

## Stars come out at IT gala

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New Brunswick's information technology industry has chosen its Rising Stars and Junior Stars at a gala last Thursday in Moncton. The Rising stars are, top row, from left: Jacques Guitard, Lynne Sampson, Joy Cummings, John Born, Chris Newton, Larry Cossaboon, Greg Rekounas and Etienne Fontaine. The Junior Stars are, bottom row, from left: Kyle Nguyen, Guillaume Pelletier, Brandon Smith, Tyler Hill. Missing from the photo were Rising Stars Adam MacDonald and Sylvain St-Onge and Junior Stars François Côté and Gabe Williams.



MONCTON - New Brunswick's information technology sector has a new batch of rising stars.

Roughly 250 people gathered in the Hub City last Thursday night to recognize the achievements of the 25 finalists and celebrate the 10 winners in the fifth annual province-wide IT industry Rising Stars Awards.

Nancy Mathis, executive director of the G. Wallace F. McCain Institute for Business Leadership at the University of New Brunswick, delivered the keynote address during the awards gala dinner. Mathis said in an interview one lesson she's learned in her experience in the private sector and in education is the importance of understanding the importance of - and learning from - failure. "You will fall. You must pick yourself back up," she said. "Being a leader, you're stretching yourself, you're growing. You're like a toddler who is learning to walk. It doesn't happen without skinned knees."

The 2007-2008 Rising Stars winners are Larry Cossaboon, manager of technology and operations, Innovatia Inc.; John Born, instructional support specialist, University of New

Brunswick Centre for Enhanced Teaching; Joy Cummings, media production manager University of New Brunswick; Etienne Fontaine, senior network administrator, Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

The other winners are Jacques Guitard, chief technology officer, IC-Agency, Adam MacDonald, co-founder, Spheric Technologies Inc.; Chris Newton, chief technology officer, Radian6; Greg Rekounas, Oracle specialist, OAO Technology Solutions Inc.; Lynne Sampson, media relations specialist, Skywire Software Canada and Sylvain St-Onge, owner, Computech.

The 10 winners were selected from a field of 25 finalists. A judging panel consisting of six industry and government representatives selected the finalists and winners.

Mathis said it's important for New Brunswick industries to recognize their best and brightest. "There is so much positive in being recognized for what you are doing," she said. Peer recognition can be particularly important for young leaders, Mathis added. "Leadership can be a lonely road and sometimes you feel like 'where is this leading?' and it's nice to be recognized by your peers for the efforts that you are putting in above and beyond the call of duty.

For the first time, the Rising Stars awards have also added a new category to recognize up and coming "Junior Stars" who are still in middle or high school.

The junior stars are Kyle Nguyen, Saint John High School; Gabe Williams, River Valley Middle School; François Côté, École Odyssee; Brandon Smith, J.M.A. Armstrong High School; Tyler Hill, Moncton High School and Guillaume Pelletier, École Mathieu-Martin.

Patrick Goguen, Rising Stars Committee chairman, said that the record-number of nominations and attendees at the evening gala shows how the information and technology industry in the province is becoming more vibrant.

"Last year we weren't able to reach 200 [attendees] and this year we're way over, probably close to 250," he said. Goguen said events such as the Rising Stars help keep New Brunswick's best and brightest in the province. The awards recognize the winners for "their contributions to their companies, their industry and to their community," he said.

The Rising Stars program isn't just about celebrating the best, it's also about helping talented men and women continue to improve, said Goguen. The 10 Rising Stars winners will all be invited to participate in a year-long mentorship and networking program, he said.

Mentors will help the rising stars in areas including leadership as well as technology, entrepreneurship and innovation, said Goguen.

"We bring in the big guns. The big guns in the industry, sometimes outside of the industry either in banking or some field related to IT."