



North American Hardware and Paint Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Entrepreneur Receives 2023 Young Retailer of the Year Award

INDIANAPOLIS—Travis Hellvig, operations manager of Hartford Building Center in Hartford, South Dakota, was recently named one of the independent home improvement industry's 2023 Young Retailer of the Year honorees by the North American Hardware and Paint Association (NHPA).

The Young Retailer of the Year program, now in its 27th year, identifies and promotes the next generation of aspiring independent home improvement, paint and decorating retailers. It recognizes individual achievement by industry retailers age 35 and younger throughout the U.S. and Canada. Honorees are chosen based on a number of criteria, including professional milestones, community engagement, continuing hardware industry education and extracurricular activities.

Sponsors of the 2023 Young Retailer of the Year program include American Hardware and Lumber Insurance (AHLI), Arrow Fastener, Intertape Polymer Group (IPG), Midwest Fastener, Pony Jorgensen, PPG, STIHL and The Wooster Brush Company.

This is Travis' second time earning the Young Retailer of the Year honor—he was also named an honoree in 2016. Travis is no stranger to personal and professional challenges, and he has used those difficult times to improve the business and himself. When health issues left his parents unable to manage the store in 2013, Travis took on a leadership role, keeping the business running smoothly while simultaneously graduating from college with honors.

"When I took over the day-to-day management of the business, I learned very quickly that I have a desire to maximize efficiency within all facets of the business," he says. "I'm always looking for ways to realize higher sales potential, reduce stress on employees and equipment and implement processes that ensure the highest level of satisfaction from each of our customers."

This drive to improve both himself and the business has led Travis to regularly participate in continuing education opportunities, including NHPA's Retail Management Certification Program in 2017.

The Retail Management Certification Program requires each student to complete a business improvement project, and for his project, Travis developed a plan to expand the operation's existing building. In 2019, his



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vision became reality with the groundbreaking of a 6,400-square-foot expansion, including 2,400 square feet of additional retail floor space and a showroom, contractor sales offices and conference room space.

Travis designed the entire building expansion and served as general contractor for the project. When the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions affected the project, Travis came up with solutions to get the new space open and operating to serve customers, putting in sweat equity throughout the process to help lessen the overall financial cost of outside labor for the project.

“When it was all said and done, despite the unprecedented challenges we faced as a business throughout the process, the entire project finished just a few weeks behind the initial schedule,” Travis says. “We ended 2020 with the highest sales year in our history.”

2021 was a different story for the operation, with sales falling almost 12%, but Travis was not deterred. Instead, he committed to making 2022 more successful and profitable. He reduced turnaround times for plans and quotes and worked with the sales team to reach more customers.

In May 2022, a derecho storm caused major damage to the building, and Travis immediately went to work on a plan to fix the damages and stay open during the process.

“We knew people were going to immediately need supplies, so we put together a process for customers to safely obtain what they needed from us, even though we had no power and could not allow customers into our facility,” he says. “Within 24 hours after being hit by the storm, our warehouse was mostly cleaned up and fixed, except for the new light fixtures we had to order, and was completely secure and functional for customers to get what they needed.”

In spite of the difficulties—and thanks to Travis’ work and vision—2022 ended as the most profitable year the operation had ever seen.

Outside the store, Travis has been a member of the Hartford Area Fire & Rescue Department since 2011, serving as a volunteer firefighter. He was also the assistant fire chief from 2014 to 2016. He is a member of the Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce and the Hartford Area Optimist Club and a volunteer for Junior Achievement in the West Central school district.

Along with his family, Travis helped launch Hartford Hometown Christmas in 2011, which now attracts thousands of people on the first Sunday of December to come together and give back to the community. The event includes a community breakfast by the chamber of commerce, a local vendor craft show, a gingerbread house contest, a kids carnival, horse-drawn wagon rides, a bonfire, a tree lighting, a Christmas light parade, a community dinner and fireworks.



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“Being able to be involved and give back to the community is so rewarding,” Travis says. “I wouldn’t be even close to where I am today without both our amazing team at HBC as well as the support from our community, so it’s always fulfilling to me any time I can give back and serve the community.”

“Being chosen as a Young Retailer of the Year is a high honor. Each year, manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers in the industry join us in celebrating the honorees’ contributions to their communities and the industry,” says Scott Wright, executive director of advanced retail education programs for NHPA. “Travis exemplifies the dedication and innovation that keep our industry growing.”

For more information on the Young Retailer of the Year awards program, honorees and more, visit YourNHPA.org/yroty.

About the North American Hardware and Paint Association

Founded in 1900 by a group of retailers, NHPA is a not-for-profit trade association whose mission is to help home improvement, paint and decorating outlets in the U.S. and Canada become better and more profitable retailers. Governed by a board of independent hardware and paint retailers, NHPA fulfills its mission by providing how-to management resources, product discovery, training programs and networking opportunities for the industry it serves. Learn more at YourNHPA.org.

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