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Michael Whittaker (left), president of TruCorp Investments and Bonté Foods, with New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant at the New Brunswick Export Awards.

[awards]

Top dogs

New Brunswick Export Awards honour sector leaders

New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant and U.S. ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman were among the distinguished guests at this year's New Brunswick Export Awards in June. With a record number of submissions, a total of 30 outstanding companies in the province were nominated.

As the former managing director of private wealth management at Goldman Sachs, Heyman has a strong business background. He said that the United States

supports New Brunswick's attempts to grow its export capacity: "Whenever your next-door neighbour is strong economically, that accrues to the benefit of the neighbour. Especially in this case, when we're so interwoven in terms of our populations and our families. We make things together, we do things together, we have tourism on both sides of the border. The stronger Canada is economically, the better it is for the United States."

This year's awards were handed out in the following categories:

Global Diversification Award recognizes companies that have opened up new markets outside Canada and the United States. The winner was Fredericton-based ADI Systems Inc., which delivers wastewater-treatment solutions to more than 220 customers in over 30 countries.

Foreign-owned Exporter Award honours foreign-owned companies that are successfully exporting New Brunswick-produced products. While their headquarters are located outside the province, their facilities here provide New Brunswickers with valuable jobs and make a significant contribution to our economy. The winner was AV Group, which owns two New Brunswick pulp mills that export rayon pulp to viscose-fibre manufacturers in China, Thailand, India, and Indonesia. AV Group currently employs 730 employees directly, and many more indirectly, through its forest division.

Innovator of the Year Award is given to companies that use innovative marketing techniques and whose products are cutting edge in terms of innovation. This year's winner, Malley Industries, is a well-known producer of ambulances, emergency response vehicles, modified commercial fleet vehicles, law enforcement and security vehicles, and wheelchair-accessible conversions. Last year it reported more than 1,500 vehicle conversions and produced tens of thousands of sub-assemblies and components.

Emerging Exporter of the Year Award recognizes companies that are new to exporting within the past five years. This year's winner, Fredericton-based Smart Skin Technologies, has created a pressure-sensing and mapping technology called Quantifeel.

Exporter of the Year Award is given to the New Brunswick company that represents an all-around excellence in export. This year's winner, Dieppe-based Bonté Foods Limited, manufactures more than 300 food products under several brands and is currently the largest deli-meat manufacturer in Atlantic Canada. — TOM MASON