

own air carrier and international airlines from Category 1 approved countries provide an adequate service, therefore the travelling public is in no way inconvenienced by Guyana's classification as a Category 2 State at this time".

Through IDB sponsorship...

Two local companies enter global role models network

TWO Guyanese companies were recently recognised by an international organisation as role models for others in Guyana and the Caribbean to follow.

At a ceremony hosted at Regency Suites, Hadfield Street, Georgetown, Mr. Howard Bulkan, of Bulkan Timber Works Incorporated, accepted the winning prize at the country level, while Wilderness Explorers, which emerged second, was accorded honourable mention by the Pioneers of Prosperity (PoP) programme.



Howard Bulkan of Bulkan Timber Works Inc. receives his plaque from SEVEN Fund representative, Mike Brennan. Looking on is IDB representative, Marco Cola Nicola.

The three entities involved in the PoP are Social Equity Venture (SEVEN) Fund, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which provides funding through its Multilateral Investment Fund and John Templeton Foundation.

Local IDB Representative, Mr. Marco Nicola, observed that the scheme is one which seeks to create greater prosperity, by identifying models for success in small and

medium scale enterprises, investing in them and showcasing their stories to inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs.

He said another of its main goals is to showcase the talent which exists among local entrepreneurs and other business owners in the Caribbean.

Nicola posited that small and medium enterprises are the backbone of any healthy economy, generating the largest share of innovation, growth and taxes for local economies.

He added, however, that, despite this, such businesses are often ignored for being too large to qualify for micro-finance and too small for bank loans or foreign direct investment.

Economic bases

Nicola said, too, that those companies can provide economic bases for countries in the Caribbean and, therefore, governments and the donor community have a role to play in supporting growth so that the companies can provide the wealth and prosperity that the region needs.

“Research indicates that a key constraint to economic growth in the Caribbean is a low level of entrepreneurship or low support, such as technical access to financing and policy environment for entrepreneurs who are trying to start or build their businesses,” he said.



The awardees, Howard Bulkan of Bulkan Timber Works Inc. and General Manager of Wilderness Explorers, Teri O'Brien, pose with, from left, IDB representative, Marco Cola Nicola, SEVEN Fund Executive, Mike Brennan, Head of GO-INVEST, Geoffrey Da Silva, and Information Officer, Nick Buckley of OTF Group.

Nicola explained that the PoP award winner is an entrepreneur whose business provides sustained value to its customers, workers, owners and future generations and whose commercial success and entrepreneurial spirit makes him a role model for his peers.

Bulkan Timber Works exemplifies this and the IDB delegate noted that one of its unique strengths is that, although its focus is wood related production, which involves the cutting and exporting of raw material from the rainforest, it has focused on developing a sustainably harvested, value-added export rather than only continuing with this business model.

“BTW takes the logs and saws them into lumber that is air or kiln dried, decreasing warping and significantly adding value to the lumber. BTW then turns the dried lumber into various building products,” he pointed out.

Nicola said another strength of that company is that it pays significantly higher wages than the Government mandated minimum for the timber industry and employees work their way up through an apprenticeship process.

Sustainable forestry

He remarked that BTW also purchases logs from other companies that practice sustainable forestry, following strict Government guidelines around the number of trees that can be cut in a certain area, while its sawdust and wood waste are given away daily to numerous chicken farmers living in and around the factory.

Nicola also acknowledged that a sawdust cottage industry has developed in the community, with people reselling the material.

Wilderness Explorers secured recognition for its ability to identify potential, whether it involves nature walking, bird watching or sport fishing, then forming the necessary partnerships to develop the product to an international standard, he said.

According to him, it requires time and a financial commitment to research different geographic areas, identifying the components that could be combined to create a product and then assisting partners in moulding the raw elements into a marketable product.

The owners of Wilderness have invested substantial time and resources in developing long-term environmentally friendly tourism destinations and products, with local partners like lodges, drivers and guides, Nicola said.

He said Wilderness is committed to protection of the environment where it operates, as the pristine nature of it is a key selling feature to their customers.

Head of GO-INVEST, Mr. Geoffrey Da Silva commended the dynamism of the two companies and expressed the hope that the recognition and

appreciation being displayed for small and medium scale enterprises within the region, through the PoP, continues in the same vein.

He said BTW has always operated at a very high standard and is very proud to be Guyanese, always forward looking and brought many other investors here over the years.

Appreciating the award, Bulkan said the road to getting where he is today was not an easy one to travel and mentioned the many hurdles he had to overcome in the wood processing business.

Highest respect

He said he has the highest respect for fellow manufacturers who stay the course.

“However, at the end of the day, one can feel enormous satisfaction and pride in making value-added products, creating employment for fellow Guyanese, paying taxes and developing export markets for the beautiful timber species of our country,”

Bulkan stated.

BTW was incorporated in 1997, one year after its establishment and, in addition to moulding, it manufactures most of the wood components for houses, among them rafters, wall studs, cladding, flooring and floor mouldings.

Bulkan said the entire manufacturing output is exported to countries both inter and intra regionally and, over the last two months, he has been exporting the bulk of the production to the Middle East.

“It is fair to say very few woodworking companies in the Caribbean are outfitted as we are and the quality of our product is comparable with the very best,” he boasted.

Representing SEVEN Fund, Mr. Mike Brennan concurred with the sentiments regarding the achievement and the operations of the two honoured companies and described their awards as “astounding”.

He said the genesis of the award lies in the innovation displayed by the duo, their concern for customer needs, the provision of quality service, effective management of cost - using it as a weapon, as well – and their ability to compete.

Also commendable, Brennan said, is the future business model which has to be sustainable and in harmony with and ensuring no harm to the community and finding ways to give back.

He said the two awardees should be promoted as role models not just in Guyana and the Caribbean but in other parts of the world.

“A group of entrepreneurs who can change the world by example,” is how Brennan assessed the two Guyanese enterprises.

Regional competitions

The PoP is a global undertaking involving regional competitions, spanning the Caribbean, Africa and Central America.

Seven countries participated in the inaugural Caribbean rivalry, including The Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

From amongst them, 10 winners and five honourable mentions were selected and chosen out of a pool of 580 small to medium size firms who submitted applications.

Winners at the country level each receive grants of US\$40,000, through the IDB, to invest in training and technical infrastructure for their companies and

are automatically entered into the regional contest for a chance to win an additional US\$60,000 and the prestigious title of 'Pioneer of Prosperity Caribbean'.

Companies that are honourably mentioned get US\$10,000 grants, individually.

The winners will be connected to a global network of technical expertise, potential investors and other cutting-edge entrepreneurs.

The programme was first introduced to Africa in 2007 and was conducted there again in 2008.

Plans are now underway to inaugurate a third competition in 2010 but, next month, it moves to Central America.

Accolade considering roll for 2009 Music Awards on November 21

The Accolade Nominations Panel is currently considering the 2009 roll that will showcase various genres of music and highlight supportive personalities in the local music industry. Accolade Music Awards of Guyana is billed for November 21, 2009.

The panel will review submissions from over 20 primary contributors in the form of Local Music Producers/Recording Studios, Disc Jockeys, Record Bars and Media Entertainment Personalities to determine the nominations roll in 40 categories covering the period January 1, 2007, to June 30, 2009.

In all the categories, excluding those identified for special awards, no less than three and no more than four artistes will be chosen for each and then presented to the public for voting using website and SMS text messaging.

Local Disc Jockeys, Media Entertainment Personalities, Music Producers/Recording Studios, Record Bars and the public participation at large will also feature prominently in the various tiers of voting to determine the winners who will be known and announced for the first time at the Awards Show. The entire voting process will be supervised and managed by a reputable audit firm.

An eligible artiste for the purpose of these nominations is a person who was either born in Guyana, or attained naturalisation status, or a person who has lived in Guyana for the full eligibility period (January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2009).

An artiste may be eligible for any number of general categories. Where there are fewer than the minimum required amount of eligible entries, the panel may use deliberate judgment, including making the entry automatically eligible in the same category for the following year.

The categories are Chutney artiste of the year (male), Chutney artiste of the year (female), Best Chutney Band of the year, Best Chutney Album of the year, Best Groovy Soca single (male), Best Groovy Soca single (female), Best Soca (male), Best Soca (female), Soca single of the year, Best Soca Album solo, duo or group, Best Reggae single, Best Reggae (male), Best Reggae (female), Best Soca compilation, Best non Soca compilation, Reggae artiste of the year, Best Rock Alternative Artiste or Band, Gospel artiste of the year (Male), Gospel artiste of the year (Female), Gospel single of the year, Best RnB artiste of the year, Best Calypso artiste of the year (male), Best Calypso Artiste of the year (female), Best Hip Hop/Rap artiste of the year, Living legends award, Cornerstone award, Band of the year, Producer of the year, Media award print/internet, Media Award-radio/television, Best new artiste, Best music video, Song of the year, Studio of the year, Album of the year, Entertainer of the year, Lifetime achievement award, Best Dancehall artiste of the year, Best Folk single.

The Nominations Panel is appointed by the Executives of Accolade Music