



25 Years In and Seaway's Growing Strong

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CORNWALL, ON -- Lots happened in 1990.

Nelson Mandela got sprung from jail. Germany reunited. The Internet came along.

And in this southeastern Ontario town on the banks of the St. Lawrence, Bob and Linda Gauthier went into business with a five-ton and the desire to provide reliable and efficient overnight transport service between Eastern Ontario and Quebec. The couple eventually built Seaway Express, a proud civic-minded prosperous company, now home to 25 trucks, 55 employees and walls full of community citations and awards.

Thursday of this week was 25th birthday-party day for Seaway.



DOING CORNWALL PROUD: From left, Ian McLeod, Mayor of South Glengarry, Linda Gauthier, Bob Gauthier, Jim McDonell, MPP for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, Cornwall Mayor Leslie O'Shaughnessy, and Seaway General Manager Melanie Hamel.

"We hosted a customer appreciation BBQ," said Melanie Hamel, who was a baby in 1990 but is now Seaway General Manager. (She was also named as one of Canada's most influential trucking executives under 40 in 2014 by Today's Trucking and is currently completing her Next Generation Leadership certification, through the Ontario Trucking Association.)

"We invited current customers and any important people who were key in the success of Seaway over the years. Local dignitaries were also on hand to present plaques and say a few words. This evening we are having staff, family and retired drivers join us for a BBQ. The weather cooperated and it was an great turn-out!"

Gauthier Sr., meantime, attributes his success over the years to his team of dedicated drivers, dock workers, office staff and in-house mechanics.

"We have the same equipment and trucks as other companies," said Gauthier, "What really sets us apart is the quality of our team. You get the best people in the business, treat them well and with respect and let them shine. I'm just the coach."

Seaway can boast 16 years of Excellence according to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO). In 1999, the MTO performed a facility audit and gave Seaway Express an "Excellent" rating with a score of 97%. The rating has remained unchanged to this date.

Over the years, Seaway has increased its real estate footprint in Cornwall's industrial park. The company is currently managing 200,000 square feet of warehousing space – allowing for more opportunities to better service their customers.

And if awards and citations were freight; the Gauthiers could fill their original five-ton. Here's an example of what's hanging on their wall: 2015 Shipper's Choice Award Winner, *Canadian Transportation & Logistics Magazine*; In 2015 Melanie Hamel was featured in *Today's Truckings*"20 under 40"; 2014 Shipper's Choice Award Winner, *Canadian Transportation & Logistics Magazine*; 2009 Business of the Year, Cornwall Chamber of Commerce; 2003 Award of Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Ontario Trucking Association; 1999 "Excellent" rated carrier, MTO (Rating has remained unchanged to this date); 1997 Small Business of the Year, Cornwall Chamber of Commerce.