

Opening Address by Henry Tan, President, SOE

Spirit of Enterprise Award 2007, Singapore  
Pan Pacific Hotel  
26 Sept 2007

1. Good evening, Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Minister of State for Community Development, Youth and Sports; Patrons, SOE Chairman Board of Governors of Spirit of Enterprise, Distinguished Honourees, guests, ladies and gentlemen.

2. A very warm welcome to this evening's Spirit of Enterprise Awards 2007.

3. Since 2003, The Spirit of Enterprise awards has been continually recognizing and honouring the spirit of entrepreneurship of Singapore's entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are a very special bunch of people who take on risks in their careers and personal life in order to fulfil their dreams of bringing a better product or service to the market. Through the hardwork and the dedication that they put in, they have blazed their own paths. By creating their own sustainable enterprises and brands, they have served to introduce greater variety and excellence to the Singapore economy. Without entrepreneurs, it'll be hard to imagine if our country can be as vibrant as it is today.

4. As it is the hardwork of these entrepreneurs should never go unrecognized and it is precisely the founding vision of the Spirit of Enterprise Awards where we will seek to honour and recognize entrepreneurs. When Mr Tan Kin Lian founded the SOE with Russell Miller, they have the vision of honouring and inspiring entrepreneurs especially those small & medium enterprise. They have put in a lot of efforts in their own career to change things & inspire changes. We are indeed proud to be associated with them. Today SOE is in USA, Mauritius and Vietnam.

5. This year we had 156 nominees and eventhough we have not managed to honour everyone, I must remark that each and every person that has been nominated is a winner simply because starting up is difficult and to have gotten a business off the ground is definitely an achievement in its own.

6. However, we have selected 42 of these to be honoured at this year's award. Over the past couple of months, the Board of Governors and the student volunteers behind the SOE Award have put in a tremendous amount of effort in sourcing the interviews and helping select the 42 top honourees. It has most definitely been a painstaking effort but nevertheless, I'm sure it has been absolutely worthwhile for everyone. Especially for the student volunteers involved, we hoped that this has been a top-notch experience in exposing them to high-performing entrepreneurs. We definitely feel that one of the best ways to inspire young people is to expose them to entrepreneurs through a formal process like this.

7. You will soon bear witness to the unveiling of the 42 honourees for this year. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the honourees and the support of their family and friends who have come along to join us in this occasion. The SOE award may not be a big monetary prize, but nevertheless we believe it is a recognition you can be proud of.

8. One of the hallmark of SOE is the involvement of young minds, the students. Beside the interviews being done by students, we also have a student entrepreneurship program where students are encourage to start a small business or project in school through the help of a grant from SOE. It is our hope that as our young are inspired to travel the road of entrepreneurship, they will make a difference to Singapore.

9. This year Friend of Enterprise award goes to Shell live wire & SIM. These two organisations has done tremendous work in encouraging entrepreneurship & share the same vision as SOE.

10. The SOE has come very far since its early days and with so many entrepreneurs receiving awards over the past years, we are pleased that SOE Alumni was officially launched this year, this will bring together all the previous winners and allow them to network and interact with each other across a common bond.

11. Last but not least, I like you to join me in thanking all our valued donors and sponsors, who share the same vision as us, their names are listed in the program book and the backdrop. Without them, our organisation, SOE which is a private sector initiative will not be in existence. We look forward to their continued support and also many of you who are seated here for future support as well.

12. Thank you & have a good time of networking.