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Carr Hardware Receives \$50K in Cash and Prizes as National Small Business Award Winner *2017 Indie Award winner donates cash portion of prize to Massachusetts park revitalization project*

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Each year, the national small business movement [Independent We Stand](#) helps consumers recognize the top small business in the country, whose owners go out of their way to give back to their communities, with the Independent Small Business of the Year award or Indie Award. With nearly 90 years of providing expert advice and quality service to customers and an unshakable commitment to community events and organizations, the 2017 Indie Award recipient is [Carr Hardware](#).

Throughout the contest, Carr Hardware committed to donating its \$5,000 cash award to a park revitalization project in Pittsfield, Mass., home to the store's main branch. The staff at the four Berkshires locations in Massachusetts and two in Northern Connecticut take pride in servicing the needs of their neighbors.

"This year's winner exhibits the spirit of what makes independent businesses special — a focus on both customer service and the community," said Bill Brunelle, co-founder of Independent We Stand. "Carr Hardware garnered support through its mission to serve customers and the community by choosing a pay it forward approach with the prize winnings. The \$5,000 cash prize will help pay for a splash pad at a community park. It's that type of local involvement and dedication we see from our nominees each year across the country; this award helps us recognize and reinforce those efforts."

Family owned and operated since 1928, the company was originally founded by Sam Carr and purchased by the Raser family in 1962. Marshall Raser and his son Bart still handle business operations. With more than 100 total employees, each location prides itself on offering years of specialty experience. Carr Hardware serves homeowners, contractors, commercial customers, institutions and government agencies throughout the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut and surrounding areas through their stores. The business also supports many organizations including Rotary Club, Berkshire Health Systems, Pittsfield Economic Redevelopment Commission (PERC), multiple Chambers of Commerce, Downtown Pittsfield Association, Boys & Girls Club, Berkshire Humane Society, Volunteer Dogs for the Blind and The Vocational & Technical Scholarship Fund.

In addition, employees are encouraged to volunteer in their communities and have served on Volunteer Fire Departments and coached local sports teams. Most recently, through product and cash donations, Carr Hardware provided its customers with a platform to support hurricane relief efforts for those affected by Hurricane Harvey in Houston.

"Our community supports us, and we support them. We saw that come full circle with our hurricane relief efforts in Houston earlier this year," said Bart Raser, co-owner of Carr Hardware. "Now, to see the support of our customers lead to an award like this, it is humbling and even



more meaningful. It's nice to know we live in a community that appreciates the value and impact of independent small businesses. Shopping local is part of our culture; it's how we build community.”

Carr Hardware will receive prizes with a combined value of more than \$50,000, including:

- \$5,000 grand prize
- \$1,000 for the winner's favorite small business group
- \$1,000 [STIHL](#) equipment certificate.
- 12-month subscription and three months of free managed marketing services from [SnapRetail](#) (valued at \$1,696)
- Branding, advertising and public relations makeover from independent advertising agency — [The Meridian Group](#)
- Three days/two nights retreat and branding workshop in Virginia Beach, Va. (valued at \$1,000)
- Plaque to display at winner's business
- Public relations and social media recognition

The 10 submissions that received the highest number of public votes online were deemed finalists. The winner of “The Indie” was chosen by a panel of contest judges.

The top 10 semifinalists, in alphabetical order, are:

- [Abby's Lane](#), a baby products store in Manassas, Va.
- [Allegory Gallery](#), a bead, art and jewelry store in Ligonier, Pa.
- [Carr Hardware](#), a hardware store in Pittsfield, Mass.
- [Cocoa Trail Chocolates](#), a chocolate shop in Collinsville, Va.
- [Hideaway Café](#), a restaurant in Winchester, Va.
- [Ju-Ju Monkey](#), a parenting store in Allentown, Pa.
- [Let's Play Books](#), a book store in Emmaus, Pa.
- [Mountain Valley Brewery](#), a hops farm and micro-brewery in Axton, Va.
- [Sequoia's Closet: Little People Boutique](#), a children's clothing store in Big Timber, Mont.
- [Walkabout Outfitter](#), an outdoor clothing and supplies retailer in Lexington, Va.

Both the quarter and semifinalists for this year's Indie Award will receive an Independent We Stand [Premium Membership](#) for life.

To learn more visit: www.IndieBizAward.com or www.independentwestand.org.

About Independent We Stand

Independent We Stand is a nationwide movement of independent small business owners whose mission is to inspire other small business owners to better understand and celebrate their locally-owned status while educating consumers about the importance and strong economic benefits of supporting them. The Independent We Stand movement is sponsored by [STIHL Inc.](#) Associate sponsors include [PPG Pittsburgh Paints](#) and [Do it Best Corp.](#) www.IndependentWeStand.org

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