



## Pioneers of Prosperity announce country winner

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The Pioneers of Prosperity Program seeks to inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs in emerging economies by identifying, rewarding, and promoting outstanding businesses who will serve as role models to their peers. Earlier this year, representative of Pioneers of Prosperity were in Belize encouraging business owners to submit their application into the regional competition. After receiving and reviewing all 66 entries, a panel of judges chose Hummingbird Group Limited, and its founder Robert Lopez, as the Country-level Winner of the 2009 Pioneers of Prosperity Awards Competition.



According to Pioneers of Prosperity Country Representative Abby Noble, Hummingbird Group Limited is a role model for future entrepreneurs who want to make their dream a reality. “They are committed to the future generation and future entrepreneurs of this country,” stated Noble, adding that, “they have been a role model for 22 years.”

Hummingbird’s product is described as “exceptional” and all its products are made from raw materials found within Belize. Noble stated that the customers spoke strongly and positively of Hummingbird which demonstrates the excellent quality of product which can compete in the international market.

Lopez told The Sun that Hummingbird Group Limited is honored to be awarded for their honest hard work. “It is hard to describe our feeling of accomplishment but it is evidently clear that it is a team effort that I simply contributed to,” stated a happy Lopez. One of the things that stood out in making Hummingbird winner of this year’s competition was its policy of empowering their employees to improve their lives. As part of the benefits, Hummingbird Group Limited provides their workers with small house loans, interest free. The houses are constructed by the staff. “I have always believed that we cannot get ahead if we do not carry all our workers forward,” stated Lopez. He added that, “I am kind to people on our way up because we never know if we will meet them on our way down, so that has been a driving force in our lives and business.”

As country winner’s Hummingbird will receive a grant of US \$40,000 dollars from the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to invest in training and technical infrastructure for their company and are automatically entered into the regional competition for a chance to win an additional US \$60,000 and the prestigious title of Pioneer of Prosperity Caribbean. Honorable mentions will receive a similar grant of US \$10,000. The Lodge at Chaa Creek, and its

founders Mick and Lucy Flemming, were named as Honorable Mentions by the Pioneers of Prosperity team.

Winning firms will also be connected to a global network of technical expertise, potential investors, and other cutting-edge entrepreneurs. Lopez stated that that the award gives Belizeans an opportunity to step up the effort to foster an environment conducive of entrepreneurship. Hummingbird joins nine other regional winners from across the Caribbean that will travel to Montego Bay, Jamaica to compete for three regional prizes. The Honorable Orette Bruce Golding, M.P. Prime Minister of Jamaica, will host the final awards ceremony on September 11th, 2009.

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