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## Entrepreneur event honours Chinese Canadians

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The winners of the 2011 Chinese Canadian Entrepreneur Awards.

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Wally Mah of Saskatoon-based [North Ridge Development Corp.](#), took home top honours at the 15th annual Chinese Canadian Entrepreneur Awards.

Mr. Mah, who started the company in 1982 with business partner Julius Calyniuk, was named Entrepreneur of the Year at a gala event in Markham, Ont., on April 2, presented by the [Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs \(ACCE\)](#).

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Former governor-general Adrienne Clarkson received a lifetime achievement award, but she was out of the country and unable to attend. She accepted her honour in a videotaped speech, “the original way I communicated with all Canadians,” she said, in reference to her long career as a broadcast journalist.

A total of eight winners were announced at the ceremony:

**Entrepreneur of the Year: North Ridge Developments, Saskatoon**

The company started out building a few houses a year and it has steadily increased to more than 300 units in 2010, generating annual revenue in excess of \$80 million.

Mr. Mah is dedicated to making sure his employees, in excess of 150, are kept informed of the company's growth and its commitment to giving back to the community by contributing to several local charities. He also includes his employees in profit-sharing opportunities.

**Best International Business Award: EcoCarrier, Markham**

[EcoCarrier](#) was established in 1997, and it is a licensed carrier and provider of services for fixed and mobile telephone and mobile roaming voice, text and data communications. The company employs 26 people and an additional 10 who work as contractors in international offices in Mexico, Morocco, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates.

EcoCarrier's operations are entirely Internet-based, including administration, sales, marketing, product management, customer support, technical services, e-commerce and product development. Its personnel are highly skilled and multi-lingual, offering service in 12 different languages to clients across time zones using online communications services.

Resellers do not need to invest in new or extra hardware, they simply use their current PCs or laptops to log on to EcoCarrier's service platform. This reduction in hardware significantly reduces the company's carbon footprint.

**Best Asia Pacific Business Award: Dr. Battery International Group, Richmond, B.C.**

Joshua Huen founded [Dr. Battery International Group](#) in 2004, with a head office in Richmond, B.C., and an IT department in Hong Kong. Each location has its own sales force and product warehouse, which means there is no down time in terms of web maintenance, updates, and catering to the battery needs of customers in more than 25 countries worldwide.

Dr. Battery's web-based ERP System processes all sales transactions, which average 700 to 1,000 a day. The company replaces batteries for a variety of electronics, including laptops and camcorders. The professional series batteries come in nine product lines spanning more than 400 laptop battery models, and supporting the power needs of 85 per cent of the brand-name laptops in the world.

Through a strategic alliance with Boston Power, Dr. Battery's "green series" offers environmentally friendly and safe lithium-ion batteries that deliver "like new" performance over a span of three years and more than 1,000 charges. The batteries are suitable for more than 7,200 notebook PCs on the market.

**Award of Merit: Thai Indochine Trading Inc., Markham**

Started in 1985, [Thai Indochine Trading](#) now has more than 50 employees in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, and it is a leading importer and distributor of Asian foods, beverages and kitchenware in Canada.

Its customers are well-known retail chains such as T&T Supermarket, Loblaws, Real Canadian Superstore, Costco, Shoppers Drug Mart, Walmart, Sobeys and Longo's.

Thai Indochine also believes in giving back to the community. It is a supporter of a number of hospitals and charitable organizations, including Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation, Sunnybrook Hospital, Canadian Cancer Society, Alzheimer Society of Canada, Mon Sheong Foundation, Yee Hong Foundation, and the Daily Bread Food Bank.

### **Most Innovative Award: Dapasoft, Toronto**

Founded in 1997, [Dapasoft](#) is a private corporation with 90 full-time employees. Its IT consultants cater to a diverse clientele that includes health care organizations such as the Ontario Medical Association and Sudbury Hospital, pharmaceutical companies including Pro-Pharm, government offices throughout Ontario, financial institutions, steel manufacturers, Munich Life Management Corp., and many others.

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Dapasoft's most recognized achievement to date is the BORN Project, the Ontario health care initiative designed to capture and analyze information on every newborn.

The company has several major software solution products that are ready to be introduced to the international market, and its operations continue to be funded internally without any external capital investments.

### **Most Progressive Award: CJ Marketing, Toronto**

In the early 1980s, CEO Brian Chan was working as an electrical engineer for Boeing when he suddenly found himself out of a job. He started selling toy vehicles out of a gift shop located in a downtown Toronto bus terminal, becoming so successful he decided to launch a company, [CJ Marketing](#), in 1985.

In 1988, he incorporated and moved into household decorative items. CJ Marketing sells and promotes its products at major trade shows and retailers across the country.

It started with two employees and now employs more than 85. Mr. Chan's business group is structured into three companies operating out of two industrial buildings, featuring a 6,000-square-foot showroom area for displaying products manufactured in China.

The company also supports major charitable organizations and it has won several awards as a top supplier to many major retailers. Mr. Chan has been invited by the governments of Mexico and Indonesia to speak about the how-to's of exporting.

### **Best Community Service Award: Dr. Collin Hong, Toronto**

[Dr. Hong](#), a renowned surgeon in the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery, exports his skills to underdeveloped countries around the world, helping burn patients, war victims and people born with deformities.

Dr. Hong, along with his family, two of his staff and other volunteer surgeons, makes bi-annual trips to remote parts of China to treat more than 100 patients during each visit. For the past 16 years, Dr. Hong and some of his staff have operated on more than 1,200 patients in Guangxi, Yunnan, and Kunming in China, and in Angola. He and his team have endured harsh conditions and they have overcome cultural differences during the missions.

They generously donated their time and absorbed all costs related to these medical missions.

In 2007 and 2010, Dr. Hong helped raise more than \$500,000 for the Angola CEML Hospital as an organizing committee member. He also mentors numerous university and medical students and he actively supports various charities including World Vision Canada and the Toronto Chinese Community's 30 Hour Famine. He also serves on a committee dedicated to supporting and sponsoring Chinese Canadian skater Patrick Chan by raising funds for his Olympic training expenses.

Dr. Hong and his wife, Carol, are the founding members of the Chinese stem cell initiative of the Canadian blood bank services.

### **Best Start-up Award: Shape Collage, Toronto**

[Vincent Cheung](#) recognized that after people download images from digital cameras to their computers, they often file them away, never to be seen or enjoyed again.

So the graduate of the University of Toronto's computer engineering program came up with a formula that allows users to quickly upload pictures and turn them into a collage of any shape. He initially made the program available on his website for free, but when people started donating money to express their appreciation he realized he had stumbled onto something unique.

Since its launch in March, 2009, [Shape Collage](#) has been translated into more than 20 languages and it has been downloaded more than 3.3 million times. The website attracts more than half a million visitors every month, and it is used in more than 200 countries worldwide, attracting international businesses that want to form partnerships.

The largest online photo printing company in Europe, Photobox, has entered into a licensing agreement the company.

Mr. Cheung has recruited an executive team to promote product development on other platforms such as the iPhone, iPad, and Android phones.

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