

COALDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS

41<sup>st</sup> Annual  
*Awards & Appreciation  
& Banquet*

SATURDAY  
JANUARY 28  
2023



- Male Athlete of the Year
- Female Athlete of the Year
- Arts or Recreation Leader of the Year
- Community Artist of the Year
- Environmental Excellence Award
- Youth Citizen of the Year



- Business of the Year
- Customer Service Award
- Citizen of the Year
- Group Citizens Award
- Special Tribute

*Celebrating  
Community Excellence*



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# President's Message

## René van de Vendel



Welcome to the Coaldale Chamber of Commerce's annual Awards and Appreciation evening! We are very happy to partner with the Town of Coaldale once again.

Every year we receive many nominations for the different categories, and we thank all nominators for providing names of individuals and businesses that stand out. Looking over the list of award recipients gave me such a sense of pride. I feel so proud of our town, but even more proud of the people in it. We are so lucky to have so many people and businesses here that go the extra mile. This is the reason that living in Coaldale is so great!

On behalf of the Coaldale Chamber I thank our partners and sponsors for making today's event a success!

René van de Vendel  
President  
Coaldale Chamber of Commerce



# Mayor's Message

## Jack Van Rijn



On behalf of the Town Council, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to all award recipients being celebrated at the Coaldale Chamber of Commerce 41st Annual Awards and Appreciation banquet.

The Town of Coaldale is pleased to continue partnering with the Chamber to host this special event. I want to thank both organizing committees for their efforts in making it successful. Your work is much appreciated and doesn't go unnoticed.

Thanks must also go to the nominators who took the time to help us determine which of our citizens deserve acknowledgment for their contributions.

Without the time and talent shared by many residents, not-for-profit groups, and businesses, our community would not be as vibrant as it is. They all work tirelessly, often behind the scenes, to make this community the best it can be. Tonight, we are honoured to be able to celebrate their achievements and recognize them for their outstanding work. Once again, congratulations!

Jack Van Rijn  
Mayor  
Town of Coaldale



# Honoured Guest

## MP Rachael Thomas



Dear Friends,

As the Member of Parliament for Lethbridge, it is my pleasure to extend greetings to all of you and convey my congratulations to the award recipients of the 41st Coaldale Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet. What a great opportunity to celebrate community excellence and the incredible individuals and organizations that make Coaldale the wonderful place it is!

To the award recipients—thank you! I am grateful for each and every one of you for the immeasurable ways you go above and beyond to serve our region. Your acts of service and tremendous generosity are truly commendable! Through your efforts, we are building a strong and vibrant community not only for today, but for generations to come. Congratulations on your well-deserved recognition.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the Coaldale Chamber of Commerce for once again hosting this wonderful event. It is truly inspiring to see a community come together to lift up and celebrate one another.

I regret that I cannot be there in person with you today but trust that it will be a wonderful evening of celebration.

In your service,

Rachael Thomas  
Member of Parliament for Lethbridge

# Honoured Guest

## MLA Grant Hunter



Hon. Grant Hunter, ECA was elected to his first term as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Cardston-Taber-Warner on May 5, 2015 and to a second term on May 16, 2019 for the newly created riding of Taber-Warner.

He served as Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction from April 30, 2019, to July 7, 2021, where he set up the government's red tape reduction strategy.

Mr. Hunter holds a bachelor of science degree and a Master of Business Administration.

Mr. Hunter has served as a board member for several political and community organizations, including the Cardston Lions Club.

He resides in Taber with his wife, Angie, and has five children and four grandchildren.

Mr. Hunter was the 889th Member to be sworn in to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

# Queen Elizabeth II

## Platinum Jubilee Medal - Alberta



A new commemorative medal has been created to mark the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne as Queen of Canada.

The Platinum Jubilee Medal program is continuing as planned despite the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and will conclude on February 5, 2023.

The Medal program will be part of the Platinum Jubilee year celebrations, organized by the Government of Alberta. Permission is being sought from the Government of Canada to have the Medal included in the Order of Precedence, along with the other commemorative medals of the Canadian Honours System.

The Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal will be awarded to 7,000 Albertans throughout 2022 in recognition of significant contributions to the province.







## Kevin McKeown

*Fire Chief*

Coaldale & District Emergency Services

Chief McKeown has spent that last 16 years of his Fire & EMS career dedicated to the communities he serves as well as to the fire service in general. Chief McKeown has a passion for continually improving the fire service. In his position as Coaldale's Fire Chief, he has implemented numerous initiatives that not only improved the fire service but improved the health and wellness of the individuals within the service. Chief McKeown dedicates a significant amount of time to our community as shown with his participation in the many events that make the Town of Coaldale a great community to live in.



## Gary Gettman

*Deputy Chief of Support Services*

Coaldale & District Emergency Services

Gary is presently the longest serving member of the Coaldale & District Emergency Services. He started as a volunteer firefighter in 1988.

Gary has been the recipient of the *Perfect Attendance Award* for training every year since he started. This is an extraordinary accomplishment over 34 years and clearly shows Gary's level of commitment to the fire department. Gary also has a strong desire to teach the public about fire prevention and enjoys running tours at the firehall for school aged children.

As a dedicated community supporter, Gary shows his willingness to serve by volunteering his time for community events, lending a hand where needed.

In 2010, due to his dedication and commitment, Gary earned a full-time position as the Deputy Fire Chief.

# Master of Ceremonies

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## Wayne Street

Wayne Street has served as an educator and principal in southern Alberta since 1974. Before his retirement in 2005, he was principal of R. I. Baker Middle School in Coaldale and president of the Provincial Council on School Administration. In addition, he was the provincial representative for the Canadian Association of Principals. Street has been described as an excellent leader, who inspired his teachers to perform at their highest level. In 1996, he was honoured with the Administrator of the Year award by the Alberta Teachers' Association. Street is also a strong supporter of his local community, and he received the Citizen of the Year award by the Coaldale Chamber of Commerce in 1998.

Coaldale Chamber of Commerce

# Membership Anniversary

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## New Members

Royal LePage - Booby Gathercole  
Hawk Eye Heating and AC  
PK Equipment Services

## Twenty Years

Andres Trailer Sales & Rentals

## Thirty Years

Dance Images

## Forty Years

Campbell Clinic

# Business of the Year



## Napa Auto Parts - *Jack Penner*

Our community is grateful and appreciative for the heart and trust NAPA Auto Parts business has built in Coaldale.

Jack Penner was born and has lived in Coaldale all his life. The business itself has been around for over 30 years. After marrying Connie in the 2000, they devoted their lives to raising family and staying engaged in the community.

Jack has done a tremendous job to ensure that his business thrives and produces the best service of its kind to Coaldale and surrounding areas. The agricultural community is dependent on NAPA Auto Parts for their needs and supplies. The store's employees also have been very long-term, and have great relationships with all their customers. Jack's business partner Rusty also lives in Coaldale, and has begun showing a keen interest in the business and the brand!

Jack and Connie are loyal supporters of a number of Clubs and Associations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Gem of the West Society, and the Coaldale Handi Ride Association. They are regular contributors to the annual Wine and Cheese fundraiser at the Gem of the West. As members of the Coaldale Sunny South Toastmasters Speakers, Jack and Connie enjoy learning about public speaking.



# Customer Service of the Year



## Darcee Abrey-McKeown - *Land O' Lakes Dental*

Every time I have taken my daughter to Land O' Lakes Dental, Darcee has been an absolute pleasure. She shows compassion for patients, always answers questions in a professional, courteous manner and her outgoing, enthusiastic personality is so contagious. She is the perfect attribute to the clinic because her positive energy lessens anxieties and/or heightened emotions that can come with dental appointments.

Darcee is also very accommodating and diligent in her scheduling, always working around patient's busy lives to ensure an appointment can be booked.

Working alongside Darcee for the last couple years has shown me that she would literally do anything to help someone out. Whether it's service at work or just to help a friend, you can count on her. There are no words to encompass all the things that Darcee is. As a colleague we couldn't ask for better, and as an employer, we are so grateful to have her as a member of our staff.



# Citizen of the Year



## *Gary Gettman - Deputy Chief of Support Services Coaldale & District Emergency Services*

For over 30 years, Gary has been a member of the Coaldale Fire Department as a volunteer fire fighter, interim Chief, and now his role as a deputy chief. That kind of commitment, to providing his time and service all these years to his fellow citizens, truly defines someone worthy of citizen of the year.

Gary has utilized his experience and easy going demeanor during his tenure as a volunteer fire fighter. He teaches everyone he connects with, what it means to give back to their community, and the importance of a role in public service. Nothing could be more evident than having two of his sons become full-time fire fighter paramedics in Lethbridge. More recently, his youngest son has become a volunteer for the Coaldale fire department. Not to mention the hundreds of other men and women that he has worked with throughout his career that he has made an impact on.

Gary Gettman often leads by example, is an amazing teacher, fireman, and mentor. He has dedicated his life to the protection and the safety of Coaldale.



# Group Citizen of the Year



## Coaldale Pickleball Club

The Coaldale Pickleball Club (CPC) was formed in 2021 to promote and develop the sport of pickleball in Coaldale and surrounding area thereby enhancing community wellness by increased physical activity and social interaction.

The CPC has a close working relationship with the Town of Coaldale and partners with Pickleball Alberta and Pickleball Canada. They actively support Adult Play and a Youth Program.

Pickleball has taken off in this area with approximately 600 active pickleball players in the Lethbridge area. Founding members, Richard and Valerie Boras, have also witnessed this sport's popularity as the CPC has grown to over 200 members!

The club enjoys four permanent outdoor pickleball courts that were opened in 2019 through the partnership of the Town of Coaldale and the Kinsmen Club of Coaldale. The facility is located in Eastview Park at 1825 10th Street, Coaldale. The courts have wind screens on two sides and a plexipave (smooth concrete) finish with offset colors. Weather depending, the outdoor playing season usually runs from April through October.



# Special Tribute



## Fred Tolsdorf - *Total Automotive*

Fred bought his first shop at 1404 20 Ave in 1985 and opened his business Total Automotive Ltd. He then moved across the road to 1411-20 Ave in 2003 where he continued to build his business.

As a business owner, he has always gone above and beyond for his clients. During harvest season, Fred would go out in the fields to help fix equipment.

As an employer, he has allowed staff to grow in their roles and to develop new skills. Dianne Reid, who was promoted from janitor to bookkeeper, is especially grateful to be trained under Fred's guiding hand.

During his leisure time, Fred enjoys racing his beloved 1963 Dodge 440. He also enjoys exploring, Rving, boating, and traveling abroad - especially to visit his daughter in China. He has also been to Thailand and Europe. On the local scene you can find Fred on the courts as an avid member of the Coaldale Pickleball Club.

Contributing to the community is important to Fred, and can be seen with his years as a Boy Scout Leader, sharing his passion with youth by bringing them to his shop.

At the end of 2022, Fred sold his shop and is now officially retired.



# Male Athlete of the Year



## Ben Dyck

Ben has played multiple sports throughout his entire life. As Ben has matured, his love for court sports has taken over. This past year Ben was a leader on both his school basketball and volleyball teams, as well as working his way to a starting position on his Lethbridge Volleyball Club (LVC) U18 team.

This past June Ben was awarded the MVP for both the Kate Andrews Senior Boys Volleyball team (21-22 season), as well as Senior Boys Basketball team (21-22 season), and was then awarded Kate Andrews Male Athlete of the Year for the 2021-2022 season as a Gr. 11 student.

Not only is Ben a fierce competitor, he also demonstrates a commendable level of sportsmanship in his play on and off the court. This aspect of Ben's game has been commented on by multiple coaches.

Ben has experienced some exciting success in 2022 as his U18 LVC team finished the season 9th in Canada at Nationals. Ben also captained his KA Senior Volleyball team this fall to a silver medal at 2A Provincials. Ben is looking forward to his Senior basketball season this year, as well as his upcoming U18 LVC season. Ben also plans to participate this year in track and field again for Kate Andrews in triple and long jump.

Ben signed in December with the Lethbridge College Kodiaks men's volleyball team and is looking forward to joining their squad in Fall of 2023.





# Female Athlete of the Year



## Aliya Koliaska

Aliya is a high performance judo athlete who competes at provincial, national and international levels.

Aliya started judo when she was just 3 years old at the Lethbridge Kyodokan Judo Club. She began competing by asking for exhibition fights with older kids at local tournaments when she was not old enough to enter the competition. She now trains at the regional training centre in Lethbridge as well as the national training centre in Montreal.

Because of her drive and persistence Aliya was granted a developmental card from Judo Canada in 2022. This helps athletes be selected to higher level competitions as well as contributes to funding these tournaments. Her contract with Judo Canada helped Aliya be successful at a higher level than before but with this also came responsibilities and requirements at the dojo and at home.

In 2022 Aliya's top performances were a bronze medal at Pan Am Championships in Lima, Peru, Gold in Senior US Open in Fort Lauderdale Florida, and Gold at Canadian Open Nationals in Montreal which qualified her to compete in the cadet world championships in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina placing in the top 16.



# Arts or Recreation Leader of the Year



## Kelly Wiebe - *Coaldale Copperheads*

Kelly Wiebe is the type of recreational leader every community dreams of. She is passionate about her family, community, and sport. She is a great communicator, working together with Coaldale community groups since the inception of the Coaldale Copperheads Junior Hockey Club in 2007.

As one of the founding members of the Copperheads, she has always been at the forefront, assisting its players, coaches, and staff. As the Director of Operations her duties are extensive. Bookkeeping, communications, media, ordering hockey equipment, scheduling practices and games, arranging busing, meals, and hotels for road trips. On game night, she finds anthem singers, flag bearers, announcers, and stats trackers. She also helps with fundraising by coordinating 50/50s, merchandise sales, and gate admissions.

Kelly has shown support for the greater community by helping to establish the Coaldale Rink Fund, which has raised over \$100,000 for rink improvements through the sponsorship rink advertising program.

After 16 years of dedication and commitment to the Copperheads, Kelly will be stepping down at the end of the 2022/2023 season.



Town of Coaldale

# Community Artist of the Year



## Gerry Unger - *Dance Images*

Gerry Unger is the proud Artistic Director/Owner of Dance Images dance studio for the past 30 years. The studio's goal is to “create good people not just great dancers”. The studio offers classes for ages 3 to adult in ballet, Jazz, tap, lyrical, contemporary, musical theatre, hip hop and Acro. She studied with three Chicago based companies, Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble, and Ballet Folklorico Ibero Español. Her Choreography represented Canada in the Jazz Dance World Congress. She has choreographed throughout Alberta including Lethbridge Musical Theatre, Cardston Carriage House Theatre and the University of Lethbridge to name a few. Gerry was a sessional instructor for the University of Lethbridge fine arts department. She is very grateful to the Southern Alberta community for their continued support and love through the Covid restrictions. Gerry is grateful, appreciative, and thankful to the Town of Coaldale and the Coaldale Chamber of Commerce for this award. It truly has been an honour representing Coaldale for the past 30 years.



*Geraldine  
Unger*

# Environmental Excellence of the Year



## Whole Leaf, a division of Star Produce Ltd.

Whole Leaf, proudly grows some of the cleanest, most sustainable and most delicious lettuce on earth. Their automated greenhouse near Coaldale, Alberta, is capable of producing more than fifty thousand heads of lettuce per day, every day of the year.

They do so using the abundant natural sunshine of Southern Alberta, and using just one and a half liters of water to grow each head of lettuce, as opposed to field-grown lettuce which can require one hundred liters or more per head. Their advanced water recycling and re-filtration technology means not a drop gets wasted.

Additionally, growing in a controlled environment, they do not have to use treated seeds, and they do not apply any chemical pesticides to the crop.

In more than five years of operations they have never sprayed pesticides in their greenhouse! The result is Inspired Greens lettuce that is clean, fresh, delicious . . . and better for the planet.



# Youth Citizen of the Year



## Jersey Kirkness

Aside from Jersey always helping others and volunteering at school and in the community, she has managed to keep good grades and is currently on the honour roll.

Jersey could be found volunteering at the library for the summer reading clubs three days a week. She also made an appearance in the parade to support the library and has aspirations to work there one day.

Jersey was awarded the Merit award at R.I. Baker Middle school, receiving a \$250 scholarship to attend the YouthWrite camp in Calgary. She also received 1st place for the Royal Canadian Legion contest in 2021 for the intermediate essay category and was recently awarded 2nd place for this past year.

At school, Jersey volunteers to work with the new Baker Buzz News team, where school mates and teachers work together to write news anchor scripts and perform interviews for upcoming events.

She has been a part of the school's SLC group for the last three years. With the support of her teachers, Jersey helps organize school dances; including themes, music, and snacks. For Christmas 2022, along with many other SLC students, Jersey spent her spare time, prepping goodies and crafts to sell, with funds being donated to the Coaldale Food Bank.



# BALLOON DRAW

ENTER FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

**1 Balloon for \$10**  
**3 Balloons for \$20**

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Package



**FLAMES**  
GAME NIGHT  
**\$1000**

**TWO TICKETS + SPENDING CASH**  
Tickets for your choice of 2023-2024 regular season game

OR TAKE HOME  
**\$800 CASH**

Sponsored by  
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Prize #2  
Package



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HOTELS & RESORTS

**\$1000**  
GIFT CERTIFICATE

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owned and operated resort,  
store, golf course, food &  
beverage outlet, or spa

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