

## Entrepreneur award finalists unveiled

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Prairie finalists for the 2010 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards hail from Calgary to Winnipeg, but the list has a strong Red Deer flavour.

Four of those in the running for the annual awards work in or near the Central Alberta city, while a fifth makes his home in the area. Even one of the judges has deep Red Deer roots.

Ernst & Young announced on Tuesday that Ken Travis, Doug Quinn, Bill Graham, Lance Kadatz and Tracy Graf are among the 42 finalists in 10 categories for this year's awards.

Travis is president and CEO of Strata Energy Services Inc., an oilfield equipment and services company that operates out of Blindman Industrial Park just north of Red Deer. He's one of eight finalists from five companies competing in the Energy — External Equity Funded category.

Quinn, president and CEO of Red Deer's Quinn's Oilfield Supply Ltd., is vying against two other entrepreneurs in the Energy — Private category. Quinn's Oilfield Supply sells and services pumps in the oil and gas sector.

Graham, Kadatz and Graf are among five finalists in the Professional/Financial Services category: Graham as president and CEO of Red Deer-based Rifco Inc., Kadatz as the same company's vice-president and CFO, and Graf as president and CEO of Carfinco Income Fund of Edmonton. Graf, whose cousin Troy is CFO of Carfinco and another Entrepreneur of the Year finalist, lives just north of Red Deer and commutes to Edmonton four days a week.

Rifco and Carfinco are unrelated companies that provide auto-purchase financing through dealers across Canada.

Among the five regional judges for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards is longtime local businessman Jack Donald, who is president and CEO of Parkland Properties Ltd.

The 2010 winners from the Prairies will be announced at a Calgary banquet on Oct. 14, with the overall winner to represent the region at a national banquet in Toronto on Nov. 17.

The Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards are now in their 17th year. Other award categories are Business-To-Business Products and Services, Business-to-Consumer Products and Services, Cleantech, Manufacturing, Real Estate/Construction, Technology and Special Recognition.