

GDX nominated for national safety award

Maggie Riopelle/Tribune Staff ~ September 19, 2007

GDX Automotive is being recognized by the Welland Safe Community Partnership for its safety record and the company may also be recognized nationally.

It's the first opportunity the organization has had to nominate a business for a local award and the national Business Safety Ambassador Award. Deciding which business would be first up for the award wasn't a difficult decision, said Bill Auchterlonie, safe community chair. The awards are annual and presented on Oct. 3 to coincide with national Safe Communities Canada Day.

"This one was obvious," said Auchterlonie. "GDX won a worldwide competition and had incredible numbers. We are extremely proud of what our local GDX plant has accomplished with respect to their safety record."

Safe communities nominated GDX for the national award, he said, because the company is a positive example of what all workplaces in Canada can achieve.

In 2005, the company won the Chairman's Award for EHS Safety. The facility had the lowest recordable injury rate of GDX plants worldwide. The performance was based on a 83 per cent reduction in workplace injuries in the previous three years. As well, GDX Welland had the lowest lost time injury rate of all GDX plants with a reduction of 93 per cent in the previous three years, the second lowest severity rate in the company.

The company's records, however, have continued to improve. Claims for 2007 are now one-third of what they were in 2000 and lost days due to injuries have fallen to three per cent of what they once were.

"All businesses keep stats and the Workplace Safety Insurance Board provincially keeps stats on everybody based on claims. The information is readily available. We became aware of GDX accomplished this amazing feat from an article in The Tribune," said Auchterlonie.

Since the Welland Safe Community Partnership was formed, GDX has hosted several tours of the plant to demonstrate changes made in order to achieve its safety record over the past few years. Members of the partnership have toured the facility and it helped sealed the deal for the local award and national award nomination.

GDX, said Auchterlonie, has been a strong supporter of the Safe Community Partnership not only by sharing its success stories but also through participation in public events promoting the organization.

The annual awards, said Auchterlonie, also includes an individual award whereby people are recognized for their ongoing dedication to making the community a safer place to live, work and play. While a call for nominations did go out to the community for the individual award, no names were put forth. Auchterlonie is hoping next year an individual will be recognized.

As far as recognizing businesses annually, the committee will only award those who are deserving of the recognition, he said. Although the committee has already discussed a potential nominee for next year.

“We’re going to look at businesses every year. We’re hoping to be able to find somebody who is worthy of it every year,” he said.

GDX will be recognized on Oct. 2 at a city council meeting and the committee hopes “to be present them with the national award at the same time.” Auchterlonie said they should find out soon enough if GDX won national recognition.