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Oppenheimer recognized as one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies

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At the venerable age of 150, The Oppenheimer Group, based in Vancouver, BC, holds a number of distinctions, including its designation by the Vancouver Historical Society as British Columbia's oldest currently operating company as well as its recent elevation to Platinum Club status as one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.

In a program sponsored by Deloitte, CIBC Commercial Banking, National Post and Queen's School of Business, Oppenheimer has retained its Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies designation every year since 2001. Platinum Club status is given to those companies that have sustained a standard of excellence and leadership in all areas of their business practices, and have qualified in the award program for at least six consecutive years.

The designation in 2008 is, more than metaphorically, icing on the cake. John Anderson, Oppenheimer's chairman, president and chief executive officer, said in a press release, "Earning Platinum Club status during our sesquicentennial year is truly an honor. Our anniversary also coincides with the year that British Columbia was established as a colony, 1858. It's a year of celebration for us on so many levels."

What is now a major force in the produce marketing industry had its start in 1858, when the four Oppenheimer brothers - Charles, Godfrey, David and Isaac - followed the gold rush and founded a wholesale provisions company in Victoria to outfit miners heading to the Fraser River.

Within a few years, the business had grown into a regional chain with multiple locations, and the brothers eventually relocated their business to the area now known as Gastown in downtown Vancouver. It was there that they constructed the city's first brick building in 1887.

One brother, David, is often called the "Father of Vancouver" for his significant contributions to the area. He served four consecutive terms as the city's second mayor, was the first president of the Vancouver Board of Trade and founded the B.C. Fruit Growers Association.

Moreover, the company he helped create is today an international marketer of over 100 varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables grown in more than 25 countries. Customers include retailers, wholesalers and foodservice operators across North America. Operations are from 13 offices located in the United States, Canada and Chile.

With its headquarters based in Coquitlam, a Vancouver suburb, Oppenheimer has also been recognized by the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, which represents the Coquitlam area. In January, that chamber named Oppenheimer the "Outstanding Business of the Year" at its 2008 Business Excellence Awards.

"Being awarded this distinction by our home office's chamber of commerce has made our anniversary and our Platinum Club member status even sweeter," Mr. Anderson added in the press release.

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