



CHATHAM-KENT
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COMMERCE

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Nominations Open for Chatham-Kent Chamber's Landmark 80th Rural Urban Awards

Milestone celebration honours agricultural excellence, rural leadership and the people strengthening Canada's food future

CHATHAM-KENT, ON — October 9, 2027 — The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is inviting the community to recognize the people growing our future. Nominations are now open for the **80th Rural Urban Awards**, a milestone celebration of the leadership, innovation and community commitment that make agriculture central to Chatham-Kent's identity and prosperity.

Founded in 1872, the Chamber's roots are deeply connected to agriculture and the commercial relationships that link farms, rural communities and urban businesses. The Rural Urban Awards carry that relationship forward, recognizing that the success of one strengthens the success of all.

"What happens in our fields shapes what happens on our main streets," said Amanda Clark, Chair, Board of Directors, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce. "Our rural and urban communities do not have separate economic futures. We grow together. This 80th celebration honours generations of people who have understood that connection—and the leaders who are carrying it forward."

Agriculture's contribution reaches well beyond the farm gate. Municipal reporting places Chatham-Kent's agriculture and agri-food sector at **more than \$4 billion in annual economic activity**. Its connections extend through food processing, transportation, equipment, financial and professional services, and the businesses that sustain communities across the municipality.

That local strength has national significance. Canada's renewed emphasis on food security includes growing and processing more food domestically, strengthening supply chains and helping the next generation take over farm businesses. Chatham-Kent's agricultural leadership is directly relevant to that future.

"Food sovereignty is not built by declarations. It is built by people who grow food, steward productive land, invest in new ideas and make it possible for the next generation to farm," said Ring. "These awards put those people—and the businesses and communities behind them—where they belong: at the centre of the story. Recognizing their contribution is both a celebration of achievement and a statement about what we value."

The anniversary also reflects the Chamber's continuing agricultural advocacy: protecting productive farmland, supporting farm succession and enabling the investment needed to sustain viable farms and strong rural communities. Bill_109_Standing_Committee_Wri...

Help recognize the people making a difference

The Chamber encourages residents, farm organizations, businesses and community partners to look across Chatham-Kent and put forward the individuals and businesses whose contributions deserve recognition.

Nominations are being accepted in the following categories:

- **Agriculturist of the Year**
- **Woman of Agriculture Award**
- **Friend of Agriculture Award**
- **Future Leader of the Year Award**
- **Agriculture Innovator of the Year Award — Business**
- **Agriculture Innovator of the Year Award — Individual.** Whether their contribution is a lifetime of service, an innovative business approach, leadership that opens doors for others or the promise of a young person beginning their agricultural journey, this milestone is an opportunity to bring their story forward.

Nominations close November 20, 2026. The online nomination form requests contact information, an award category and a brief explanation of **50 words or fewer** describing why the nominee deserves recognition.

Submit a nomination:

<https://chathamkentcc.awardify.io/nominations>

Help make the 80th Rural Urban Awards a celebration worthy of the people who have built—and continue to build—Chatham-Kent's agricultural future.

About the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce exists to cultivate a thriving business ecosystem and collaborate with like-minded stakeholders so that members can broaden their economic horizons, inspire success, and contribute to a prosperous and vibrant community for generations to come.

Rory Opening Remarks

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