

For immediate release

Local small businesses celebrated at FirstOntario Credit Union's 1Awards Gala

Four hometown businesses take home close to \$175,000 in cash and professional services

Hamilton ON, May 17, 2018– Caliber Communications, Humble Bee Inc., The Burnt Tongue and White Elephant shared close to \$175,000 in cash and in-kind services as the 2018 1Awards competition winners were announced today. The winners were revealed at a breakfast gala at Carmen's Banquet Centre.

"It's no surprise to see so many talented entrepreneurs and successful businesses in Hamilton and the surrounding areas," said James Lefebvre, Senior Vice President, Member Experience, and Business Services at FirstOntario Credit Union. "The 1Awards is a great way for us as a credit union to put a spotlight on the winners, and the finalists, who make our communities unique with their great ideas and innovative products and services".

This year's winners could not be more diverse. Caliber Communications is a technology-based security company that operates on less than 60 watts of power. Humble Bee Inc. specializes in urban beekeeping, honey production and breeding. The Burnt Tongue stirs up some of the best soup you've ever tasted and White Elephant showcases Canadian-made women's fashion. All four of these unique Hamilton businesses shared their stories of success, their ideas for the future and a genuine love for what they do.

A group of 10 finalists presented their business plans and their ideas about future growth to a panel of judges just few weeks ago. After a tough deliberation, the judges went with four front-runners and prizes were allotted to each business based on their needs.

In its seventh year, the 1Awards competition is an important way that FirstOntario encourages small business development. Since the program's inception, FirstOntario and 1Awards partners have invested more than \$1 million into Hamilton and Halton's small business landscape. This year's partners include the Hamilton Spectator, Agro Zaffiro LLP, KPMG, Mohawk College, 900 CHML, PLAY and M is for Money.

For more information, please contact:

Stacey Marshall
Manager, Communications and Public Relations
FirstOntario Credit Union
905-387-2133
Stacey.Marshall@FirstOntario.com

[About FirstOntario Credit Union](#)

FirstOntario has been serving Members in the Golden Horseshoe, Niagara Region and Southwestern regions of Ontario since 1939. FirstOntario is the province's second largest credit union with more than 118,000 Members and \$5 billion in assets under management. Everyone is welcome to be part of FirstOntario for financial services including daily transactions, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario profits are invested into the communities we serve through support for entrepreneurs, competitive rates and charitable pursuits including our award winning student nutrition program. Learn more about us today at FirstOntario.com.

[The1Awards](#)

The goal of the 1Awards is to help local businesses get to the next level by recognizing and rewarding ideas for growth and community-focused plans. This is the seventh annual 1Awards small business competition in Hamilton which also considers Burlington and Oakville entrepreneurs. Due to its growing success, the program has expanded to Niagara in a separate competition. Established businesses must demonstrate measurable growth such as workplace expansion, innovation and economic impact in their local communities to be eligible for cash and specialized in-kind services provided by 1Awards partners. Hamilton partners include The Hamilton Spectator, Agro Zaffiro LLP, KPMG, Mohawk College, 900 CHML, PLAY and M is for Money.

[Caliber Communications](#)

Caliber Communications is a technology-based company that has engineered and developed a unique communications platform that is totally independent of infrastructure and operates on less than 60w of power. Our communications are transmitted wirelessly to our UL certified monitoring station over the cellular networks in North America and our platform is capable of being powered through solar. To date, this platform has been utilized across various industries, mainly for the purpose of providing remote security monitoring services. Our vision is to change the standards surrounding how security can be utilized "residually" to provide safer and more productive environments.

[Humble Bee Inc.](#)

Humble Bee Inc. is a partnership between Luc Peters and Dan Douma. We are primarily urban beekeepers, with half a dozen apiaries in backyards and rooftops in the lower city of Hamilton and rural locations from Grimsby to Flamborough. We focus on urban honey production, breeding and sales of queen bees and nucleus colonies, and educating beekeepers and the general public. Beekeeping is a hyper-local undertaking, we are proud to showcase Hamilton's ecological diversity through our bees and hive products.

[The Burnt Tongue](#)

Founded by two local Hamiltonians, Burnt Tongue opened its first location's door on Supercrawl weekend of 2013. Our menu at the time featured only a daily rotation of fresh soups and hand cut Belgian frites. As time has passed, customer requests and feedback has expanded the menu to add salads, sandwiches, burgers and a number of daily specials across two locations and with a third in the making.

[White Elephant](#)

White Elephant is an independent and female-run clothing and lifestyle store based out of Hamilton, Ontario. We opened the doors to our bricks and mortar boutique in 2008, focusing on handmade and small-batch jewelry, accessories, and gifts. We have since expanded our offerings to include Canadian-made women's clothing, as well as expanding to include a second retail location in our hometown of Hamilton in 2014, and an online shopping platform in 2017. Run by owners Hollie and Jane, White Elephant is passionate about supporting our community and providing quality goods that will be loved for a lifetime.