



TOWN OF CLAYTON COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

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DOWNTOWN CLAYTON HOSTS 2025 AWARDS CELEBRATION

CLAYTON, NC – The morning sun spills through the windows of Boulevard West as the aroma of freshly brewed coffee fills the air. Friends greet each other, students settle into their laptops, and neighbors stop by for a quick chat. For nearly eight years, this lively coffee shop has been a place where connections are made, community grows, and Downtown Clayton comes alive.

On Tuesday, February 24, the Downtown Development Association Advisory Board honored Boulevard West as the 2025 Business of the Year during the Downtown Clayton Awards at Church Spirits and Cocktails in Clayton. The awards celebrate businesses, leaders, and community champions who bring energy, creativity, and dedication to downtown. Customers, visitors, and fellow business owners cast more than a thousand votes to recognize the places and people that make Downtown Clayton vibrant and welcoming.

Boulevard West has grown into a central gathering spot in Downtown Clayton where neighbors, friends, and visitors come together over coffee, conversation, and community. Nominations for the Downtown Awards praised the welcoming atmosphere, the staff's personal touch in remembering names and favorite orders, and the sense of connection the shop fosters. The business also hosts local events, supports downtown initiatives, and provides a place where people can celebrate milestones, meet up with friends, or simply enjoy a lively, friendly space.

The nominations also emphasized the owners' dedication to staying on Main Street, even when leaving was an option - a commitment that reflects their belief in Downtown Clayton and its future. Owner Oisin Finn shared his thoughts on the recognition: "It is definitely an honor amongst all the amazing businesses here. I would say just the vibrancy of downtown, that I think a lot of towns do not really have, makes this special. Downtown Clayton still has that small-town charm, and that is important."

Other major awards recognized the people and projects that continue to shape Downtown Clayton's success. Secondary Investment received the Downtown Investment Award for revitalizing the nearly 100-year-old The Station Clayton building, carefully preserving its historic character while transforming it into a destination in the heart of downtown. The Downtown Contributor Award went to Clayton Councilmember Porter Casey for his volunteer efforts and steady advocacy that strengthens the downtown community. The Rising Star Award honored Magnolia Inn, a newer business that has quickly earned trust, hosted community gatherings, and created memorable experiences that bring people together.

In addition to the major awards, community members cast votes for the "Best of Downtown Clayton" categories. Here is a list of the winners:



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- Best Place to Grab Lunch: Snacks Provision Company
- Best Event: Clayton Harvest Festival
- Best Professional Service: A&E Trophy
- Most Family Friendly: Fare Game
- Friendliest Staff: Snacks Provision Company
- Best Spot for an Adult Beverage: Deep River Brewing Company
- Best Fitness, Wellness or Self Care: West End Nails Salon
- Most Instagrammable: Aaktun
- Best Window Display: The Market at Three Little Birds
- Best Hot Drink: Boulevard West
- Best Place to Shop: The Market at Three Little Birds
- Best Date Night Plan: Games at Fare Game, dinner at Clayton Steakhouse, and drinks at Revival 1869

Visitors are encouraged to stop by these businesses the next time they are in Downtown Clayton and experience what makes Main Street special.

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Photo 1: Business of the Year Award (from left to right) - Boulevard West Owner Oisin Finn; Owner Jacklyn Finn, Manager Paula Finn; and Clayton Mayor Jody McLeod

Photo 2: Downtown Investment of the Year Award (from left to right) - Kevin Lee; Clayton Town Councilmember Ruth Anderson; Carrier Lee; and Downtown Development Advisory Board member Stephanie Lanier

Photo 3: Downtown Contributor of the Year Award Winners (left to right) Clayton Town Councilmember Porter Casey; Michele Molinaro; Erin Belcher; Erin Nenni; and Christi Thompson

Photo 4: Rising Star of the Year Award (left to right) - Clayton Town Councilmember Porter Casey; Magnolia Inn Owner Jordan Robinson; and Downtown Development Advisory Board member Paul Auclair.