

2025 Business Award Nominations



Celebrating Excellence, Innovation, and Community Spirit

The Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce Business Awards recognize and celebrate the businesses, organizations, and individuals who make our region a vibrant, innovative, and welcoming place to live, work, and do business. These awards highlight outstanding achievements across a wide range of categories, showcasing the dedication, creativity, and community involvement that drive success in Whitecourt and Woodlands County.

Feel free to complete all categories or skip to the ones you want to nominate.

THE DEADLINE TO NOMINATE IS NOVEMBER 30, 2025, AT 5PM.

Your nomination will be kept anonymous. Your contact information is collected in the event we need more information from you.

Business Award Rules & Regulations

1. Nominations

- a. Each nomination will be specific to its category and explain how it meets the criteria.
- b. The Business Awards Committee will review the nominations to ensure businesses are in the correct category.
- c. Businesses nominated must have one person in attendance in order to win.**
- d. The nominator must provide the name of the owner/manager and contact information.
- e. Business will be contacted to provide further information (customer reviews, staff retention rates, etc.)

2. Voting

- a. Voting will be open to all residents of Whitecourt, Woodlands County, and Mayerthorpe.
- b. Voters must provide a contact name, municipality, and phone number. Votes will be considered invalid if this information is not provided.
- c. Voters must be a minimum of 14 years of age.

3. Winners

- a. If a winner wins in more than one category, the Business Award Committee will take the following into consideration:
 - i. Award based on widest margin of victory by votes
 - ii. Award based on highest number of votes in a category
 - iii. Award based on highest percentage of votes in a category
- b. Winners will be awarded at the President's Gala on Saturday, January 24th, 2026.
- c. **Members that win will receive \$150 off their membership the following year.** Non-members will have a two-week grace period to join the Chamber of Commerce to use their \$150 credit.
- d. Winners may be invited to present their business at the Economic Forum or another event.

Categories & Criteria

1. Small Business of the Year

Honouring the backbone of our economy — small businesses that lead with service, innovation, and community.

Presented to a small, locally owned business that has shown excellence in customer service, community involvement, and workplace culture while contributing positively to the local economy.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must have 10 or fewer employees
 - Must be privately owned, locally owned, and operated
 - Demonstrates outstanding customer service and strong staff retention
-

2. Corporate/Franchise Business of the Year

Celebrating exceptional corporate or franchise operations that enrich our community.

Awarded to a locally owned and operated corporate or franchise business that exemplifies excellence in customer service, community engagement, and workplace culture.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must be a corporate entity or franchise
 - Must be locally owned and operated
 - Demonstrates active community involvement and strong staff retention
-

3. Non-Profit of the Year

Honouring organizations that make a meaningful difference in our communities.

Presented to a non-profit organization whose members, staff, and volunteers have made a significant and lasting impact through programs, advocacy, or services.

Criteria:

- Organization must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must be a non-profit organization
 - Demonstrates impactful contributions to the community
-

4. Employee of the Year *(Must be nominated by their employer. Non-Voting – winner will be chosen based on information provided by the employer)*

Recognizing outstanding dedication, growth, and service.

Awarded to an employee who demonstrates exceptional dedication to their work, outstanding customer service, strong teamwork, and a commitment to continuous growth.

Criteria:

- Employee must work for a business located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must have been employed by the same business for 5 or more years
 - Demonstrates exceptional performance and professional growth
-

5. Regional Community/Tourist Attraction Award

Celebrating businesses that showcase our region and draw people to experience it.

Presented to a business or attraction that plays a key role in drawing visitors, enhancing community vibrancy, and contributing to the region's reputation as a destination to live, work, play, and visit.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt, Woodlands County, or Mayerthorpe
 - Must serve as a tourism or community attraction
 - Demonstrates a positive economic and cultural impact on the region
-

6. Legacy Business of the Year

Honouring long-standing businesses that have shaped our community.

This award recognizes a business that has demonstrated sustained success, innovation, and community involvement over many years.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must have been operating for 15 or more years
 - Must be a Chamber Member
 - Demonstrates long-term growth, employment, and community impact
-

7. Emerging Business of the Year

Spotlighting rising stars in our business community.

Presented to a business that has been operating for less than three years and is already showing strong signs of growth, innovation, and community connection.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must have been operating for 3 years or less
 - Demonstrates significant early success and community engagement
-

8. Customer Service Award

Recognizing excellence in customer care.

Presented to a business that consistently goes above and beyond to provide exceptional customer service, creating memorable experiences and building loyal relationships.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Demonstrates outstanding customer service standards
-

9. Employer Excellence Award

Celebrating businesses that prioritize their people.

Presented to a business that fosters a positive and supportive workplace, values employee development and retention, and creates a culture where employees thrive.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Demonstrates high employee retention
 - Provides exceptional incentives, benefits, and workplace culture
-

10. Community Champion Award

Honouring businesses that lead through community involvement.

This award celebrates a business that consistently supports and contributes to the community through sponsorships, volunteerism, and leadership roles.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Must be a Chamber Member
 - Demonstrates significant community involvement and impact
-

11. Business Innovation Award

Celebrating forward-thinking and transformative ideas.

Awarded to a business that has demonstrated innovative practices, products, or services that have transformed their operations, industry, or community.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Demonstrates exceptional innovation or leadership in their field
-

12. Business Employing Youth Award

Supporting the next generation of the workforce.

This award recognizes a business that actively provides meaningful employment opportunities for youth and supports their development.

Criteria:

- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Employs multiple youth under 18 year-round or seasonally
 - Demonstrates a commitment to youth development and mentorship
-

13. Indigenous Business of the Year

Celebrating Indigenous leadership, culture, and entrepreneurship.

Presented to an Indigenous-owned business that demonstrates excellence in entrepreneurship, contributes positively to the community, and honours Indigenous culture, knowledge, and values through its operations.

Criteria:

- Business must be majority Indigenous-owned
 - Must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Demonstrates excellence in business practices, community involvement, and cultural leadership
-

14. Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Honouring the next generation of business leaders.

This award recognizes a young entrepreneur (aged **30 and under**) who demonstrates exceptional vision, leadership, and innovation in building and growing their business.

Criteria:

- Entrepreneur must be 30 years of age or younger as of December 31, 2025
 - Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County
 - Demonstrates innovation, leadership, and growth potential
-

15. Made in Whitecourt/Woodlands County Award

Celebrating locally made products, services, and creativity.

This award honours a business that creates, manufactures, or produces products or services within the region, contributing to the local economy and showcasing the talent and craftsmanship of our area.

Criteria:

- Product/service must be designed, produced, or manufactured locally
- Business must be located in Whitecourt or Woodlands County

- Demonstrates quality, creativity, and community impact