

An 11th Gala that Fulfills the Expectations of the Entire Hardware and Building Materials Industry

To the three usual ingredients that make up the AQMAT Recognition Gala (passion, talent, and hard work), human warmth was added yesterday, felt from the blue cocktail to the Latin dance, and even more so during the award ceremonies. In front of a record audience of 530 guests, this eleventh edition organized by the Quebec Hardware and Building Materials Association (AQMAT), held at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, declared 54 employees, products, and companies as winners among the 1,000 members of the Association.

A beautiful complicity between the president of AQMAT, Richard Darveau, and the actor Jeff Boudreault, known particularly for his role as a journalist in District 31, allowed for an energetic and efficient co-hosting.

"The satisfaction of seeing and greeting each other, of smiling and encouraging was visible and palpable. Winners and mere participants all seemed satisfied with their experience," appreciated Isabelle Picard, the event coordinator.

The event, costing about \$220,000, was delivered thanks to the financial support provided by about twenty sponsors, whom the AQMAT management sincerely thanks.

It should be mentioned that in 2024, the gala will take a break in order to co-organize with the Hardlines team a major pan-Canadian conference.

For the CEO of AQMAT, Crystelle Cormier, it is clear that the limited 400 seats that the ballroom of the Château Frontenac in Quebec will allow for the next AQMAT gala, on March 27, 2025, will sell out like hotcakes. "To give more people a chance to participate, we are considering limiting the number of places per company," she specifies.

Winning employees, managers, and companies

Award	Description	Sponsor	Winner
Loyalty SUPPLIERS	Recognizing an employee's years of service and their conduct towards their employer.	MAAX	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul FAULKNER, Dural• Ghislain LEHOUX, Etalex
Loyalty RETAILERS		HENKEL (LEPAGE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charles COTTON, Home Hardware, Égide Dupuis et Fils, Gaspé• Linda BARBEAU, Home Depot Saint-Jérôme• Guy BLANCHETTE, RONA Major et Major, Montréal

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sylvain THÉRIAULT, UNIAG Coopérative, réseau BMR, Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague • Francis BÉGIN, Matériaux de construction Létourneau, Castle, Bromptonville et Waterville
Team SUPPLIERS	Recognizing the best sales performances and/or exemplary customer service	ADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKO, Brampton, Ontario • GILLFOR DISTRIBUTION, Longueuil
Ascent RETAILERS	Recognizing an employee's rising career to whom increasing responsibilities have been offered	AGENDRIX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexandre AUDET, Matériaux Audet, TIMBER MART, Québec et Saint-Marc-des-Carrières • Justine BOYER, Matériaux Robert Boyer, Castle, Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs • Caroline CHEVRIER, Matério, Sainte-Sophie • Marc-Antoine PERRON, Quincaillerie Nouvelle-France, Home Hardware, Granby
Manager SUPPLIERS	Recognizing the qualities of a manager who successfully works towards the well-being and productivity of resources	LJT avocats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles BOURBONNAIS, Polymos, Vaudreuil-Dorion • Maxime GAGNIER, SamaN, Victoriaville • Marco TREMBLAY, Osblock, Saint-Henri-de-Taillon
Manager RETAILERS		SOLENO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Éric BAILEY, Matériaux Pont-Masson, réseau BMR, neuf succursales • Nancy LAMPRON, Centre de rénovation Roberge et Fils, Home Hardware, La Sarre • Philippe MAYRAND, RONA Ducharme et Frère, trois succursales • Jézabel PRÉVOST, Home Depot Saint-Romuald
Speciality RETAILERS	Honoring a niche store that stands out	TECHNISEAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAIN DEPOT, Blainville • MATERIO, cinq succursales • DISTRIBUTION MATÉRIAUX LAVOIE, Gatineau • RONA CENTRE DU BRICOLEUR LACHINE, Montréal
Society SUPPLIERS	Honoring a commitment to ecological, social, or humanitarian causes	VICWEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABB CANADA, Montréal • LES PRODUITS DAUBOIS, Montréal • JELD-WEN DU CANADA, Saint-Appolinaire • SIKA Canada, Pointe-Claire

Society RETAILERS		BP Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LES HOME DEPOT DU QUÉBEC, Montréal • QUINCAILLERIE JEAN-DENIS HOME HARDWARE, Saint-Raymond-de-Portneuf • NUTRINOR COOPÉRATIVE, RÉSEAU BMR, Saint-Bruno
Perspective SUPPLIERS	Honoring remarkable marketing, allowing the company to stand out better from the competition	BANQUE NATIONALE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TECHNISEAL, Candiac • STYRORAIL, La Pêche • UNIBOARD, Val-d'Or
Perspective RETAILERS		SELJAX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QUINCAILLERIE TREMBLAY LAROCHE, CASTLE, Metabetchouan-Lac-à-la-Croix • GROUPE SEXTON, Winnipeg, Manitoba • RONA INC., Boucherville
Conqueror SUPPLIERS	Honoring a company that shows business growth	RAYMOND CHABOT GRAND THORTON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHANTIERS CHIBOUGAMAU • SAINT-GOBAIN, Sainte-Catherine • L.P. ROYER, Sherbrooke et Lac-Drolet • TAIGA PRODUITS DE BÂTIMENT, Boucherville
RETAILERS		TAIGA produits de bâtiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QUINCAILLERIE A. POULIOT, RONA, trois succursales • MATÉRIAUX LAVERGNE, HOME HARDWARE, trois succursales • UNORIA COOPÉRATIVE, RÉSEAU BMR, Rimouski
Heritage RETAILERS	Honoring a family in business for at least two generations where the next generation plays a real role	METRIE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QUINCAILLERIE BIGRAS TIMBER MART, Sainte-Anne-du-Lac • CENTRE DE RÉNOVATION LORTIE ET MARTIN, CASTLE, Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts • RÉNOMAX HOME HARDWARE, cinq succursales • ROCH GAUTHIER ET FILS, RONA, Les Cèdres et Saint-Polycarpe

INNOVATION Awards

The two products of the year, honoring an invention, a solution, or a procedure that adds value to the users of its products or services, were the following:

- Public prize: Finitec's MicroBéton;
- Jury prize: Ardobec's hybrid paving.

Special Awards

The "Outstanding Employer" award was given for the first time by AQMAT College to **RONA Forget**, Mont-Tremblant, due to the seriousness given to training and staff development.

A status of "Honorary Lifetime Member" of AQMAT was awarded to **Christian Bélair**, soon to retire as General Manager of Lortie and Martin Renovation Center, Castle banner in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts.

Personalities of the Year

Normand Caissie, founder and CEO of Imperial Manufacturing Group received the highest individual honors for his entire career, marked by the Order of Canada that was recently awarded to him.

Geneviève Gagnon, president of Groupe Gagnon, which includes the five "La Grande Quincaillerie" renovation centers, the wood manufacturer Évolution Structure, and the merchant services center Évolution Distribution received a similar tribute, this time for the ascent of her career and the company she presides over.