

Details of new awards for old businesses to be hammered out in June

By Brock Weir

Aurora's 150 years of business heritage could be honoured with an awards ceremony this fall.

Plans continue to fall into place on 'longevity' awards being considered by Aurora's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to celebrate the Town's 150th anniversary.

The idea for a new form of business awards was floated by EDAC chair Councillor Michael Thompson earlier this spring to serve two purposes. The first is to mark the Sesquicentennial and the second is to pick up some of the slack from the Aurora Chamber of Commerce this year.

The Chamber has decided to put their annual Business Achievement Awards, celebrating individual business people and their companies, on ice until 2014 while they recalibrate, retool and revitalize what was once an annual celebration.

A new awards ceremony for this year will not only highlight the Town's rich history of trade and commerce, but also be a bit of a celebration for the companies that continue to thrive after decades of business in Town.

'The committee is very receptive and enthusiastic about putting something together and the Chamber has also expressed an interest in participating in the process,' says Councillor Thompson. 'At the last EDAC meeting, we talked over a whole bunch of different ideas. If we're leaning towards one thing, it may be that the York Region Small Business Group, which does a series of six talks a year, their last talk will be in Aurora on 150 Years of Innovation.'

'The thought process was that we would align our Business Longevity Awards with that session and go from there.'

Ideas floated at the table included starting awards for 25 years of activity in Aurora and working their way up. There was also consideration around the table on the possibility of ways to honour some of the businesses key to the development of Aurora, such as Sisman Shoes and Sterling Drugs, which, while defunct, still played their role.

'We're brainstorming and we're going to vote on what we think is the best format and process of our next EDAC meeting next month and that would go to Council for Council's approval; that would include things like where we are going to do this, do we need a budget, how we're going to recognize those businesses,' he says.

'Some of the things from EDAC were whether it is really a recognition amongst their peers, or is there a way to let their customers know they have been recognized? Not everybody wants a plaque, but there might be other ways to recognize them that might be just as beneficial but in a different way.'