

## Monthly Message: Dufferin Board of Trade celebrates local business at annual gala

The Dufferin Board of Trade (DBOT) welcomed business and community leaders from across the region for an evening of celebration, connection, and recognition at the 2026 Business Excellence Awards Gala and Annual General Meeting.

Held in front of a packed room of local entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, elected officials, and community supporters, the evening celebrated the individuals and organizations helping to make Dufferin County a vibrant and thriving place to live, work, and do business.

The evening began with the Dufferin Board of Trade's Annual General Meeting, where members reflected on the organization's work over the past year, including the continued growth of its social enterprise initiatives through the Dufferin Biz Hub. Through the Biz Hub, DBOT provides flexible workspaces, meeting rooms, business and creative services, and recently expanded into engraving and signage services ? all designed to help local businesses and nonprofits access affordable supports, strengthen their operations, and thrive within the community.

MPP Sylvia Jones attended the event and officially swore in the Dufferin Board of Trade's 2026 Board of Directors.

The 2026 Executive includes:

? Lisa Thompson ? Chair of the Board

? Doug Harkness ? Past Chair

? Rob Koekoek ? Secretary-Treasurer

Returning Directors:

? Brandi Neil

? Sarah Sawchyn

? Bill McCutcheon

? Miranda O'Connor

? Paul Janssen

? Gail Little (currently on a temporary leave of absence)

New Directors joining the Board in 2026:

? AJ Cappuccitti

? Carmine Domanico

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2026 Business Excellence Awards, recognizing businesses and individuals for their leadership, innovation, community impact, and commitment to excellence.

This year's award recipients included:

? Business of the Year ? Shelburne Home Hardware Building Centre

? Small Business of the Year ? DSE Automotive

? Businessperson of the Year ? Stephanie Lavoie

? New Business of the Year ? Make it Sweet

? Nonprofit of the Year ? Choices Shelter & Support Services

? Local Impact Award ? Fenech Designs

? Chair's Award ? Sandy Brown

?We were honoured to celebrate the incredible businesses, organizations, and individuals who help make Dufferin County such a strong and resilient community,? said Diana Morris, Executive Director of the Dufferin Board of Trade. ?The energy in the room was a reminder of the passion, innovation, and community spirit that exists throughout our local business sector.?

The Dufferin Board of Trade also extended congratulations to all nominees, noting that being recognized by peers and the community is an achievement in itself.

The organization thanked the many sponsors and partners whose support helped make the evening possible, including award sponsors Carters Law Firm, The Chambers Plan Insurance, The Town of Orangeville, RLB, Shelburne Golf & Country Club, and JDC Custom Homes / Janssen Design.

Additional support was provided by community partner Dufferin Community Foundation; casino table sponsors Dufferin Federation of Agriculture, Hill N Dale Landscaping, Indie FM 101, Country 105, and Orangeville Precast Concrete; event supporters Georgian College, MNP LLP, FloorPlus, and Wightman; and catering partner Gourmandissimo Catering.

Photos from this year's event are available online at: [bookevrafter.lightfolio.com/gallery/business-excellence-awards-2026](https://bookevrafter.lightfolio.com/gallery/business-excellence-awards-2026)

The Dufferin Board of Trade is a nonprofit chamber of commerce serving businesses and organizations across Dufferin County through advocacy, connections, and innovative social enterprise initiatives that help strengthen and support the local business community.