

BACKGROUNDER: TOURISM AWARD WINNERS

City of St. John's

Event of the Year – Royal Canadian Legion Provincial Command

The Event of the Year award is presented annually to the group or organization who, through the production of an event, best exemplifies the spirit of St. John's and generates tourism visitation to the St. John's region. The recipient this year is the Royal Canadian Legion Provincial Command.

With 2016 marking the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel, the Memorial Day Ceremony coordinated by the Royal Canadian Legion Provincial Command was quite the undertaking.

Paul Hillier and his team expanded on their yearly Memorial Day event with invitations to various Ambassadors from European countries including Belgium, Turkey and France, Australia and New Zealand. Joining the official delegations, were representatives from the Canadian Armed Forces, the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Royal Canadian Navy, with the HMCS St. John's being in port.

The highlight was having Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Colonel in Chief of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment, Princess Anne, in attendance.

Victoria Wagon Award – Mike Edmunds

The Victoria Wagon Award is presented annually to the taxi, coach, bus or tour driver who exemplifies the spirit of exceptional customer service. The recipient this year is Mike Edmunds of McCarthy's Party.

Mike spent 31 years as a teacher and principal in Newfoundland and Labrador. In retirement Mike was looking for gratifying work to continue educating and sharing the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. As a tour guide with McCarthy's Party, Mike shares his passion for St. John's through his stories, anecdotes, music and expressions, all of which can be experienced on one of his tours.

Signal Award – Gord Dalton

The Signal Award is presented annually to the individual, group or company who has made significant contributions to the evolution and sustainability of the cruise ship industry in St. John's.

Gordon Dalton has been with the City of St. John's Ambassador Program since for approximately 14 years. A retired teacher, Gordon was looking for something meaningful to do with his time, and an outlet to pass on his life experiences. Gordon takes his title of City of St. John's Ambassador very seriously and has become well versed in guiding tourists through their visit to our City. He is a welcome

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face for passengers coming off a long journey at sea, and is ready to greet them with helpful advice, all the while looking his best in his signature shirt and tie.

Some of Gordon's fondest memories of the Ambassador Program include having the opportunity to meet President Bill Clinton and cutting the Canada Day cake on Confederation Hill. Over the last three years, Gordon's vision has become severely impaired, and today he is legally blind. This impairment has not held him back. Gordon volunteers for the Ambassador Program as often as his schedule allows, and his great knowledge of the City of St. John's allows him to assist and direct cruise passengers with confidence and expertise.

Discovery Award – So-Full Food Tours

The Discovery Award is presented annually to an individual, business, attraction, event or community organization that offers new or innovative tourism-related products, services or activities which enhance the tourism industry of St. John's.

Christa Willar travelled to New York City two years ago, with two friends for a long weekend. There they participated in a three hour walking food tour, which ended up being the highlight of their trip. T

Christa came back home and thought this would be a great idea for downtown St. John's. She started with the walking route then began pitching her idea to restaurants. It wasn't hard to get them onboard and Newfoundland Chocolate Company, Tavola, Rocket Bakery, Yellowbelly and O'Reilly's have been great choices for the tour.

Christa employs two incredible guides who give customers as memorable an experience as she had in New York. Guides take guests to the participating establishments along Duckworth Street and Water Street for a delicious sampling from each of their menus; all the while intriguing them with historical accounts of times gone by.

Sport Tourism Award - St. John's Soccer Club

The Sport Tourism Award is presented annually to the individual, group or organization who, through the hosting of a sporting event has made significant contributions to the tourism industry in St. John's.

From October 5 to 10, 2016, the St. John's Soccer Club hosted the Senior Nationals - the Jubilee Trophy for female and the Challenge Cup Trophy for male.

In total 22 teams participated in the tournament, with 20 of those teams coming from out of province; for a total of 440 participants from outside Newfoundland and Labrador. If you combine participants with officials and guests, and there was a total of 574 out of province guests.

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Guests utilized three sponsor hotels and ground transportation was provided by local bus companies. Also, six provinces rented cars and vans. The host team also provided tours of St. John's and the surrounding area for teams.

Since 2006, when the new King George V Park reopened, St. John's Soccer Club has hosted seven national youth and senior tournaments, plus five Atlantic, two Eastern Canadian and 14 provincial tournaments.

Legend Award – Dave Snow

The Legend Award is the most prestigious award to be presented. This award is presented annually to an individual or organization who has made a significant contribution to the enhancement of tourism in St. John's.

Dave Snow grew up loving nature and the Newfoundland landscape. An avid outdoorsman and birder, his years spent studying marine biology at Memorial University was one of the best times of his life. The seabird islands of Witless Bay, where he spent a summer doing research, were magical for him.

Following university, he worked as a high school science teacher, an interpreter at the Fluvarium, and as an educator with the Salmonid Association of Eastern Newfoundland and the Atlantic Salmon Federation. Through these jobs he discovered a passion for sharing his love of nature and the environment. He discovered the best way possible to do that for the rest of his life – he founded Wildland Tours.

Dave Snow pioneered environmental tourism in this province, and he was the first tour operator to realize the true potential of the cruise ship industry for St. John's and other ports throughout the province. His work was recognized by the Governor General and National Geographic.

He loved sharing our province's wildlife, history and culture. He rescued a dilapidated heritage building on Water Street to create a home for his tour company and his gift shop, Wild Things. Whenever friends found a hurt bird or creature, they would call Dave.

The late Dr. Jon Lien was a mentor and friend, and Dave's love of whales led Dr. Lien to champion the census of humpback whales off the shores of our province. Dave was perhaps the first to notice and track the return of the Orca to the waters of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Dave was a devoted father, brother, son, and friend, who shared his love of nature, the environment, science, history, folklore, and business with everyone. A life-long resident of St. John's, he loved to spend his free time walking the trails along Virginia River and Long Pond. A well-known figure in the downtown, his presence is dearly missed by many.

Dave's children Alan, Angela, and Jennifer accepted this award on his behalf.

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