

Lanark County presents 2013 Awards of Excellence

A group and an individual were honoured for their contributions to Lanark County on Wednesday evening at the 2013 Awards of Excellence presentation held during the council meeting.

The award recognizes and honours citizens or organizations that have made a significant and/or extraordinary contribution to Lanark County.

This year the 2012 World Broomball Championships Host Committee was recognized in the Business/Recreation/Sports and Tourism category, and James (Jim) Lowry was honoured in the Agriculture/Business/Community Service and Volunteerism category.

"These awards are a way for us to showcase people who give freely of their time, enthusiastically promote our county and continue to make it a wonderful place to live," said Warden Bill Dobson (Montague reeve). "The collective ripple effect of the work of tonight's recipients has been felt far and wide – in our own county and far beyond its borders."

The program began in 2005 as a way to recognize recipients for contributions to the county at large or in at least two municipalities. It was developed to say thank you to citizens of Lanark County, to provide community recognition and visibility, to support citizens for their contributions and to inspire further community service.

This year, the World Broomball Championships Host Committee was nominated by Cassandra McGregor of the Township of Beckwith Recreation Committee. Over a period of four years, the host committee planned, organized and hosted the international tournament that was held Oct. 29 to Nov. 3, 2012, which drew 1,000 players from 55 different teams and visitors from around the world.

"The committee worked hard to ensure all visiting teams were able to enjoy the culture and hospitality of the hosting municipalities," Ms. McGregor said. This included Beckwith, Carleton Place, Almonte and Pakenham in Lanark County, as well as neighbouring Arnprior.

This was the first time the championships had been held in rural communities – a rare occurrence for an event of this size and international status. It generated a significant amount of tourism and revenue within the county. "The host committee succeeded in setting a precedent for both future World Broomball Championships and other international events in the participating rural municipalities," Ms. McGregor said.

A focus for the committee was to promote broomball among community members, especially youth, as part of a healthy lifestyle and for growth in recreation, and they did this by working with schools. They also overcame the challenge of helping teams and individuals find accommodations that were within easy access of tournament events. "No one facility in the region was large enough to accommodate an event of this magnitude; it required careful and methodical planning to organize tournament games between the separate venues," Ms. McGregor said.

"The host committee worked tirelessly to ensure that the benefits of rural communities such as Lanark County have to offer were showcased for all to appreciate," Ms. McGregor said. This included a banquet for 1,400 that was "an enormous success" and showcased a harvest theme.

"The host committee was very professional and inclusive in planning and carrying out this event," Ms. McGregor said. "They faced every challenge with determination and creativity and always maintained a positive and professional image."

The host committee received letters of support from Joanne Henderson, Carleton Place recreation and culture manager, and Mississippi Mills recreation coordinator Calvin Murphy, who attested to the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism of the team. Arnprior recreation services director Glenn Arthur said the committee ensured that attendees "left Lanark County with the 'best ever' remark as they made their journey home!"

Members of the committee include chair George Brown, co-chairs Ruth Brown, John Dalgity and Allan Reid, and committee members Glen Arthur, Paul Watters, Ken Naylor, Kevin Kealey, Jamie Dewar, Ellen MacNaughton, Calvin Murphy, Kevin Lee, Kayla Minkhorst, Rob Munro and Todd Munro.

"This team is indeed a role model for others and I am pleased to recognize their efforts on behalf of the people of Lanark County," Mr. Dobson said.

Jim Lowry of Almonte was nominated by his daughter, Bonnie Lowry Bagshaw, who indicated a Lanark County Award of Excellence would "further commemorate his time, efforts and enthusiasm for others and the greater community" by the county "in which he is proud to reside."

Mr. Lowry, a fifth-generation farmer, was born and lived his whole life on the 9th Line of Ramsay Township. He and his brother David operate Springlow Farm, which has been in business for 60 years at its present location and currently produces cash crops of hay, wheat, soybeans and buckwheat. He has been married to Sandra for more than 40 years and has two grown children, Bonnie and Neil.

Mr. Lowry has a lengthy history of community involvement. He has been a director with Lanark Mutual Insurance Company for 33 years, serving two terms as president. He is a founding director of the Lanark County Plowmen's Association, serving as president in 2002 and 2003 during the International Plowing Match in Lanark County. He has also been extensively involved with dozens of other local boards, associations and organizations, including many in the agricultural sector, as well as health care, historical, environmental and his church.

He is also no stranger to political life, having served as a councillor, deputy-reeve and reeve of the former Ramsay Township, followed by service as a councillor for Mississippi Mills after amalgamation. He was a Lanark County councillor for nine years. He served on all standing committees at the local and county levels and chaired some, and had numerous appointments to external boards in a variety of sectors.

Mr. Lowry's efforts have not gone unnoticed. He was a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012 and the Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002, along with various awards and honours at both the provincial and local levels dating back to 1975.

In a supporting letter, Bonnie McBain of the Dr. James Naismith Basketball Foundation says Mr. Lowry's "name is synonymous with volunteerism. He has spent the better part of his life working on committees and being involved with organizations within the community....His interests are varied but his dedication to each speaks of a man always looking to help his neighbour and make things better for everyone."

Mr. Lowry also received a letter of support from the Lanark County Ploughmen's Association, and Brian Tackaberry of the North Lanark Historical Society noted Mr. Lowry's parents started the group in the 1960s and "he has continued their work to support our local and area history."

Warden Dobson said local writer Lyle Dillabough may have described Mr. Lowry best in 2011 in an article for *The Landowner Magazine*. "He wrote: 'He is a man of the land. His aspirations have been of growth and his life has been dedicated to service. He is a farmer by birth, a community activist by choice and a true 'character' by nature.' He went on to say that with Mr. Lowry's 'passion for the people and the area in

which he has lived his life, the man has become a walking encyclopedia on the life, times and history of Lanark County.' On behalf of council, I thank you for your dedication."

Recipients receive an individually designed award commissioned by Mississippi Mills-area artist Stephen Braithwaite, who also created the stained glass windows in the council chambers. They will be recognized on a plaque in the county administration building, as well as on the county website at www.lanarkcounty.ca and in notices in local newspapers.

The previous award recipient was Lanark Highlands resident Gordon Patterson in the categories of volunteerism/ community service and business/agriculture/industry.

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For more information, please contact:

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Photos available upon request