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TWO SMALL BUSINESSES IN CHILLIWACK ANNOUNCED AS SEMI-FINALISTS FOR SMALL BUSINESS BC AWARDS

British Columbia – December 16, 2014: The Top 10 semi-finalists for the 12th Annual Small Business BC Awards have now been selected, and two very special companies are from Chilliwack.

These semi-finalists include: Omega & Associates Engineering Ltd. for Best Company, and Intuitive Independence Rehabilitation Services for Best Employer. The Best Company Award recognizes the BC small business that best demonstrates exceptional leadership and a proven track record of growth and profitability. The Best Employer Award recognizes the business that goes above and beyond for their employees.

From October 1 to November 30, British Columbians were asked to nominate and vote for their favourite small businesses. This year was the biggest year yet with over 460 nominations received from upwards of 70 communities across the province, including nine nominations from Chilliwack.

Nominated companies were given two months to gain as many votes as possible through word-of-mouth, social media, e-communications and other creative means. Those who activated their communities and received the most votes have been named the Top 10 semi-finalists.

These extraordinary small businesses will now move forward to face a panel of judges, who will review their applications, and based on the award criteria, narrow down the competition to the Top 5 finalists in each category.

The Top 5 finalists in these categories will be announced on January 30, 2015, and invited to give a Dragons' Den-style pitch on why they should be named the best in BC.

The winners will be honoured and celebrated on February 26, 2015 at the Small Business BC Awards Ceremony in Vancouver. The night will include messages from Premier Christy Clark and the Honourable Minister Naomi Yamamoto, among others.

More information on the finalists and the Small Business BC Awards can be found at www.sbbcawards.ca

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Quick Facts

- Over 3,000 entrepreneurs have participated in the awards competition since its inception.
- This year, Small Business BC introduced two new award categories - Best Emerging Entrepreneur and Best Immigrant Entrepreneur.
- Premier Christy Clark and the BC Government are supporting the awards for the second year through the Premier's People's Choice Award, and the Premier's Prize of \$1,500 cash given to each of the award category winners.

Quotes

"This year we saw a tremendous amount of participation in the Small Business BC Awards from across the province. It's fantastic to see some of the many small businesses in Chilliwack nominated and recognized, not only for their success, but also for the positive impact they're having on their local communities and the global economy. It's going to be a tough job selecting the winners, but we're very excited to see who comes out on top." - **George Hunter, CEO, Small Business BC**

"The substantial growth in participation in the 2015 Small Business BC Awards is a clear indicator of the significant impact small business has here in British Columbia. IBC wishes the finalists continued success in the next round of competition and extends its thanks to all small businesses for the huge contribution they continue to make to both the economy and our communities." - **Bill Adams, VP, Western and Pacific, Insurance Bureau of Canada**

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About Small Business BC

Small Business BC provides entrepreneurs with the information and guidance necessary to build a solid foundation for their business. Through a wide range of products, services, education and resources there's a piece that fits with every business. No matter what stage or what skill level, when an entrepreneur finds themselves asking "How do I...?" Small Business BC is the one to call. To view press releases and other information, visit Small Business BC's website at www.smallbusinessbc.ca. Follow SBBC on Twitter [@smallbusinessbc](https://twitter.com/smallbusinessbc) or like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/smallbusinessbc).

About Insurance Bureau of Canada

Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) is pleased to celebrate 50 years as a valuable resource for insurance information. Since 1964, IBC has been working with governments across Canada to make our communities safer, championing issues that directly affect Canadians and the property and casualty (P&C) insurance industry. IBC is the national industry association representing Canada's private home, car and business insurers. Its member companies represent 90% of the P&C insurance market in Canada. The private P&C insurance industry employs over 118,600 Canadians, pays more than \$7 billion in taxes and levies to the federal, provincial and municipal governments, and has a total premium base of \$48 billion.