

DPL Group aiming for worldwide audience

Published Thursday November 26th, 2009

Entrepreneurship: N.B. firm captures award at Board of Trade gala dinner

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Telegraph-Journal

TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

SAINT JOHN - A Quispamsis company that creates digital products and is on the verge of selling them worldwide has won the Saint John Board of Trade's Entrepreneurial Achievement Award.



Peter Walsh/Telegraph-Journal

Jayne DeMerchant, general manager of the DPL Group, accepted the Entrepreneurial Achievement Award on behalf of the company during Wednesday's Saint John Board of Trade Outstanding Business Achievement Awards.

One of the DPL Group's inventions - a wireless unit that is placed inside an ATM and replaces a land-based telephone line - has been sold all over Canada and the United States, to the tune of 15,000, and in Puerto Rico, too. There are about 20 in various locations around Saint John.

"If you walk by an ATM machine and you see a small antenna on it, that more than likely is our unit," said Jayne DeMerchant, the DPL Group's general manager.

DeMerchant accepted the award on Wednesday night during the 25th annual Outstanding Business Achievement Awards gala dinner at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre. The Entrepreneurial Achievement Award is designed to recognize a company or individual that has started a business, considerably improved a company or modified an existing enterprise.

"I am filled with gratitude and happy for our employees," DeMerchant said.

"With a small company, it's certainly a team effort. Everybody participates, everybody's opinion is valued and we're thankful to our customers who have supported us over the past five years."

The DPL Group has been in business since 1974 and specializes in the telecom and engineering industry. The engineering division was sold in 2004 and the company was downsized from 85 employees to four, two of whom were the owners. Today, there are 14 employees in offices in Quispamsis and in Shediac.

"We expect to go with our product worldwide," DeMerchant said.

"In a lot of Third World countries, wireless technology is their product because they don't have the infrastructure in place for land lines " Every country you go to needs ATM machines for money."

Another feature of the ATM unit is an alarm to let the owner know the machine is down.

"They are able to download their reports to know how much money has gone through their ATM machine and whether they need to deploy more money to the machine," DeMerchant said.

"We allow for two-way communication, which sets us apart from any other company that's tried to do it."

At \$350 to purchase, and a \$25-a-month fee for transactions, they're cheaper than a telephone line, she said.

"It also gives them the portability to move their ATM machine wherever they see fit, because they're not tied into waiting for a technician to come and put a land line in.

"If they want to put an ATM machine at a show or at a corner store, it's instant - plug and play."

The DPL Group also manufactures vehicle tracking devices for heavy equipment that allow customers to retrieve information such as idle times, oil changes, speed alarms and exact location. It also works as an anti-theft unit.

A Texas company has 800 units in their fleet.

"We've been promoting our ATM product so heavily that we haven't even touched the market for the vehicle tracking unit in Canada," DeMerchant said.

"For us, the future is unlimited."

The Outstanding Business Achievement Awards recognizes businesses and business people in the community that have aided business development, entrepreneurship and increased economic progress in Greater Saint John.

Board of Trade president Imelda Gilman says picking the winners is never easy for the five independent judges involved.

"Growth, human resources issues, marketing, sales, innovation, the potential for growth and how much they've grown and how they're promoting themselves are all considerations," she said.

"They're all worthy, but there has to be something that sets them apart."

Other winners were: Opera Bistro (Emerging Enterprise); Fundy Region Solid Waste Commission (Business Excellence); Jamie Galbraith of Galbraith Piano Services (Youth Entrepreneur Award); Key Industries (Big Heart Award) and the Chair's Award was presented to Gerry Pond for his leadership in business and in the community.