

# The Intelligencer

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THE INTELLIGENCER

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Empire Cheese Show and Sale organizers thrilled with turnout

## Quebec man the big cheese at show

By Luke Hendry  
THE INTELLIGENCER

One of Canada's two major cheese shows will remain a local annual event.

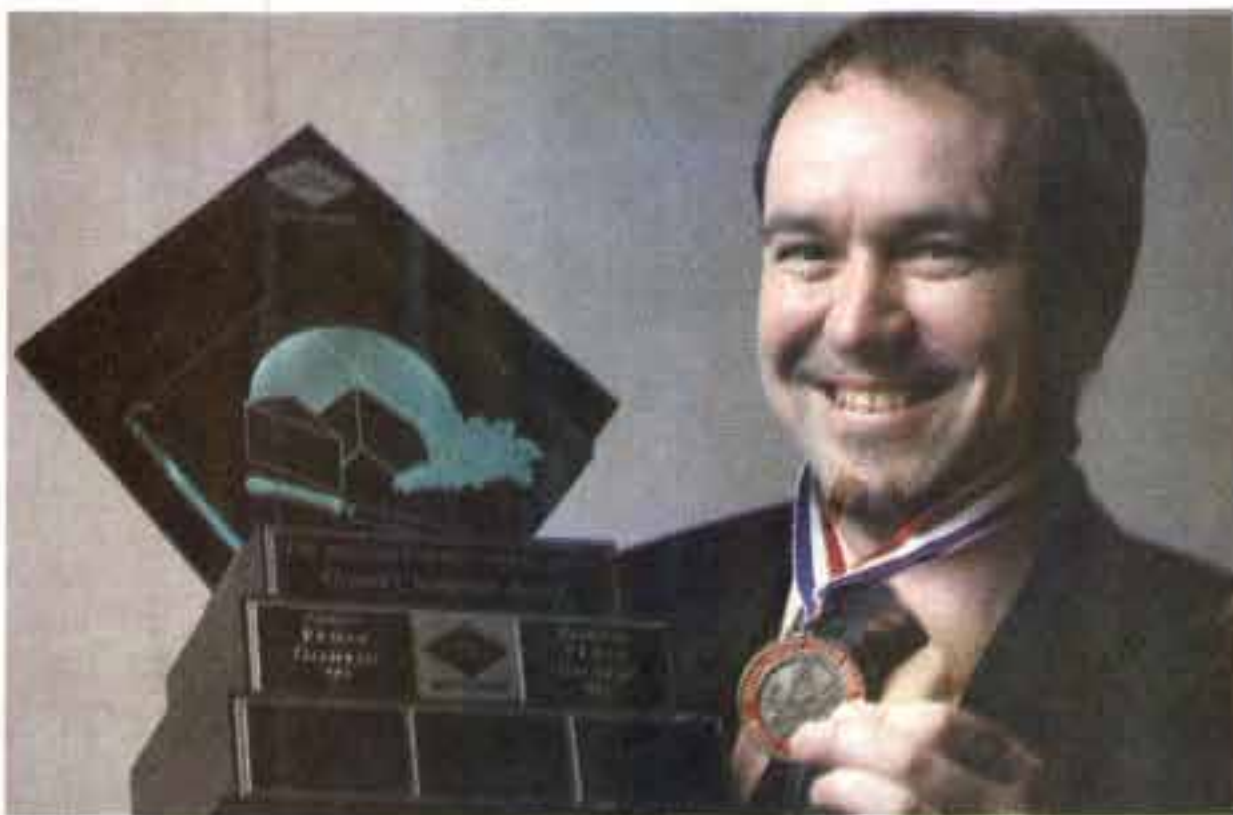
Organizers of the British Empire Cheese Show and Sale, held Thursday at Belleville's Ramada Inn, said increased interest has ensured the show will return.

The event, organized by the Central Ontario Cheesemaker Association, had in recent years been suffering from declining attendance. Association president Wayne Breau, a Trenton cheesemaker, said that had this year not seen a better turnout, the group likely would have cancelled future shows.

Instead, he said, organizers were buoyed by a 50 per cent increase in specialty cheese entries and a 25 per cent climb in cheddars. More than \$5,500 in prizes was awarded.

"It went very well this year," said Breau.

• See 'Cheese' on page 5.



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY LUKE HENDRY

Patrice Croteau, of Québec's Fromagerie Perron, took home more awards than he could carry at the Nov. 18 British Empire Cheese Show and sale, but the biggest honour for the Perron cheese factory was the grand champion title.

## Cheese show draws competitors from across North America

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Secretary Wendy Gibbons said the 77th annual show drew competitors from Vancouver Island to Truro, N.S. and New York State.

The big winner was Fromagerie Perron of Saint-Prime, northeast of Québec City.

Vice-President Patrice Croteau made the 10-hour trip to pick up two armloads of awards, including the show's grand champion title.

"I feel really, really good," he beamed, noting the company won a second and third place at last year's competition.

The Perron family has been making cheese for five generations and currently employs a staff of 55 in Saint-Prime, a town of 2,000 people.

On Thursday night he said the staff didn't yet know of their success, but that a celebration

was sure to follow.

"We try to make the best cheese in the world," said Croteau. "Perron has a good cheese because of the great employees. It's a family team."

Though Croteau doesn't have a personal family connection in the company, that didn't diminish his pride.

Perron is also an exporter, and has won awards around the globe. Still, Croteau said he was a little surprised and especially proud that Perron's product had been chosen over entries from such large companies as Parmalat.

There were just three local competitors this year. Trenton's Saputo Foods did not place, but Prince Edward County's Black River Cheese was awarded three third-place finishes and Belleville's Maple Dale Cheese received several awards, includ-

ing best medium white cheddar.

Entries were judged Nov. 14 at Hastings Cold Storage by Norm Matte and Yvan Wathier.

Matte, who judges at Canada's other major cheese show at the Royal Winter Agricultural Fair, said he was impressed by the several hundred entries. Cheeses are judged on their flavour, colour, density (a hole-filled Swiss cheese look is undesirable), texture, and presentation.

"This year was a good year — a lot of good cheese," he said.

Breau, meanwhile, said more corporate participation is needed to help the event flourish.

"The more support we get from above, the better it's going to be."

Cheese entries from the show are on sale at the Bay View Mall and will remain there through the weekend.