

57th Annual Calgary White Hat Awards Celebrate Our City's Ultimate Hosts

Individuals and organizations in Calgary's tourism industry receive recognition for their service excellence

BY BRIDGETTE SLATER

In 1948, former Calgary mayor (then alderman) Don Mackay started the tradition of presenting a white Smithbilt hat to visiting dignitaries as a symbol of the city's legendary western hospitality. Today, the White Hat is recognized across North America as a symbol of Calgary and the hard-working Calgarians who make the city a great place to live and to visit.

For over half a century, the Calgary White Hat Awards have paid homage to this tradition and celebrated members of Calgary's tourism industry who go above and beyond to make their guests' experiences memorable. On May 15, Tourism Calgary will proudly host the 57th annual Calgary White Hat Awards Show and Gala at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium where 20 individuals and three organizations will be recognized for their customer service excellence, leadership and performance.

Service excellence is recognized through 18 different categories which span the accommodation, airline, attraction, culinary, event, ground transportation, guest services and shopping facets of Calgary's tourism industry. Five honorary Calgary White Hat Awards are also presented in recognition of individuals and organizations that have shown long-term commitment to Calgary's vibrancy, brand and reputation as the Ultimate Host City. These include the Mayor's White Hat Award, Doug Johnson Service Award, Calgary White Hat Legacy Award, Calgary White Hat Restaurant Award and Calgary White Hat Festival/Event Award.

This year, Tourism Calgary received a record 902 Calgary White Hat Award nominations, submitted by guests, co-workers or managers of individuals in the tourism industry. The nominees distinguished themselves by promoting Calgary as a welcoming, innovative and experience-rich destination.

Each nominee was invited to interview with industry professionals who evaluated their enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication to Calgary's tourism industry based on a pre-established adjudication system. Nominees were also scored on whether they exemplify the four Ultimate Host service pillars: kind, proud, genuine and resourceful. Following the interviews, final scores were tabulated and verified by a third-party auditor before being reviewed by members of the Calgary White Hat Awards selection committee.

This annual event is second to none. It's an opportunity for Calgarians to come together to celebrate our city and the Ultimate Hosts who perpetuate our reputation for western hospitality. With over 6.9 million visitors contributing \$1.6 billion in visitor spending to the economy annually, the mentality and efforts of these Ultimate Hosts contribute significantly to Calgary's vibrancy and growing reputation as the Ultimate Host City.

To learn more about the Calgary White Hat Awards, or for ticket purchase details, view visitcalgary.com. 