

Connie Cuthbertson/Northwoods Gallery & Gifts/Rafters Gallery/Gourmet Outfitters

By Stephen Challis



RRFDC Board Director, George Emes (left) presents to Connie Cuthbertson and her staff at Northwoods Gallery & Gifts the 2007 Customer Service Challenge plaque.

Northwoods Gallery and Gifts is the launch point for the artistic vision and entrepreneurial drive of Ms. Connie Cuthbertson. On the second floor she also runs Rafters Gallery and, across the street and mid-way down on the same block, is Gourmet Outfitters. These enterprises, along with a handful of other operators' nearby businesses, anchor the Scott Street shopping destination.

Connie's said: "I want my customer's to know they will be 100% satisfied before they even walk through the door." "On a personal level this is important to me, and I try to instill it into my staff." "We always strive to do the little extras for our customers, like delivery service."

Connie started an art framing service in 1986, and as her children grew, she moved to the storefront in 1998. New ideas kept emerging, and two years ago she launched the kitchen equipment outlet. A bridal registry and mini-trade show related to weddings have also seen good uptake.

The businesses complement each other and bring to the market quality items at competitive prices. Her greatest satisfaction is when regular customers bring their out of town guests to "their store." In the art gallery she is able to exhibit her own paintings and other work of a similar genre.

Simply walking into Northwoods, whether to browse or buy is an experience. Connie designed and directed the expansion and renovations to the building with the aim of creating "another world for the visitor to enter." This included, amongst many details, the application of seven coats of polyurethane to the floors and log beams.

Connie listens to her customers' and tries to build trust. "If someone says: this is not what I was thinking." "My immediate reply is: let's see what we can do to make it work."