South Dakota Retailer of the Year Nomination

Names of persons I am nominating: Jane and Tom Heinz

Nominee's business: Coffee Cup Family Travel Plaza (Heinz Corporations)

Mailing Address: 47051 SD Highway 50 City: Burbank, SD State: SD Zip 57010
Ph. (605)-540-4086

Type of business:

Does the nominee own or manage the business? Owns and manages, along with their children Chris Heinz and Ericka Schapekahm whom are also active in the business.

https://www.natso.com/articles/articles/view/3-generations-of-women-create-success-at-coffee-cup-fuel-stops

How do I know the nominee? I am a customer and have been since 2000; we have a business relationship - Coffee Cup Family Travel Plaza is a member of the *Southeast South Dakota Tourism Association.*

How long has the nominee owned/managed this business? The Coffee Cup Fuel Stop Franchise has been serving truckers since in 1981 with its first store being built in Summit, SD in 1981. The business has spread to two other locations in Hot Springs and Vermillion, SD. A full rundown of the business can be found here: http://www.coffeecupfuelstops.com/

https://rapidcityjournal.com/community/hot-springs/local-news/a-new-coffee-cup-is-going-up/article_11061e62-44fb-11e5-b1a6-afacf1904a6e.html

https://siouxcityjournal.com/business/station-gives-biodiesel-use-some-gas/article_c233e67c-b15b-5962-9b40-57224558ca04.html

Why do I think this person should win this award? What makes them stand out from the crowd? The Heinz family employs over 200 people between their four locations (three in South Dakota and one in North Dakota).

The Heinz' themselves lead by example and are active in their local communities in a variety of philanthropic organizations.

What is remarkable is that the employees themselves "do their own thing," without being directed, but certainly with support. The photo of the wall featuring the employee efforts at giving back immediately below is commendable for not only the number of charitable efforts they give to, but also the amounts.

PHOTOS

Other examples of how the Heinz' recognize the efforts of their employees besides the photo wall can be found here:
http://www.coffeecupfuelstops.com/about/

https://www.plaintalk.net/local_news/article_00c9abf4-1b0f-11e7-9523-4bdac6c83df2.html

And one article that the Heinz' were never interviewed about, had not promoted and still don't know who tipped off the media about, can be found here:
https://www.thepublicopinion.com/news/local_news/summit-truck-stop-provides-more-than-fuel-and-food-offers/article_b2d8a340-7e00-11e8-a423-4bf8a6dfeab2.html

Tell us about the business they operate; what is special about this business? Far from managing simple truck stops, the Heinz family has created a travel plaza in the true meaning of the word. Visitors and customers are treated as guests in an environment something like a VIP suite at an airport.

With Tourism being the #2 industry in South Dakota, Coffee Cup Plaza's cater to the specific needs of not only truckers and local communities, but also the national and international traveling public that comes to our state for adventure and relaxation as well.

In specific, take the Vermillion exit plaza at the intersection of I-29 and Highway 50. While the State of South Dakota's Visitor Center at that exit is being remodeled and unavailable to the traveling public, the Vermillion plaza has become the de facto visitor's center for that region.

As the photos immediately below will show-first you are welcomed into a lobby, which features an efficient design for traffic flow and payment. But it's the hand-painted original mural of the South Dakota prairie that looms over the entire area. To one side, is a full compliment of franchise food options—Caribou Coffee; Pizza Hut; Subway; and Cinnabon, all with well-trained and friendly staff that truly understand what customer service and hospitality means for our state. They are almost ambassadors for our entire citizenry, and darn good ones as well.

In a well-thought out design, gifts are available surrounding the center island where you pay for your goods and services. Opposite the food court, you are subtly led by well-thought out design for traffic flow into a seating area with tables, fireplace, ferns, browsing materials, etc., Beyond that there is a second area with windows to the outside for more privacy while you check your emails, read, have your lunch or just sit and relax with your coffee. A third area up the stairs overlooking the lobby features an amazing second fireplace that feels like home, if your home is well appointed with big, comfortable loungers and TV screen. And again, a more private area beyond that against the windows looking out onto the prairie landscape…and the dog park!

This is a place that visitors are made to feel welcomed, relaxed and invited to take their time and enjoy their surroundings. I've never seen anything like it anywhere and I've been in the tourism industry for 30 years.

PHOTOS

Caribou COFFEE
Valiant Vineyards

Caribou COFFEE
The Trail of Lewis & Clark
CLOSED

DRIVERS CORNER

What organizations or special projects are they involved in, either through volunteer work or financial contributions?

One example of giving back that the Heinz' have adopted and support is a cause near and dear to their hearts-- The St. Christopher Truckers Development & Relief Fund. The SCF is an organization that assists truckers whose medical problems have led to financial hardships. The SCF gives charity to these truckers to help improve their situation. SCF is also are working on programs that will benefit both the professional drivers and the trucking industry as a whole. At Coffee Cup Fuel Stops, the family knows how important the truckers are to their business as well as their lives. And because of that, they want to make sure that they can have the best possible situations, so they personally support the organization but also encourage others to step forward as well:

Tom and Jane serve their communities quietly in a variety of ways. Specific organizations they serve include Tom serving on behalf of the family on the University of South Dakota Foundation Board of Directors, Vermillion, South Dakota, NATSO Foundation Board of Directors, Alexandria, VA, Dakota Hospital Board of Directors, Vermillion, SD., and is a member of David Nelson Petroleum Marketers 300 Study Group.

Tom was recognized on behalf of the family by NATSO, which you can see fully in the link below.
https://www.natso.com/contributors/contributors/view/73

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In conclusion, thank you for the opportunity to nominate a very well deserving, homegrown family business doing great work in the retail business community of South Dakota.

Gary