

***direct in the community* – Volunteer Citizen of the Year
MATTE STORY**

**2008 Volunteer Citizen of the Year Award program
launched**

\$1,000 prize to winner

Volunteers who have made a significant contribution to our community are once again eligible to receive a \$1,000 prize with the launch of the 2008 *direct in the community* – Volunteer Citizen of the Year program.

The program is designed to recognize volunteers whose contribution makes their communities a better place to live in. According to Volunteer Alberta, volunteers in this province contribute an average of 214 million volunteer hours each year. That's equivalent to approximately 11,000 individuals working full-time.

The award, offered by Direct Energy and supported by the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association, is open to residents of communities served by member newspapers of the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association (AWNA), including those in the [newspaper name] distribution area.

It's the fourth year of the program, and Tanis Kozak, Vice-President and General Manager for Direct Energy in Alberta, says it has been a resounding success. "Each year we've run the program, we're amazed at the number of heart-warming stories we receive about Albertans and their spirit of generosity," says Ms. Kozak. "That spirit is worthy of recognition so we're delighted to fund the program again."

In addition to the \$1,000 personal award, the winning nominee will also have a \$5,000 donation made, in their name, to the not-for-profit organization of their choice.

"Last year's winner, Dorothy Towns of Red Deer, donated her grant to the Central Alberta Refuge Effort (C.A.R.E.) committee, an organization she helped establish nearly 28 years ago. Volunteering with C.A.R.E., she helps hundreds of refugees and immigrants gain their footing in the Red Deer community," said AWNA President Scott Fitzpatrick. "We're looking forward to once again recognizing individuals who work hard to make our communities great places to live."

Nominations close Friday May 2, during National Volunteer Week. Nomination forms and additional program details are available at the [newspaper name] offices, or on-line at both the AWNA website at www.awna.org and the Direct Energy website at www.directenergy.com/vcoy.