



**PRESS RELEASE
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RONA WINS THREE OUTSTANDING RETAILER AWARDS
Stores in Windsor, Ontario and in Lone Butte and Prince George, BC
honoured for their operational excellence

Boucherville, Quebec, October 29, 2010 – RONA inc. (TSX: RON), the largest Canadian distributor and retailer of hardware, renovation and gardening products, is proud to announce that three RONA dealers have won Outstanding Retailer Awards for 2010. These home improvement “Oscars” are the industry’s highest awards of recognition for overall excellence.

The Outstanding Retailer Awards were presented in Toronto on October 28 by the trade magazine *Hardware Merchandising* as part of the annual Hardlines Conference. Winners were selected by an independent panel of industry experts and journalists. Stores were ranked by major retail groups according to 10 criteria that included customer service, staff training, merchandising, marketing and community involvement.

RONA Won Outstanding Retailer Awards in Three Key Categories:

- Outstanding Large Surface Retailer: Windsor RONA Home & Garden (Ont.)
- Outstanding Contractor Specialist: Interlakes Building Supplies Ltd. (Lone Butte, B.C.)
- Outstanding Community Leader: Capital Building Supplies Ltd. (Prince George, B.C.)

Outstanding Large Surface Retailer: Windsor RONA Home & Garden

Partners Terry Ray, Mike McCallum and Matt McKay credit “a lot of hard work and perseverance” for their store’s success. With five competing big-box stores and a smaller proximity store only minutes away, they’ve proven that the “little extras” are not so little after all. Until June 2009, the partners operated two small RONA stores (in Amherstburg and Windsor). RONA proposed that they scale up their expertise by merging at one location (100,000 square feet of retail space and a 2.1 acre lumberyard).

Sales increased almost immediately, partly because loyal customers followed from the old locations, but also because the partners made the store convenient for both homeowners and contractors. “Always providing the very best service and shopping experience,” is how they describe it. With that came an emphasis on employee pride and community involvement.

The store is known for its exceptional service (an 86% customer service satisfaction rating), for its employee’s expertise and product knowledge and for providing staff with appealing career opportunities. It also hosts regular community appreciation days that highlight charity organizations, sporting groups and local entertainment. In just over a year, they made their new store location into a top-notch shopping experience; all for the benefit of Windsor customers.

Outstanding Contractor Specialist: Interlakes Building Supplies Ltd.

Steve Brown’s construction experience makes his RONA store an important stop for contractors in British Columbia’s interior. His affiliation with RONA began in 2009. The opening of the new 8,600-square-foot store in 2010 is allowing him and his team to take advantage of this prime location in Lone Butte which, over the past five years, has become the Cariboo Regional District’s fastest growth area. “Even with new construction starts slower than in previous years, our numbers are all up,” he says, citing a 25% sales increase since the recent expansion.

RONA provides him with access to an expanded product range needed for finishing and renovating, so “the new lines have made it even easier to assist local contractors and groups complete projects.” Steve’s hands-on knowledge (he personally designed more than 150 buildings for which his business supplied materials) and desire to stay on the leading edge have made him a truly valuable resource. “Many of my biggest customers either worked with me in the early years or I helped them get established. Having lived here for 45 years, I know most of them,” he says.

His strong community ties have led Steve to organize a annual spring meeting with building inspectors, contractors and builders to discuss code issues. As well, he often invites industry experts to help develop new ways to save time and money on local projects. Steve is proud of his staff and the achievements he and his wife, Susan, have made in the community. And true to his “Outstanding Contractor Specialist” award, he says, “If you explain *Value for the Dollar* to a customer, they will almost always demand that value.”

Outstanding Community Leader: Capital Building Supplies Ltd.

This Prince George (BC) RONA focuses on improving personal service and promoting individual successes. Owner Rod Bellmann joined RONA in 2008, coming from an award-winning business that served contractors because, as he puts it, “I was always interested in selling the entire house.” Now he sells products as well as installs those products for both contractors and homeowners, in the recently expanded retail space (12,500 square feet with a 10,000 square foot warehouse). “It all comes down to supporting each other,” he says. “Our customers support our business and we support them with excellent products and services.”

But buying and selling is not a closed system for Rod. It is also rooted in a larger community where “support” includes helping “people who are looking to reclaim their place in society.” That has led him to work with the Baldy Hughes Addiction Treatment Centre to provide 90 days of job training for people (up to six at a time) ready to leave the centre’s grounds. “The program is working incredibly well,” says Rod. “These men want to get back to a normal life.” In fact, two will remain as RONA employees while others have moved on to jobs elsewhere. The Prince George RONA also takes part in fundraising events (often donating trucks and drivers) and sports leagues, including help in maintaining playing fields.

“We have an advantage over the big-box stores since we can be market-reactive and can change daily to suit market conditions,” Rod says. He believes RONA has about 80% of the area’s contractor business, a number that reflects the one-to-one service that his employees provide every day. “The reason we are the leader in contractor sales in our community is that we’re willing to work the hours needed to fulfill special delivery requests, and we have staff that come in voluntarily – as early as 5:30 AM – to make sure orders go out smoothly.” This RONA store has earned its “Outstanding Community Leader” honour at all levels.

RONA has Won 24 Outstanding Retailer Awards since 1992

“We are honoured by the fact that RONA has now won 24 Outstanding Retailer Awards since these awards were established in 1992,” said Pierre Dandoy, executive vice president of retail operations. “We’re also the only retailer to have won in each of the different award categories: from smaller hardware stores to mid-sized home centres and building supply stores, to big-boxes. This is especially satisfying since our objective is to reach the highest level of excellence in all our store types, listening to our customers and providing them with the different formats and concepts that cater to all their needs. That’s because we’re consumer specialists, not just specialists in one particular store format.”

“We at RONA are very proud of these award-winning independent dealers who, along with their dedicated and enthusiastic staff, have worked so hard to give their customers such a great home improvement shopping experience,” said Jean-Luc Meunier, senior vice president, affiliate dealer-

owner network development. “The vision and determination of dealers like these have been a major part of RONA’s growth and success since our inception in 1939.”

About RONA

RONA is the largest Canadian distributor and retailer of hardware, renovation and gardening products. RONA operates a network of nearly 700 corporate, franchise and affiliate stores of various sizes and formats. With close to 30,000 employees working under its family of banners in every region of Canada and more than 16 million square feet of retail space, the RONA store network generates over \$6 billion in annual retail sales. For more information, please visit rona.ca.

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Photos available upon request.

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