

4 Business Thompson Okanagan - October, 2009

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that Robert Fine is the recipient of the prestigious 2009 Business Leader of the Year award.

This award is sponsored by UBC Okanagan, and recognizes Robert's leadership and outstanding contribution to the Kelowna business community. Robert Fine has been a significant force in the field of economic development in British Columbia for more than 20 years, working in Squamish, Whistler and Kamloops before moving to Kelowna to lead the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) in 1998.

The 2009 Business Leader of the Year Award will be presented to Mr. Fine at the 22nd Annual Business Excellence Awards on October 21 at the Delta Grand Okanagan Lakefront Resort. The 2009 BE Awards are presented by the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and Gold Sponsors the Business Development Bank

A Fine choice by Chamber

of Canada and Farris, Vaughn, Wills and Murphy LLP.

Recipients of awards in six other categories will also be honoured at the awards dinner. Twenty finalists in each of these six categories were previously announced September 10.

Under Robert's leadership, the COEDC has played a major role in growing the Central Okanagan economy, reflected in the organization's ability to adapt its programs and services to changing economic conditions and the unique needs of local businesses.

In boom times when affordable housing and available labour made the Okanagan attractive for new business investment, the Commission played a key role in attracting numerous businesses in diverse

Kelowna BUSINESS

WELDON LEBLANC



on the IEDC board. He is also a member of the Provincial Small Business Roundtable and writes a twice monthly column in the Kelowna Daily Courier. In June of this year he was honoured with an Honorary Fellowship from Okanagan College.

The public is invited to come out to support Robert and all of the 2009 award recipients and finalists on October 21st. Tickets for the Business Excellence Awards dinner are \$89 per person and can be purchased by calling Allison at 250-469-7350. The finalists are:

Rising Star Award (In business less than three years): Kelowna Regional Fertility Center, SZ Innovative Products Group Ltd., and Vineyard Networks.

Small Business Award (1-10 Employees): Interior Tax & File Small Business Services Inc.,

industries to locate here.

A refocus on business enhancement in recent years has resulted in innovative programs to assist existing businesses in overcoming economic challenges including the Export Development Program, Foreign Skilled Worker Program and Agricultural Support Program, and other award-winning initiatives related to aviation, high technology and manufacturing.

The value of the Commission's work is reflected in the steady increase in inquiries to the EDC office, from 6,921 in 2001 to more than 16,000 in 2008.

Mr. Fine is Past President of the Canadian representatives on the International Economic Development Council in Washington, DC and is one of two Canadian representatives

Kelowna

Modern Pur Air Inc., Orchard & Vine Magazine, and Platinum Personnel & Business Services.

Mid-Sized Business Award (11-30 employees): CBD Network, JDS Energy & Mining and Vedanta Academy.

Large Business Award (31-plus employees): Benson Edwards, Grant Thornton, and Troika Developments.

Community Impact Award of the Year: Big Brothers and Sisters of the Okanagan, Kelowna Art Gallery, United Way of the Central & South Okanagan, and Women's Enterprise Centre.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year (individual under 34 years of age): Raegan Hall of Blonde, Angela Reid of Tigris Ventures, and Mark and Todd Reiger of Prestige Collision.

Tickets for the Awards dinner are \$89 each and can be purchased by calling Allison at 250-469-7350.

- Weldon LeBlanc is CEO of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce.