

Contact: Barbara Rainville
802-388-0627
barb@maplelandmark.com

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Middlebury Toymaker named VT Small Business Person of the Year

MONTPELIER, Vt. – The president and owner of Maple Landmark is named 2017 Vermont Small Business Person of the Year.

Michael Rainville is being recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration for Maple Landmark's employment growth, financial success, expansion and community involvement.

"It's a privilege to have Maple Landmark recognized for its efforts," said Rainville. "Throughout the years we have been recognized for our toys, but this is the first time Maple Landmark has been recognized for its overall business operations."

Headquartered in Middlebury, Vt., Maple Landmark manufactures eco-friendly wooden games and toys, such as jigsaw puzzles and trains. Maple Landmark started in 1979 in Rainville's parents' basement. Today the company occupies a 28,000 square-foot facility.

"We are extremely proud to be a Vermont manufacturer. There were times when it was tempting to think about going overseas, but we know what we are. We are an American company that likes to make stuff," said Rainville.

Each year, Vermont small businesses compete for four other award categories in addition to Small Business Person of the Year.

Bee's Wrap, located in Bristol, is awarded the Woman-Owned Business of the Year. Founded in 2012 by Sarah Kaeck, the company mixes cotton and bee's wax to make a reusable natural substitute to plastic wrap for food storage.

Veteran-Owned Business of the Year is awarded to Buermann Engineering, located in Grand Isle. A former Navy Reservist who retired in 2015 after 20 years of service, Jay Beurmann's firm provides civil engineering services for commercial, industrial and residential properties on islands throughout Lake Champlain.

Gretchen Hardy, co-owner of Hardy Foard Catering, is awarded Young Entrepreneur of the Year. The 32-year-old entrepreneur started the Brattleboro-based company with Bo Foard in 2010.



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Schill Landscape Group, located in Essex, is awarded the Family-Owned Business of the Year. Blake Schill started the company with his father in 1998. The company offers landscape design, installation and maintenance for residential, commercial and government clients.

Rainville and the other small business winners will be presented their awards during the 2017 Vermont Small Business Awards Ceremony cohosted by Vermont Business Magazine in June. "We have an incredible group this year. Each award recipient started his or her company as a microenterprise with little to no employees. Today they are all thriving Vermont companies combining to employ nearly 100 Vermonters," said Darcy Carter, SBA Vermont District Office Director.

The ceremony is open to the public and registration will be available in May.

Maple Landmark and the Small Business Person of the Year winners from each state have been invited to attend ceremonies in Washington, D.C. April 30 and May 1. During this time they will be honored with their individual award along with the naming of the 2017 National Small Business Person of the Year.

"These small business owners define entrepreneurial spirit and best represent the 28 million small businesses that are the backbone and economic engine for today's economy. I look forward to welcoming the winners to Washington next month when they are officially honored for their achievements," said Administrator Linda McMahon, the head of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

For more information about the 2017 Vermont small business award winners, call the Vermont Small Business Administration at 802-828-4422. To learn more about Mike Rainville and/or Maple Landmark, please visit the website at www.maplelandmark.com

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