, Aunor A, involved reclaiming a historic mine property within the Porcupine operations, with an \$11 million local remediation budget. This project successfully addressed 2.8 million tonnes of tailings over 60,000 working hours, all without safety incidents.

#### **Projects Completed:**

- *Newmont Hollinger Lookout Project*
- *Newmont Paymaster Tailing Harvesting/Screening*
- *Kirkland Lake Shaft 4 Earthworks*
- *Newmont Pamour ETP Earthworks*
- *Macintyre Containment Ditch*
- *Various Brushing Projects*
- *Various Test Pits*

### Ongoing Projects:

- *Newmont Hoyle Pond Ore Haul/Site Services/Screened Tailings Haul*
- *Newmont CA2 Collections Closure*
- *Newmont Pamour Sludge Haul*
- *Newmont Aunor Beach Rehabilitation*
- *Agnico Eagle Shaft 4 Crushing and Haulage*
- *Agnico Eagle Shaft 4 Snow Removal*

Niiwin remains a vital force in the region, dedicated to sustainable economic development, empowering both First Nations and non-community members through job creation, training initiatives, and responsible resource management, paving the way for a prosperous future for all stakeholders.



**Caption: Group photo of award winners and sponsors at the 32nd Annual NADF Awards, hosted at the Porcupine Dante Club, Timmins, Ontario, on October 18, 2024.**

**Brian Davey, CEO, NADF,** stated, *"The NADF Awards celebrate the incredible achievements of Indigenous entrepreneurs and leaders. Each recipient's journey reflects hard work and dedication, inspiring future generations to follow in their footsteps."*

**Joey Petrisor, CEO and President, Perimeter Aviation LP,** emphasized, *"Supporting the NADF Awards reflects our commitment to fostering a vibrant Indigenous business community. We are*



*proud to celebrate the hard work and creativity of this year's recipients, as their achievements drive meaningful change and collaboration across the region."*

The NADF Awards continue to be a powerful testament to the strength, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit of Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario. As these award winners lead the way in innovation and economic growth, their achievements inspire the next generation of Indigenous entrepreneurs and set a standard for excellence across the North.

#### **About NADF**

The Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF) is a not-for-profit Aboriginal Financial Institution, founded in 1987, focused on supporting Indigenous businesses in Northern Ontario. It offers financial products, loans, and advisory services to empower entrepreneurs.

#### **About Perimeter Aviation**

Founded in 1960, Perimeter Aviation LP, along with its eastern division Bearskin Airlines, is one of Canada's largest regional air carriers, providing scheduled flights, charter and cargo services, and emergency air ambulance operations throughout Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

**For more information about the awards, contact:**

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