

## A Jewel of a Business: Cumberland Diamond Exchange named 2015 Small Business of the Year

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by [Philip Clements](#)

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**CUMBERLAND** — Mark Jacobson and his wife, Rhonda, owners of Cumberland Diamond Exchange, thanked God, their staff and their customers when they were recognized by the Cobb Chamber of Commerce last month, less than a week after their 30th wedding anniversary.

“I’m overwhelmed. My heart is still pounding,” Rhonda Jacobson said. “I feel full of humility and gratitude. ... I would have been happy if someone else had won, but I was real hopeful that we would.”

More than 400 people attended the chamber breakfast at the Cobb Galleria Centre to recognize Cumberland Diamond Exchange as the 2015 Small Business of the Year.

“This year’s winner believes it’s their responsibility to create a better community through partnerships with nonprofits,” said John Loud, whose business, LOUD Security Systems, was the 2014 Small Business of the Year. Loud presented the couple with this year’s award.

“I have no doubt that you’ve seen the owners sharing their talents at SafePath, the YWCA, American Cancer Society and the WellStar Foundation — and that short list just scratches the surface on their level of involvement,” Loud said.

Established in 1982 by brothers Wayne and Mark Jacobson, Cumberland Diamond Exchange is now owned and operated by Mark and Rhonda.

Mark Jacobson settled in the Atlanta area in 1976, starting an advertising agency whose clients included a local jewelry store. He soon became the head of the store’s in-house marketing, and eventually rose to become its sales manager.

After parting ways with the jewelry store, he developed a concept for a fine jewelry business of his own, and in 1982, he and his brother opened the doors to Cumberland Diamond Exchange.

The business has occupied the corner of Spring Road and Cumberland Boulevard in Smyrna since it first opened, and a major renovation was completed last year. It started at 1,200 square feet; now, it has grown to about 4,800.

Mark Jacobson said the business is also responsible for connecting him to his wife.

“She came in to buy a watch for her boyfriend (at the time),” Mark Jacobson said. “We became friends ... started dating in January ’84 and never stopped dating.”

The couple celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on May 26.

Rhonda Jacobson said her advice to new businesses is to work hard and continue to reinvest in the business.

“Just like we advise young people to live below your means: as a business, you need to also live below your means,” she said.

Mark Jacobson agreed, saying a successful business has a plan and grows slowly but surely.

Cumberland Diamond Exchange was selected as the winner because for its focus on philanthropy, according to Loud.

“I want our legacy to be the community jeweler that gave back,” Rhonda Jacobson said. “If you’re blessed, then you should bless others.”

Added Mark Jacobson: “Nonprofits know that we’re going to do what we can.”

Rhonda Jacobson said one of her favorite things about the business is the intimate way they get to know the community, as they are often the first to know about an engagement or pregnancy.

The third time is the charm for the Cumberland Diamond Exchange: it was recognized as one of the top 25 businesses in the county by the chamber in 2013 and was a top five finalist in 2014.