Business view magazine

MAY / JUNE 2018

TOYS ON TOP

IN TOY MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & RETAIL RUBIKS BRAND HAS BEEN LEADING THE WAY

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Executive Publisher / CEO
Marcus VandenBrink

CONTACT US
12559 New Brittany Blvd
Fort Myers, 33907
239.220.5554
Email for all inquiries:
info@businessviewmagazine.com

USA
Canada
Caribbean
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WWW.BUSINESSVIEWMAGAZINE.COM

From the Editor

At a time when political divisiveness is the order of the day in America, there is one thing that everyone can agree upon: too many of our citizens – from all walks of life and from all parts of the country – are facing the terrifying realities of the opioid crisis. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, an estimated 2.1 million Americans currently abuse prescription opioids.

In addition to the havoc wreaked upon the families of these unfortunate countrymen and women, the crisis is also taking its toll on the American workforce and the economy at large. In fact, according to the Council of Economic Advisers, the opioid epidemic cost the U.S. economy $504 billion in 2015, alone - a number equivalent to 2.8 percent of the country's total GDP for that year. And last year, a National Safety Council survey found that 29 percent of employers reported impaired job performance due to prescription-painkiller use. Similarly, a whopping 70 percent said their workforce had been affected in some way.

In addition to issues of safety, productivity, and lost work time, drug addiction is an especially big problem for employers, right now, because a growing number of working-age men and women are simply disappearing from the workforce. The most telling measure of this dire situation is the labor-force participation rate, which measures the percentage of the population that is employed or actively looking for work. It now sits around 62.7 percent, and that's low by historical standards.

Unfortunately, in that same National Safety Council study, fewer than 20 percent of employers said that they felt prepared to deal with issues related to addiction. While many employers do have drug policies, the study found that 81 percent of those policies are incomplete. Fifty-seven percent of employers say they perform drug tests, but out of those, more than 40 percent don't screen for synthetic opioids like oxycodone — one of the most widely abused narcotics. Thirty percent of workplaces do not discuss return-to-work procedures after completing drug treatment; another 32 percent do not discuss procedures for taking prescription drugs at work; and over 40 percent do not cover making accommodations for employees who become impaired after taking prescription drugs at work. Moreover, 76 percent of companies fail to provide training to identify prescription drug or opioid abuse in the workplace.

So, if businesses want to be a part of the solution, both for their own bottom lines, as well as the welfare of their workers, human resource professionals recommend that they do the following:

- Educate employees about the dangers of addiction and the harm of drug abuse.
- Make sure employees take the appropriate time off for medical reasons for surgeries.
- Be on the lookout for warning signs of addiction: mood swings, changes in energy level, tardiness, missed days, napping at workstations or in cars, and signs of withdrawal.
- Be extra vigilant if employees work in safety-sensitive positions or with heavy or dangerous machinery.
- Utilize employee assistance programs (EAPs), which are work-based intervention programs designed to identify and assist employees in resolving personal issues. These issues can range from marital to financial to mental health issues. EAPs can also deal with addiction, and more specifically, opioid addiction.
- Communicate treatment options. If treatment is necessary, it is important to educate the worker on options, including counseling and pharmaceutical treatment.
- Ensure any information obtained is confidential and protected.
- Integrate employees returning from medical leave back into the workplace in a positive manner.

Al Krulick
Editor-in-Chief

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Opening Lines

MONTH 2017



CANADIAN MILLENNIALS DREAM OF BEING HOMEOWNERS BUT MOST AREN'T PLANNING FOR IT

A new Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) poll finds that Canadians aged 18-37 who rent or live with family still dream of owning a home but few are on track to make it a reality. While nearly half (46 per cent) of those who intend to buy plan to do so within the next five years, 76 per cent haven't started to save or have accumulated less than a quarter of their down payment.

"Our survey reveals that few Millennials are taking the necessary steps to make the move to homeownership," says Grant Rasmussen, Senior Vice President, Mobile Advice, CIBC. "You can't buy a home with intent and desire alone. It's important to have a financial plan to make the most of your income and set yourself up with the right savings





plan to achieve your goals now and in the years ahead."

"While most still dream of owning a home one day, higher house prices, the prospect of higher rates, and new qualifying rules are prompting some Millennials to pause and question whether being a homeowner is realistic or even desirable for them," says Mr. Rasmussen. "The key is to understand your total housing costs and start planning early so you can consider your rent versus buy options in the context of your overall financial plan and desired lifestyle."

The poll findings show that while the top reason for owning a home is to provide "a place to set down roots and raise a family" (49 per cent), an almost equal number also feel that renting is a "waste of money" (46 per cent). Poll findings also suggest that renters are not taking advantage of the opportunity to save for their future.

As many as 60 per cent of Millennials believe renting is just as costly as homeownership. However, the poll finds that millennial homeowners spend as much as 50 per cent more per month on housing costs than their peers who rent, and more than half (51 per cent) of homeowners admit they didn't quite understand the total costs of owning a house before making their purchase.

Despite the higher expenses, millennial homeowners still manage to save more each month than renters or live-at-homers, on average $566 compared to $368 or $360, respectively. Further, homeowners have amassed an average nest-egg of just over $60,600 - more than double that of their peers who rent or live at home.

In most cases, because renters don't have the same housing costs as homeowners, they have a real opportunity to grow their wealth. Yet regardless of income levels, fewer millennial renters appear to be making savings a priority. In fact, the poll shows that only 18 per cent of renters and live-at-homers who intend to buy a home have met with a financial expert and less than half (45 per cent) have set a monthly budget.

"Deciding to buy a home is often the trigger for most people to get serious about their finances, cut spending and build the necessary savings habits and behaviors to achieve that goal. But for Millennials who rent or still live with family, it's easy to delay or put off savings and developing a financial plan," says Mr. Rasmussen. "Remember, the earlier you start, the more your money will grow. Renting shouldn't be a free-pass to spend."

"Even if you never buy a home, the most important thing to do early on is to work with an advisor to help you identify your short- and long-term goals and start working towards them. It's easy to get caught up in the idea of homeownership, but owning a home isn't the only way to build your net worth," he adds.



KEY POLL FINDINGS:

- 65 percent of Millennials aged 18-37 currently rent (42 per cent) or live with family or others (23 per cent)
- 94 percent currently renting or living with family/others intend to buy a home;
- 67 percent who plan to buy a home haven't started saving yet.
- 46 percent intend to buy within five years, with very few having saved the down payment
- 31 percent have saved about one quarter of the down payment
- 9 percent have saved about half
- 7 percent have saved three-quarters
- 7 percent have saved the total amount
- 45 percent haven't yet started to save
- 45 percent of renters and a third of live-at-homers (39 per cent) can see the appeal of being a homeowner, but don't think it's realistic or desirable anymore
- 35 percent of Canadians aged 18-37 own their home
- 58 percent of millennial homeowners worry that rising rates will affect their ability to manage current household expenses
- 75 percent say being a homeowner has a 'downside' and can come with 'significant social costs', such as fewer social gatherings, and longer commutes to visit friends or family

A LENS THAT OFFERS VISION AND COMFORT TO THOSE WHO THOUGHT ALL HOPE WAS LOST

EyePrint Prosthetics LLC, a company dedicated to restoring vision and comfort to patients who have complex corneal irregularities, announces the clinical outcomes that have been achieved since the EyePrintPRO lens was first FDA-cleared less than two short years ago.

The EyePrintPRO™ is a prosthetic scleral cover shell that improves vision by creating a new, smooth, refractive surface for the eye. It is similar to a type of contact lens known as a scleral lens. However, unlike other contact lenses, the EyePrintPRO™ is designed utilizing Elevation Specific Technology, a proprietary software that's used to exactly match the unique irregularities of each individual eye.

The process begins with an EyePrint Impression, which captures the precise curvatures of the entire ocular surface. Doctors then send the resulting impression to an EyePrint lab for 3-D scanning. The scanned data is then fed to a numerically controlled machining system to produce a lens that matches the impression exactly and therefore fits the individual cornea and sclera perfectly.

"The EyePrint is like a fingerprint — it's completely individual," says EyePrintPRO developer Dr. Christine Sindt, Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at University of Iowa. Dr. Sindt has devoted her career to providing vision for patients with diseased and irregular corneas, including Teresa Sack, one of Dr. Sindt's first EyePrintPRO patients.

Teresa has had ten eye surgeries for conditions related to myesthemia gravis, a condition she has struggled with for 27 years, which had left her with double vision, chronic pain and an inability to hold her head straight. "When I met Dr. Sindt, I didn't expect that a contact lens could change my life," says Teresa. "But even compared to all the surgeries, the EyePrintPRO™ has made the biggest difference."

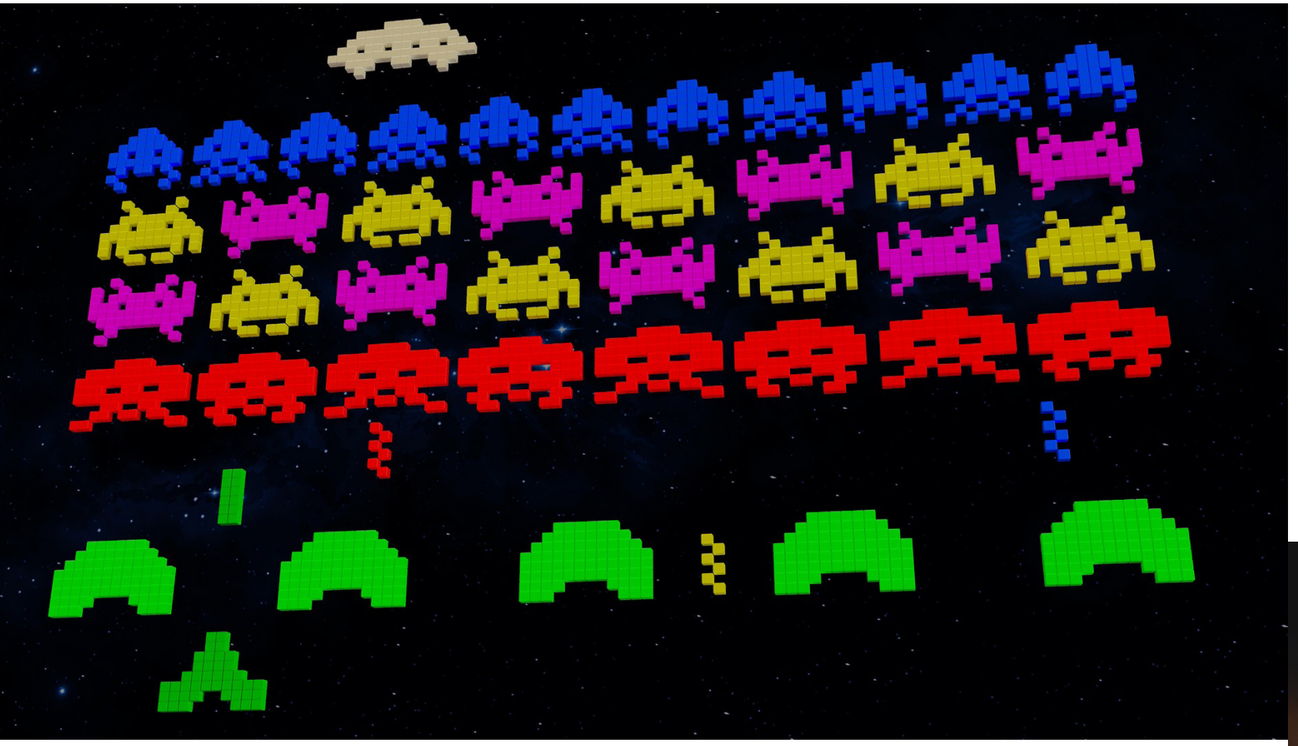
Thanks to the EyePrintPRO, Teresa now has 20/20 vision, can hold her head in a straighter position, and has far less pain and discomfort. "Hundreds of thousands of people suffer from debilitating corneal disease like Teresa does," says Dr. Sindt. "These patients have tried so many things and have gotten used to a string of disappointing outcomes."

CHANGING FACE OF GAMING DEBUNKS LONG HELD STEREOTYPES

The gaming industry has changed at such an exponential rate over the past five years that the face of gaming has transformed before our eyes, both literally and figuratively. Once a niche hobby, explored primarily by teenage boys and serviced by a handful of companies, the gaming market exceeded $30 billion in 2016 and is forecast to grow at a 6% compounded annual growth rate through 2019.

In 2017, more people tuned in to watch electronic sports' (esports) League of Legends finals than the U.S. football and baseball professional championships combined. In fact, Alienware co-founder, Frank Azor, predicts esports is on the path to becoming the most popular sport in the world in the next 10 years.

Similarly, with PC gaming's explosion of popularity have come many new hardware and software entrants, introducing innovation and competition as well as driving down costs, which has lured even more intrigued spectators into the gaming world. Alienware, the leading hardware manufacturer and member of the gaming community for more than 20 years, is a proud ambassador of PC gaming. With two lines of products to serve gamers of every budget, as well as robust community engagement



programs from Alienware TV to Alienware Arena, and more - Alienware has stood side by side with the community as it has grown.

As the figurative face of gaming has changed, so has who people think of as a "gamer." Looking to set the record straight on the profile of today's players, Alienware partnered with a third-party research firm, Researchscape, to conduct an extensive online survey of 5,763 video game players from 11 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, New Zealand, UK, and U.S.) on today's gaming habits, attitudes, and the wider gaming community. To qualify for the study, respondents had to play videogames on desktops or laptops for at least an hour a week.

The survey results confirm, today's gamer is not the stereotypical teen loner playing in his parents' basement. He's a coworker with two kids, the woman at the gym, a fellow volunteer – and most commonly, a spouse, sibling, or friend. But they all have in common that they proudly call themselves a "gamer."

Gone are the days that being called a "gamer" is derogatory. According to those surveyed, fewer than one in 10 feel either "judged," "childish" or "embarrassed" being called a "gamer" (8-9% each). Instead, they consider "gamer" a positive label and feel "fun" (35%), "cool" (29%), or "excited" (26%) as a result.

Through online platforms and social media, fueled by the popularity of esports and innovations in PC gaming rigs, the gaming community is growing in size, diversity, and inclusiveness. Gamers are not shy about sharing their love of gaming with others and inviting others to share in the enjoyment, with 27% having introduced three to four friends or family members to gaming, and 25% having introduced five or more. With the accelerated pace at which gaming is going mainstream, it's safe to bet those unfamiliar with gaming will start to see it pop up in their daily lives before they know it.

Why do people say they game? People are increasingly turning to videogames for relaxation (60% of respondents), passing the time (51%), and relieving stress (49%). A little under half (40%) of gamers are not concerned with their skill level, yet ironically, no one likes to identify as a "noob" (gamer code for the new kid on the block). Just under 6% identified as noobs, while 14% consider themselves to be just beyond noob level; 40% identify as casual gamers, 25% as "pretty darn good", and 8% feel they can compete with pro gamers. And a fun fact - gaming for a living can net a pretty penny with some of the top players bringing in as much as $500,000 a month for their videos.

Once the dominion of young men, gaming has become a welcoming community, accepting of whoever is behind the computer. When it comes



to being matched with rival gamers, culture/ethnicity (8%), political views (7%), and sexual orientation (6%) are, for the most part, inconsequential to a player. What matters most is the other gamer's skill level (40%).

Only 14% of gamers said they care about the gender of the rivals they are matched with online, which could explain the sharp increase in female gamers in recent years. One in two players (47%) has a female friend who plays videogames. Almost a third (29%) have a sister who plays, and 21% said their daughter does. Only 17% of gamers reported a need to recruit more women to their gaming community (male - 17% - vs. female gamers - 16%), though a quarter of teenagers (25%) wanted to create a more welcoming environment for female players.

Contrary to outdated stereotypes about the reclusive gamer, many lead busy lives with many outside interests. When not gaming, their attention is spent on music (63%) and spending time with family (59%) or friends (55%). Traveling (50%) and reading and writing (46%) were also popular. Players in Brazil (52%), France (58%), and Canada (49%) in particular are more inclined than others to be more curious and want to learn about new things.

Gamers in Brazil (46%), China (46%), and India (41%) enjoy breaking a sweat to stay fit, while Canadian gamers prioritize quality time with family (68%), friends (64%), and pets (40%). Their American neighbors are more inclined than anyone to spend time with their pets (45%) and are almost as sports-mad as the PC gamers from India are (46% vs. 58%).

Gaming isn't just playtime – it can also hone beneficial skills. Close to four out of 10 survey respondents said that, because of gaming, they are more strategic thinkers (39%), have improved hand-eye coordination (37%), and increased reaction time (36%). Some even perceive that their teamwork (27%) and leadership (18%) skills have improved. This aligns with research conducted by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia which found teens who were regular gamers scored higher than average in math, reading, and science on an international exam.

The more advanced the gamer, the more likely they are to report skill development. Half of gamers at pro level (54%) claimed that gaming has made them more strategic thinkers, while 36% of casual players and 30% of noobs said the same. Similar patterns occur for technology skills: 42% of pros said they are more tech savvy compared to 18% of casual players and only 14% of noobs.

Gamers spend a median of six to nine hours per week playing video games with 25% spending 10-19 hours and one out of five gamers (21%) spending 20 or more hours per week playing.

Players say they know gaming is their priority when they feel like sacrificing sleep (37%) and eating (27%). Yet today's gamers are unlikely to skip out on social commitments for gaming, with less than one in four saying they would bail on holiday celebrations (23%), a friend's celebration (21%), a family birthday (18%), or a professional sporting event (18%) to game instead.

Respondents would be willing to give up a lot just to play video games, including candy/sweets (28%), their favorite television show (23%), and social media (23%). As might be expected, younger gamers (39 years and younger) are willing to give more things up than those 40 and up.

While skill level is important, losing is not the end of the world. Only 23% said that losing an intense match is worse than a low battery, 20% that it is worse than traffic jams, and 19% that it is worse than a cold shower.





2018 TOP 10 TECH TRENDS FOR ELECTRONIC DISPLAYS AND MORE

Exciting technology advances continue to emerge, seemingly nonstop, enabled both by those at the cutting edge of high-tech, and by those who are adapting those developments to make them useful in our everyday world. The list below, compiled by Sri Peruvemba, Chair of Marketing for the Society for Information Display (SID), reflects 10 overall tech trends, including the role of displays in making them viable and accessible for consumers.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE/ MACHINE LEARNING

With the advent of home-control gizmos such as Google Nest, the public is becoming increasingly reliant on their artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. This has triggered development efforts for a slew of competitive products – companies in the hunt for a share of this lucrative market include Apple, Lenovo, Alibaba, Amazon, Google, LG and Samsung. This will be an ongoing battle, particularly as the interaction and connectedness with various home security, entertainment and control systems continues to tighten and become more intuitive. Displays are now entering the equation – as evidenced by Amazon's newest Echo incarnation, the Echo Show. Just as phones evolved into full communication hubs, the Show now enables Echo to be a digital photo frame, a small TV, a video-calling hub, and more. People want to connect and interact visually, and this is something we're going to see more of in the display development arena.

ROBOTICS

This trend will explode within the next few years. Currently, two types of robots are in use: those that look like machines, and those that more resemble a person. The latter type includes displays that facilitate interface with humans – often, as with Robotelf Technologies' Robelf, they show facial expressions. While all robots include some means of interface,

people want visual confirmation of their interaction. In some environments, people may prefer to deal with a machine rather than a potentially rude or judgmental "service person." Self-service kiosks and ATMs at airports and banks have already proven our preference for working with machines. In human-interface applications, the display plays a significant role: large, aesthetically pleasing, interactive displays are desired; they have to be able to pass rigorous mechanical bump and vibration tests; and their specs are likely to be similar to those of automotive displays.

AUGMENTED REALITY/VIRTUAL REALITY

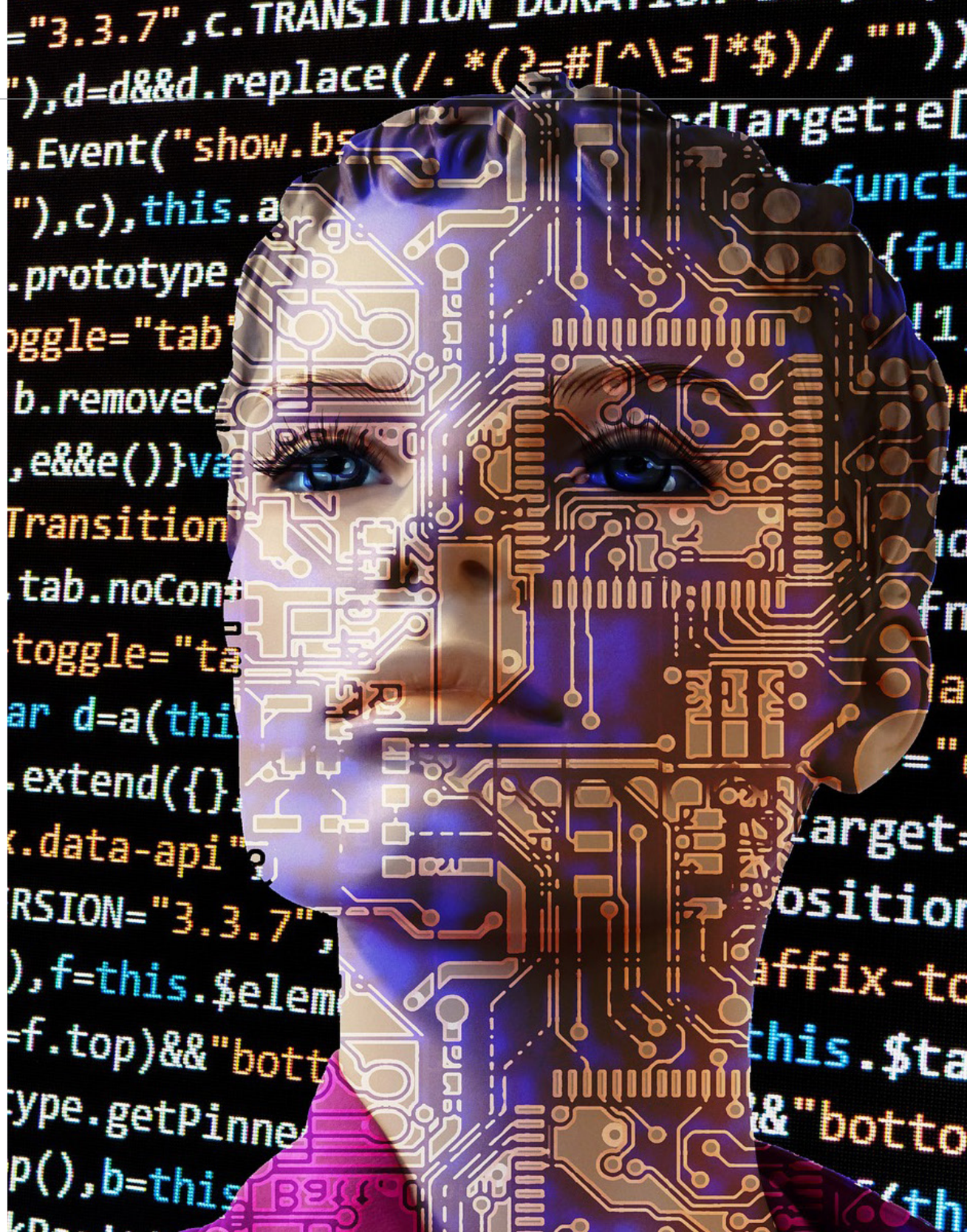
The market for these technologies is growing quickly as new applications emerge. For VR to be fully immersive, the visual presentation must be exceptional, allowing users to truly "believe their eyes." To this end, high-resolution displays (the more pixels, the better) are being created to address users' needs. Haptic actuators and sensors are also being integrated into VR gloves to enhance the realism of the experience – broadening the technology's application beyond gaming. Some wide-ranging examples include car sales (test driving in different environments); real estate purchases (virtual property tours); travel opportunities for those with physical or other limitations; and virtual amusement park rides. In AR, Vuzix is one company already shipping product into different applications. Its AR smart glasses allow the user to see what's in front of him or her while providing a notification about a potential problem. This is helping transform the work environment for those in manufacturing, mining, construction, mechanical maintenance, and firefighting, to name a few.

ELECTRONIC SCHOOLBOOKS

Educators, parents, and governments want children to have access to knowledge from anywhere, at any time. While traditional books are great for learning math, they don't give the ability to view or learn from, say, a groundbreaking TED talk. China is taking a leading role in satisfying this thirst for education by enabling widespread use of eSchoolbooks – more than 100 companies are pursuing this vision in the region. An eSchoolbook is essential to keep up with reading and learning, by maintaining access to the latest and best information. What is the ultimate display for an eSchoolbook? Medical professionals have expressed concern about young children using devices with emissive displays, as it may harm their eyesight. Several device manufacturers already offer filters for blue light, and in Canada, some insurers are already offering free prescription glasses that filter blue light. Reflective ePaper is a potential choice for eSchoolbooks.

AUTOMOTIVE

We are seeing many, many developments aimed at improving technology in both





human-driven and autonomous cars. This market is providing significant opportunity for organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs) – they can be used to create better, more vivid displays, heads-up displays, and curved displays, which, thanks to OLEDs' flexibility, can be placed in unique ways to avoid destroying the design/appearance of the dashboard area. In autonomous cars, the front dash won't need displays, as no one will be sitting there – even Tesla's Model 3 has no displays directly in front of the driver; the only display is in the center console. Thus, the inside of the car will more resemble an office or sitting room, with displays that can create a conference room atmosphere, others that can be used for writing surfaces, etc.

WRITING SURFACES

The world of eWriting surfaces has continued to evolve, with new products integrating established technologies in unique ways. For example, reMarkable's Paper Tablet touts a lag-free reading, writing, and sketching experience for those who love paper, using an ePaper display unencumbered by an OS or apps. Another example is QuirkLogic's Quilla, a digital alternative to flip charts and white boards. While fully equipped with displays, cameras, conference phones, etc., most modern conference rooms still use traditional white boards. Quilla facilitates team collaboration and interaction, regardless of members' location. Others jumping on board the move to digitize the white board experience include Google, Cisco and Microsoft – all using LCD technology.

SMART SURFACES

The Internet of Things (IoT) concept is not new, and now that it is becoming truly ingrained into everyday life, efforts are ramping up to employ connectivity in new ways – both large and small. One example, the Amazon Dash, allows the user to simply press a button when it's time to reorder a staple household product. However, the Dash offers no visual confirmation of the order – and adding a display would do just that. For these kinds of products, a display would need to be small, inexpensive, easy to read, and able to last a long time on the same battery. The kind of ePaper currently being used on shelf labels, made by companies such as Visionect, would be useful for this type of application, as well as for home appliances.

On a larger scale, ePaper for outdoor displays is a growing trend. It can be used in myriad ways – for building signage, bus shelters, advertising on public transportation, and more. These smart surfaces are easily visible, regardless of weather, and their solar-enabled low power and wireless connectivity enable them to provide tremendous value to the user.

ELECTRONIC SIGNAGE

Indoor signs have traditionally been made of paper, plastic or metal, but LCD has been rapidly replacing them. An exciting trend in this market is flat-panel MicroLED technology. First developed in 2000, MicroLEDs offer bright, beautiful images while omitting the pixelation that occurs with standard LED displays. Samsung provided a glimpse of a MicroLED future at CES 2018 with "The Wall," its striking 146-inch display that





enabled the display to virtually disappear against its background. Although not yet in mass production, MicroLED has the potential to compete with LCD and OLED for both indoor and outdoor signage, such as signs inside shopping malls and retail outlets, and other areas not previously targeted by LED technology. For low-power indoor signage, ePaper also offers many advantages, delivering images that are clear and readable, but not so bright as to be distracting.

WEARABLES

No longer a fad, wearable technology is here to stay. Sensors play an important role in the wearable space, and are beginning to be designed into gloves, exercise wear, outerwear, and other garments by innovators like BeBop Sensors that offer fabric-based sensor technology. Of the wearable devices such as fitness bands and smartwatches currently available, most do one or two key things users want – typically, counting steps or monitoring heart rate -but they're increasingly incorporating more complex functionality. With a device that touches the skin, these can include tracking skin temperature, monitoring hydration by measuring skin salt levels, providing blood oxygen level via pulse-oximetry, etc. Because many readings still need to be confirmed by looking at one's smartphone, the argument to move all functionality to a smartwatch is becoming increasingly compelling, requiring a robust, flexible display that adapts well to a variety of temperatures and environments. China seems to have taken over the lead in this emerging market, with Xiaomi taking the leadership position in this space. Sunlight readability, low power, and video capability are all desired in these applications, creating opportunities for existing and emerging display technologies.

ULTIMATE TV

In the ever-evolving television realm, the two key types of technologies competing for dominance are OLED and liquid crystal display (LCD). OLEDs offer flexibility, vivid colors and lifelike images, while LCDs – still the market leader – are less costly and render a decent image. In addition, some TV makers are using quantum dots (QD) in tandem with LCD to better compete with OLEDs' color and image quality. Quantum dots are semiconductor nanocrystal particles used to enhance LCD color gamut, rendering as much as a 30-percent increase in the visible spectrum.

ENTERPRISE FLORIDA



CREATING JOBS AND BUSINESSES

Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is the principal economic development organization for the Sunshine State. A public-private partnership between Florida's business and government leaders, EFI is funded both by the State of Florida and by private-sector businesses. It was first created in 1996, in the belief that, with hands-on participation by Florida businesses, Florida could move from its traditional economic drivers of tourism and agriculture to a sophisticated mix of industries and international business. Thus, Florida be-

AT A GLANCE
ENTERPRISE FLORIDA

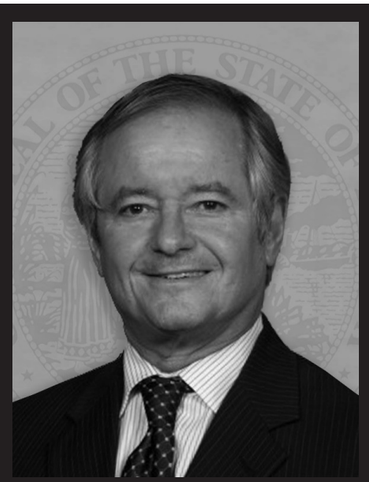
WHAT: A public-private economic development organization

WHERE: Orlando, FL

WEBSITE: www.enterpriseflorida.com



PETER ANTONACCI
CEO



MANNY MENCIA
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

came the first state in the country to place principal responsibility for economic development, international trade, research, and business image marketing in the hands of a business-government partnership.

EFI's ongoing mission is to expand and diversify the state's economy through job creation, while championing Florida as the premier location for capital investment and business expansion and relocation. EFI recruits new business to the state, and works to retain and expand existing industry and business, focusing its economic development efforts on a wide range of industry sectors, including: aviation & aerospace, life sciences, information technology, defense & homeland security, clean energy, financial & professional services, and manufacturing.

In 2011, Florida moved to optimize its economic development structure by creating the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and giving EFI's President and CEO the additional title of Secretary of Commerce. A policy-driven Board of Directors, comprised of appointed members and a diverse group of investors representing some of the nation's most notable corporations in Florida, oversees EFI's operations. In addition, each member of the Florida Cabinet holds a position on the Board and the governor serves as the Board Chairman.

Recently, Business View Magazine spoke with two members of EFI's leadership team: CEO, Peter Antonacci, and Senior Vice President for International Trade and Development, Manny Mencia. The following is an edited transcript of those conversations:

BVM: Peter, what are Florida's strengths as a state to do business in? If I wanted to open a new business or relocate to Florida, what would you tell me are some of the state's benefits?

Antonacci: "Everything comes under the heading of 'business climate,' and what we have is special. So, that includes permitting. The larger the business, the more permitting challenges, and



even if you set up a small business, you have some permitting issues. Our permitting system is user-friendly.

"There's no personal income tax and the corporate income tax system has been ratcheted back over the last seven years, so the corporate income tax atmosphere is very positive. We are a right-to-work state, which means you don't have to join a union to have the privilege of working. We have an excellent K-12 education system, and after K-12, our apprenticeships, our certification programs are excellent. So, we've got a robust workforce that's highly trained, and if they're not trained, we have facilities here to train them. We think that markets mean a lot, and between our airports and our seaports, we're a gateway to the world."

BVM: How does EFI connect with businesses who want to come to Florida?

Antonacci: "We continue to work with our site selection community to show our wares. If you're not showing your wares all the time, you're easy to forget, so we're out there every day with our site selectors, showing what we have."

BVM: Does being a public-private partnership help those outreach efforts?

Antonacci: "Some believe that government doesn't communicate on the same



length as business, and we want to get government and business to communicate more effectively. The economic development undertaking of a state works best if you put the business world into the business of economic development with a government partner. And it's worked very well in Florida. We have businesses that put up their good money to be part of this undertaking because it's a real value to them."

BVM: Do you see any opportunities for improvement in EFI's effectiveness?

Antonacci: "Here's what I think is the challenge: every day is a different day, and it's hard to see what's going to happen tomorrow. What the state has to do, to improve its human capital infrastructure, is to work with our education system, all the time, to make sure that it's keeping up with what industry is doing. Industry changes pretty quickly and you have to be nimble to respond. So, for example, this past year the legislature appropriated a portion of $85 million for specialized workforce programs, so that our colleges and schools can access resources to develop these kinds of quickly-changing job needs in their communities. And if we don't do that, we fall behind, because people in other states are working just as hard."

BVM: And yet, there are some in the state legislature who don't believe that the government should be funding business development at all - or even doing business with business.

Antonacci: "I don't think that any of the legislators are opposed to business and government working together to make Florida a better place. But where the debate sharpens is in the area of taxpayer incentives. Incentives are controversial because taxpayers don't oftentimes see the immediate value in the expenditure of their money. And that controversy opens up the question: Is this a proper thing for government to do? So, it gets into the philosophy of governing."

BVM: What's on your agenda as Florida's Secretary of Commerce?

Antonacci: "My agenda is coterminous with our Governor's agenda – get people around the world and around the country to invest in Florida either with their capital or with their businesses. Our metrics show that we do a pretty good job of bringing capital to Florida, and the issue of bringing business to Florida is one that we work on assiduously, every day. We have a great product to sell and always have exciting things happening. Florida is open for business and we mean it."

BVM: Manny, can you talk about the responsibilities of your position?

Mencia: "I manage the State of Florida's trade development programs, which is helping Florida companies - with a strong emphasis on small and midsize companies - to find new clients, and sell their products in markets around the world. We work on the export side with between 2,200 and 2,500 small or mid-size Florida companies, every year. My unit is deployed statewide; I have field offices in Pensacola, Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, Palm Beach, and my headquarters in Miami. Each of those offices has a territory they are responsible for. You need to have people in the market that can visit a company and assess its export readiness.

"I also manage our network of foreign offices in 12 countries around the world, which are there to promote Florida, to develop foreign direct investment leads, and to support our trade programs. And, as I see my mandate, it is also to help Florida









companies diversify their exports; to find new markets in places like Asia, the Middle East, European Union, and Africa.

"So, I do all the exports and I help with the generation of foreign direct investment leads from other parts of the world that want to invest in Florida."

BVM: Where does most of the state's foreign investment currently come from?

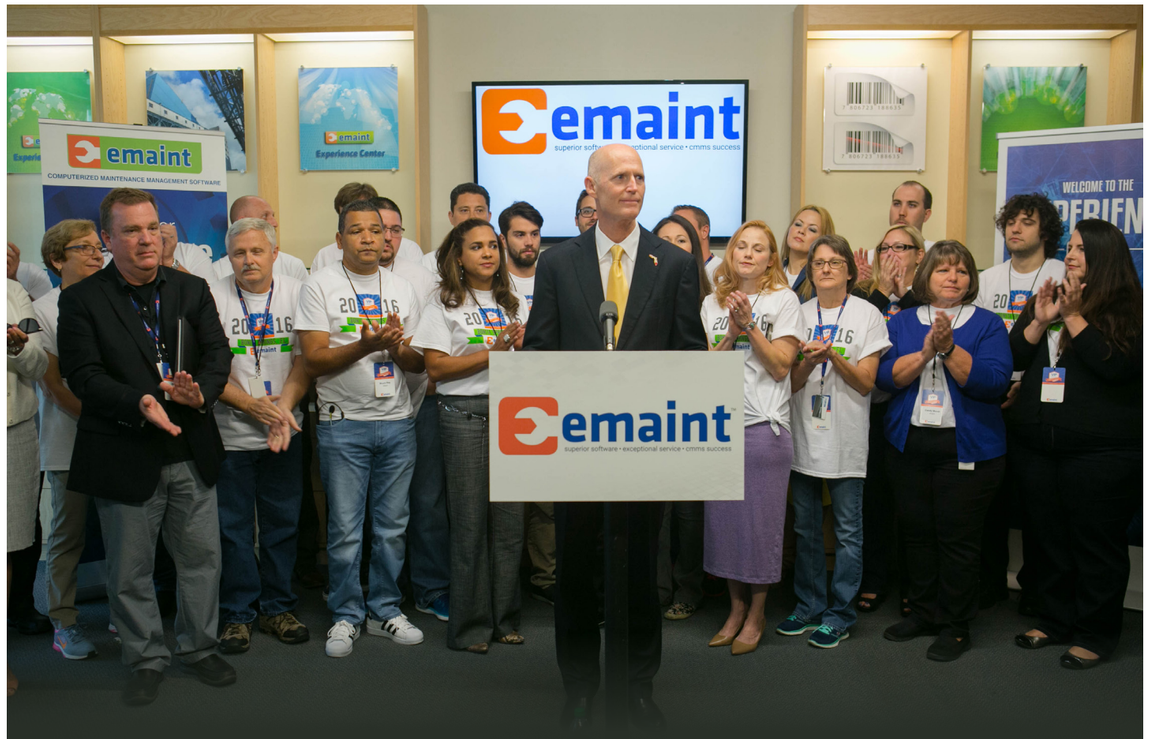
Mencia: "Roughly two thirds, maybe a little more than that, of Florida's identifiable foreign direct investment comes from two sources: the European Union and Canada. So, obviously, while we pursue, welcome, and promote investment from other regions, you do want to focus a significant part of what you do on those markets that have clusters of large, multi-national companies that tend to drive foreign investment. Four of our foreign offices are based in the EU – Madrid, London, Paris, and Germany. Japan is another investment market after Canada and the EU, so we have an office in Tokyo. The main thrust of those offices is foreign direct investment lead generation."

BVM: On the export side, how does EFI help small Florida companies?

Mencia: "We provide them with what we like to think is a pretty comprehensive program that runs the gamut. We talk to them about their export readiness, market selection, i.e. what are best markets for their products; we help them with market research and information; we talk to them about the channels of distribution in those markets, and, oftentimes, introduce them to our foreign offices for support.

"For those companies that are less experienced, or fairly new to exporting, or are infrequent exporters, we have a strategic alliance with the Small Business Development Center Network in Florida, and are able to subsidize for them, a company-specific export marketing plan – a roadmap to expanding their exports.

"My main tool for helping them after we qualify them and provide the best marketing information for them, etc., is to help them find a client and enter the market. So, we do, roughly, 30 interna-



tional trade shows and trade missions every year. We focus our trade shows on the largest world-class aerospace and aviation defense shows; the large medical hospital/ pharma products exhibitions; IT; the marine industry. And we do shows in other sectors: security, transportation, and others.

"Aviation and aerospace is probably Florida's largest industry cluster; medical – we're the second largest manufacturer in the nation of medical device products. We have a very fast growing IT sector in Florida – some 30,000 companies and growing fast. So, on the trade show side, we are very focused on those major sectors in Florida which are also high-growth and high-wage.

"We also do trade missions, which are different than trade shows. They tend to be focused on growing international markets - Latin America, some in Africa, some in Asia – and those are, essentially, matchmaking missions. We recruit a group of companies; we vet their products to make sure they are in demand in that market, and then we work with U.S. Commercial Services and the U.S. embassy in that country, to help them line up individual appointments with companies interested in their specific product line. And then, they have high-value individual business meetings called Gold Key meetings.

"We also do educational events around the state, where we bring one of our foreign officers, or a floating commercial officer, and we talk about business opportunities – we



call them 'road shows' – 'Business Opportunities in South Africa'; 'Doing Business with the World Bank'; 'Exporting to Turkey.'

"We have a Florida export directory, online. Any Florida company can register there for free, so we can promote their products through this site, throughout the world. We have a newsletter to inform Florida companies about export opportunities, the trade shows that we do, all the partner events, etc. It goes to 10,000 Florida companies that are in our data base.

"We also help companies in the form of a grants program, which are small grants designed to help a manufacturer or a high technology company go into new markets. Say you want to go to a trade show - we are able to offset 50 percent of the standard exhibition costs. When you go on a trade mission, the U.S. Department of Commerce charges a fee to make appointments, provide the translator, and so on. We have a grant for a new to market manufacturer or high tech company - we will pay the cost of your Gold Key meeting, 100 percent.

"And the final one, which we just created recently: we are helping Florida companies localize their website. Say you just got back from 'Arab Health,' the largest medical show in the Middle East and you did well enough on that show that now you think that you should have a website in Arabic. We have a program to help offset part of the cost of translating the website. Let's say you go to a show in Singapore and you want your website in Mandarin - we're able to help you do that.

"Remember: export development is a tool of job creation, just like investment recruitment. The difference is that job creation, in this case, comes indirectly. We help the company sell its products, and because of those expanded sales, the compa-



ny grows organically and adds jobs. It's a huge job engine. Roughly one out of every six jobs in Florida comes from exports or foreign direct investment."

BVM: "What do you say to those who suggest that the government should not be helping companies at all; that it should stay out of the 'free market'?

Mencia: "When it comes to the export side, I think most people, even those who are philosophically opposed, believe that there is role in helping small business; that they do need the extra push in order to succeed and the payoff is extremely significant. When companies grow through export, those products are created organically - good companies with good products going to markets to create wealth in the local community and expand the job base. I believe that it's in the national interest and the state interest to support small exporters. And our mission is to facilitate that."

BVM: What are some of the most significant objectives that you have for your division over the next several years?

Mencia: "On the export side, it's a very simple equation: retain or possibly expand market share in Latin America and the Caribbean and, at the same time, continue to diversify our exports to other parts of the world. Right now, a little over 60 percent of everything Florida companies export goes to Latin America and the Caribbean; about 20 percent to Asia; a little less than that to Europe; and then the rest of the world. It would be great if it were more like, 50/50 – 50 percent to Latin America and the Caribbean and 50 percent spread out to the world. That is a long-term goal: to better balance our export market share.

"And Florida could not be more ideally positioned to do more international business. If you look at our geographic position, we are at the very epicenter of the Western Hemisphere. We are also in an ideal position for east/west trade, particularly after the expansion of the Panama Canal which will result in increased business formation. I believe that if you're a Florida manufacturer, the path to growth and increased sales is international business. And the statistics bear that out – Florida is the number two state in the nation in what the National Association of Manufacturers calls 'manufacturing export intensity' – that is the percentage of what you produce that is sold overseas and not in the domestic market.



"Also, Florida is one of the very top states in terms of the percentage of exports by small business. In 2016, Florida exported about $52 billion worth of tangible products. Out of those, almost two thirds were sold by small businesses. The national average is less than a third. So, it's strategically important to help manufacturers export. If we want to keep growing the export pie, keep bringing more money into the state, creating more jobs, helping small business is important."

"Number two: take advantage of the expansion of the Panama Canal and the new generation of commercial aircrafts that make direct flights between Asia and Florida to help Florida companies do more business in Asia. Three: help more infrequent or non-exporters among manufacturers to get into the business and once they're in the business, diversify their exports.

"Another key objective would be to expand Florida exports and trade with Mexico. We have a market share of roughly 30+ percent of everything the United States sells to everybody else in Latin America and the Caribbean, but our share of Mexico's market in terms of U.S. exports is less than two percent. Why? Mexican/U.S. trade has always gone through the border. So, we are trying to divert trade to the Florida ports and airports. If we were to add one or two percent of export market share to Mexico, that would be billions of dollars in exports because that relationship is so huge. And it's doable because our transportation costs by sea are very competitive to the cost of shipping something over the border."



manufacturing view



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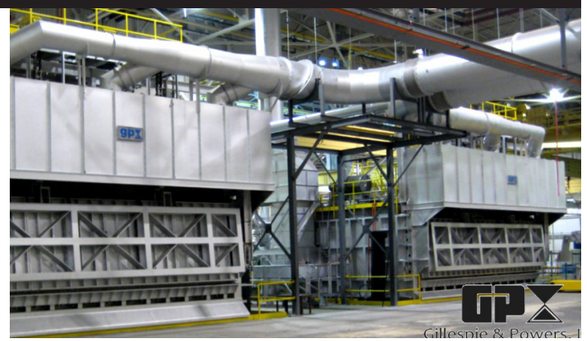
RUBIK'S BRAND LIMITED



NOT JUST THAT RETRO TOY ANYMORE

GILLESPIE & POWERS, INC.



FAMILY-OWNED, GLOBALLY-KNOWN

CHATTANOOGA BOILER & TANK COMPANY



A CENTURY OF FABRICATION AND ERECTION

MANUFACTURING ONLINE

THE TOY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

100 years of service

THE DOMETIC CORPORATION

Mobile living made easy

THE BENNETT PUMP COMPANY

Fuel options



NOT JUST THAT RETRO TOY ANYMORE

The Rubik's Cube is an iconic toy that's been around nearly as long as anyone can remember, but most people don't know that it was never intended to be a toy. The Magic Cube, as it was originally dubbed, was invented in 1974 by Ernõ Rubik. This professor from Budapest had designed the Cube as a model to help explain 3-dimensional geometry. After its invention, it took Rubik nearly a month to solve his own puzzle. "It was a code I myself had invented, yet I could not read it," he once wrote.

It wasn't until the 1979 Nuremberg Toy Fair that the world got its first look at the Rubik's Cube. There, in a little back corner of the fair, the Magic

AT A GLANCE
RUBIK'S BRAND LIMITED

WHAT: A toy and game manufacturer

WHERE: London, England

WEBSITE: www.rubiksbrand.com



Cube was spotted by Tom Kremer, then the CEO of Seven Towns, Ltd., a small toy company he had started in 1964. He negotiated with Rubik for the rights to the Cube and licensed it to the Ideal Toy Co. in 1980.

The Cube was an instant success, selling 100 million units in the first three years, and holding the distinction of being the first puzzle ever advertised on television. Unfortunately, the Rubik's Cube, as it was marketed, was just as quickly forgotten. Warehouses were full of unsold Cubes, and no one wanted anything to do with them.

Tom used the disinterest in the design to his advantage, and reacquired the rights to the Rubik's Cube, re-launching in 1991. While it didn't regain its initial popularity, the Rubik's Cube continued to sell well throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Over time, the Cube's popularity started to grow once again thanks to the growing trend of speedcubing, or solving a Rubik's Cube as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, because of this resurgence – and, perhaps inevitably - a growing number of fakes were being marketed as alternatives to the brand.

Seven Towns created a secondary company in Notting Hill, London – Rubik's Brand Limited in 2013 – to handle all Rubik's Cube licensing and marketing and to take advantage of opportunities beyond the toy and game industry. "We didn't become Rubik's Brand Limited until about six years ago," says Head of Marketing, Hayley Woodward. "Seven Towns still exists. We still share an accounts department office building but that's about it. But Rubik's Brand Limited and Seven Towns are separate, now."



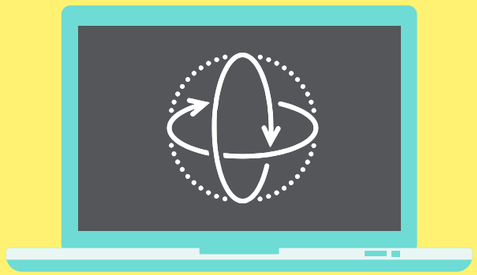
The company is relatively small, made up of CEO Mike Townend, Woodward, and Chrisi Trussell, who is the company's legal and licensing liaison. Two other employees look after social media and the company's web account. Professor Ernõ Rubik is Honorary Life President.

What's Rubik's Brand Limited up to lately? The company is expanding into licensing – turning the Cube into a brand rather than just focusing on building toys. "We have expanded quite recently into licensing and we're really trying to push Rubik's as a brand rather than focusing on the core product and the toy range. So, we've moved onboard with the Smiley Company and we've partnered with them to leverage all our licensing products." They've signed up a lot of licensees in apparel and back to school wear, home wear, everything you can



Yellow

BRAND PROTECTION



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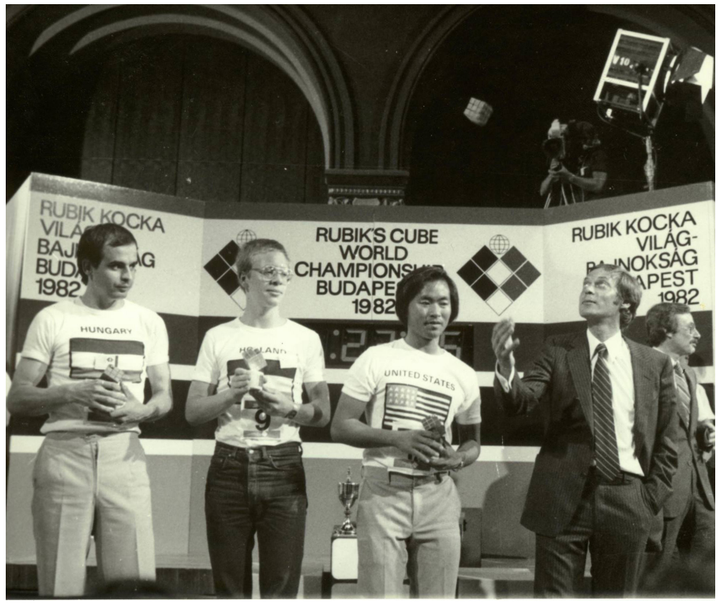
think of, Rubik's licensing-wise." And according to Woodward, that will be a big focus for their company for the next three to five years.

In addition to licensing the Rubik's Cube as a brand, the company is in charge of maintaining relationships with licensees and distributors around the world. Hasbro is the biggest licensee that the company deals with, handling distribution in the United States, but it is not the only company that Rubik's Brand Limited works with to get its product out into the world. "We actually have two U.S. licensees – Hasbro, who distributes to the big chains, and Winning Moves, who distributes to the specialty toy market," Woodward explains. In addition, the company has over 30 licensees in different territories, worldwide. The company also doesn't change licensees often. Most of the companies that are licensed to distribute these toys have been with the company since the Rubik's Cube was first launched.

2017 was easily one of the best years for the company. "2017 saw the biggest year in sales of Rubik's Cubes since the height of the 80s," according to Woodward, though much of that upward trend is due to new products, such as board games, Cubes of various sizes, and other branded items. "We're trying to keep Rubik's fresh in people's minds and relevant to new audiences and the next generation," she adds. That's why the focus now is more on licensing. We have about 25 lines now. Last year, we introduced a junior range with smaller character puzzles for a younger audience – children who are just getting into problem solving. That junior range outsold the 3X3 line this past Christmas. Also, the board games are doing very well for us."

Since its launch in the 1980s, Woodward says that they've sold more than 450 million Rubik's Cubes, and it is estimated that an amazing one in seven people have played with this fascinating and frustrating puzzle. And the upward trend is continuing to carry this classic toy that has delighted and infuriated both children and adults for more than 40 years, to even newer and greater heights.





PREFERRED VENDORS

- **Kroeger Inc.**
  www.kroegerinc.com

  Kroeger Inc. markets and sells toys, gifts, and hobby goods to specialty and mass, brick-and-mortar, and e-commerce retailers in North America. The company was founded in 1971, and is based in Scarborough, Ontario.

- **Yellow Brand Protection**
  www.yellowbrandprotection.com

  Yellow Brand Protection is a leading global provider of online, anti-counterfeiting services, with offices in the United Kingdom, Sweden, China, and the USA. Working closely with popular online marketplaces the world over, the company is able to detect and take down unauthorized listings, making it harder for counterfeiters to sell somebody else's good name. -

- **Markan Industrial Group Ltd.**
  www.hktdc.com

CHATTANOOGA BOILER & TANK COMPANY

A CENTURY OF FABRICATION AND ERECTION

Chattanooga Boiler & Tank Company (CBT) was founded in 1905 to serve the boiler repair and vessel fabrication needs of the Tennessee Valley area of Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. Although the company is still in the same location in Chattanooga, it no longer makes boilers, but rather designs and constructs both shop-fabricated and field-fabricated tanks, stacks, silos, and pressure vessels from stainless steel, carbon steel, aluminum, and exotic alloys. Its primary markets are the power, pulp and paper, chemical, metal and mining, water and wastewater, and oil and refining industries. Since 1987, the company has been owned by Williams Enterprises of Georgia.

All of CBT's products are custom-designed. "We have our own engineering department in Chattanooga," says company President, Tom



AT A GLANCE
CHATTANOOGA BOILER & TANK COMPANY

WHAT: A fabricator of tanks, stacks, silos, and pressure vessels

WHERE: Chattanooga, Tennessee

WEBSITE: www.cbtank.com



Shull. “We’ve also got about 50 shop craftsmen and 35-40 office support for our shop and field. The field division constructs large tanks and vessels that can’t be shipped over the road. We’ll fabricate the components here in smaller segments that can be shipped - 40,000 pounds of steel is about the maximum you can ship as long as it’s not over width or over length. We’ll ship it to the field and offload it with cranes and fully assemble it. The shop will fabricate the components that our field will assemble and they also build a complete fabricated vessel of the size that you can ship by truck or rail. You can go to just about every state in the country and see a unique product that we’ve been involved with over the years.” In addition to new fabricated products, the company also has a well-regarded repair division and has performed extensive repair to scrubbers, coal silos, pressure vessels, and tanks throughout the country.

Shull believes that what differentiates his company from the competition is its century-old



CHATTANOOGA BOILER & TANK COMPANY

> This has built a lot of pride into our organization over the years and continues to be a motivating factor to our staff. It’s a very family-oriented company; we have fantastic employees and we fully recognize that our employees define us. It’s a stressful market and a stressful business, but we roll up our sleeves and work well together to deliver the product to our customers.
>
> **TOM SHULL**
> COMPANY PRESIDENT



traditions of quality and productivity. “We have a great name in the industry and live off our reputation,” he states. “To stay in business as long as we have, you’ve got to be doing something right. It’s about customer relations, honesty, and integrity. We make mistakes, but one of the things that separate us from our competition is how we deal with that; we go out of our way to keep the customers content and satisfied with the investment they made in us.”

In addition to relying on word-of-mouth and its 113-year-old name, CBT participates in various trade shows to stay fresh in its customers’ minds. For example, it regularly exhibits at POWER-GEN,



one of the largest power generation shows in the world. Regarding its high level of productivity, Shull reports that its fabrication department stays current by employing the most up-to-date versions of CAD design technology, and uses the industry's most modern forming and welding equipment. "We have, in the last four or five years, had a decent-sized expansion," he notes. "We've upgraded facilities, put in larger cranes, and some new blasting and painting equipment to make ourselves more competitive in the market – that was a several million dollar investment. And we are in the process of buying a new burning table to help facilitate the products we desire to build."

Shull admits that even a company that has been in the forefront of its sector for over a century still has its challenges. "It is a competitive world we live in, and we anticipate the market to be a challenge as we move forward," he avers. "We're going to have to figure out a way to do more with less. You have to have the ability to be more productive, whether that's an investment in technology, or training for our employees, or a good marketing team to find the work. What we do is specialized, but there is some good competition and we're just going to have to work hard to prepare for the future."

One particular challenge for companies such as CBT is finding enough skilled craftspeople at a time when many young people are choosing college and white collar jobs over a career where they are trained to work with their hands. "You can really make a good living and have a long, productive career by choosing a craft," Shull states. "We hire welders and fabricators and fitters – skilled guys. We hire college-educated employees, as well; we've got engineers and accountants. But there is a void in today's society for craftsmen. And if a guy or a gal is willing to roll up their sleeves and learn how to perform some of these tasks, they can make a nice living. It's an honorable trade and really rewarding. When you get finished with a product and see what you've constructed and what it's going to do for our society and our economy, it's very rewarding."

Meanwhile, Shull is hopeful that, for the next hundred years, Chattanooga Boiler & Tank Company will continue its tradition of being one of the sector's leading firms. "You can travel to almost every state in our country and point to some steel process vessel or custom-designed steel structure that we have fabricated and erected throughout our history," he declares. "This has built a lot of pride into our organization over the years and continues to be a motivating factor to our staff. It's a very family-oriented company; we have fantastic employees and we fully recognize that our employees define us. It's a stressful market and a stressful business, but we roll up our sleeves and work well together to deliver the product to our customers."

PREFERRED VENDORS

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  www.holstongases.com

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GILLESPIE & POWERS, INC.

FAMILY-OWNED, GLOBALLY-KNOWN

Gillespie & Powers of St. Louis, Missouri, designs, fabricates, installs, and maintains refractory-lined, high-temperature furnace equipment for the non-ferrous melting and hazardous waste industries. The family-owned company extends back to 1902, when Gillespie & Daly Construction, a brick and stone mason firm begun by John H. Gillespie, completed projects in the St. Louis area with bricks made from the area's large, high-quality clay deposits.

At that time, the company also supplied the fire clay bricks that were used to contain the coal-fired boilers that provided heat and



energy. Certain clay products are known as "refractory" materials, meaning they remain chemically and physically stable at high temperatures; thus their use in furnaces, kilns, incinerators, and reactors. Over time, the company began to specialize in boilers and high-temperature applications, then ultimately grew into the engineering and construction of high temperature refractory furnaces and systems.

Early in 1938, Charles A. Gillespie, son of John, H., united with Frank X. Powers to create Gillespie & Powers Inc. At that time, the city of St. Louis banned the burning of soft coal, which necessitated the conversion of boilers to use either gas or oil. So, the company designed the refractories that could do that, and, for many years, it continued to provide masonry installation services for heating systems and electric generator stations.

It was in the 1960s that, as a result of providing refractory repair services to a number of aluminum clients, the company expanded into the aluminum industry, beginning with refractory rebuilding services and culminating in the design, fabrication, and installation of aluminum melting and holding furnaces. The company's management was also transferred to the third generation - John R. Gillespie, nephew of Charles A., was named president of the company in 1966, and in 1968, Charles K. Gillespie, son of Charles A., came on board as a partner and vice president. From that time, the two managed the company through more stages of growth and prosperity.

Another generation, the fourth, took its place in the mid-2000s, after John R. died and Charles K. retired. Jon R. Gillespie, the son of John R., who joined the company in 1980 as a brick mason after receiving his degree in mechanical engineering from St. Louis University, was named president. Today, Gillespie & Powers is run by Jack B. Gillespie, son of Jon R., and his cousin, John Peterman, who bought the company from Jack's dad, in September 2017.

Today, Gillespie & Powers has about 75 employees,



AT A GLANCE
GILLESPIE & POWERS, INC.

WHAT: A company that designs, fabricates, installs, and maintains refractory-lined, high-temperature furnace equipment

WHERE: St. Louis, Missouri

WEBSITE: www.gillespiepowers.com



including engineers, field supervisors, and office support. Its head office remains in St. Louis where it maintains its refractory masonry construction activities, as well as the aluminum industry segment, including the design and installation of melting and scrap preparation equipment. In addition, the company has masonry construction field offices in Hannibal, Missouri; Lewisport, Kentucky; Davenport, Iowa; and, most recently, Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Most of the company's current clientele is in the secondary, or recycled, aluminum market. "Aluminum is the second most recyclable product next to lead," Peterman notes. "And we design and build aluminum melting and handling equipment for the aluminum and non-ferrous industry, which is broad - the U.S., China, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, Japan – we've serviced all those markets. "We also just finished a large project in Saudi Arabia," says Sales Director, Ian Marsh. "We cover the entire world," Jack adds. "We're family-owned, globally-known."

Peterman believes that Gillespie & Powers laps its competition in the sector because, unlike his company, they don't "get dirty." "Our competition will design it, and then hand it over to contractors to build and assemble, and they may show up when it's turned on," he states. "Everybody here is hands-on. We're unique because we have our construction side. We will, design, fabricate, and build. It never leaves our hands. We take it from day one and hold it until we hand it over to the customer."

"We also offer the refractory engineering side of it," offers Marsh. "And because we've been in refractory for so long, we talk to the refractory manufacturers, and what we learn in the field gets passed back to them, so that they improve their products as we improve ours."

Going forward, Peterman says this fifth generation at the helm of Gillespie & Powers is planning on expanding the company's products, offerings, and geographic footprint. "We're also planning on expanding into other markets, - steel, glass, copper," he reports. "Currently, we deal in waste incineration, but we want to expand our services. Right now, we are in a two-hundred-mile radius of our home office, but we'd like to expand that further. We also plan on doing several acquisitions of some competitors. And we are always doing research and development and working on future patents."

"Everything we do, we stand behind 100 percent," Peterman declares in summation. "That also distinguishes us from our competition. We value our relationships and our legacy relationships to the point where we view them as partnerships and not a vendor/owner relationship. That shows in our work. So, we're going to continue to focus on growing without jeopardizing our quality."



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AT A GLANCE
PHOENIX FABRICATORS & ERECTORS, LLC

WHAT: A builder of elevated water towers

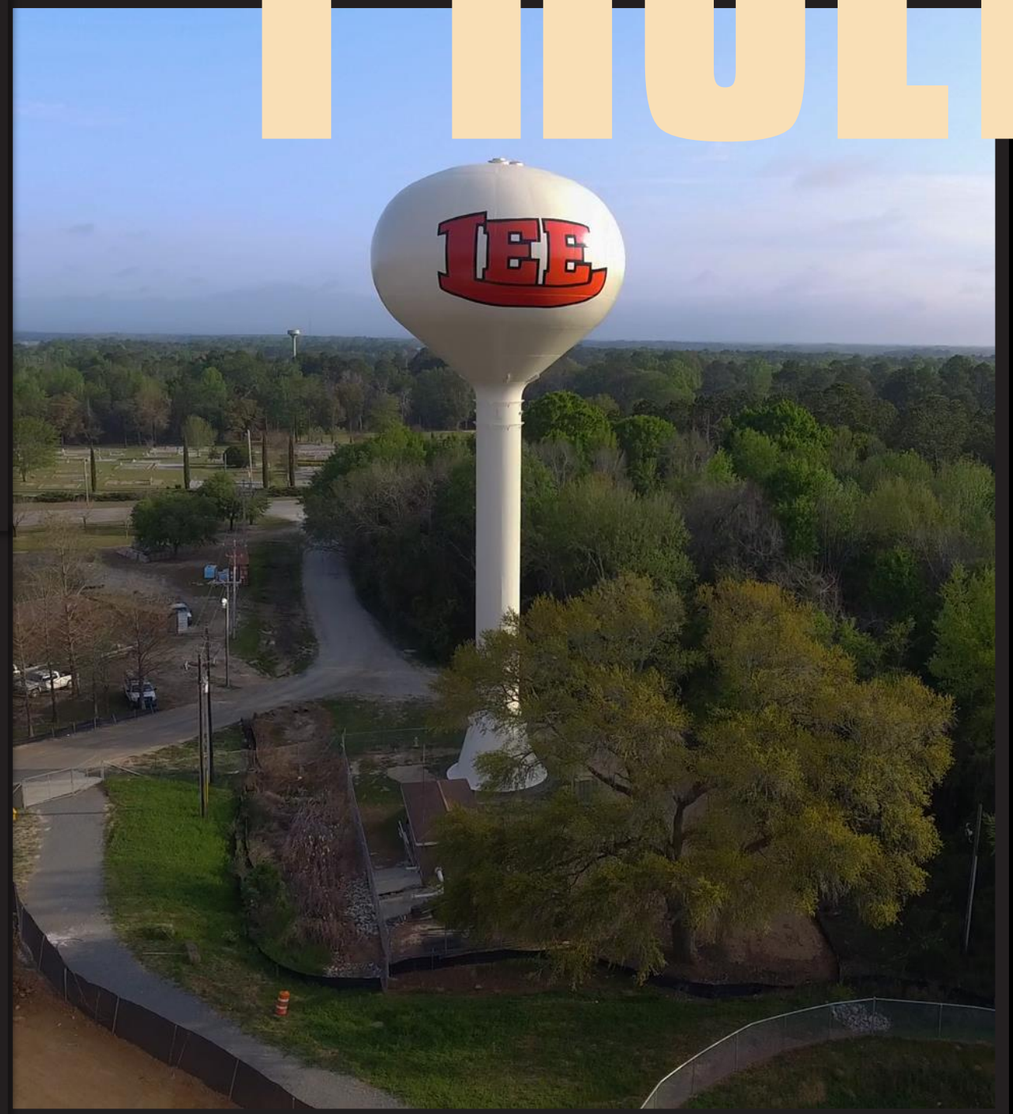
WHERE: Avon, Indiana

WEBSITE: www.phoenixtank.com









PHOENIX
FABRICATORS & ERECTORS, LLC

RISING ABOVE THE REST

It is estimated that there are some 50,000 elevated water tanks that rise high above the cities, towns, and counties of the United States, and that Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors, LLC ("Phoenix") of Avon, Indiana has constructed approximately 5,000 of them. The company, which engages in the foundation, fabrication, engineering, erecting, painting, modification, relocation, service, and maintenance of water tank systems, likewise rose from the ashes of a predecessor entity, Universal Tank and Ironworks, in 1986, to become an industry leader with a reputation for exceptional quality in the design, manufacturing, and erection of multi-column, single pedestal, and fluted column water tanks.

In addition to its corporate offices and a 61,000-sq.-ft. fabrication facility in Avon, Phoenix has an addition-

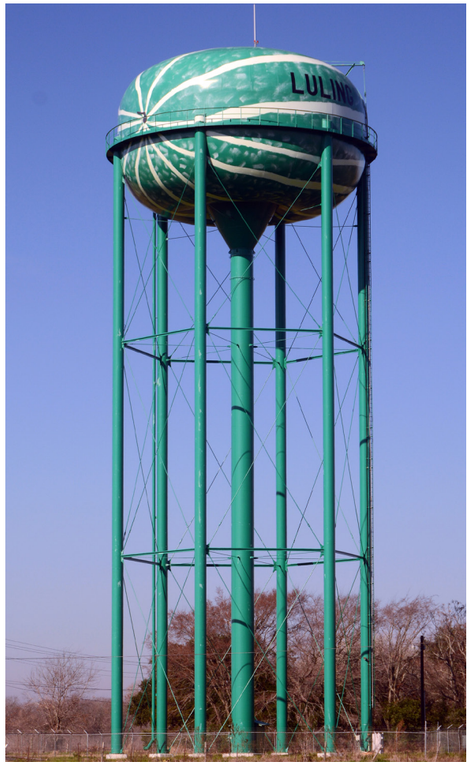
al office and fabrication facility in Sebree, Kentucky, and some 235 full-time employees who live and work all over the country. The vast majority of the company's clients are municipalities. Chief Development Officer, Joey Thomas, explains, "Typically, a municipality hires a consulting engineer to bid a project out. We bid against our competition on those projects and are awarded them primarily on a low-bid basis. That is a large percentage of our client base. However, there are some private or industry contracts out there. Additionally, we do some custom fabrication work for other manufacturers across the country, as well."

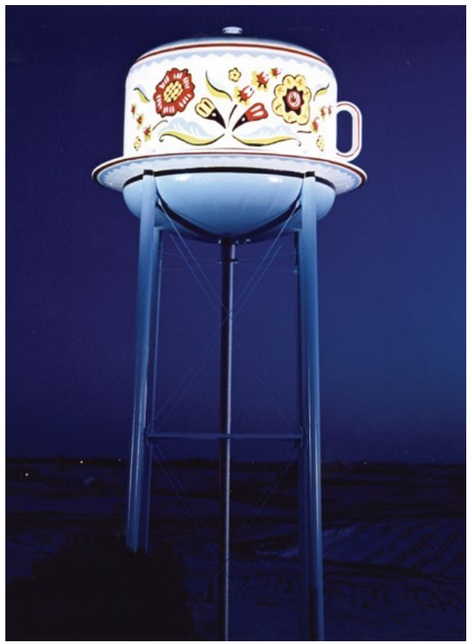


Phoenix CEO, Tim Yohler, believes that if those low-bid contracts were based on things other than just price point, Phoenix would have a lot more business coming its way. "People like working with us; the guys in the field who construct our tanks are very knowledgeable and experienced," he avers. "If you go to our customers and you go to the consulting engineers that we work with, they would say that Phoenix has the best client service, by far. We have a reputation for customer satisfaction and we go well beyond any of our competition in making sure that our customers are happy with their tanks."

Another competitive strength of Phoenix, according to Thomas, is its ability to take a project







from start to finish - from design, to fabrication, to field erection. "And we have our own in-house painters," he adds. "A lot of our competitors will subcontract most of that out. We have Phoenix painting crews on almost every project. That way we can control the quality of the coating and ensure the timeliness of completion."

While the primary focus of Phoenix is on new construction, the company also maintains and modifies existing structures. "We'll take an existing tank that may need to be raised or lowered for whatever reason," Thomas explains, "most often in a situation where districts might merge together water systems and District A might be working on a certain pressure plane, and District B might be operating on a different pressure plane, and when they merge, they want to operate the system together. So, one of the tanks might be selected for modification. We would come in and analyze the structure and then proceed with the raising or lowering of that structure



to match that pressure point that they want that system to operate off of. We're the industry leader, and only water tank manufacturer in the tank modification market, which is a very niche industry."

For decades, the multi-column steel tank has been the industry standard, and Phoenix is currently the recognized industry leader in the multi-column tank market. But, according to Yohler, the fastest growing segment of the marketplace, by far, has been the emergence of the composite elevated tank. "A composite tank has a concrete support pedestal with an all-steel container on top, as opposed to an all-steel structure, which has typically been the product of choice," he explains. "And for tanks a million or more gallons in capacity, they're becoming the tank of choice."

In order to capitalize on that market segment, Phoenix acquired the Elevated Tank Division of Pittsburg Tank & Tower, in 2006, along with its 52,000-sq.-ft plant manufacturing in Sebree, Kentucky and a work force skilled in composite elevated tank manufacturing and management. "We didn't get into the composite market until 2006, when we made that acquisition," Yohler recounts. "So, our marketing focus has been to get pre-qualified by demonstrating our superior construction capabilities so that we are able to bid certain projects, especially the larger projects – two million gallons and above – and gain a share of that marketplace."

Going forward, Yohler would like to see Phoenix become the industry leader in all styles of tanks, including composites. And he knows that having a satisfied workforce will be one key to achieving that goal. "Unemployment, right now, is lower than it's been in a long time, so, especially in our industry, finding quality, qualified welders who are willing to go on the road and work at job sites that are, sometimes very remote, sometimes very challenging, to live away from their family for four to six weeks at a time, is very difficult," he admits. "So, we try to treat our people right, so they'll stay with us."

Some 32 years ago, a half dozen, highly motivated, middle managers pooled their resources to purchase the assets of the defunct Universal Tank and Ironworks. They chose the name "Phoenix" for their new company as it symbolized a business rising to new life from its ashes. Over the last three decades, Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors, LLC has constructed more than 5,000 water towers of all styles, ranging in size from 30,000 to 2,000,000 gallons, all across the American landscape.

That's a business that's not merely rising – it's soaring.



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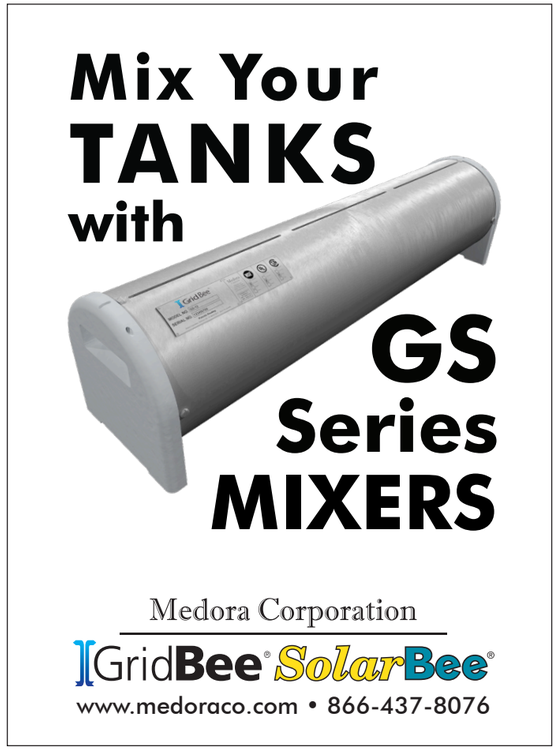

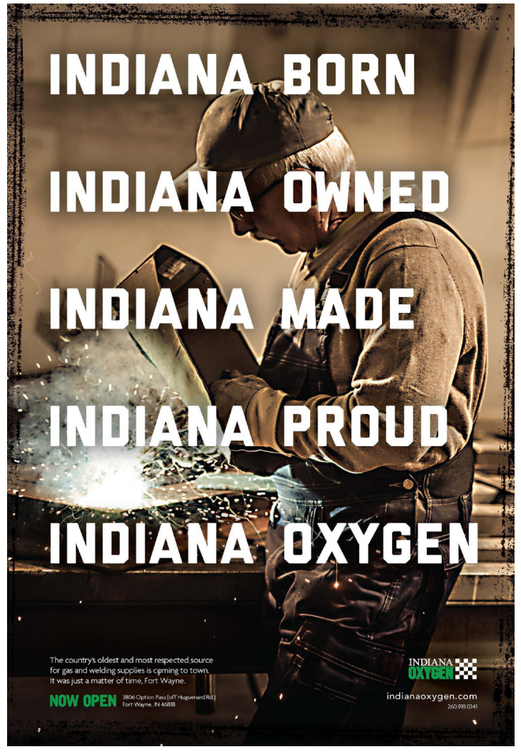



new advances and growth in

General Aviation

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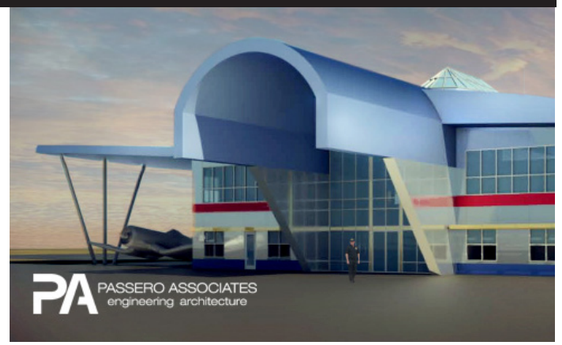

A COMMUNITY ASSET

LEESBURG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



AN ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR THE REGION

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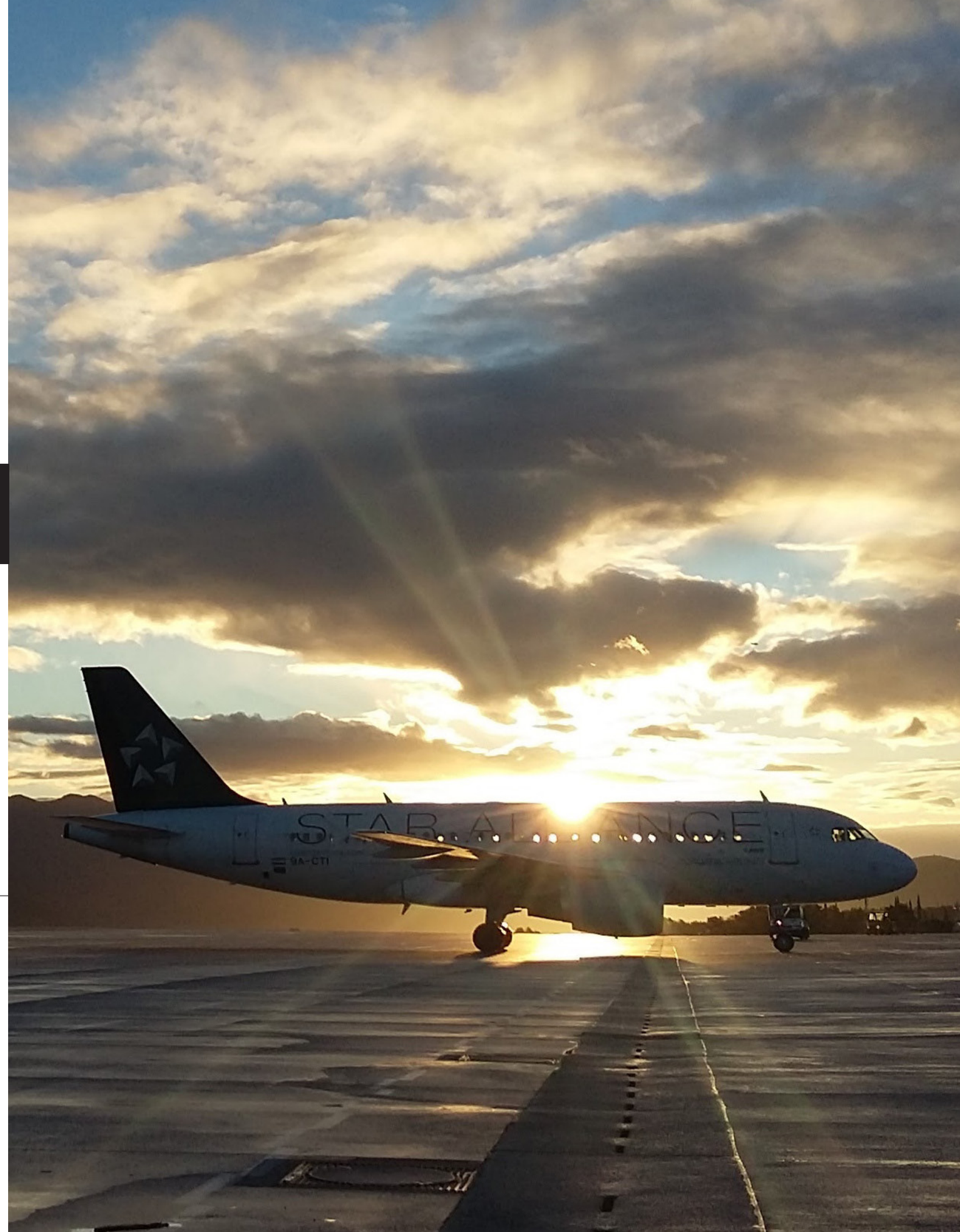

The Bartow Municipal Airport

A HISTORY OF PILOT TRAINING

Like many of the airports in Florida, the Bartow Municipal Airport (BOW) in Polk County, was originally built as a World War II air base. "The vast majority of the airports in the state were built in less than a year at the outset of World War II," says John Helms, BOW's Executive Director. "It was just an amazing feat of engineering. It's hard to be part of military aviation and not have some connection to the State of Florida."

"BOW opened in 1943 as the Bartow Army Air Field and it operated as a fighter replacement training station for P-51 Mustangs, until 1945," Helms continues. "The airport was briefly turned over to a civilian operator until 1951, when the Air Force came in and took possession of it, opening the Bartow Air Base as a primary pilot training base. They operated T-6 Texans, T-28 Trojans, T-34 Mentors, and T-37 Talons. Many Air Force pilots came through and received their primary training at Bartow. We also had three astronauts come through for their primary training – Buzz Aldrin was trained here; Ed White and Bo Bobko."

When the Air Base closed in 1961, the ownership was transferred to the City of Bartow, with aviation facilities leased to a fixed-base operator. In 1964 the City requested authority from the Federal Aviation Administration to convert a large building area into an industrial park and, in 1967, the Bartow Municipal Airport Development Authority was established. Today, the Authority operates both the airport and the industrial park, as well as serving as the primary fixed base operation for the airfield and the operator of its

AT A GLANCE
THE BARTOW MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

WHAT: A municipally-owned, regional airport

WHERE: Bartow, Polk County, Florida

WEBSITE: www.bartow-airport.com

well-regarded flight school. While BOW does get some funding from the federal and state governments for capital projects, it operates self-sufficiently with revenues from aviation and industrial park tenants that lease hangars and buildings, and fuel sales.

BOW sees approximately 40-50,000 operations a year, ranging from small, single engine aircraft to large corporate jets. "We have three active runways on this airfield, which is rare for a general aviation airport. Our primary runway is 5,000 feet long and 150 feet wide," says Helms. "We have an operating control tower on the field that's completely privatized. We have fully licensed and certified air traffic controllers, but they are our employees – they work for the Airport Authority. And we're probably operating one of the oldest, still active control towers in the country, dating back to the war era."

"We have 27 employees as part of the Airport Authority, and to this day, we continue that long tradition as a primary pilot training facility," Helms adds. "We're a pretty unique operation. We're one of those medium-level, general aviation airports with an equally large industrial park, so it's a very dynamic operation. It's different than the majority of general aviation airports and even some commercial services airports."

Airside businesses at BOW include three maintenance facilities, an aircraft painting facility, two medivac helicopter companies, the Polk County Sheriff's Aviation Unit, mosquito control, and the Bartow Flying Service (operated by the Airport Authority) which provides line service, fuel, and flight training. "In the industrial park, we have over 60 buildings that we own and operate and lease out to multiple businesses," Helms reports. "The industries vary from steel manufacturing to car customization; we have a plastic recycling center and county government facilities. And we're a true multi-modal hub in the area. We have a trucking facility and we have multiple rail spurs."





Terry Beacham, BOW's Deputy Executive Director, says that BOW has plans to expand the aforementioned intermodal capabilities of the industrial park by adding a community rail dock and truck loading facility, as well as additional rail lines. "It would improve the intermodal function of the industrial park, tying highway, rail, and aviation all together," he states.

Other items on BOW's agenda include a terminal apron expansion. "We're trying to get more corporate jet activity at the airport, and during our busy season, our ramp completely fills up," Beacham explains. "Longer term, maybe five to seven years out, we're looking at a runway extension, which would allow us to get a little bit larger aircraft in. We're also looking at some improvement on the airside for convenience – building connecting taxiways



– to make the airfield more efficient. In addition, we're always doing rehabilitation projects because we have so much pavement and it's a major challenge to keep up with that. We're constantly trying to get more funding to rehab pavement and refurbish our industrial park buildings, which also date back to the World War II era."



The airport is also looking into the implementation of ground-based ADS-B (Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast) to provide increased capability to tower operators, giving them the ability to see aircraft in the area in real time from their computer screens. The addition of ADS-B equipment will dramatically increase tower operators' capabilities as well as increasing safety and efficiency of arriving and departing aircraft in a much more cost-effective manor compared to radar services.

While no longer a military installation, Bartow Municipal Airport still commemorates its military heritage. Forty years after the deactivation of Bartow Air Base, a retired USAF T-37 was loaned to the city and the airport by the National Museum of the United States Air Force and placed on a permanent static display pylon as a memorial to the former U.S. Army Air Forces and U.S. Air Force presence at Bartow. The T-37 is near the former air base main gate, now the airport entrance, and the Bartow Air Base Museum occupies a room in the airport's main terminal building.





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THE FERNANDINA BEACH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT



A COMMUNITY ASSET

The Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport is a public use airport owned and operated by the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida. It serves the general aviation (GA) needs of the City of Fernandina Beach, Amelia Island, Nassau County, the northern portion of Duval County, southeastern Georgia, and the GA community, as a whole. The Airport sits on approximately 850 acres of land, and is roughly three miles south of the city's historic downtown, less than two miles from Amelia Island's beaches, hotels, and resort accommodations, and approximately 27 miles northeast of Jacksonville International Airport, for which it serves as a general aviation reliever facility.

"The airfield was originally developed during World War II as a training base for the U.S. Navy," says Airport Manager, Nate Coyle. "At the time, they were flying an aircraft called an F4U Corsair. Some years later, around 1947, they transferred the ownership to the City of Fernandina Beach, and the city has owned it since. One of the benefits of being a surplus military airfield is that they developed the infrastructure here, substantially.

AT A GLANCE THE FERNANDINA BEACH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

WHAT: A city-owned, regional airport

WHERE: Fernandina Beach, Amelia Island, Florida

WEBSITE: www.fbfl.us/168/Airport-Information

In fact, the Airport has always been utilized as a community asset, regularly providing property for community and other events. In addition, the Airport provides 26 acres of land used by the City Parks and Recreation Department; the Amelia River golf course and portions of the city golf course are located on Airport property, and the Airport contractually provides land for a dog park.



We have three runways, all with a reasonable length."

In fact, all three runways at the Airport meet or exceed 5,000 feet in length, in addition to five taxiways. Runway 04/22 is 5,300 feet long and 100 feet wide; it has an asphalt surface in good condition (resurfaced in 2004). Runway 09/27 is 5,001 feet long and 100 feet wide; it has a concrete surface in good condition (resurfaced in 2003). Runway 13/31 is 5,152 feet long and 100 feet wide; it has an asphalt surface in good condition (resurfaced in 2010). All three runways have medium intensity runway lights.

"To have three runways and that level of infrastructure in a GA airport is a little bit unique," says Coyle. "And, over time, the city has continued to maintain that infrastructure, which provides a great service for the local aviation community and those who are flying into the area. Since Amelia Island is an attractive resort location, we get a lot of transient traffic here. So, it's a great mix of the local traffic coming into the field, and charter and executive level jet service coming to visit the island."

Currently on the Airport's agenda is the completion of a new, $4.5 million terminal building that Coyle says will actually bear the resemblance of an old F4U Corsair. "They started construction in August 2017, and we think it will be done in June," he reports. "It will house the airport's new fixed base operator, Bent Wing Flight Services, airport staff, and will provide a high level of service to our local and transient traffic. At the same time, it will respect the history of the airport by having a nose and tail structure that will look like that Corsair that used to fly here in the '40s." In addition, the Airport Terminal will offer community access for youth and education programs, special events, and airport business meetings.

In fact, the Airport has always been utilized as a community asset, regularly providing property for community and other events. In the past, the city has hosted the Ben Byrns 5K Runway Rally which offers a 5K run, an open house at the Airport, and separate events with free airplane rides for children. The City works closely with military agencies, such as the Florida Army Guard and Georgia Air National Guard to use the airport for training exercises. Every March, the



Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, an annual "celebration of the automobile" featuring more than 250 rare vehicles from around the world, uses the Airport for parking 2,000 vehicles and 70 to 80 aircraft, per day, for the weekend of the event.

In addition, the Airport provides 26 acres of land





> To have three runways and that level of infrastructure in a GA airport is a little bit unique,. And, over time, the city has continued to maintain that infrastructure, which provides a great service for the local aviation community and those who are flying into the area. Since Amelia Island is an attractive resort location, we get a lot of transient traffic here. So, it's a great mix of the local traffic coming into the field, and charter and executive level jet service coming to visit the island.
>
> NATE COYLE
> AIRPORT MANAGER

used by the City Parks and Recreation Department for soccer and baseball facilities; the Amelia River golf course and portions of the city golf course are located on Airport property; the Airport contractually provides land on behalf of the city to Nassau Humane Society for a dog park and for City Animal Control services; it provides reduced hangar rental to the Civil Air Patrol in exchange for emergency service assistance to the city. In return, the city provides needed services. "We have the city staff that provides support to us and we lean heavily on some of the city resources," Coyle notes.

The airport also provides significant economic benefits to the Fernandina Beach area, estimated at over $30 million, annually, between direct and indirect impacts. Some revenue comes from the rents on its 52 T-hangars/Row Hangars and based aircraft; some from leases held by its tenant businesses, which include Bent Wing Flight Services, the airport's fixed base operator; Fernandina Beach Aircraft Maintenance, an aircraft maintenance and avionics business; Skydive Amelia Island, a skydiving operator; Experience Powered Paragliding (paragliding); Hang Glide USA (trike flights); and Ad Airlines (aerial advertising); and some from charges and fees placed on transient traffic. Indirect income comes from associated spending from visitors who arrive in their private or charter aircraft.

Indeed, Coyle reports that "the airport operates in the black. We don't pull off of the general fund or property taxes; we're self-sufficient. It's a great asset to the community."

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aholesko@passero.com

Brad Wente, PE -
Aviation Services Director
bwente@passero.com

Don Ramdass - Associate
dramdass@passero.com

Christopher Nardone, RA - Architect
cnardone@passero.com

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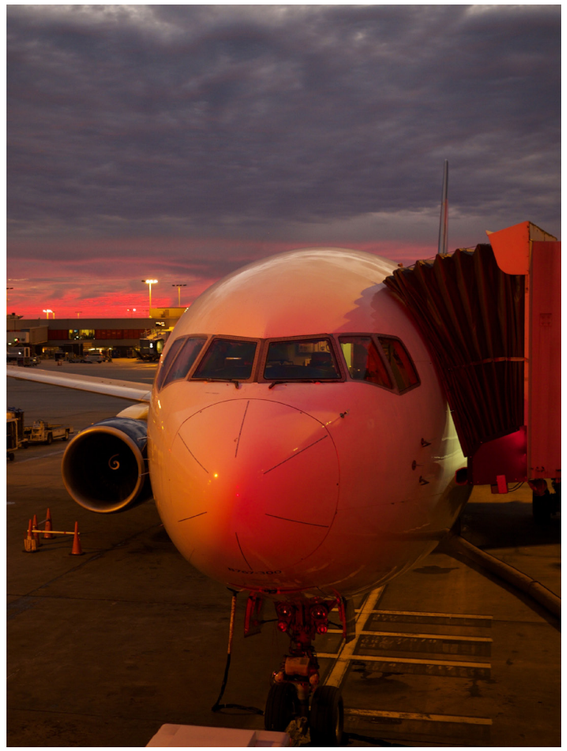

Leesburg International Airport

AN ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR THE REGION

Leesburg International Airport, located 35 miles northwest of Orlando, is the central hub for air transportation and business in Lake County, Florida. The airport was originally constructed in 1942 by the Civil Aeronautics Administration as a World War II training facility for the U.S. Army. In 1946, it was deeded to the City of Leesburg for use as a general aviation airport. "It was a pretty sleepy little airport, and remained relatively small after the war," says Al Minner, Leesburg's City Manger. "In the mid 1970s and early '80s, more business approached and slowly it became the economic engine that it is today."

The airport's economic impact to the Leesburg region is approximately $64 million, annually. With two runways extending up to 6,300 feet, the airport regularly supports flight training, corporate/ business operations, general aviation aircraft charters, and recreational/ sport flying, logging approximately 60,000 operations,



per year. Its major tenants include Brainerd Helicopters, a helicopter charter company; Skybolt, a manufacturer of aerospace fasteners; Wipaire, an aircraft maintenance and modification business; Flying Colors of Leesburg, an aircraft painting business; Sunair Aviation, the airport's fixed base operator; and The Villages retirement community's corporate flight department.

In addition, Leesburg International Airport is a Port of Entry to the U.S., due to its U.S. Customs and Border Protection office, allowing international flights to be cleared in Leesburg and the establishment of a Foreign-Trade Zone. The airport, which is managed by the City of Leesburg, is self-sustaining, and has been designated a Gold Seal Airport by the Florida Department of Transportation, recognized for its high standards for infrastructure, services, and safety.

According to Minner, the most recent major project at the airport has been the construction of a seaplane ramp created in conjunction with Wipaire, a large fabricator of floats for general aviation aircraft. "We struck a deal with Wipaire in 2014, for them to do a major expansion to their business that would provide the airport 60 additional jobs," he explains. "They're also required to make several other facility improvements to existing hangars and, in exchange, we would build a seaplane ramp."

The State of Florida is second only to Alaska in terms of the number of seaplanes and seaplane-certified pilots that are registered within the state. The airport's proximity to the Metro Orlando area, together with the availability of U.S. Customs services on the airfield, make it an ideal gateway for seaplane traffic to the Central Florida region. Leesburg's sister city, Tavares, located about 11 miles to the east, is a local hub for seaplane sightseeing and entertainment, and Minner sees the Wipaire facility at the airport as a hub for seaplane maintenance. "Regionally, it blends, because we're the industrial side and Tavares is the commercial side," he notes.

Going forward, the airport is in the progress of putting together a comprehensive master plan, which, according to Airport Manager Tracey Dean, will outline its programs, operations, and potential growth through 2035. "Right now, our struggle is that our usable land is just about gone," says Minner. "The new master plan is examining the south side of the airport and some other areas where we can get additional land and expand into more industrial sites."

"The airport is about 850 acres, so there's additional land for future development, but there are challenges that come with it," adds Dean. "There's a lot of wetlands on the property and there's a need for infrastructure; there are no utilities on the south side. So, long-term, there is plenty of room and, hopefully, the master plan will help us prioritize some of that."

One reason that Dean wants to see the airport grow is that, currently, there is a large waiting list



AT A GLANCE
LEESBURG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

WHAT: A city-owned, general aviation airport

WHERE: Leesburg, Lake County, Florida

WEBSITE: www.leesburgflorida.gov/government/departments/airport/index.php



for general aviation aircraft. "Leesburg is a lot of people's first choice," she says. "I have a waiting list of 85 people who want to get into a T-hangar. A lot of people want to come to Leesburg because they like the fact that we have a tower, and the GA airports that are in the national system can receive grant funding, whereas, if you're a private airport, you're not going to receive funding, so there's less opportunity for continual maintenance. As far as businesses, a lot of people have approached us about larger hangars and new construction."

Minner believes that the airport's assets as a transportation hub make it very attractive to all types of new businesses that want to take advantage of the economic opportunities it offers. "There are two things going on at the airport," he maintains. "Typically, it's always been a general aviation airport and the projects and the investments that we put into the airport made it better for the flying public. But, in the last five years, the City Commission's vision is to use it to get new investment and more job creation, and make it more of an economic development engine and not just an airport. So, some of the things we invested in - the seaplane ramp, the trade zone, the customs office - have been to unlock its potential, to create jobs and new investment in the region. That's where we're headed."

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The Monterey Regional Airport is a small, non-hub airport, located three miles south of the city center. Its operations include four commercial airlines, 211 hangars and tie downs, 55 business tenants and 400,000 passengers per year. Ken

AT A GLANCE
THE MONTEREY REGIONAL AIRPORT

WHAT: A small, non-hub, regional airport

WHERE: Monterey, California

WEBSITE: www.montereyairport.com



Griggs, Airport Operations Manager Director of Operations, explains the volume that moves through the runways: "In 2017, we had about 112,000 operations. An operation is a departure or an arrival. Of those operations, a little less than 8,500 of those were commercial carriers. So, the vast majority of our operations are general aviation related." General aviation refers to all civilian flights, excluding passenger airline services, and includes private and corporate jets, single-engine planes, and flight trainings.

Griggs continues, "We have a lot of transient corporate business traffic. We're a destination, with large marquee events that bring foodies, cultural and sports enthusiasts, and wine lovers all year round. And we have a lot of leisure activities for families to enjoy, so it's very attractive for businesses to come here as there is something for everyone." In order to serve all the travel and extracurricular needs of visitors and residents, the airport accommodates accordingly.

"We have base tenants here that encompass general, corporate, and light aviation," Griggs reports. "We have two major full service fixed base operators (FBOs). Monterey Jet Center and Del Monte Aviation facilitate the executive

> We have a lot of transient corporate business traffic. We're a destination, with large marquee events that bring foodies, cultural and sports enthusiasts, and wine lovers all year round. And we have a lot of leisure activities for families to enjoy, so it's very attractive for businesses to come here as there is something for everyone.
>
> **KEN GRIGGS**
> DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



business clientele through their own terminals on the property, so all transient traffic goes to one of those facilities." The operators provide aircraft line services, fuel, aircraft storage, maintenance, and aircraft rental. Through their lease terms, they are also allowed to sublease space and have arrangements with maintenance technicians and flight schools. Therefore, the FBOs are able to, according to Griggs, "augment some of the services we can't provide."



Two flight schools are found onsite at Monterey Regional Airport: Aerodynamic Aviation is a public facility and the Navy Club is a members-only operation. Multiple defense/military institutions provided a strong presence in Monterey, such as the Naval Postgraduate School and the Defense Language Institute. In fact, within a year of being established as the Monterey Peninsula Airport District, a special district of the state, the airport was used as a naval facility to support World War II efforts. Leased to the United States Navy for a dollar a year, it was turned back over for civilian use after 1945. The same patterns that drove early development in Monterey, such as growth of tourism, agriculture and the defense presence figured prominently in the establishment of the Airport.

Since then, the airport has been able to grow as it sees fit. As a special district, the airport is not owned or oper-



ated by a city or county. An elected, five-person board of directors is responsible for fulfilling the airport's mission, which is three-tiered:

- To provide the region convenient commercial and general aviation access to the national air transportation system,
- To operate the airport in a safe, efficient, sustainable and fiscally responsible manner, and
- To develop the airport to meet future needs, opportunities, and challenges.

In its efforts to keep up with the needs of the community, the airport is working on a long-term plan. "We are in the environmental review of our 20-year vision," explains Chris Morello, Senior Planning Manager of Development and Environment. Within the vision are "quite a few proposed possible improvements, such as a new relocated passenger terminal, general aviation facilities, a relocated commercial ramp, and a relocated aircraft rescue and firefighting facility." While these endeavors are still proposals, yet to be approved or funded, Morello explains that continual infrastructure improvements keep the airport competitive. "San Jose is 75 miles away and San Francisco is approximately 101 miles from here," she details. "They have larger airports, with a more diverse fleet mix. So when you have those relatively nearby, low-cost more diverse options, they are definitely competition." There are also four nearby general aviation airports as well; Salinas, Watsonville, Hollister, and Marina all are smaller general aviation airports that are within driving distance to Monterey.

So when it comes to what sets Monterey Regional Airport apart from its large and small competitors, "It's pure convenience," explains Griggs. "We are the most convenient airport in the county. With all the municipalities near

the airport, all destinations are within 15 minutes. Basically, once you get off the airplane, you are home within 5-15 minutes or at your vacation destination." He elaborates on the ease in which passengers pass through the airport as well, "Our TSA lines are not long, and the boarding areas are very close. While we don't have jetways here, the walk to the plane is very minimal. And the weather here is good." Meaning, departures and landings are simple and quick.

Chris Morello seconds her colleague's opinion. What she wants people to know about Monterey Regional Airport is that "we aren't so small that you wouldn't want to consider us as a travel option. A lot of times, when people think regional, they think of very small operations with limited travel options. We fly to Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles. We have great connections, and I think that makes us very competitive for people who may want to come to the peninsula."

As the region continues to grow, so too will its visitor count. According to Morello, the airport remains on mission: "From new housing developments sprouting throughout the county, to multi-million-dollar renovation investments by local hotels and resorts, the growth and vitality of Monterey County is booming. So the Airport continues to dialogue with airline associates to attract more commercial services and opportunities for passengers to funnel through gateway cities when Monterey is their destination."

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Franchise view







IN THIS ISSUE

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AT A GLANCE
PET WANTS

WHAT: A distributor of specialty-crafted pet food products

WHERE: Cincinnati, Ohio

WEBSITE: www.petwants.com

PET WANTS

NUTRITION YOU CAN TRUST

Americans spend $25 billion a year on pet food. The world's largest producer of pet food is the United Kingdom's Mars Petcare with a portfolio of approximately 50 brands. Nestlé Purina Petcare of St. Louis, Missouri is the world's second largest company, globally, and the first largest in the United States. Hill's Pet Nutrition of Topeka, Kansas, a subsidiary of Colgate-Palmolive, comes in third, and Blue Buffalo of Wilton, Connecticut, recently sold to General Mills for $8 billion, owns the fourth spot.

A newer, and much smaller, entrant into the lucrative pet food market is Pet Wants of Cincinnati, Ohio, a niche company that was founded in 2010 and offers specialty-crafted pet food products made with natural ingredients, with no sugar added, no fillers, no animal by-products, and no corn, wheat, soy, or dyes. Pet Wants, listed #33 in Entrepreneur Magazine's 2018 listing of the Top New Franchises, sells its private label food products, along with a variety of other pet products from partner companies, through its network of



franchise stores.

Pet Wants is a member of the Strategic Franchising System, a family of five separate brands: Freshcoat, a painting company; Caring Transitions, specializing in senior services; The Growth Coach, a leader in business and sales coaching; and TruBlue, which provides house care services.

Recently, Business View Magazine spoke with Scott Hoots, a seasoned franchise management executive, who became President of Pet Wants in September 2017, in order to learn about this dynamic, fast-growing company. The following is an edited transcript of that conversation:

BVM: How did Pet Wants come onto the scene?

Hoots: "Pet Wants was started by Michelle Hobbs out of the need to solve a problem. Michelle and her wife, Amanda Broughton, had a dog named Jackson, and Jackson was having some health problems that required a lot of visits to the veterinarian and thousands of dollars in bills. And when they got down to the root cause of Jackson's problems, it all pointed to the lack of nutrition in his diet – they were feeding Jackson one of the name-brand, big-box retailer dog foods.



"So, Michelle and Amanda developed a dog food formula that was fresh and nutritious, and once Jackson started doing better on the food, Michelle got the idea that they could start selling the food and help other people's pets. So, in 2010, in Findlay Market, in downtown Cincinnati, Pet Wants was born. In 2015, Michelle partnered with Strategic Franchising to help start franchising the concept. We grew from nine locations at the end of 2015, to 50 at the end of 2016. At the end of 2017, we had 65 open locations in 26 different states. Today, we are a national brand."

BVM: How are you continuing to build the Pet Wants franchise network?

Hoots: "We use all of the traditional franchise recruiting methods; we have a very robust franchise development website; we use franchise development online portals. Generally speaking, though, candidates find us because they are looking for a franchise business where they can give back to the community. More often, what I hear from our candidates is, 'We wanted to go into business for ourselves; we wanted to buy a franchise; but we wanted to buy a franchise that had an impact on people and one that gives back to the community.' And that's generally what leads them to Pet Wants."

BVM: How do you vet those potential franchi-







sees, to make sure they're a good fit for the brand?

Hoots: "First and foremost is a passion for pets. Now, that, in and of itself, isn't enough to be able to successfully build a pet food business, so on top of that passion for pets, you have to have a desire and ability to sell products, because we're a sales organization, at heart. Third is the ability to manage people – both employees and relationships with customers. Then there's the financial acumen – being able to run the day-to-day financial side of the business, as well."

BVM: What kind of training do you offer new franchisees?

Hoots: "Once awarded a franchise, they go through an onboarding process. That onboarding is designed to get the business components started. We haven't dug into pet food operations or pet food nutrition - we haven't dug into any of that, yet. We're just helping them get a corporate entity set up; helping them get a bank account set up; their DBA; all of that.

"Then we bring them into our corporate offices here in Cincinnati, and they go through a very hands-on training regimen that includes sales skills, how to run a Pet Wants business from an operational standpoint, how to go out into the community and build the brand, how to plan and manage the business from a financial standpoint, and how to manage the inventory on a monthly basis. Those are a few of the concepts that we teach them in the hands-on training program.

"We have two models. The first is a mobile-only business. That business focuses on building a business through grassroots development activities and delivering fresh and nutritious pet food to people's doors, using a vehicle. The second concept is a retail store. In that case, they are going to not only deliver food via the mobile component with all of the grassroots, community-based business development that a mobile store does, but they're also going to open a storefront and operate a retail revenue stream, as well.

"Once they have gone through the training process, if they're looking to open a retail store, they will be directed toward our real estate vendor, who will help them find the right space that meets our criteria in the market in which they are launching. If they're a mobile-based franchise, they're assigned a franchise business coach who helps them finish the process of getting the business launched, and then continues to help them manage and build the business. So, we really have a soup to nuts support system when it comes to our new franchise owners."

BVM: After a franchise is up and running, what products does it sell?

Hoots: "Our core product is our Pet Wants dog and cat food. That product represents a significant portion of our annual revenue and they are required to buy that product from our single-ap-







proved manufacturer. We also offer complementary products, like homemade treats, for example, homemade beef jerky. There are some other dog and cat treats that our franchisees make right in their own kitchens. And then there are third-party treats, toys, and supplements that our franchisees are allowed to sell that are manufactured by approved vendors."

BVM: Aside from your proprietary brand foods, what other characteristics make Pet Wants a unique company in the marketplace?

Hoots: "There are two key points of differentiation. The first is the freshness or our product. Truly, there is nobody in the country that sells a product like Pet Wants pet food. We're the freshest and most nutritious dry dog and cat food that you can feed your pet, measured by the length of time from manufacture to the bowl.

"In the mass market, most pet food goes 12, 16, 18 months from the date of manufacture, before your dog or cat eats it. And that's the problem, because just like human food loses nutrition over time, pet food loses nutrition, as well. We make it fresh in small batches, every month, so we're guaranteeing that our private label food is the freshest. That's the first point of differentiation.

"The second point is that we offer the convenience of delivery. You don't have to go by a store or market to be able to get your food; we'll bring it to your home, your office, your doggy daycare. We offer the convenience of delivery on top of the fresh advantage. So, that's who we are and what we do."

BVM: What was on your agenda when you first came to Pet Wants?

Hoots: "The first thing that I did when I came on board, last September, was to reach out to our franchise owners and ask them about their satisfaction with their Pet Wants franchise business; ask them about what has gone right and what could have been improved. And I got a lot of great and valuable feedback from them. Out of that feedback, I crafted five pillars of growth, which define us in the short and medium term as to what we're focusing on to help our franchisees be successful.

"The first pillar of growth is strong unit level economics – in other words, our franchisees have to have a strong revenue stream and a strong profitability, so that they can reach their financial goals.

"The second pillar of growth is building a strong relationship between

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the franchisor and the franchisees. I want them to be happy with their investment in Pet Wants; I want them to be happy with the way they're treated by the franchisor; and I want them to feel good about their investment in our brand and be willing to tell people that they would do it all over again, if given the chance.

"The third pillar of growth is building a strong marketing and advertising program. We have to continue to build the brand and find new ways to increase the brand awareness of Pet Wants and our products.

"The fourth pillar of growth is to improve our technology platform. That includes our online presence and the technology which we use to run our franchise locations, like our POS system.

"The fifth pillar of growth is to build an effective management team, and that means that it's up to me to build franchise support personnel who are capable and passionate about helping franchisees be successful.

"Those are the areas that we're working hard on to create a positive and successful business environment for our franchise owners."

BVM: Do franchise owners ever get together?

Hoots: "We sure do. In fact, we just got done with our fourth regional meeting. My goal in the first quarter was to schedule a group of regional meetings where I can have myself and our operations team meet our franchisees close to home, but also allow groups of franchisees to get together, network, and share best practices. So, in the first quarter of this year, we have a total of six regional meetings across the country.

"In 2019, I expect to launch the annual PetWants Franchise Conference, which we will do each year to share best practices, celebrate our achievements and provide training and resources that will help our franchisees continue to get better and better."

BVM: What are your plans for the company, going forward?

Hoots: "Our biggest opportunity lies in expanding the brand awareness of Pet Wants across the country. We've been able to grow through our franchise locations, but we still have a grand opportunity in front of us to improve and increase our brand awareness through offering direct sales to customers who are not in a franchise location. That's a big part of what we are looking to do in the latter part of 2018.

"The vision for the future is to become a widely-known and admired brand that's respected as the leader in fresh and nutritious pet food, operating as a national franchise network with PetWants locations locally owned and operated by people who are passionate about pet nutrition. PetWants will also be a well-known, online brand, serving customers in all 50 states. That defines the long range goal for us."

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Mister Softee



AT A GLANCE // MISTER SOFTEE

WHAT: An ice cream truck franchisor

WHERE: Runnemede, New Jersey

WEBSITE: www.mistersoftee.com

"THE CREAMIEST, DREAMIEST SOFT ICE CREAM"

"I think, one of the things that makes our company unique within the franchise world, is that we are going to be a third generation family-owned business, and we have a lot of multi-generational franchisees," explains Jim Conway, Jr., Vice President and second-generation, co-owner of the notable and nostalgic Mister Softee Ice Cream brand. Founded in 1956 by two brothers, William and Jim Conway, the business began as Dairy Van, a manufacturer of ice cream trucks. It soon grew into a multi-million dollar company with over 350 franchise dealers and 600 trucks in 15 states.

"When they started, they still hadn't gotten the engineering right." Conway explains, adding that the brothers were overwhelmed handling issues with the vans, the machinery, and recommendations on ingredients. So, they decided, "If we're going to do all this hand-holding, we should create the busi-



ness as a franchise. That way, we can get royalties and make our money back. We'll sell the supplies, trucks, and everything that goes with it." With the franchise model in place, "they really blew it up," Conway exclaims.

During the first half of the 1960s, Mister Softee had explosive growth. "They were on the razor blade model and pretty much giving away the trucks. You could buy a truck for somewhere near five thousand dollars," Conway recounts. "Because they were financing the sales, controlling inventory, and receiving royalties; they had three streams of revenue."

As business for the brothers grew, so did opportunities for their children. "My cousin and I are partners," Conway reports. "We started working at the company when we were teenagers. We began by cleaning trucks, went off to college, and came back afterwards. I came back the summer before John and was running the wholesale supply company for a few years. Then, we became our



parents' exit strategy, if you will. By the late 1990s we both started working in the office, and concluded the purchase by the year 2000."

With their parents having relocated to Florida, the cousins set to work plotting the future of the business. With a heavy footprint in the northeast, from Connecticut to Virginia, the company began mapping out new opportunities to the south and west. As Conway explains, "There are so many regions in the country, Florida and the Carolinas, Texas and California, and so many people who have migrated from the northeast. People tell me stories of people doing U-turns on the highways, running down the trucks."

So the cousins are tapping into nostalgia to enter new, distant markets. New franchisees in Texas, California, and Arizona have built their businesses into multiple-truck operations in a few short years. One of their newer franchisees in California is already opening up a storage location for his trucks. As Conway puts it, "These newer markets, which have so many people who have moved from the east, really represent tremendous opportunities for us."

The company continues to see new growth in existing markets as well, including amongst existing franchisees. While Mister Softee builds about 15 new trucks per year, they paint between 40 and 50 trucks. Conway describes





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the maintenance side of the company: "We do a lot of servicing, refurbishing, and painting of trucks over the winter. I'm out interacting with franchisees a lot, so when I see a truck that looks old and tired, I encourage them not to run it into the ground."

Conway understands that maintenance, refurbishment, and investment into new trucks are imperatives to expanding and/or selling franchises. While looking out for Mister Softee as a whole, he parlays the bigger picture to his franchisees. "There are guys out there, who have been with us a long time and they've really taken great care of their truck. But, their truck is now 20 years old. For those who are looking to take over their franchise, the truck doesn't have any value to them. Nobody wants to buy a business with a 20-year-old truck."

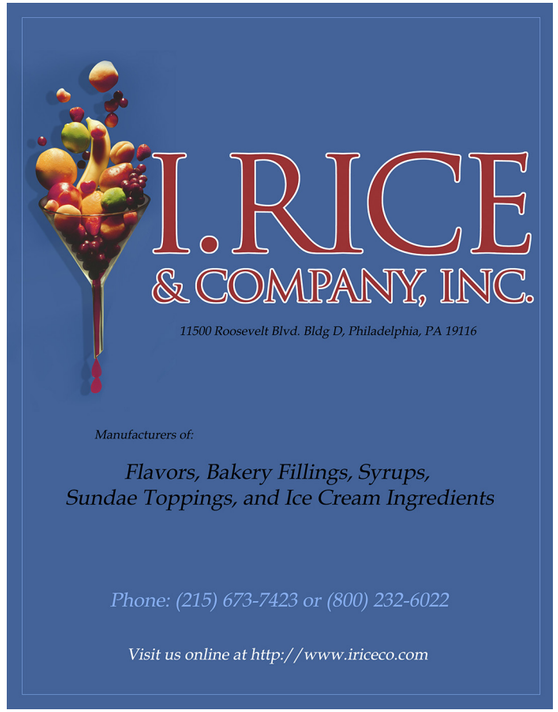


This honesty and transparency in business is an ethos of Mister Softee, and Conway believes that the company has become a multi-generational firm for this reason. He states, "If you didn't conduct your business honestly and reputably, you wouldn't have fathers and uncles bringing in their sons and nephews into the business." He further describes his company culture as open and welcoming. "We do our own financing. We finance people who would never get standard bank financing. So we are really open to bringing in minorities, recent immigrants, and women. If you took a snapshot of our franchisees, you'd see they are from all over the world. We are great at putting people into their business for the first time of their life, which is something we're really proud of."

But of course it's not all about company culture. Mister Softee's production and product is superior. Conway explains, "When it comes to the actual construction of the truck, the way it's designed, the equipment, the engineering that goes into it – we just flat out surpass anyone else who is building a truck." He calls the Mister Softee truck the Cadillac of the competition, built on a GM platform with an International body and custom-designed machines made by Electro Freeze.



The past 60 years of service have helped the two generations of owners develop and perfect their offerings. As Conway concludes, "We produce the best equipment in the market, and if you follow our advice, you'll be selling the best quality product that's available on the market. You'll be second to no one."



PREFERRED VENDORS

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mining view

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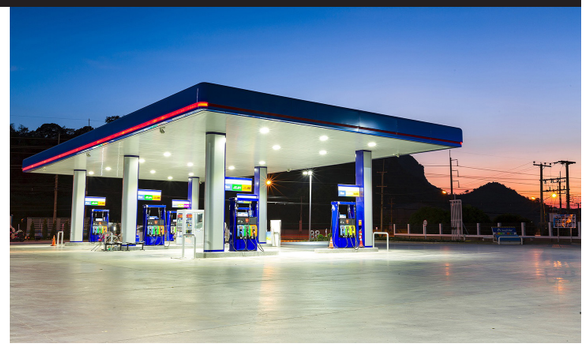

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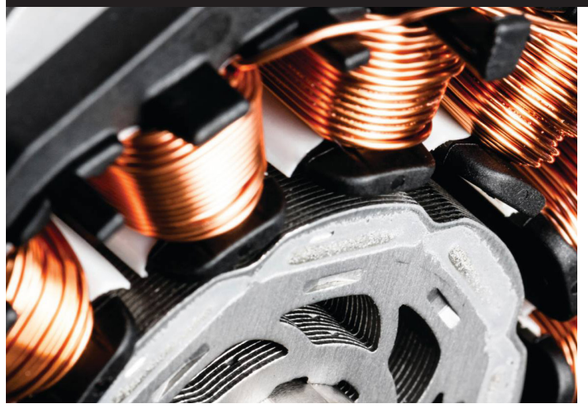

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AvaLAN Wireless Systems

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

AvaLAN Wireless Systems, Inc. develops and manufactures wired and wireless Ethernet equipment and solutions for commercial and industrial clients, including retail fueling stations, digital signage, retail point-of-sale, and other industrial automation applications. Now based in Madison, Alabama since 2008, AvaLAN began in 2004 as a technology company in Silicon Valley, California.

"Our very first products were connections for the Microsoft XBox," says company President, Matt Nelson. "In the early days of AvaLAN we did connections for IP (Internet protocol) surveillance cameras and access control devices. Then we got into the Internet of Things and the industrial wireless space, and since then, we've evolved into other markets that require reliable and secure network

AT A GLANCE
AVALAN WIRELESS SYSTEMS

WHAT: Wireless solutions for commercial and industrial clients

WHERE: Madison, Alabama

WEBSITE: www.avalan.com



connectivity. Through focusing on different vertical markets, we were able to grow very successfully. And each year, it seems like there's a newer, better, bigger, potential vertical market that we get involved in. Some of that is because we have fundamental technology in data networking – we have our own proprietary protocol, our own proprietary encryption, our own proprietary networking stack, and because we've got that level of expertise, we're able to customize our solutions for many customers in different markets."

For example, one of AvaLAN's customers is Daktronics, the largest manufacturer of digital signage. "Daktronics uses our products for connecting their digital signs – everything from billboards that you see out on the highway to the signs you see in front of pharmacies, schools, churches, and fast-food restaurants," Nelson notes. Another major client is Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, the largest manufacturer of digital cutoff switches for the electrical utility industry. "We've been doing last-mile connections to transformer stations, as well as connections in and around transformer stations," he adds.

"Our newest market is in retail petroleum," Nelson continues, "in particular, doing industrial wireless connections for fuel dispensers to enable secure credit card transactions. That market has a federal mandate to have support for EMV (Europay, Mastercard and Visa) by October 2020, and we're finding the bulk of our sales and revenue coming from that market at this point in time. EMV upgrades of the retail fuel market is a large market opportunity estimated to be around $6.4 billion. About $400 million of that market is in communications and AvaLAN is working day in and day out to become the de facto standard for the data



> "We've made the Inc. 5000 list two years in a row as a Fastest Growing Company, and we think that we've really just begun to scratch the surface of our growth potential."
>
> **MATT NELSON**
> COMPANY PRESIDENT

connections to those fuel dispensers. So, five years from now, I'd hope you would see that every time that you do a transaction at a pump, it's going across an AvaLAN network connection."

Nelson characterizes his company as being "small but mighty." It has only a few employees and it differentiates itself in the type of technology it offers its clients. "It's not Wi-Fi, and it's not cellular," he explains. "It's a technology that's designed for device to device connectivity as opposed to the way a laptop or cell phone connects. There are layers of security and reliability that are required for our industrial customers that you wouldn't see in consumer type products. Being small and responsive to customers gives AvaLAN a number of









advantages over their larger less nimble competitors.

"We pride ourselves on one of our core skills which is going to a customer and listening – not saying, 'Hey, here are our wares.' We like to go in and say, 'What's that difficult wireless or networking problem that you're facing in your infrastructure?' We'll listen to the customer and then say, 'We think we have something for you,' or 'No, sorry, we don't have something for you.' We like to architect and engineer custom solutions for those industrial customers.

"And so, if you look at the different vertical markets that we've been involved in and try to draw some commonality between them, the most common thing is, typically, we're entering into a market that traditionally has been resistive to newer technologies - and they've been resistive because newer technologies aren't reliable enough or they're not secure enough. And that's where we've always been a champion for those customers. The solutions that we've brought are the solutions that are secure and reliable enough that they can take advantage of a wireless network infrastructure. We go where there are pain points; if there's a market that needs good network connectivity, that's where we go."

Nelson reports that AvaLAN has had five consecutive years of double-digit growth. "We've made the Inc. 5000 list two years in a row as a Fastest Growing Company, and we think that we've really just begun to scratch the surface of our growth potential," he declares. "Even though we've been a company for almost 13 years, we feel like we're still a start-up in a lot of ways. The future for us is not just network connectivity for retail fuel pumps, but any sort of pedestal where there is a credit card transaction. We have deployed thousands of units into all the divisions of Kroger Foods, for connections inside their stores for mobile, point-of-sale carts, combining that technology with our outdoor wireless technology, which is what led us to dealing with the payment systems for outdoor payment. And now, that's extending into other applications where there's outdoor payment. On top of that, we're doing quite a bit of network segmentation, where we're doing more sophisticated networking associated with those transactions to make sure they're secure in the way they're being handled in the cyberworld.

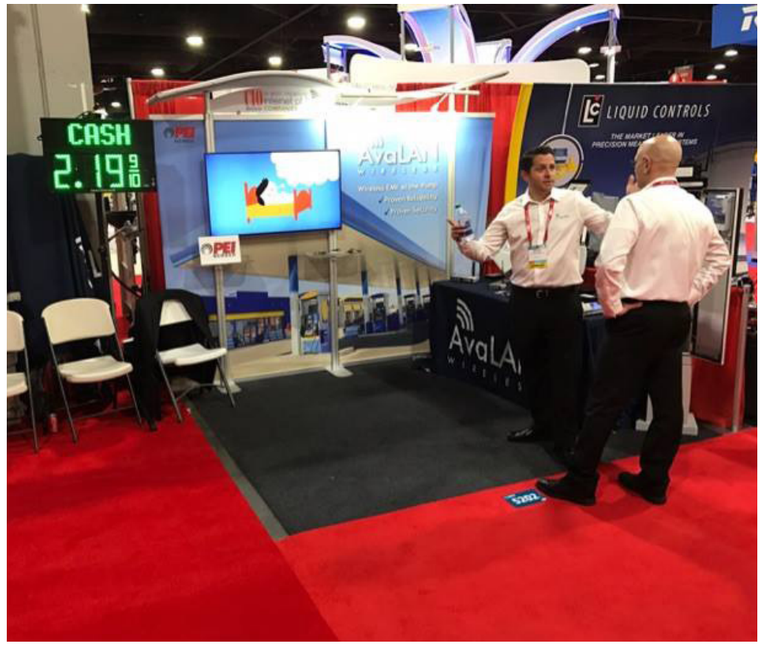
"And because we've been doing more and more of that, we've actually opened





up a cloud services operation within our company. Where, in the past you might have had to have an IT guy on your staff, 24/7, to take care of your network connections, we offer that service, where we can remotely monitor and control and track the performance of your network from our location. For us, that's created a recurring revenue stream, above and beyond just our hardware and software sales, and we're looking at adding network management services to all those devices that we're adding out there."

Nelson admits that one of the struggles that AvaLAN has had over the years has been getting the word out about what it does and the solutions







that it offers. "Part of the reason is that a lot of our solutions are embedded," he explains. "It's kind of like you don't see an Intel chip every day because it's inside your computer or inside your phone. We're similar in that we're behind the scene. That wonderful Internet of Things, with all those cool sensors that allow you to remotely collect data and interact with things wouldn't be possible without the proper infrastructure for being able to get there. And that's where we come in; we're kind of the glue that holds it all together. We talk about AvaLAN-enabled technology, or AvaLAN inside. You might not see the AvaLAN logo on the outside, but we're there."

Small but mighty, indeed.

GUARDIAN
FUELING TECHNOLOGIES

SERVICE FIRST LEADS TO INDUSTRY SUCCESS

Fuel supplies are an integral part of an enormous number of industries. Fuel is necessary to power the fleets that carry products from the factories where they are manufactured to their final destinations. It powers the cars that carry individual workers from their homes to their jobs. However, in spite of its importance, fueling isn't a high growth industry. According to Joey Batchelor, President of Guardian Fueling Technologies, "It's very fragmented. It's an old industry. It's not real sexy."

Yet, in spite of its lack of sex appeal, Guardian Fueling Technologies is quickly setting itself up as a fuel superpower, at least in the Southeastern United States. Here's a look at the company, where it all began, and where it's hoping to go in the future.

Batchelor didn't start out trying to become a



AT A GLANCE
GUARDIAN FUELING TECHNOLOGIES

WHAT: A company that sells, installs, and services petroleum systems

WHERE: Jacksonville, Florida

WEBSITE: www.guardianfueltech.com

fuel mogul. After high school, he joined the Marines and studied electrical engineering. When his term of service ended, he found himself back home in South Texas, working for a family friend in the fuel industry. "I went there after the Marine Corps and learned the business from him, and in 1996, I had the opportunity to purchase this business which, at the time, was in Pompano Beach, Florida." That business, which would later become Guardian Fueling Technologies, only had 10 employees. With some help from a bank loan, and some money from his father, Batchelor took the plunge.

At its inception, Guardian Fueling Technologies was a service-based company. "If someone's gasoline dispenser broke their credit card readers on the pumps where you buy gas for your car, or one of the screens out there wasn't working, or the pumps weren't working, they called this company," Batchelor recalls." He was 26 years old at the time, so purchasing a small company like this in an industry that didn't traditionally have a lot of growth potential was



JOEY BATCHELOR
COMPANY PRESIDENT





a big risk. His goal, though, was to turn the company into something that offered more than just repair services.

While the company started out in Pompano Beach, it didn't stay there long. Within three years, Batchelor had opened two more Florida offices - in Orlando and Jacksonville - and hired more technicians in those markets. And by 1999, the company was growing faster than Batchelor had the capital to sustain. Thankfully, in cases like these, it's not what you know but who you know – and one of Batchelor's existing customers had just sold his own business for several hundred million dollars. "He acted as sort of an angel investor for me," he says. "In 1999, he came in and partnered with me, gave us a nice capital infusion to pay off debt, and put some more operating capital into the business so that we could continue to fuel growth." While at its core, the business remained a service-based company, the infusion of capital enabled Batchelor to branch out into equipment distribution.

Today, Guardian Fueling Technologies has ex-





panded well beyond Florida. "We currently employ about 180 service technicians that cover from the outer banks of North Carolina all the way to Key West," Batchelor reports. "And we just wrapped up an acquisition in Charlotte, North Carolina (Southeastern Petroleum System), which represents our 13th regional office across the Southeast."

What does Batchelor believe is the secret to his success and what sets him apart from other fueling companies across the country? "I would say number one, it's the caliber of people that we have," he states. "One of the things that I've always believed, maybe it's because of the time I spent in the Marine Corps, but I've always believed that the company with the best people and the best training is going to win."

It's no surprise then, that Guardian Fueling Technologies is also a very pro-veteran company and makes it a point to hire as many military veterans as possible. "Our human resource director spends a lot of time in military trade shows and military job fairs where people who are getting out of the military and looking to move into the civilian world are looking for jobs," Batchelor notes.

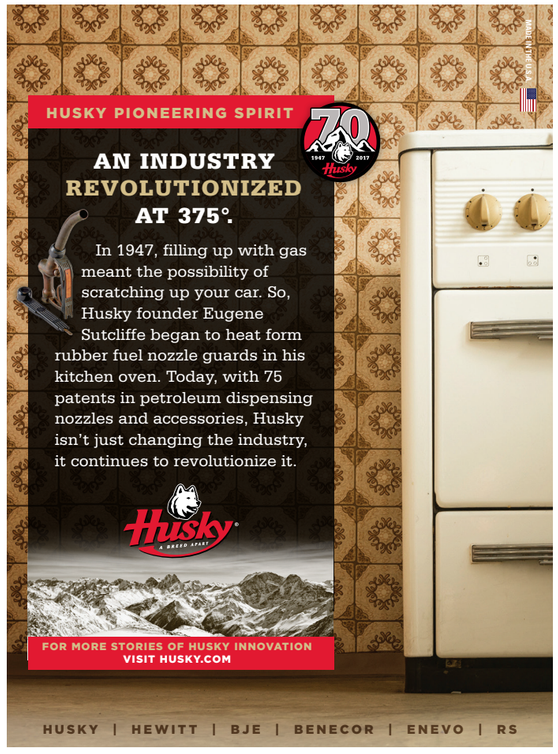
The core of the company, and the true secret to its success, though, is the service that it provides to so many clients across the Southeastern United States. "Service is our biggest revenue generator, even as big as we are," he said. "People find it hard to believe sometimes. They think they have a good service business. They're doing a million or two million dollars a year revenue with it. Well, we'll do over $50 million this year - just in service." And that's for a company that is expecting to pull in a total of $100 million in overall revenue in 2018.

With any large business, it's important to look toward the future – and that's exactly what Batchelor and his team are doing. "We have something that we call Vision 2025, and two years ago, I sat down with my leadership team and said 'What do we want our business to look like in 2025?" That meeting allowed them to outline how many offices they wanted to have opened by that time, how they would boost their reputation, and even the kind of people that they wanted to employ. The goal, right now, is to have 25 regional offices open by 2025 to cover the entire southern United States.

So, Global Fueling Technologies is well on its way to becoming the premiere service and equipment company for the Southeast's fuel needs. Its service first mentality might seem a little odd in an industry that is dedicated to equipment distribution rather than service, but it has served Batchelor well for the last two decades and will likely continue to do so, well into the future.

PREFERRED VENDORS

- **Irpco**
  www.irpco.net
  Irpco was established in 1973 to provide coupled curb pump hose assemblies to Petroleum Equipment Distributors (PED) and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM's). Based in Charleston, West Virginia, the company was the first assembler to offer UL listed assemblies and the first in the industry to be ISO-certified.
- **Husky**
  www.husky.com
- **Syn-Tech Systems, Inc.**
  www.myfuelmaster.com
- **Krueger Sentry Gauge**
  www.ksentry.com
- **Modern Welding Company**
  www.modweldco.com











REA MAGNET WIRE

WE POWER THE WORLD

2018 is an important year for Rea Magnet Wire, celebrating its 85th anniversary as a distinguished manufacturer and supplier to the motor, automotive, and transformer industries. The company was founded in 1933 and remained under private ownership until 1960, when it was purchased by Alcoa. In 1985, a group of managers purchased Rea Magnet Wire taking the company private, returning the organization to its family-owned, privately-held roots.

Today, the company has close to 900 employees, with corporate headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and five manufacturing plants in Fort Wayne and Lafayette, Indiana; Ashland, Virginia; Monterrey, Mexico; and Guilford, Connecticut. Rea Magnet Wire has also operated a joint venture in China since 2002, comprised of four facilities spread out over three cities. Acquisitions have played a significant role in the company's growth.

AT A GLANCE
REA MAGNET WIRE CO.

WHAT: Manufacturer & supplier to the motor, automotive, and transformer industries

WHERE: Headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana

WEBSITE: www.reawire.com

REA MAGNET WIRE



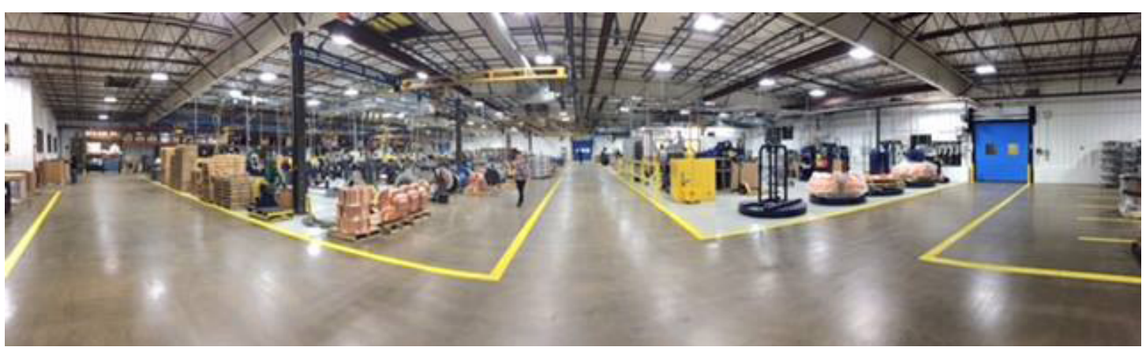
Its largest was the 2006 acquisition of Phelps Dodge Magnet Wire Company, with the manufacturing locations in Fort Wayne and Monterey.

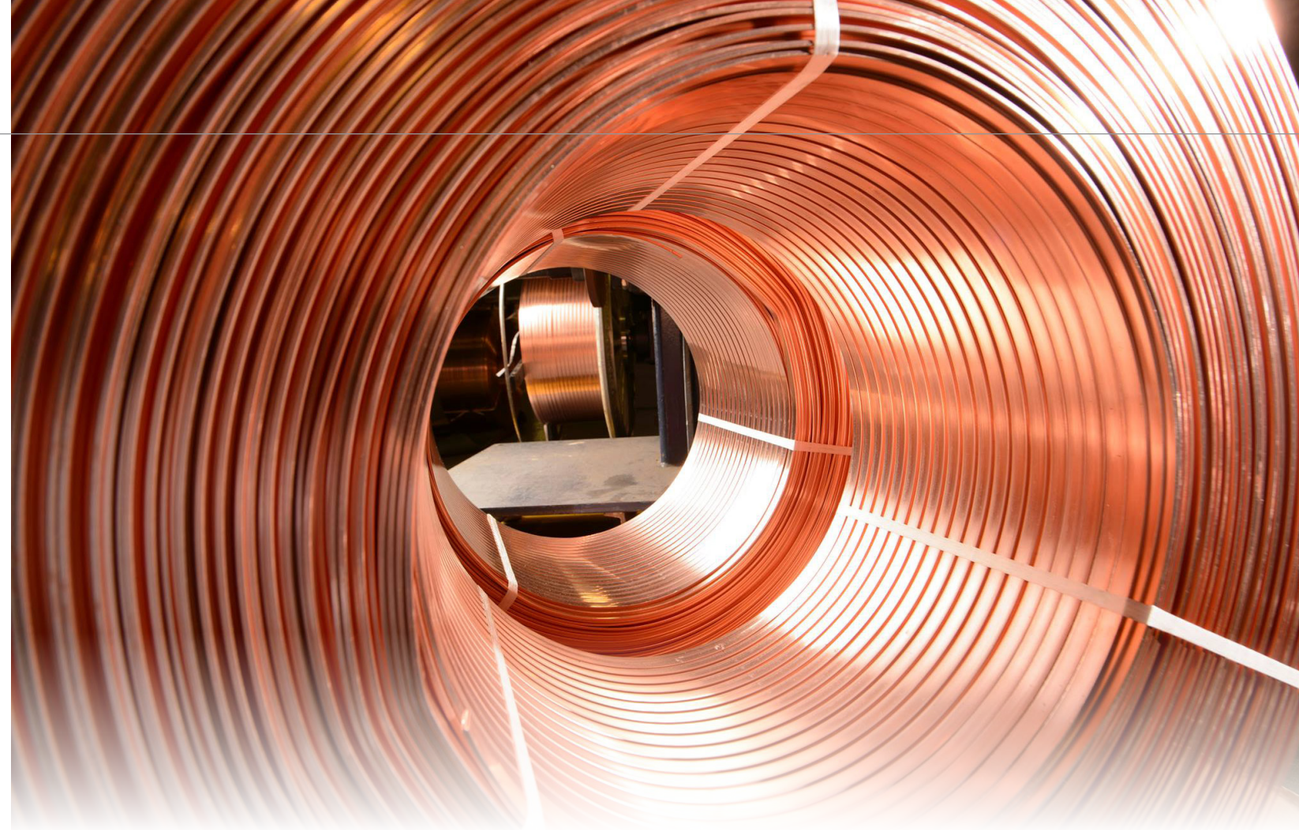
Recently, Business View Magazine spoke with Rea Magnet Wire representatives Eric Bilinski (Director of Customer Experience), Lew Tutton (Corporate Environmental Director), and Brian Bolinger (Director of Corporate Health & Safety) about the importance of safety and sustainability in this dynamic company. The following is an edited transcript of that conversation:



BVM: Who is your typical customer?

Bilinski: "The beauty of the magnet wire industry we're in is that we're not dependent on one sector. If you look at our business profile, our two largest markets are the electric motor market and the power transformer industry, which have a diverse number of applications Our wire can be found in smaller, dry-type transformers for home or commercial industrial applications, all the way up to large distribution or power transformers responsible for distributing electricity throughout a nation. On the motor side, our wire is present in small motor applications, such as residential appliances, HVAC systems, ceiling fans, and power tools, with wire applications ranging up to large commercial industrial motors and generator systems as well as applications for power generation.





"We're also a Tier I and Tier II supplier of magnet wire for providing wire to automotive applications, as well as electromechanical markets, which use uninsulated magnet wire for welding or metal forming purposes. Everything we do has an element of custom manufacturing, because we're manufacturing to each customer's unique specification."

BVM: What sets your company apart from competitors?

Bilinski: "Safety is at the forefront of what we do. It starts every meeting and is rooted in our culture. In addition, we are constantly innovating. We are launching new products annually, and we place the customer at the center of what we do. We are focusing our initiatives around what we call the 'three Ts' – Trust, Transparency, Teamwork. It's that mindset that we use to approach every problem we encounter."



BVM: How do you promote safety on the job?

Bolinger: "Safety is a core value at Rea Magnet Wire. We recognize that every employee is responsible for their own safety and because of that we have a culture at Rea that empowers all. You'll find our executive team – starting with the ownership and the Board of Directors – drives the expectation that all injuries are preventable. The important aspect of that is putting



it in action from the top with expectations that we all walk the walk, and then tying your focus to the same goal each of us has, to go home to our family every night. We talk a lot about family, the importance of not letting them down, and the consequences for not doing right as it relates to your own safety.

"The organization has a long history of safety performance improvements. In the last 10 to 12 years, we've seen a significant improvement – to the point that we consider ourselves world-class as it relates to OSHA recordable rates or incident rates. And we're extremely excited to share that we just broke the company record in 2017 for the safest year ever at Rea Magnet Wire. It's the second time in three years we've broken the standing record.

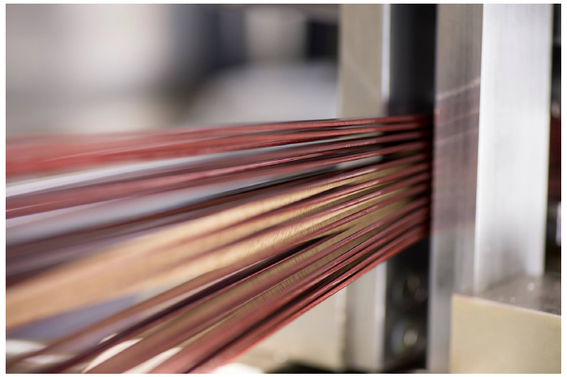
"One way we specifically promote safety is through a system that customizes training videos that show our plant footage, our employees acting within the filming, and we even include families along with executives of our organization introducing the monthly training message. All employees are expected to view these monthly. That's just one of many training opportunities we offer. The longest-tenured employee we have is well over 50 years, but there's a good core of our hourly staff that are 25, 30, 35-year employees.

"Internally, there is friendly competition among employees for recognition as the safest plant. We have our Chairman's Safety Excellence Awards, based on a list of 12 or so metrics we keep track of at plant levels throughout the year. At the end of the year, we compile the results to come up with the Safety Plant of the Year. We developed a travelling trophy, artistically designed and created from our products, which was made into a very unique looking trophy. The winning plant gets to display it for the next calendar year, while everybody else, in a friendly way, competes to earn it from the current holder. The first three years our Monterey, Mexico plant won and most recently, in 2017, our Lafayette, Indiana plant won. We also recognize, by issuing plaques to the plants that work an entire year injury-free, and to the Most Improved Plant each year.

"Safety is not a trade or product secret, so we are very transparent with our customers and vendors about our performance. When you have world-class safety, why not share it with those that can benefit. We're always willing to show how we've become so successful and how we plan to get even better."

BVM: How does Rea Magnet Wire address sustainability?

Tutton: "In our facilities, we're continually looking to reduce waste and improve costs. Energy efficient lighting has always been at the forefront, with our facilities being converted to the most energy efficient technologies as they become available. Obviously, we are in the supply chain for motors, so energy efficient motors and drives are required in any of our capital projects, as well as replacements during routine maintenance. We've also focused on ways to reduce



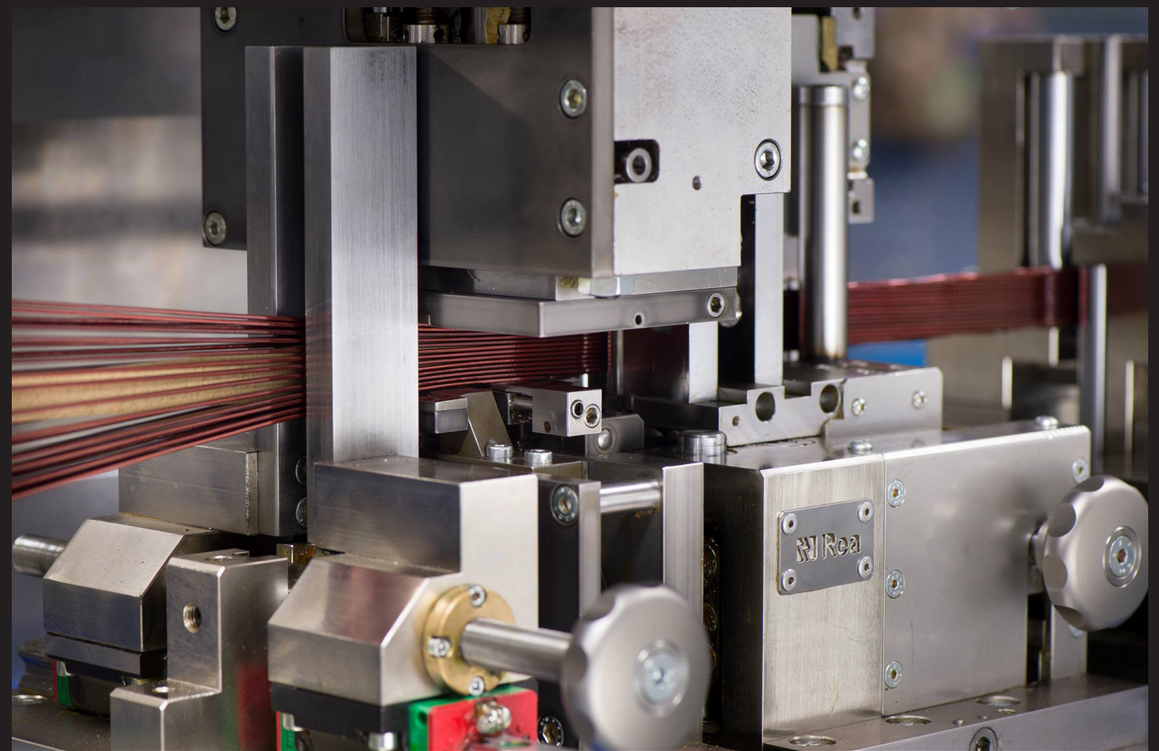
ASARCO
GRUPO MEXICO

ASARCO LLC and Americas Mining Corporation Congratulates **Rea Magnet Wire Co.** on 85 Years of Outstanding Customer Service, Innovation, and Quality Products – Partners in Copper.



ASARCO, LLC, a subsidiary of Grupo Mexico, is an integrated copper mining and manufacturing company headquartered in Tucson, AZ and operates mines, mills, and a smelter near Tucson and a refinery in Amarillo, TX.

Americas Mining Corporation, a division of Grupo Mexico headquartered in Mexico City, is a worldwide fully integrated mining and manufacturing corporation with operations in Mexico, Peru, the US, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Spain.





our waste streams, with projects like recycling used solvents, as opposed to sending those out as waste. In some cases, we've been able to partner with outside vendors to reprocess and reuse material that used to be considered waste. We're a big user of copper and aluminum, which are readily recyclable products, and anything that can be recycled, even dust, is sent out as recyclable material. We have a strong commitment to going above and beyond environmental compliance in reducing our overall waste and emissions.

"What we have done over the years is partner with suppliers to do things such as reformulating the coatings we use, so they meet performance specs for our customers but have reduced hazardous air pollutants in the solvent base.

BVM: What are the company's objectives for the future?

Bilinski: "When we look across markets, there's a huge importance placed on energy efficiency; more often than not, the energy efficiency of systems that people use. Heating and air conditioning from a residential standpoint is one area where many legislative and efficiency regulations have been put in place. Our goal is to be ahead of that as much as possible, to serve our customers who are manufacturing motors for the designers of HVAC systems.

"The development of electric vehicles is receiving a tremendous amount of focus in the news. That is a significant opportunity within the magnet wire market. All those drive systems have electric motors powering the drive trains, and that is anticipated to be a huge growth area in the next five to ten years.

"Rea Magnet Wire is built on a rich, 85-year history here in Fort Wayne – grown from a very small Midwestern company to a large multi-national supplier to the motor, automotive, and transformer industries. I tell people that magnet wire is the most common thing you've probably never thought about. It affects every individual, every day, no matter where you live.



PREFERRED VENDOR

■ **Asarco LLC**
www.asarco.com

A subsidiary of Grupo Mexico, Asarco LLC (American Smelting and Refining Company) is a mining, smelting, and refining company based in Tucson, Arizona, USA, that mines and processes primarily copper. It was originally founded in 1888.

STIEBEL ELTRON

MAKE IT RIGHT, KEEP MAKING IT BETTER



Stiebel Eltron was founded by Dr. Theodor Stiebel in 1924 to manufacture his revolutionary immersion water heaters. More than 90 years later, the family-owned company is a household name in Europe, known for the engineering and manufacturing excellence of products such as tankless electric water heaters, solar thermal equipment, and heat pump water heaters. The company has epitomized its philosophy "make it right, then keep making it better" for almost a century – those who have dealt, and continue to deal, with the company on a global scale describe Stiebel Eltron as "simply the best."

The company employs approximately 3,000 people worldwide, with manufacturing plants in Holzminden, Germany; Eschwege, Germany; Slovakia, Thailand, and China. Western Hemisphere operations are based in West Hatfield, Massachusetts, where Stiebel Eltron maintains a sales, service, distribution, and spare parts facility. The company has been in North America since 1980.

President and co-owner, Frank Stiebel, shares the background on his long-serving family business: "My brother Ulrich and I own the whole group as partners, and I'm also in charge of North and South America. The company was started in Berlin, Germany in



AT A GLANCE STIEBEL ELTRON

WHAT: Global producer of water heaters and solar thermal products

WHERE: North & South American operations based in West Hatfield, Massachusetts

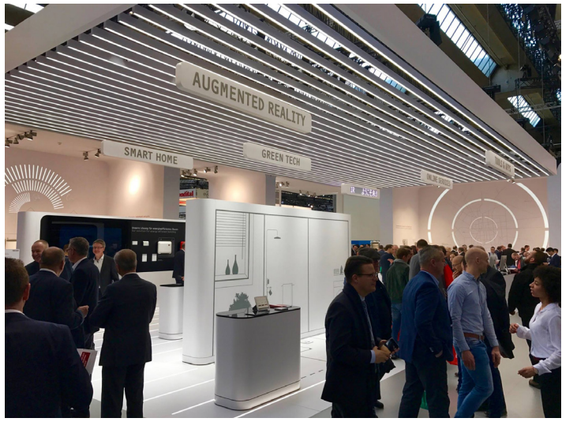
WEBSITE: www.stiebel-eltron-usa.com

1924 by my father, who unfortunately died a long time ago. The first product we came up with was an electric immersion heater. These were the beginnings of electric water heating. Say, for example, you were at a farm and wanted to wash your hands or disinfect something, you would stick this heater into a bucket of cold water. That's basically how we got started and from there it went to tank-type water heaters. I think the traditional model back then in Germany was a coal stove in your bathroom to heat the water. There was a little fire chamber in the bottom to heat the bulk of the water, then you would use electricity to keep it warm for a few days."

Stiebel Eltron evolved from there into pure electric water heating and then into tankless electric water heating. Today, that represents 40 percent of their business, globally – they are the world's largest manufacturer of tankless hot water heaters. In North America, popularity for tankless is growing. Stiebel

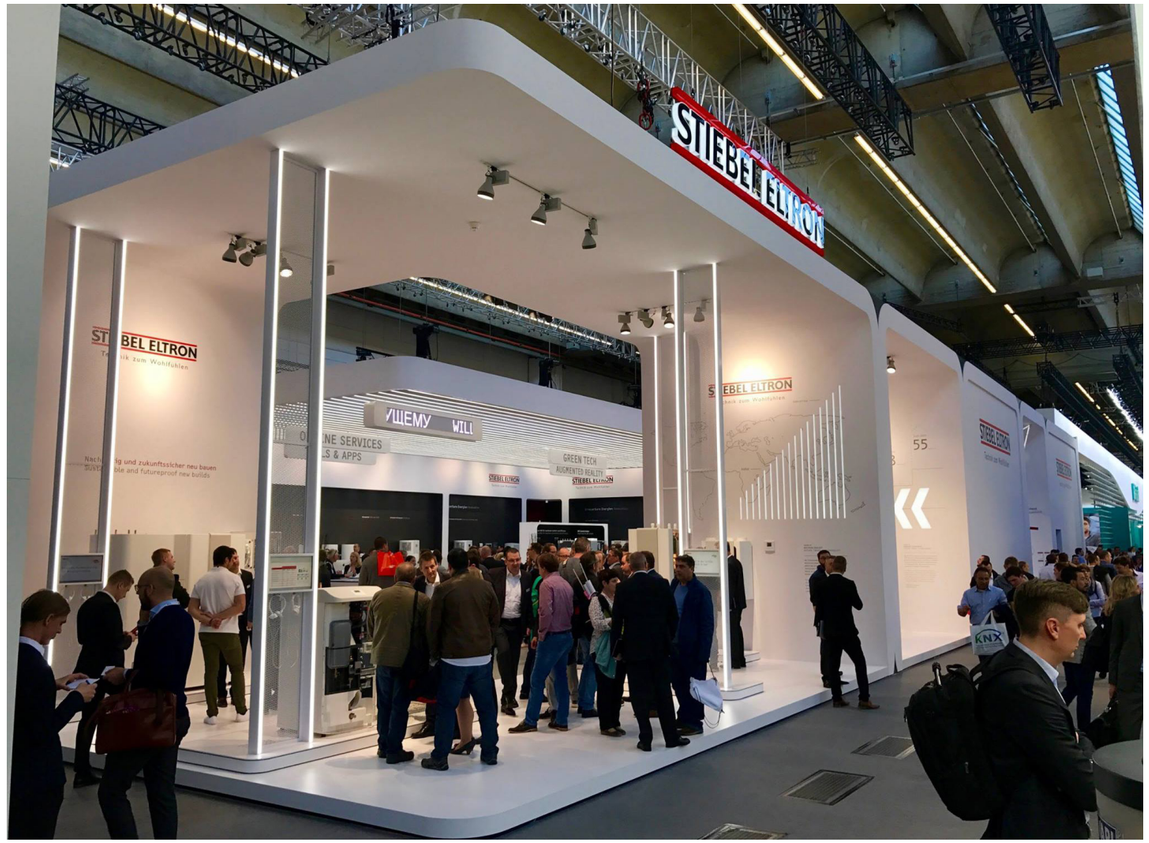


notes, "Every time I go to trade shows and talk to people, they tell me tankless water heating is getting more popular, especially on the gas side, because with a gas flame you can go up to 199,000 BTUs before you need ASME approval. That's a very powerful heater. You can heat six or seven gallons per minute of water flow; electrics do a little bit less, but it's still very satisfactory."



North and South American business is taken care of from the Hatfield, Massachusetts location, by a highly-skilled team of 40. From there, they assist the Germany operations with engineering products, and do a small amount of assembly work. Many of their other products come already assembled. Most are brought from Germany, but they also have a plant in China, where they source electric space heaters, and a plant in Slovakia, where they source the heat pump water heaters. The majority of Stiebel Eltron products are for residential use, except hand dryers and the small point-of-use tankless electric units and mini-tank units, which mostly go into commercial applications. The biggest product in terms of North and South America sales volume (65 to 70 percent) is the tankless hot water heater.

Stiebel jokingly dismisses the competition: "As for the others, they're not really in our league, so we don't consider them competitors. Seriously, though, we have competition in every arena. The biggest on the tankless side is EEMAX. When it come to hand dryers, it's mostly World Dryer and Excel. We do about eight trade shows per year, including IBS (International Builders Show), AHR, Green Build, and NESEA (New England Solar Energy Association). Plus, the plumbing industry has their own shows, so we do quite a few." The company sells to plumbing wholesalers, never directly to the consumer. They have a dual,

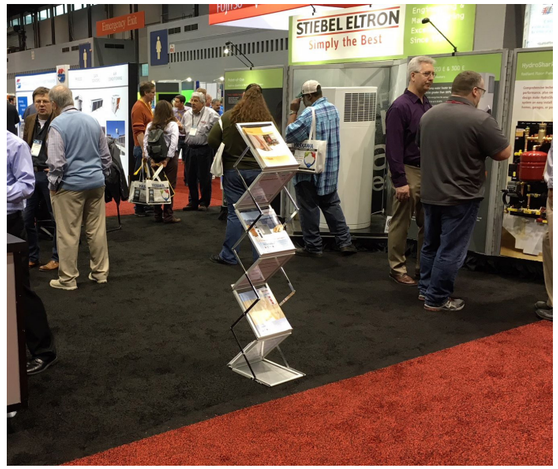


two-pronged sales strategy – plumbing distribution is one avenue. The other is retail, where they sell through Home Depot, Amazon, Menards, and Lowes.

Chris Wetherby, Head of Solar Renewables for Stiebel Eltron, explains, "While we buy 90 to 95 percent of items from our affiliated companies, we do purchase mounting flashing kits from Eco Fasten Solar, an amazing company that started in Vermont and now they've grown to Arizona. They are well established in the PV (photovoltaics) industry, but they serve both solar thermal and solar electric. Now, a lot of big installer companies use them because they're affordable. The owner is a professional engineer and designs practical products for the markets."

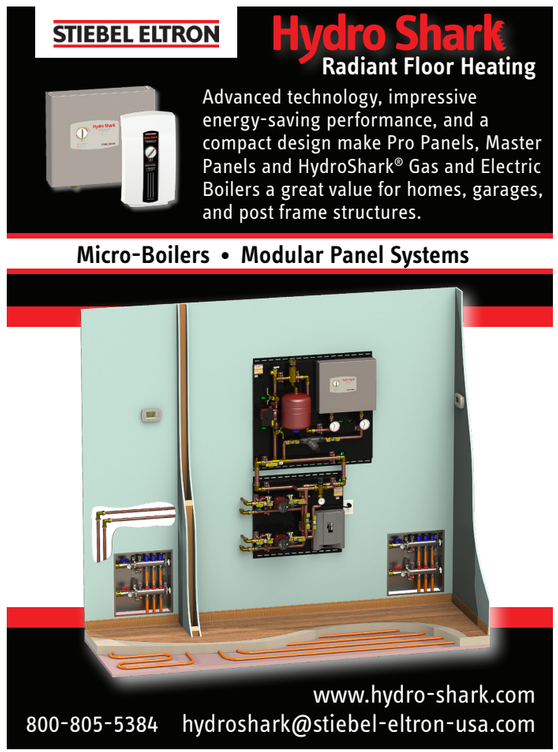
For the future, Wetherby sees solar technology working in the direction of simplification. "The absorber plates have changed and there have been some improvements, but it's hard to tell what lies ahead, because there's an awful lot of competition, even between solar electric and solar hot water (solar thermal). The improvements that will last, I would say, are the ones aimed more towards less complicated installations and lower costs. The industry is very sensitive to state-administered rebates and there have been a lot of legislative activists that have pushed back and disrupted that on a state level. Not everything is all roses out there."

Stiebel Eltron is moving towards a more active presence in South America and the Caribbean – specifically, Puerto Rico and Columbia. It already has well-established distribution networks in those countries



PREFERRED VENDOR

■ **Hydro Smart Inc.**
www.hydro-smart.com



and, recently, has been asked to provide solar thermal equipment and small PV systems. Stiebel clarifies, "At present, we don't sell PV panels, we only sell thermal solar equipment, but we're working in that direction. We're the market leader in Puerto Rico for tankless water heaters. The business has dropped way off, as you can imagine, because of the hurricane devastation on the island, but we're hoping they are able to rebuild."

Five years down the road, Stiebel forecasts his company will continue to grow in the tankless electric arena. "We're coming out with new, more sophisticated products in North America – going more towards electronics, rather than electro-mechanical controls," he reports. "The tankless will always be an important part of our business, but we also manufacture the heat pump water heaters. We see a lot of opportunities in that sector; we're also looking at space heating heat pumps. Mostly, air to water heat pumps. And we will continue to work on solar thermal as much as we can."

Wetherby adds, "We manufacture the solar storage tanks at our facilities in Germany and Slovakia, while other components (collectors, pumps, electronics) come from suppliers around the world. The racking we make here in Hatfield. We also collaborate with a company in Cambridge, Massachusetts on energy monitoring equipment. That has been very successful, at least in trouble shooting, as it gives us the ability to remotely affect system changes without being onsite. We have been doing a lot of creative design in solar thermal, improving the products, making them easier to install. Anything in the renewables industry changes quite rapidly and you need to really be on your toes to stay valid."

Summing up the Stiebel Eltron best practices and secret to success, Frank Stiebel states from the heart: "We are an old family company with a proud heritage of making high quality products that are advanced and energy efficient. In other words, we are awesome."

city view

COMMUNITIES ON THE GROW

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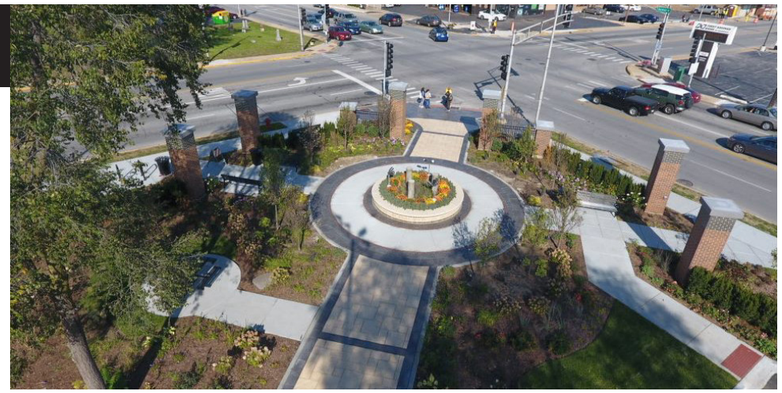

A COMMUNITY
ON THE MOVE

PAWTUCKET, R.I.



THE 2.0 VERSION

PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO



A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

LANGLEY CITY, BRITISH COLUMBIA



THE PLACE TO BE

THE CITY OF SEATAC



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Public-Private Partnerships:
A Viable Financing Tool for Local Governments

MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES OF CANADA

An interview with the Honourable Amarjeet Sohi

THE AIAI

Public-private partnerships: Good policy that's good for taxpayers





LANSING, *Illinois*

A COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

Lansing, Illinois, a village in Cook County, is a southern suburb of Chicago. It was first settled in the mid-1800s, primarily by Dutch and German immigrants who came to the area to build homes, farms, and businesses. In the late 19th century, brickyards dominated Lansing's economy, and the Village supplied much of the brick to rebuild Chicago after the Chicago Fire of 1871. While onions, tomatoes, beets, spinach, and cabbage were common crops grown on its farms, it was onions that were most prominent; the suburban Chicago area supplied 80 percent of the country's onion sets in the 1930s and 1940s.

Aviation is also a significant part of Lansing's history. The Ford Hangar at the Lansing Municipal Airport is a permanent reminder of an era when air travel was still in its infancy. Built for Henry Ford and designed by renowned architect Albert Kahn, the hangar was built to house Ford's tri-motor plane using a cantilevered construction method. The hangar was added to the National

AT A GLANCE
LANSING, ILLINOIS

WHAT: A village of 30,000

WHERE: Cook County, seven miles south of Chicago

WEBSITE: www.villageoflansing.org





PATTY EIDAM
MAYOR



DAN PODGORSKI
VILLAGE MANAGER



Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Lansing's current population is approximately 30,000 and today, in addition to being a bedroom community of Chicago, the Village has a significant retail base, and is also home to some light manufacturing and distribution companies. The Village has a viable downtown with lots of old shops and the newly completed Park Plaza, located on the site of an old railroad line at the southwest corner of Ridge Road, the Village's main thoroughfare, and Burnham Avenue, that hosts a farmers' market during summer months.

Recently, Lansing has embarked upon several redevelopment projects, which, according to Village Manager, Dan Podgorski, are designed to be "destination drivers; something to bring people, not just Lansing residents, but people outside of Lansing to our community." The most prominent among them is an outdoor concert venue called Fox Pointe. "It's being developed on a site that used to house a business called Fox Home Lumber," Podgorski continues. "When the Village purchased that old rail line, we also acquired that piece of property that Fox Home Lumber used to operate on. We turned down other proposals to develop it, because we felt it was going to be significant to the future redevelopment of downtown. It was such a significant piece of property – it's only a few acres, but it was right in the heart of our downtown, and we felt it was going to have significant municipal value as some sort of a gathering place, and that's what it turned into. In the last several years, there's been an Autumn Festival that's developed in that area, and the last administration adopted some plans to turn it into a concert venue. Plans were drawn, bids were awarded, and contracts signed."

A $5 million project, Fox Pointe began construction in June 2017, and should be completed in time for the Village's traditional Autumn Fest, this year. The venue includes an outdoor amphitheater, an open air pavilion, a concessions building, and bathrooms. The pavilion will be able to hold 250-plus people, and the amphitheater will accommodate over 2,000 in a lawn-type setting. "It's probably the most significant investment the Village has made in redeveloping a piece of our own property for the benefit of our residents and, what we hope will be, increased attraction to businesses in our downtown area," Podgorski explains.

"People will come here and enjoy the concerts and other performances that we expect to have and then, hopefully, they're going to eat in our restaurants and they're going to stay in our hotels and stop for a drink or two in some of our bars," he adds. "We're also hoping that this is going to be the type of driver that's going to appeal to entrepreneurs; we're hoping to attract additional restaurateurs and maybe some micro-brewery and wine bar type owners to bring their businesses to our downtown."



Another project on the Village's agenda is the repurposing of an old landfill site. "It's attracted the attention of a developer, and we're looking at converting this old landfill into a usable green space as part of a large economic development project," Podgorski says. Finally, there is the old Ford Hangar at the Lansing Municipal Airport that has been used, in the past, for some city events. "It's our goal to get that historic building removed from the footprint of the airport, so we can use it as a venue for things such as weddings, concerts, and conventions," says Mayor Patty Eidam. "We have high hopes for it."

"We're trying to create two or three destination drivers that Lansing has never had on two or three different sites: Fox Pointe, our Municipal Airport, and the sustainable green project at the old landfill," says Podgorski. "We haven't had that driver that brings people from outside the community here, and that's what we're looking to do – refresh and reinvent ourselves. If we're able to develop even two out of these three destinations and drivers, we can position ourselves to the point where we can give our residents something to crow about, but also have something that we can market to people outside of Lansing to bring them here."

"It's a combination of creating new traditions, but also remembering and honoring the ones that we've always had," says Ken Reynolds, Mayor Eidam's Executive Assistant and Director of Communications for the Village. "One thing we have in our community is solid tradition, and former residents keep coming back to





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Lansing for the community events that we have. One of the things the mayor campaigned on was bringing back the tradition in Lansing of the Santa Claus House. It was a tradition in our community for 30 or 40 years or more, but over the last couple of years, it disappeared; the Santa House was taken down and was leveled. So, a lot of our residents wanted to see that come back. We were able, through a volunteer project in the community and donations from many of our civic groups and individuals, to re-establish and rebuild a brand new Santa Claus House on property just north of the Fox Pointe."

Combining the old and the new, with an eye toward providing more amenities for both residents and visitors, Lansing, Illinois is a community on the move.

PREFERRED VENDOR

- **Calumet City Plumbing Co., Inc.**
  www.ccp1967.com

Murfreesboro, Tennessee











FASTEST-GROWING AND MOST LIVABLE

Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a city of 132,000, and the county seat of Rutherford County, sits in the geographic center of the state. Located 34 miles southeast of Nashville, it is Tennessee's fastest-growing city and, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 10th fastest-growing city in the nation with a population over 50,000. Established in 1811, Murfreesboro was originally named Cannonsburgh, but was subsequently renamed after Revolutionary War hero, Colonel Hardy Murfree.

In its early years, Murfreesboro was mainly an agricultural community, but by mid-19th century, it was also home to three colleges and several academies, earning the moniker: "Athens of Tennessee." The city was host to a major battlefield during the Civil War – America's rival armies suffered a combined total of 23,515 casualties, making the Battle of Stones River, one of the war's bloodiest. Fortress Rosecrans, built by Union forces in 1863,

AT A GLANCE MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

WHAT: A city of 132,000

WHERE: In the geographic center of the state, 34 miles southeast of Nashville

WEBSITE: www.murfreesborotn.gov

Murfreesboro

DESIGN BY TOWNMAPS USA



was the largest fort built during the conflict, encompassing an area of 255 acres. It was constructed using the labor of 4,000 men and was eventually garrisoned with 2,400 troops.

Today, Murfreesboro's former agricultural-based economy has been replaced by industry, manufacturing, and education; the city is home to Middle Tennessee State University, the largest undergraduate institution in the state, with 23,000 students. Its high quality of life, with plentiful housing, excellent schools, and outstanding city services make Murfreesboro not only the fastest-growing city in Tennessee, but also one of the most livable. "We are a young, family-oriented community," says Jennifer Moody, Murfreesboro's Assistant City Manager. "The average age is 30 years old. The quality of life in the community tends to attract families, and I feel like we're building things that are good for the whole family."



One of the "things" that the city of Murfreesboro recently built is a tribute both to its devotion to its families, as well as its successful ability in attracting and hosting many youth championship tournaments, giving the city yet another trademark moniker: the Sports Capital of Tennessee.

Murfreesboro's Miracle Field officially opened on May 6, 2017 at McKnight Park, an 81-acre community park located in the northern area of town. The Miracle Field is a custom-designed, special, rubberized baseball field built for children and adults with special needs and can





accommodate wheelchairs and other assistive devices. The first Miracle League Field opened in Conyers, Georgia in 2000, and, today, there are hundreds of Miracle Fields across the U.S., Canada, and even Australia.

"This project was a collaborative effort between the David Price Foundation, Project One Four, and the City of Murfreesboro," explains Thomas Laird, Athletic Superintendent - Murfreesboro Parks & Recreation Department. David Price, an All-Star, major league pitcher, and a Murfreesboro native who grew up playing baseball and basketball in the city's parks and schools, founded Project One Four in 2008. "When David first became a major league baseball player, he participated in the Miracle League in Tampa, Florida, and he said that if he ever made it to a point where he would be able to do this in his community, he would bring the Miracle League to Murfreesboro. So, a few years ago, his Foundation approached the city and he made a commitment to purchase and build a Miracle Field."

Fundraising for the Miracle Field Complex was







spearheaded by Price, who donated $300,000 at the groundbreaking ceremony in February 2016. "The cost was roughly $3.2 million with a third of that generated through community donations and the Project One Four Foundation," says Laird. "The rest was subsidized by the City of Murfreesboro. And I want to applaud our City Council for stepping up and going above and beyond. They could have simply matched funds, but they recognized the opportunity we had here, and allowed the leaders to go ahead and make this project what it is, today. The city also recognized an opportunity to make a real impact on our community by not just building a field, but also building an entire park that was all-inclusive, and which provided for every child and adult of all ages and abilities. Our community pitched in, millions of dollars were raised, and the park became a very high-end project. It's probably one of the nicest parks in the State of Tennessee."

"One thing that we're really proud about is that we just didn't build a field



- we built an all-inclusive playground," Laird adds. The playground has accessible ramps and turf, sensory stations, and an easy-to-ride zipline, just to name a few of its features. "We also built a dirt T-ball field adjacent to the Miracle Field. This was an opportunity for us to try to change the culture here in Murfreesboro. By allowing T-ballers, the four and five year olds, to play alongside the Miracle League participants, they have the opportunity to play on the playground, together. Some of those barriers that exist between adults and older children are non-existent when young kids interact with kids with special needs, at that age. So, our hope is, as time goes on, over a few generations of participating in the League, that all kids, not just our special needs community, but our entire population of youth will grow into accepting adults who are all-inclusive in their daily life. I think our programs and our facilities are geared around helping parents develop their children into good citizens - and helping our citizens be good citizens."

Angela Jackson, Director of Murfreesboro Parks & Recreation Department, agrees and believes that the Miracle Field represents a drive for cultural change in Murfreesboro because it recognizes "every one of our citizens and all of their abilities." She also believes that the city's parks and green spaces have been key in attracting newcomers to town: "They're an incentive in recruiting and retaining businesses and residents," she states. In fact, in the city's recently approved, one-year, $70 million capital improvement plan, there is funding for a brand new one park – Blackman Park – which is currently in the design phase.

"Blackman Park will have both a regional draw as well as be a community park and a significant improvement in our park system," Jackson declares. "We're also working to expand our greenway, our pedestrian



and bike trails, providing not just recreational opportunities, but also looking to grow a community that recognizes wellness and alternate transportation. We have 14 completed miles and a construction project with an additional three, underway. So, by having a complete park system, by having wellness and recreational opportunities, and by providing support for a good quality of life – that is a draw and an incentive."

"With the completion of the three miles of greenway, you'll be able to traverse the entire town – 17 miles through the City of Murfreesboro," Laird adds. "You can camp out at one of our outskirt parks, hike back, and never leave the city limits. There's not many cities that can do that." Moody says, "The greenway system is another one of the jewels in our crown."

While paying attention to its parks, Murfreesboro is also intent on revitalizing its historic downtown. "Most recently, we've undertaken a couple of land use studies and have a big vision for the revitalization of some specific areas downtown," Moody reports. "What the studies have shown us is that more people want to live downtown and they want more things to do. So, one of the things we saw is that we have assets that are already in place and a perfect opportunity to create an arts and entertainment district in our downtown, So, that's been a focus."

"Another is improving pedestrian connections. We have a five-lane highway that divides part of our downtown and we have a vision for a bridge over the roadway, but also improving the at-grade crossings to better connect the north and south ends of downtown. And then, we also have plans for daylighting a creek in the historic Bottoms area of downtown. We think that there's a stormwater system improvement that we can gain from it but, we're not just going to open the creek for that purpose – we plan on making it an amenity, an attractive park-like setting that will be attractive to development and, hopefully, we'll see more residential and mixed-use projects built around it.

"Within the last year, a lot of our efforts have centered around one block in our downtown, where we had an older church in our community that was sitting empty; part of the building was occupied by a bank for many years, and then they decided to move out. The city has purchased that entire block and we accepted competitive proposals and, now, we're working with a developer on what I think will be an iconic project unlike anything else we have downtown. It's a five-story, mixed-use development that will have retail and restaurants on the bottom, a 60-room boutique hotel

Congratulations
City of Murfreesboro on
Miracle Field at McKnight Park
from the
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component, residential condos, and public parking. So, that's a really exciting project. And we just had the county build a new six story, $50 million judicial building – another iconic project that's changing the face of downtown. And there are other investments, both in residential and commercial properties. So, we have a lot going on."

A lot going on, indeed. It's no "miracle," then, why Murfreesboro, Tennessee is the fastest-growing, and one of the most livable cities, in the Volunteer State.

PREFERRED VENDOR

- **Musco Lighting**
  www.musco.com

PARMA HEIGHTS *Ohio*



A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

Parma Heights, Ohio, a city of 20,000 in Cuyahoga County, is a suburb and bedroom community of Cleveland, some 12 miles to the northeast. Its 4.5-square-miles are surrounded on the north, east, and south by the larger city of Parma, while the cities of Brook Park and Middleburg Heights form most of its western border. In the early 1800s, the area was known as Greenbriar, supposedly for the rambling bush that grew there. It was incorporated as a village in 1911 and a city in 1956.

Mayor Michael P. Byrne, who first took office in 2010, says that Parma Heights is a community with "small town amenities in a big city location. It offers a range of reasonably-priced housing options on quiet, tree-lined streets, and every citizen is within walking distance of a city park. Strong city services and award-winning safety forces help make Parma Heights a desirable, vibrant city in which to live, work, and play."

One of Byrne's first tasks when he became mayor was to set

AT A GLANCE PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO

WHAT: A city of 20,000

WHERE: A western suburb of Cleveland in Cuyahoga County

WEBSITE: www.parmaheightsoh.gov



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PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO

in motion the "Greening of Parma Heights Initiative," with the aim of tackling the city's over-paved commercial areas while highlighting and expanding its park system. The main thrust of the initiative, which involves green/sustainability efforts, infrastructure improvements, and community development initiatives, centers on the Pearl Road corridor. Pearl Road is the city's Main Street, and has been designated as an Improvement Target Area (ITA) by the Cuyahoga County Department of Development and a Priority Transit Corridor for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

So, when the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) offered a Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) grant, the city's Economic and Community Development Department applied for, and was awarded, funding for "The Pearl Road Complete and Green Streets Initiative." The study, conducted by professional planners, has recently been adopted into the city's updated Master Plan, which was also developed with a grant award from the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission in conjunction with the Cuyahoga County Department of Development. The resulting TLCI plan divided the Pearl Road Corridor into three segments: Residential, Town Center, and Commercial with recommendations for each with emphasis on green infrastructure and enhance multimodal travel options encouraging pedestrian, bicycle, and transit usage.

With increased mobility in mind, the city also won a Community Development Brock Grant (CDBG) in 2016 for the installation of a number of ADA Ramps compliant with the Americans with

Thanks to voters saying "yes" to Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) in the form of a construction bond issue in fall 2017, Tri-C will experience many improvements in the coming years. Not the least of these will be at Tri-C Western Campus, located in Parma and Parma Heights.

To support increasing needs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), a $34 million, 60,000-square-foot STEM Center will be situated on the northeast corner of the main campus center. It will be LEED-Silver certified and feature science and information technology labs as well as areas for collaborative math study.

Tri-C is also expanding its KeyBank Public Safety Training Center by adding a training village that simulates real-life scenarios faced by first-responders.

The Advanced Automotive Technology Center on the campus will also be updated and expanded.

Tri-C Western Campus offers a rich mix of direct-to-job and transfer programs. Each year more than 12,000 credit and non-credit students take courses at the campus, part of the 55,000 students annually who attend Tri-C for workforce credentials, university transfer, professional development and personal enrichment.

Tri-C's Western Campus opened in 1966 in the former Crile Veterans Hospital. The campus serves southern Cuyahoga and Medina County residents.

www.tri-c.edu

PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO





Disabilities Act along the Pearl Road Corridor. Also that year, NOACA TLCI Implementation grants were announced and the city received funding for putting in place one of the Residential recommendations: the installation of a raised curb median with HAWK signal and decorative crosswalk. In 2017, the city again applied for Implementation funding to install a series of ornamental crosswalks in the Town Center and on-street parking in the Commercial District with decorative permeable pavers, bike racks, and bike sharrows.

The city has also recently submitted a Cuyahoga County Supplemental Grant application requesting funding for a Wayfinding and Branding Master Plan study, the next logical step in the transformation of the community from a pass through into a destination by linking amenities and spurring reinvestment. Additionally, the city has established a regional partnership with the cities of Middleburg Heights and Strongsville, as well as NOACA, to resurface Pearl Road, which will include stormwater infrastructure.

Like most communities in Ohio, road and sewer maintenance are ongoing. The cost of road repairs and reconstruction has risen to a level that makes all but the most basic repairs beyond the financial scope of a small bedroom community like Parma Heights. In response to that situation,



the city has been consistent and vigilant in its grant requests and awards from the CDBG program. It recently received a $150,000 grant for a residential street repair. In regional partnership with the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works, the city spends an annual average of almost $1.2 million on storm and sanitary sewer maintenance and repairs. This past year, however, Parma Heights businesses and residents experienced extensive flooding and damage as a result of the unusually heavy spring and summer rainfall. In August 2017, the city made application to the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD) for a grant to construct a master storm water retention basin to address the problem of stormwater capacity.

"Seeking all these grants has been an integral part of our ability to continue to provide excellent services to our residents and businesses," says Erin Lally, Mayor Byrne's Executive Assistant.

As a bedroom community, Parma Heights necessarily pays attention to real estate, local business, and homeowner issues. The city offers a Continuing Education Class for local realtors, focusing on the amenities of Parma Heights and why prospective home buyers should consider making Parma Heights their home. The city participates in the Heritage Home Program, which offers the owners of homes age 50 and older free professional advice on home improvement and maintenance projects. The program also offers homeowners access to low-interest financing to



cover those project costs. The entire City of Parma Heights has been designated a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA). A CRA allows tax abatements to residential and commercial property owners who can reinvest in their real property. The CRA Program is a tool used by the city to promote the development of new residential and commercial structures, and encourage the revitalization of its existing building stock. Under the CRA Program, residential and commercial property owners are eligible to receive abatement of property taxes up to 100 percent of the increase in the assessed value of a structure. The abatement permitted differs for new construction projects and projects involving the remodeling of existing structures.

In keeping with the "Greening of Parma Heights", the city was one of the first in the county to institute an automated curbside waste and recycling collection program. Since its inception, the city's rate of



recycling and number of residents participating in the environmentally-friendly efforts has risen exponentially each year. "There's always a bit of hesitancy to get these programs started but once it's been implemented, there are little to no complaints. People learn how to utilize it, once they get into the rhythm and routine of it," Says Byrne. "And it has enhanced the community, visually."

Mayor Byrne is equally committed to enhanced communication between City Hall and Parma Heights residents. The city publishes a community newsletter three times each year, which is mailed to every home and business in the city. In concert with Cleveland Magazine and Great Lakes Custom Publishing, the city also publishes an annual magazine Take a Look at Parma Heights. Parma Heights also communicates with residents via its website, an electronic sign located in front of City Hall, and via social media.



To promote its recycling program, the city has been awarded consecutive Recycling Grants through the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District. In addition, Parma Heights hosts special recycling events such as: Household Hazardous Waste Collection, a Community Shred event, Personal Computer Recycling, Scrap Tire Collection, and a Holiday Light Collection. The City of Parma Heights has also welcomed Simple Recycling, a free curbside service that offers residents the ability to recycle unwanted household and textile items that are too heavily worn to donate to charitable organizations.

Parma Heights is also committed to its open, green spaces, and is fortunate to have a 20-acre parcel in the center of town called the Greenbriar Commons. The Commons, which is the heart of the community, houses the city's branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, N.E.O. Soccer, a water park and pool complex, tennis courts, a playground, pickleball, volleyball, and bocce ball courts, and has been home to the Cassidy Theatre since 1974. Now in its 44th season, Cassidy Theatre is a non-profit organization dedicated to producing quality community productions. It offers everything from classic dramas to slapstick comedies to modern Broadway musicals alongside children's theatre classes and productions.





Two community rooms, recently renovated with grant funding from the State of Ohio, are housed in the theatre building and are available for resident rentals and special events.

In 2012, a new park was created in the center of town when a vacant, blighted, and contaminated former gas station site was donated to the city by Margaret Colombo, the wife of a local developer. In addition to $300,000 donated by Colombo, the city also took advantage of funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Cuyahoga County Department of Development to establish Colombo Park. “We put an emphasis on green space, and try to utilize the space that we have and enhance it any way that we can come up with,” Byrne states.

Another successful endeavor was the completion of the Parma Heights/Big Creek Connector Trail - roughly 1,000 feet of new pathways and a bridge that spans the Big Creek and directly links the Greenbriar Commons in the heart of the city with the Cleveland Metroparks’ Big Creek Reservation. Collaborators on that project included the Cleveland Metroparks, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the Cuyahoga County Department of Development Community Development Block Grant Program.

Speaking of collaboration, Byrne reports that Parma Heights has been extremely effective in working with neighboring communities on public safety issues and resident services. The city is a member of a regional dispatch center for police and fire, and has established a public safety partnership with a shared major crime investigation unit, auxiliary police, and local jail.

Mayor Byrne is equally committed to enhanced communication between City Hall and Parma Heights residents. The city publishes a community newsletter three times each year, which is mailed to every home and business in the city. In concert with Cleveland Magazine and Great Lakes Custom Publishing, the city also publishes an annual magazine Take a Look at Parma Heights. Parma Heights also communicates with residents via its website, an electronic sign located in front of City Hall, and via social media.

Community participation is an enduring characteristic of the city, and recently, three Parma Heights community organizations have experienced significant revitalization: The Parma Heights Garden Club, the Parma Heights Historical Society, and the Greenbrier Art League.



The Garden Club works to make Parma Heights





more eco-friendly. One key effort aimed at the "Greening of Parma Heights" is the implementation of the Daffodil Project - an initiative specifically aimed at community beautification along the Pearl Road corridor and in city parks. So far, Garden Club members and community volunteers have planted more than 8,000 daffodil bulbs at strategic locations along the Pearl Road Corridor, at major intersections, and in city parks and green spaces along Pearl, York, and Old York Roads. The Garden Club and its members also cultivate a community garden, located adjacent to the Historical Society's Toll House in the Greenbrier Commons Complex. Produce harvested from the Community Garden is donated to the Parma Heights Food Pantry.

The Historical Society Maintains the Toll House in the Greenbrier Commons, which is a replica of the



toll house that used to be located on Pearl Road. Members not only research and preserve the city's rich and vibrant history for future generations but they also collect and preserve historic artifacts. The Greenbrier Art League presents "Tuesday Art," a continuing series of community art opportunities every Tuesday in the community rooms.

Other ways in which life in the community is enhanced for the residents include: "Kids in the



Commons," an annual event in August for children; Community Movie Nights, which offers free, outdoor movies for the community throughout the summer; a summer Band Concert Series, presented from June through August each year at the Gazebo in the Greenbrier Commons; Community Dances; and an annual Holiday Tree Lighting Event when the city's Christmas Tree is officially lit and residents gather to celebrate the season.

PREFERRED VENDOR

■ **Cuyahoga Community College**
www.tri-c.edu

Founded in 1963, Cuyahoga Community College (also known as Tri-C) is a community college in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. It is known as Ohio's first community college and is the oldest and largest public college within the state. For more than 50 years, Tri-C has provided high quality, affordable education and programs to more than 900,000 members of the community. The College serves more than 55,000 credit and non-credit students annually and offers day, evening, and weekend classes; classes via television, the Internet, and independent learning.

Tri-C offers also more than 800 Distance Learning courses and more than 130 courses at various locations throughout the community, close to home and work. Tri-C's campuses in Parma, Highland Hills, Westlake, and downtown Cleveland, and its Corporate College locations in Warrensville Heights and Westlake, provide state of the art facilities and equipment. The College also opened a Hospitality Management Center on Public Square in downtown Cleveland in 2010 and the Brunswick University Center. The College ranks 1st in Ohio and 25th in the nation in conferring associate degrees in all disciplines.

PAWTUCKET, R.I.



THE 2.0 VERSION

Founded in 1671, at the strategic falls of the Blackstone River in northern Rhode Island, Pawtucket is a city with a special place in the industrial history of the United States. For it was here, in 1793, that Samuel Slater built the first fully mechanized cotton-spinning mill in America. Over the next century, a variety of machines and iron working shops grew up alongside Pawtucket's bourgeoning textile industry and, by the early 1900s, the city was a highly developed and prosperous manufacturing center, boasting over a half-dozen movie theatres, two dozen hotels, and an impressive collection of fine commercial and residential architecture.

Unfortunately, the textile business in New England declined during the Great Depression of the 1930s with many manufacturers



closing, or moving their facilities south, where operations and labor were cheaper. But unlike numerous older mill towns in the region, Pawtucket retained much of its industrial base. Today, the city has a broad cross section of industries and small businesses. Goods produced include lace, non-woven and elastic woven materials, jewelry, silverware, metals, and textiles. Hasbro, one of the world's largest manufacturers of toys and games, is still headquartered in Pawtucket, as is Collette Tours, one of the top two tour agencies in the country, Tunstall Americas, Pet Food Experts, and the Cooley Group.

In addition, as traditional manufacturing declined, Pawtucket was able to repurpose some of its former industrial assets and, as a result, the city of 72,000 has become a well-known, regional center for the arts. "The city took those old mill buildings and repositioned them," says Jeanne Boyle, the city's Director of Commerce and Redevelopment. "They changed a lot of their zoning regulations, and 307 acres of Pawtucket were declared an Arts District. They worked aggressively to focus on repurposing those mill buildings for live/work space and for small businesses. So, hundreds of new units of residential and dozens of small businesses have been created in those former mill buildings." Today, the Pawtucket Arts District encompasses 23 mills and 60 streets and, in addition to being the home of many artists and art-related businesses, some of the repurposed mills have also become the nexus of Pawtucket's nascent brewery industry.

However, all of that vibrant economic activity did not entirely shield Pawtucket from the consequences of the recent Great Recession, and several years ago, the city almost defaulted - a situation which did occur in the neighboring city of Central Falls. Pawtucket's mayor, Donald R. Grebien, first entered office in 2011, and, according to his Director of Communications Lauren Greene, "was facing the very real possibility that the state would take over our city and it would go into bankruptcy." The good news is that Pawtucket hung on; it continued to invest in its infrastructure, it streamlined its permitting and development processes, and it stabilized its tax structure, while overseeing a wide range of public and private investments that began to truly turn the city's fortunes around.

Now, Pawtucket is poised to undergo yet another cycle of evolution, as outlined in its bold 2020 Downtown Development Vision, which includes several major initiatives – a new commuter rail station, a National Historical Park, a new major league, AAA ballpark, a regional bike path system, and downtown and riverfront development.



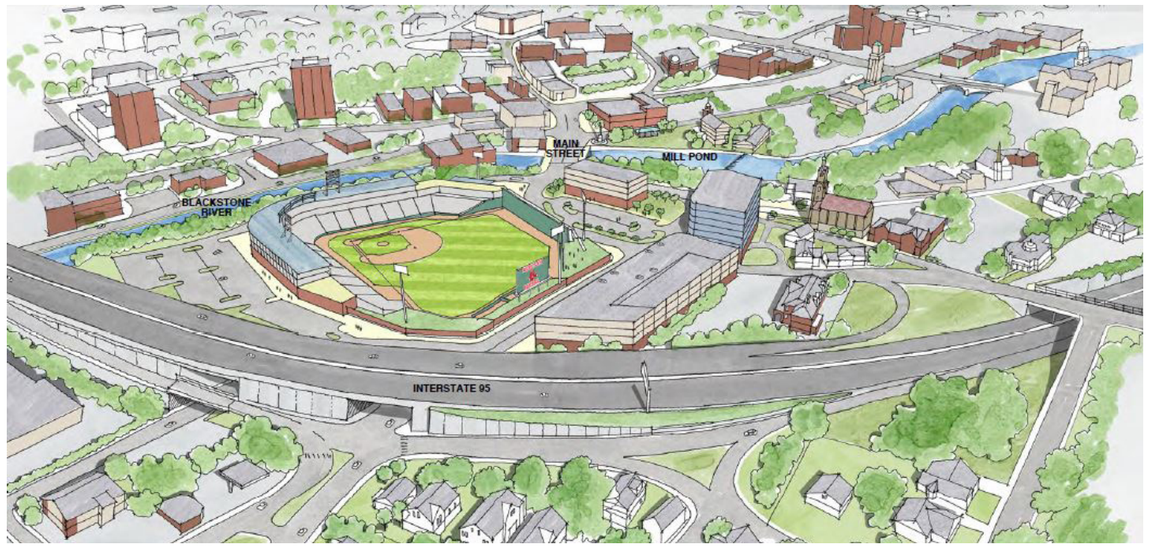
DONALD R. GREBIEN,
MAYOR

AT A GLANCE
PAWTUCKET, R.I.

WHAT: A city of 72,000

WHERE: Northern, Rhode Island

WEBSITE: www.pawtucketri.com





The new MBTA commuter line station, to be built on the western side of downtown, will link Pawtucket with Providence to the south and Boston to the north. The $40 million project is funded largely by a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant as well as money from the state's Department of Transportation. Additional funding will be coming from the communities of Pawtucket and Central Falls who decided to partner together to create a TOD, a Transit-Oriented Development District, which Boyle sees as "instrumental in changing the development patterns in the downtown section of Pawtucket. There's about two million square feet of underutilized space in that area, and the potential for up to four million square feet, where we're creating a TOD district in partnership with the City of Central Falls," she reports. "There's going to be a change in the zoning for that whole area to foster new development and the repurposing of some of the existing space. This was a manufacturing center, so there's a lot of existing mill buildings. It's been rebranded and we're calling it the Conant Thread District."

"By 2020, it will be up and running and people will be able to come here, and with our Transit-Oriented Development District, we expect that we're going to have a place where people can live, work, and play," she continues. "And by having an expedited zoning and permitting process, we're going to facilitate redevelopment. We already have a tremendous amount of development interest – properties are being bought up and properties are already being renovated in anticipation of this new commuter rail stop coming in."

The Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park was created in 2015, for the purpose of preserving, protecting, and interpreting the industrial heritage of the Blackstone River Valley. Its crown jewel is the Slater Mill on the banks of the Blackstone River, which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. The Slater Mill site now serves as a museum, educational center, and music venue, and is key to the city's plans for a growing tourism industry.

Another regional planning project, of which Pawtucket is partnering with two other Blackstone Valley communities, Central Falls and the City of Cumberland, is the Broad Street Regeneration Initiative. Through a Preserve America grant from the National Park Service, the three cities have developed an action plan to sustainably develop this key thoroughfare to stimulate business growth, encourage youth involvement, enhance safety along the street, and support heritage tourism in the region. "It's about connecting the communities, tying in the parcels and making it a long stretch, so it becomes one community, if you will," says Grebien.

"We see it as an opportunity to support the small businesses, the restaurants, the retail, and the other things that exist along that Broad St. corridor, and particularly, in the downtown, which for many years has been struggling," Boyle adds. "At one point, it was a very thriving downtown with some fantastic architecture and was the hub of the Blackstone Valley section of Rhode Island. We see it as coming back and regaining its role as the center of northern Rhode Island. The Broad Street Regeneration Initiative is emblematic of us working to be that gateway to northern Rhode Island. It's been a terrific effort and very much appreciated by the small business owners in that area."

Since 1970, the Pawtucket Red Sox have played their home games at the city's McCoy Stadium. "About three years ago, the ownership of the Paw-





tucket Red Sox changed, and there was talk of them relocating from Pawtucket to Providence," Grebien recounts. "But we convinced them to stay. They have a lease till 2020 at the McCoy site. And as part of our economic development, we have now identified the site of the old Apex Department Store, right off the highway in downtown Pawtucket, as the opportunity for the relocation of the ballpark next to Slater Mill."

Plans for the new $83 million Ballpark at Slater Mill, which will be the home of the AAA Pawtucket Red Sox Baseball Club through 2050, include a 9,0000 – 10,000 seat stadium with the same field dimensions as historic Fenway Park in Boston. "The governor has bought into the initiative, the Senate has bought in, the city and residents have," Grebien states. "We're still trying to get through the House, because there is going to be some public funding involved, though it will be self-sustaining with the profits going back into it. So, we're dealing with the political issues. But, we see it as a great economic development opportunity to reinvigorate our downtown, which has been struggling for many years."

Pawtucket's waterfront also has tremendous potential for quality development and increased public access. The city has recently partnered with a local developer to redevelop an 11-acre riverfront property at Division Street to likely include a mix of market-rate residential apartments, commercial and retail space, and a restaurant. The Tidewater site is a former manufactured gas plant and electric generation facility that is now largely vacant. The National Grid has offered 13 acres of land for development along with an abutting 7-acre city-owned parcel. Plans for that site include recreation, development, residential, and commercial uses.

A few years ago, the city finished renovating its Festival Pier to the tune of $2 million. "It's a tremendous asset to the city and a place to enjoy one of the most scenic locations in Pawtucket," says Boyle. "It's used by boaters and fishermen. One of the most interesting uses that it's put to every year is our Dragon Boat races that are part of our Arts Festival. It's quite a colorful event. Racers come from all over the region. And now that it's renovated, we're just starting to explore other opportunities for its use."

Finally, Pawtucket is at the beginning stages of creating a local and regional network of bike paths. Boyle explains, "Pawtucket is located on the Blackstone River as well as the Ten Mile River. So, we have the opportunity to knit together the whole city with a series of bicycle paths, some of which have already been constructed, others of which have portions scheduled for construction this coming year. We have a real commitment to making Pawtucket a walkable, bikeable community. So, we're making sure we have pedestrian access and bikeable access from our commuter rail to our riverfront, and we're also committed to making sure our TOD has bicycle connections, as well. And we're working with the State of Rhode Island to do a bicycle plan for the city so that we have those connections to the entire Blackstone Valley and the City of Providence."

"We have great community assets," Grebien exclaims. "We have a strong community. We have good infrastructure, and now we're trying to make sure that we maintain it and bring new life into the city." "The people here have deep ties to this community and deep affection and a desire to move it forward," adds Boyle. "This isn't a top-down vision; it's a vision that's come from the people of the city, building on the past, building on the assets, and not being afraid to reinvent themselves. There's a love of the Pawtucket of the past, but not a fear of making the changes that are necessary to move it forward."

"We're moving Pawtucket forward and we're not trying to steamroll our past," Greene echoes, emphatically. "It's very much alive and well here. It's just the 2.0 version of Pawtucket."

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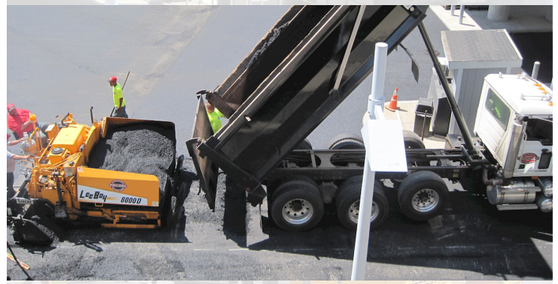

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PREFERRED VENDORS

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The City of SEATAC

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR GROWTH

February 2018 marked the 28th anniversary of the City of SeaTac, Washington. While young and modest in size at 10 square miles, SeaTac is a compact and bustling community with a resident population of 28,850 that grows to 171,000 during daytime hours due to the large employment base and the traveling public. And SeaTac is growing – largely due to its location. Situated halfway between Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, the city is home to the Seattle–Tacoma International Airport – the 9th largest airport in terms of passenger count, and one of the fastest-growing in the United States.

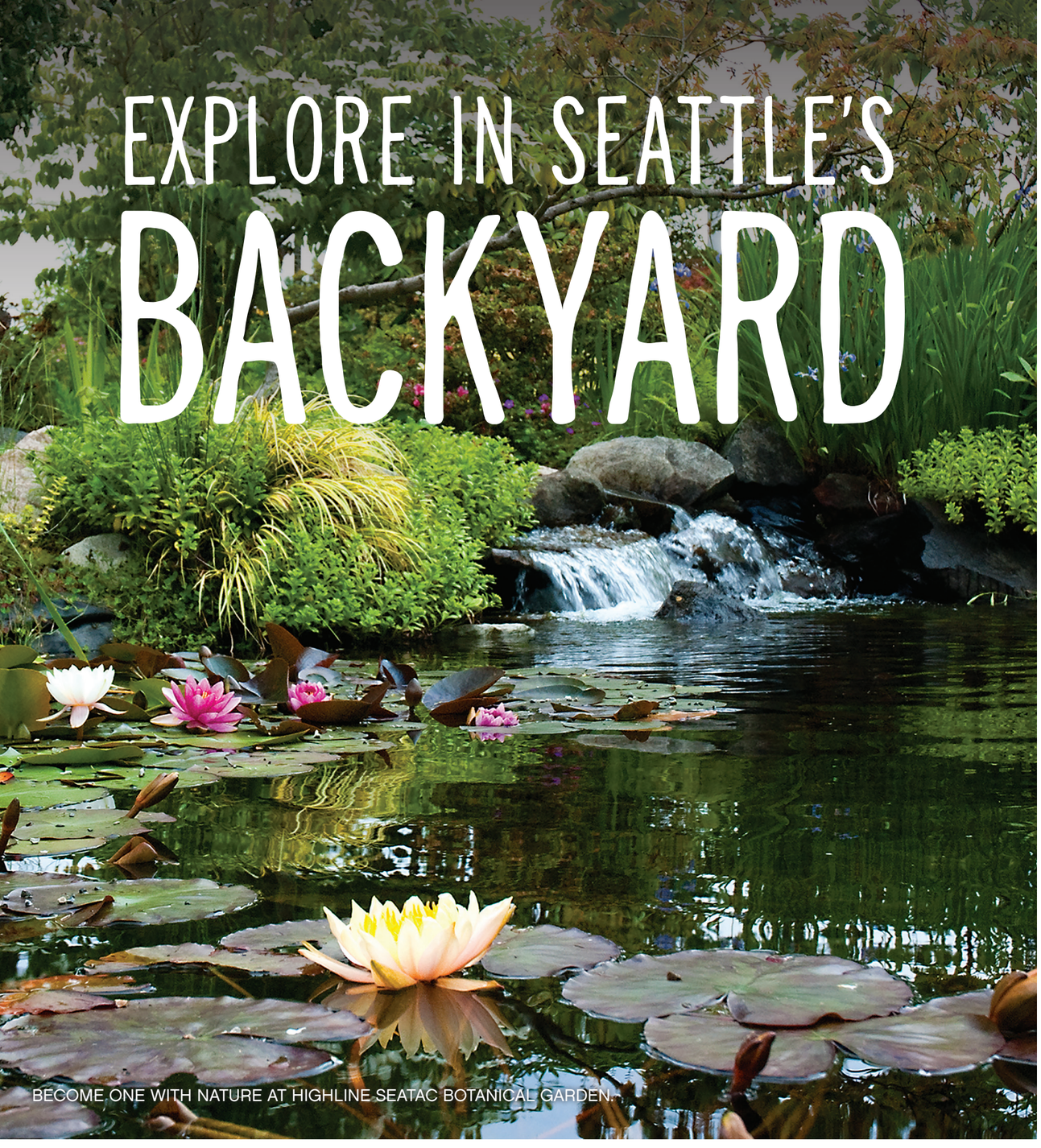
"Everything we do commer-

AT A GLANCE
THE CITY OF SEATAC

WHAT: A city of 28,850

WHERE: Northwest Washington, between Seattle and Tacoma

WEBSITE: www.ci.seatac.wa.us



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SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE
SeaTac | Tukwila | Des Moines

cially and economically is tied, in some fashion, to the airport," says City Manager, Joe Scorcio. "Not just the hotels, but all of the corollary businesses that support the airport. We've got about $465 million worth of construction going on outside of the airport and a comparable amount of activity going on inside the airport – nearly a billion dollars of active construction." So, SeaTac capitalizes on its interconnectedness with the airport, developing around its transportation channels to support its businesses and residents. Indeed, the city slogan is: "everywhere's possible."

Jeff Robinson, SeaTac's Community and Economic Development Director, talks about the city's current and future connectivity: "We are already at the hub of interstate and state highways, the international airport, and three light rail stations that feed to the north, downtown Seattle, and the University of Washington," he notes. And these connections will soon reach the east side of Lake Washington, the suburbs of Bellevue and Kirkland and south to Tacoma - regions that are experiencing development as well.

"One of the biggest infrastructure projects that we just completed was the 28th/24th Avenue Extension, which connected us to the neighboring city of Des Moines and opened up quite a bit of real estate in both cities for economic development activity," Robinson says. This endeavor will not only bolster employment within the area, but also enhance the existing transportation routes, providing direct access to the airport from the south, which will help with traffic problems and congestion issues on International Boulevard, which serves as the major north / south thoroughfare in the city.

One of SeaTac's newest private developments,

Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority Strengthens Our Community

At Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority, we believe we are stronger together. That is why the cities of SeaTac, Tukwila, and Des Moines came together over a decade ago and began promoting the region to prospective travelers as Seattle Southside. For many years, the destination was successfully promoted as an idyllic home base for visitors to the Greater Seattle Area; but the driving force behind the united brand, City of Tukwila's former Tourism and Marketing Director, Katherine Kertzman, always believed there was more to be done.

It wasn't until 2014 that Seattle Southside hoteliers petitioned the cities to create a self-assessed tourism promotion area fund to increase funding for tourism marketing and promotion. In 2015, Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority was established as a separate legal entity, and the official destination marketing organization for the three cities.

The RTA staff works tirelessly to promote Seattle Southside as a premier destination for domestic and international leisure and business travelers. The combined efforts of the RTA staff, board of directors, hoteliers, advisory committee members, and community at large have created a powerful, economic machine that will continue to promote and support the region for years to come.

www.exploreinseattlesouthside.com

SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE
SeaTac | Tukwila | Des Moines

While the state of Washington does not give its cities much opportunity to offer incentives to developers, Robinson believes that SeaTac still has some built-in advantages that are attractive to developers.

planned as a consequence of the 28th/24th Avenue Extension, will be a 460,000-square-foot industrial building in the Des Moines Creek North Business Park that is being constructed by Trammel Crow - a project that will create approximately 400 new, permanent jobs. The building is a result of an overall development strategy that, according to Robinson, "has and will continue to play a huge role in the economic health of the city."

Economic vitality in SeaTac also means maintaining a large portfolio of lodging options. "We're a 24-hour city," Scorcio states. "We have a tremendous amount of hotels in the city. We are in the process right now of adding around fourteen hundred hotel rooms in the city, which will bring the total to approximately six thousand."

Another large project soon to break ground is a new addition to the corporate headquarters of Alaska Airlines, which already calls SeaTac its home. Construction for a new campus, to be called Copper River, will begin this summer on property recently bought by the airline. The project will include the redevelopment of an old hotel and apartment site.





Because SeaTac has little room for expansion, and is surrounded by other jurisdictions, much of its growth and expansion is, necessarily, infill. "What little parcels there are, are acres – not hundreds of acres," Scorcio explains. "So, we do not have a comprehensive growth plan in that sense; we have a redevelopment plan for the city. Virtually everything that occurs in the city means something else being torn down and something new is built in its place – which, for a suburban city is another thing that makes us unique. Normally, only a big central city gets to that point, while suburban cities get to stretch and grow. We're redeveloping within our footprint."

While the state of Washington does not give its cities much opportunity to offer incentives to developers, Robinson believes that SeaTac still has some built-in advantages that are attractive to developers. "One of the benefits of doing business here in SeaTac is that we don't have any local business and occupation tax," he explains. "We have no utility tax. We have a business license fee based on the number of employees, but not taxes per employee. We're a low-tax city and I think that helps bring people into town to do business."







Another advantage is SeaTac's relative economic strength, and its streamlined permitting processes. "We've been able to manage the city in a fiscally responsible manner over the last few years," Scorcio says. "We have no debt as a city. We have strong strategic reserves in all our funds and accounts. The city is run very much, and effectively, like a business. And we've spent the last five years significantly streamlining our development regulations and processes. If you're a suburban city that's growing, and you're doing new housing developments and new subdivisions, you have a very different development code than one that is based almost entirely on redeveloping everything. You just have to have different standards, and we finally have a development code that reflects that."

In terms of residential development, Scorcio mentions two types: "We are still seeing apartment development at two levels – market rate and senior housing – both of them driven mostly by proximity to light rail and our bus rapid ride system. There are still some larger tracts of land where some traditional single family housing is going in – larger in the sense of maybe a dozen homes, but no large subdivisions." Regarding its population, SeaTac is an extremely diverse community – a minority-majority municipality in terms of its ethnic makeup with approximately 70 languages spoken by its residents.

And then there's the airport, whose relationship with the city is synergistic. Scorcio explains, "We have a new ILA, an interlocal agreement with the Port of Seattle, the managing entity of Sea-Tac International Airport that is part development agreement and part relationship agreement. We've had an interlocal agreement with them for 22 years but just last February, the newest version of the agreement went into effect and it is radically different from its predecessors. It's now based on the idea that as the airport succeeds and grows - the city succeeds and grows with it."







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"The airport cannot pay property taxes, because it's a separate government entity," Scorcio continues, "but they have agreed to pay a community relief amount that compensates, in part, for not paying property taxes to the city. We are able to provide police officers and provide some general government support that normally property taxes would pay for. Airports are very different than other private development because the types of buildings and infrastructure they have to have is unique to airports. And so, our agreement with them recognizes those unique features and allows us to move smoothly through them. We're working hand-in-hand on transportation projects at a new level. We have a streamlined permitting system that expedites the ability for the airport to grow and do what it needs to do."

"So, this is a watershed moment for the city," says Scorcio, in conclusion. "Because it now allows us to address the fact that we have a very large property owner – 42 percent of the city is the airport – that is now contributing to helping make our city better, stronger, and safer, as we move forward."

PREFERRED VENDORS

■ Seattle Southside RTA

www.seattlesouthside.com

Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority is a national award–winning destination marketing organization and the official destination marketing organization for SeaTac, Des Moines, and Tukwila - three cities near Sea-Tac International Airport. The organization markets Western Washington to leisure and business travelers, as well as meeting and event planners. Seattle Southside RTA is funded by a self-assessed hotel fund and supported by a lodging tax from the cities of SeaTac, Tukwila, and Des Moines.

■ CWA Consultants

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Portage la Prairie Manitoba

CITY OF POSSIBILITIES

Portage la Prairie is a small city in the Central Plains Region of Manitoba, Canada, some 47 miles west of Winnipeg, along the Trans-Canada Highway, on the Assiniboine River. Its name was derived from the French word “portage,” which means to carry a canoe overland between waterways. In this case the portage was between the Assiniboine and Lake Manitoba, over “la prairie.” Long before French Canadian explorers arrived in the mid 18th century and built Fort La Reine, north of the river to serve as a fur trading post, the area was inhabited by indigenous peoples.

In the 1850s settlers began arriving to exploit the area’s fertile soil, giving birth to the new village’s agricultural-based economy. Over the ensuing decades, more and more people moved to Portage, establishing farms and opening new businesses. The community



AT A GLANCE
PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, MANITOBA

WHAT: A city of 13,000

WHERE: Between the Assiniboine River and Lake Manitoba in south central Manitoba

WEBSITE: www.city.portage-la-prairie.mb.ca

increased in population and, in 1881, Portage la Prairie was incorporated as a town. In 1907, it became a city, serving as a regional hub for agriculture, retail, manufacturing, and transportation. Today, Portage is considered to be a major center for strawberry cultivation and potato processing.

Vern May is the Executive Director of PRED, Portage Regional Economic Development, formed in 2013 with a mission to foster an environment which is attractive to investment and growth for both the City of Portage la Prairie and the Rural Municipality that surrounds it. He reports that in January 2017, the city was chosen as the site for a $400 million Roquette pea protein processing plant that will create some 150 new jobs. Roquette is a French-based, family-owned company which produces more than 650 by-products from the starch extracted from corn, wheat, potatoes, and peas. It has operations in 35 countries, but this will be its first investment in Canada.

May suggests that Portage is an atypical site for this type of foreign investment, but it was ultimately chosen because it is well situated in terms of its proximity to the area's agricultural sector, and it offers some of the lowest electricity rates

in North America. "The other thing that worked to our advantage in terms of energy is that our energy is primarily through hydro-electric power," he explains. "Green energy, as opposed to the alternate location they were looking at, which was primarily coal power." In addition, the province offered some tax incentives to Roquette and some grants for the education and training of the company's new workforce.

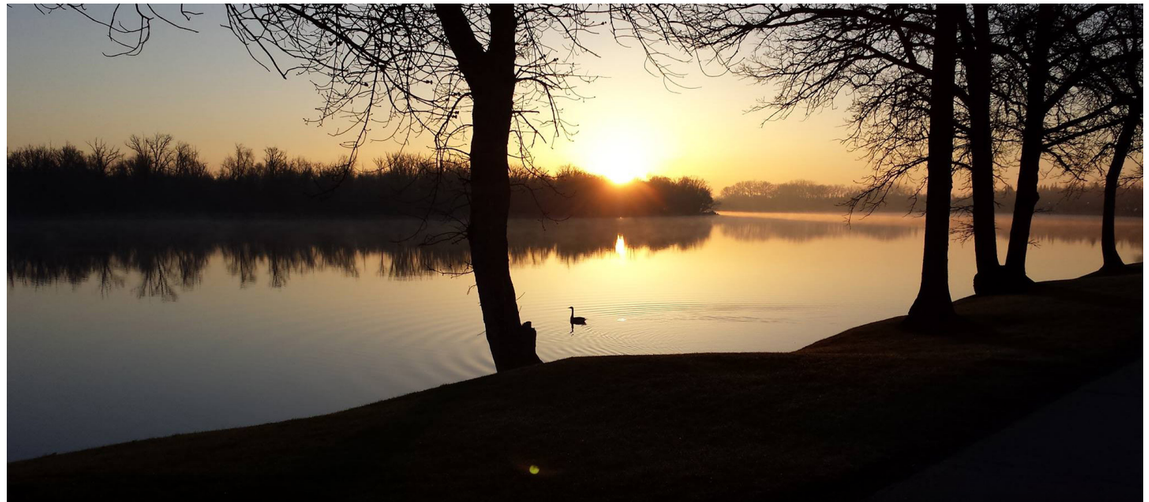


VERN MAY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF PRED

May says that the new plant will soon join Portage's emerging agrifood cluster. "We have McCain Food, here; they deal in potatoes – a lot of your frozen French fries and hash browns," he reports. "And we also have JR Simplot here, which also deals in potatoes. Between those two employers, we have, roughly, 500 jobs in food processing. Recently, Simplot came to the table and announced that they were going to be expanding their operation, here, and that investment is $460 million, which is going to double the size of their plant and double the size of their production."

With these two new development projects in the works, May believes that Portage la Prairie has gained a leg up over competing jurisdictions for even more future investment. He says, "It certainly gives us a great





advantage, right now, when you can go out and talk to a potential developer or investor or major organization and say, 'We've just had a billion dollars of new investment in 13 months. And this is why you should be talking to us.' Right off the Roquette announcement last year, we had a lot of inquiries around housing development and calls from developers both locally and nationally. And then, right off of the Simplot announcement, a lot of conversations that we had started with national chains or small entrepreneurs, where their urgency didn't seem to be a top priority, suddenly Portage la Prairie is a priority for them, and we're having more detailed conversations about how they can make their investments, sooner."

As Portage prepares for new growth, it is necessarily looking to improve various components of its infrastructure. "There has been a commitment locally, provincially, and federally to upgrade our water treatment capacity," says May. In fact, the city has procured $30 million in funding for the secondary treatment of industrial and agricultural wastewater, removing the nitrogen and phosphorous that causes algae blooms when returned to the area's watershed.

The city is also working with various stakeholders to improve its network of walkable and bikeable transportation assets in order to provide city residents, both old and new, with a higher level of active living. "Every year, we've added to our network of paths," says Portage's Mayor, Irvine Ferris. "Some years, we add paving or lighting, and some years, it's just pouring the base of new paths with limestone. The network is not wholly connected, yet, and the plan is that, eventually, we'll integrate our main street into that network of paths that currently connects the four corners of the city. Already, we're seeing a great increase in pedestrians, cyclists, roller-bladers of every age group, including seniors and very young people."



Irvine also touts the city's commitment to sustainability and good environmental stewardship.

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"We have a number of initiatives and we're constantly looking for ways to innovate," he states. "We have a composting program that we run, and we have a compost area in the city where people can take anything from leaves to grass clippings, etc., and it gets composted. We give away that finished product to people in Portage la Prairie who come and help themselves. We also do Christmas tree pickups; we do a yard waste pickup in the spring for a couple of weeks; we do it again in the fall."

"We also have an urban forest," Irvine continues. "The last number of years, we've been integrating fruit trees into it, so we have fruit production alongside of the walking paths, and, in a few years, people will be able to harvest that fruit. And, obviously, with our climate, we salt our streets, and three years ago, we started experimenting with putting beet juice in to reduce the need for salt, which has a positive impact on the environment and also on the vehicles that use our roads. The purpose of the salt is to keep the sand from clumping up in cold weather and the beet juice seems to do that just as well."

May says that Portage's population has remained virtually unchanged for the past 40 years, but with the two new plants opening in the near future, that number should change, dramatically. "From 1971 until now, our population hasn't deviated beyond 300 people," he notes. "We were just under 13,000 in 1970, and we're just over 13,000, now. So, we haven't lost any, but we haven't made any significant gains.

"In addition to the increased interest in the city and area from investors and companies, Portage Regional Economic Development is continuing to reach out pro-actively to ensure that our positioning is known by agencies that can best connect us to future opportunities. This has included speaking at the World Trade Centre Annual General Assembly in Leeuwarden, Netherlands this spring, liaising with internationally-posted Trade Commissioners at Canadian Embassies around the globe, and ensuring that our message is on point and stands out, even when we find ourselves vying for opportunities against larger cities like Toronto and Vancouver. With the world looking ahead to how we'll feed the growing population by 2050, Portage la Prairie is in a great position to be a part of all of those conversations."

Mayor Ferris agrees that the city is primed for new growth and, in anticipation, Portage la Prairie has put out the welcome mat: "We are a welcoming, inclusive, diverse community; we have a very good quality of life, here – excellent schools, excellent recreation opportunities. And I'd say to anybody, 'Come and give us a look.' I think they'd like what they see."





PREFERRED VENDORS

■ Food Development Centre

roberta.irvine@gov.mb.ca

A Special Operating Agency of the Province of Manitoba the goals of the Food Development Centre are to: increase the competitiveness, sustainability and adaptability of the agricultural industries; grow the agri-food and agri-product processing industries in Manitoba; and increase the capacity of agriculture, agri-food, and agri-product related organizations to drive economic development.

■ McCain Foods, Ltd.

www.mccain.com

McCain Foods Ltd. is a Canadian, multi-national, privately-owned company established in 1956 in Florenceville, New Brunswick. It is the world's largest manufacturer of frozen potato products with over 20,000 employees and 47 production facilities on six continents.

■ Southport

www.southport.ca

LANGLEY CITY, *British Columbia*

THE PLACE TO BE

Mayor Ted Schaffer has dedicated more than 25 years to supporting the City of Langley's vision to build a vibrant, healthy, and safe community, a vision he and his Council colleagues have exceeded beyond all expectations. Just a 45-minute drive from Vancouver, this scenic and innovative regional center is well known as "The Place to Be" for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The Mayor, who was first elected as a Langley City Councillor in 1990 and formally elected as Mayor in 2014, says, "As part of the Metro Vancouver Regional District, the City of Langley is one of 22 municipalities within the regional government structure, and we're tasked to differentiate ourselves and emphasize what makes us unique."

Small but aggressive, Langley City has retained its small city atmosphere and community spirit while offering all the amenities of a major urban center – a trait that appeals



AT A GLANCE
LANGLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

WHAT: A vibrant west coast Canadian city; population 27,000

WHERE: Metro Vancouver Regional District, British Columbia

WEBSITE: www.langleycity.ca



to a wide spectrum of people and businesses. Contained within just four square miles, the City consists of established suburban residential neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, a natural wetland of regional significance, parkland exceeding 300 acres, a pedestrian-oriented downtown, big-box retail, a regional shopping center, and one of the most active industrial and serviced commercial land bases in Metro Vancouver.

From modest beginnings as a small settlement near Innes Corners, Langley City has grown to a population of 27,000 with a distinct cultural and social identity. Mayor Schaffer states, "We've asserted ourselves as an economic center for the Fraser Valley. Our elected officials are visible neighbors, and tax dollars are spent to address issues of local significance, rather than being



redirected to another community as is done in amalgamated governments. That's why there is no aspiration towards amalgamation out here in western Canada, unlike other provinces, such as Ontario. On March 15, 2018 we celebrated our



63rd birthday as a separate municipality. That may not seem like much in the grand scheme of things but it's very important to us. We're proud of our heritage and, most importantly, we're excited about our future!"

CKF Inc. is the largest employer in Langley City. Among its many environmentally-friendly pulp and paper products are Chinet plates, egg cartons (700,000 per year), and coffee trays for Tim Hortons and Starbucks. Another valuable employer, IPEX Inc., manufactures plastic pipes and industrial products for construction utilities. Langley City also thrives in the automotive sales sector, as home to Canada's first luxury auto mall. The City is pleased to have assisted the Dilawri Group in locating its Mercedes-Benz dealership on Kwantlen First Nation land and securing a 40-year lease - quite a progressive initiative for the Kwantlen First Nation business group. Also in the luxury auto mall is the Open Road Auto Group









which is owned by local businessman Christian Chia. Together, they have invested over $70 million in the automotive sector, selling and servicing Acura, Audi, Aston Martin, Bentley, BMW, Honda, Infiniti, Jaguar, Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Porsche, Subaru, and Volvo vehicles, in an industry that provides many high-paying jobs.

The City of Langley's interests do not stop at the local or national levels. Recently the City invested with the Bank of China, making it the first Canadian municipal government to deposit funds with the financial institution. "This investment demonstrates a significant step to open the lines of communication in our community, increasing exposure and encouraging business investment opportunities for the City of Langley through the Bank of China (Canada) business partners," notes Mayor Schaffer. "We hope that this initiative will encourage positive relationships and future business partnerships between local



entrepreneurs and foreign investors, not only for our city but for the region as a whole."

With more than 550 employees, Cascades Casino Resort (Gateway Casinos & Entertainment Ltd.) drives the economy from its highly popular three-component facility in downtown Langley City, featuring a casino, a hotel, and a city-owned convention center that seats up to 500 people. "Over the last 11 years, as a host local government to our casino, we've received approximately $80 million in revenue that we've poured into infrastructure. People don't see that – sewers, roads, sidewalks – but that's where the money goes," states Mayor Schaffer. "We look after the dollars because we are stewards of the community. It's not our money. Bottom line is we are a debt-free community because we're fiscally responsible."

Langley City offers many incentives to stimulate growth and attract businesses, among them an abundance of affordable, full-serviced industrial land, modest business licence fees, extremely competitive development cost charges, and some of the most favorable industrial and commercial tax rates in British Columbia. In fact, the City is consistently acknowledged as having the most efficient and streamlined development processes in the Metro Vancouver region – it recognizes that time means money. Schaffer notes, "We keep our taxes at a low, reasonable level, and work with industry to encourage development within our light industrial area. Our downtown core has wonderfully unique shops and few, if any, vacancies. We are pioneers in nurturing joint ventures between public and private sectors, including a Triple P

deal for an arena with twin ice rinks; a homeless shelter run by the Salvation Army; a community music school; a seniors' centre; and the Stepping Stone Community Services facility for people facing life challenges. All these are on city-owned property. We're committed to pursuing opportunities that benefit everyone."

Along with providing services to a broader regional population, Langley City is a net importer of workers – meaning the number of jobs available exceeds the size of the resident labour force. Langley City has earned bragging rights for achieving one of the highest ratios of jobs to population among Metro Vancouver municipalities, along with a well-balanced economic base. As a small local government, the City of Langley espouses the mantra "Leanness Inspires Innovation" and seeks out opportunities to partner with the development industry and community groups to promote their different interests. Mayor Schaffer notes, "At the City of Langley, we recognize the incredibly important role business owners, developers, and investors play in building a great city."

In that regard, City Council focuses its efforts



in seven areas: infrastructure renewal, quality of life, communication, revitalization, environment, protective services, and organizational excellence. "We're making progress in all these areas," Schaffer reports, "and ultimately it will define our success over the next five years. Our trade population area is in excess of 300,000 and that should double by 2026, with a trade potential of $3.84 billion. Our specialty businesses draw customers from Vancouver, Bellingham, and throughout Washington State, since we're right on the U.S. border."

It's said that good cities react to opportunities, but great cities plan and create them. The City of Langley has done just that with an award-winning downtown master plan and innovative Brownfield redevelopment. Schaffer acknowledges, "We had to do something with contaminated industrial and commercial land that was sitting derelict and vacant. The plan focuses on what we can do to make these sites employment generators, improve the environmental conditions, expand our tax base, and promote sustainable development by utilizing existing infrastructure. What was so amazing was we were the first in B.C. to adopt a Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy."



Most of the research was done on successful Brownfield initiatives in eastern Canada. Langley City took some of those best practices, modified them, and developed its own strategy that has resulted in over $198 million in new construction



on Brownfield sites, creating more than 950 jobs, a national Brownie Award, a national Community Sustainability Award, a national Green Champion Award, a Federation of Canadian Municipalities award (FCM), and a provincial Economic Development Association Award.

"We didn't do it for the accolades," the Mayor admits, "They came after the fact. We did it because we had a problem – contaminated sites that needed redevelopment. And we needed to work with developers to find innovative solutions for transforming these sites into viable new commercial/industrial businesses. We are now known as a leader in economic development in British Columbia – a partner versus a single-dimension regulator of land use. The Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy really put us on the map!"

Mayor Schaffer believes that the success of any community is founded on relationship building and creating an internal framework to address business challenges, making it easier to grow along with the community and the region. When investing comes to mind, the City of Langley truly is "The Place to Be".

PROUD SUPPORTERS OF LANGLEY'S CONTINUED GROWTH

Wesgroup is one of Western Canada's largest private real estate organizations with the humble roots of a family run company. Our 50-year history of residential and commercial development has remained focused in the Lower Mainland and with significant holdings in Langley City, we are proud to be part of its growth.



Langely City Square



Corix at 200th Street Business Park

WESGROUP

PREFERRED VENDOR

- **Wesgroup Properties**
  www.wesgroup.ca

Niagara Falls, ONTARIO

SMALL CITY WITH A BIG REPUTATION

Home to one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, there is much more to the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario than meets the tourist's eye. Just ask Jim Diodati – Mayor of "The Falls" since 2010 and one of the helmsmen leading its strategic growth. His successful bid for office was based on a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of the city, followed by a 10-year business plan called 2020 Vision - The Road Map to Prosperity.

Niagara Falls' population is close to 90,000 and growing extremely quickly. Factored into planning for that growth is a strong leadership push to bring the GO train to the city. Recently, Business View Magazine spoke with Mayor Diodati about the exciting GO project, and other amazing goings-on in Niagara Falls. The following is the edited transcript of that conversation:

BVM: Why is the GO train such a priority?

Diodati: "Currently, around 33,000 people from the Niagara Region work in the tourism industry, year-round, but another 50,000 people per day

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Must be 19 years of age or older to enter the casino or attend performances at Fallsview Casino Resort.
Individuals who have voluntarily excluded themselves from Ontario gaming sites and who have not been reinstated are not permitted to enter the casino or attend performances.

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OLG

head out on the highway from Niagara to the GTHA (Greater Toronto Hamilton Area) for high-paying jobs. The advantage of a commuter train service is you can get to those great jobs and come home without worrying about delays from traffic congestion or construction. If we're able to plug into that with the GO train, people could happily live in Niagara where housing is much more affordable, where we have an outstanding quality of life, and so many things you don't get in the city.

"The region has worked hard to make sure the transportation infrastructure is in place to bring and sustain growth. The status of the GO train is 2021 to Grimsby, and 2023 for St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. Much more than a train, this will be a catalyst to an explosion of economic development. It's created an unbelievable ripple effect, so now we're touted as the second hottest economy in the country. With growth forecasts coming out, I believe the best is yet to come."

BVM: Are tourist attractions all that Niagara Falls has to offer?



AT A GLANCE
NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

WHAT: A city of 90,000

WHERE: On the Canadian side of the Niagara River

WEBSITE: www.niagarafalls.ca

Niagara Casinos – A Proud Member of the Niagara Community

Since 1996, Niagara Casinos has been a proud and important member of the Niagara business community. With 4,200 employees working at two properties, Niagara Casinos is the largest employer in the region, one of the region's key tourism attractions, and contributes significantly to the economic and social well-being of Niagara Falls and the Niagara Region.

Niagara Casinos includes two properties – Fallsview Casino Resort and Casino Niagara. Both properties offer a range of amenities, including more than 4,300 slot machines and more than 170 table games between the two properties, live entertainment, 30,000 sq. ft. of meeting and convention space, dozens of restaurants, shopping, a multiple Four Diamond Award-winning hotel, and more.

"The success of Niagara Casinos is intrinsically tied to the success of the city and the entire region," said Richard Taylor, president, Niagara Casinos. "Since our beginnings, we have worked closely with public and private sector stakeholders to successfully promote the city and region as a global destination. We are excited about Niagara Falls' future, and we look forward to working with stakeholders throughout the community to drive the success of Niagara Casinos, Niagara Falls and the Niagara Region."

To learn more about Niagara Casinos, visit FallsviewCasinoResort.com and CasinoNiagara.com.

Diodati: "Niagara Falls is often misunderstood. People think it's all about Clifton Hill – they need to know we have regular neighborhoods, churches, schools, parks. We're actually a really nice community to live in. But we're so well-branded for our tourism that I refer to us as 'The Coca-Cola of Municipalities.' I've been all around the world, and I challenge people to show me a person who's never heard of Niagara Falls. We're a small city with a big reputation.

"Because we get 14 million tourists, we've got great restaurants, attractions, and hotels; a buffet of fun and excitement for visitors and residents. Those kinds of amenities you rarely get in a city our size. We also have 125 wineries, and 95 percent of all ice wine in Canada is made in Niagara. With good wine comes fine dining and hotel stays and longer visits. We've also got the best white sand beaches along Lake Erie, horseback riding, outstanding golf courses, and farmers' markets. So, it's the best of both worlds. It all plays together with a great quality of life. And it's only a 12-minute flight from our Niagara District Airport to Billy Bishop Airport in Toronto for $159 return. That's amazing. Plus, everyone likes the proximity to the U.S. border for shopping, or an NHL or NFL game in Buffalo."

BVM: How has the recent housing boom affected the city?

Diodati: "It's a double-edge sword. Because houses here were beyond dirt cheap, compared to the GHTA, people moved down here in droves. We've had this massive growth, and now it's difficult for first-time home buyers to get into the ownership side of things. We're hoping that will ease with enough inventory of homes. As it stands, we're selling out entire subdivisions before the services are even in the ground. Thankfully, we built new pumping stations, and we're expanding that network to handle the growth and the infrastructure. But we want it to be measured growth, to ensure the new neighborhoods still have the warm, folksy character of Niagara Falls.

"Expansion of our trail network is another key aspect of community development. In 2000, we started the Millennium Trail that runs along former open canals on the hydro corridor, which were once seen as a scar across the city. Now, we've done arrangements with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and we're building a full trail from the north to the south of the city, where you can walk, cycle, blade in the midst of wildlife and nature. The breathtaking Niagara Parks Commission Recreation Trail is another incredible pathway, running from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario along the Niagara River.

"We're also upgrading and rebuilding our parks. Last year, we did ten; this year, another ten. We're connecting the trails, the parks, and the neighborhoods, so people won't feel isolated. All our new roads will have bike lanes for safety. We even built a rubberized trail around the ice surface at our arena, so it's comfortable to use for exercising and socializing regardless of the weather. We want to get people out of their houses, out of their cars, out of their neighborhoods to build





that sense of community and belonging throughout the city."

BVM: What technological and green advancements have you initiated?

Diodati: "Originally, the city of Niagara Falls and three other municipalities in our region wanted to find a way to provide high-speed fiber optic cable for the MUSH section (Municipalities, Universities, Schools, Hospitals), so we started the Niagara Regional Broadband Network. From there, we expanded into the commercial sector, and kept expanding so much that we've had the big companies try to buy us out several times. But we're not in it for the money. We're in it for the long haul for economic development.

"Fiber optic has gone from a luxury to a necessity. When you buy a house, you assume there is high-speed connectivity along with regular utilities, so we're also doing wireless. We've since bought out two of the three municipalities, but we keep reinvesting to make it bigger, better, and available to everyone. We want to bring high-speed to areas that can't afford it. This business is something we're happy to own and grow; it brings great rewards through economic development and other ways.

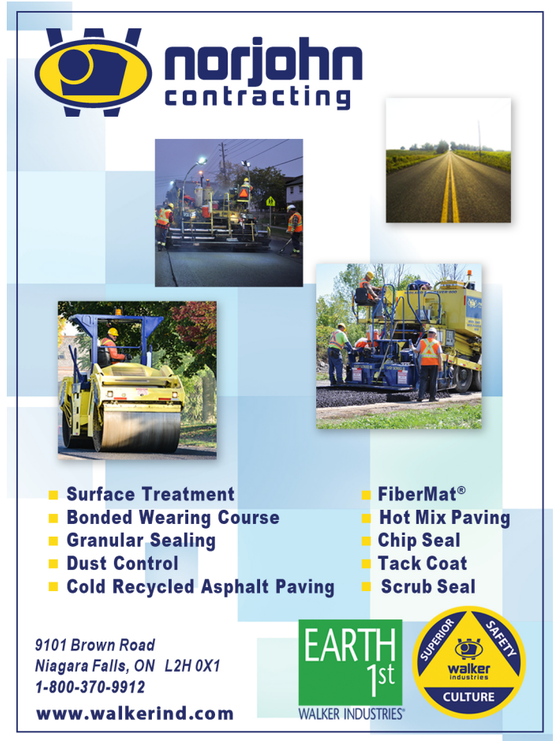
"On the 'green' side, we spent $4 million to upgrade the old sodium lighting











on the Falls. The problem with LED technology – it had not come far enough to throw light that far and through the mist. So, we did a worldwide Request for Proposals and narrowed it down to a Japanese company with equipment made in California. It's been so successful; we got a 300 percent increase in intensity, a massive range of new colors, and no dead spots. By putting the lights behind the mist, you can now see more of the Canadian Horseshoe Falls than ever before. The effects that are possible in this digital age are spectacular, and operating costs are reduced because it uses significantly less electricity to create the lighting. We've also changed our city street light to LED. All around, we're more sustainable."

BVM: What major projects are on the horizon for the city of Niagara Falls?

Diodati: "We're building a new center of excellence hospital for many disciplines. It's a



consolidation of sites in Niagara south, located in Niagara Falls in a place that's easily accessible. The hospital will focus on seniors, women, children, mental health, and will have an artificial intelligence component. It's a billion dollar plus build on 50 acres; the biggest capital project ever built in the Niagara Region – private or public. With all the best technology and equipment, it will also attract the brightest and best minds in healthcare. We hope to break ground within two years, and we'd like to be cutting the ribbon five years from now.

"We're also building a $150 million, 5,000-seat entertainment center down by the Fallsview Casino, which will bring another one million visitors per year, according to a Deloitte survey we commissioned. And we're so close to knowing if Ryerson University, in conjunction with Brock University, will locate their incubation hub in our downtown Digital Media Zone (DMZ). Ryerson's business incubator is ranked #1 in Canada and #3 in the world. When the GO train and Ryerson arrive in our downtown, it will be the catalyst for great regentrification. People assume Clifton Hill is our downtown, but that's our tourist downtown. Our community downtown is a couple miles away with local delights, experiential dining and, like our entire city, looking forward to a fantastic future ahead."

PREFERRED VENDORS

■ Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort

www.fallsviewcasinoresort.com

Built on a cliff overlooking the world-famous Horseshoe Falls, the Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort is the largest and most elegant gaming resort facility in Canada, offering a world-class casino with over 3,000 slot machines and 130 gaming tables. The resort also features a 374-room luxury hotel, a full service spa and fitness centre, dozens of shops and restaurants, the intimate, 1,500-seat state-of-the-art, Avalon Theatre entertainment venue, and over 30,000 square feet of meeting and convention space. It also is home to a collection of over 20 dining options, led by some of North America's most inspired and creative chefs.

■ Provincial Construction Ltd.

www.provconstruction.ca

Since 1965 Provincial Construction has serviced thousands of building lots and built hundreds of roads with honesty, ingenuity, and excellence. Proudly locally owned, we are excited to be part of the tremendous growth in our community and continuing to make Niagara a premier place to live.

■ Cotton Inc.

www.cottoninc.ca

Cotton Inc. is a local family owned and operated company that has been making a positive contribution in the Niagara region for 40 years. Our success is the result of dedicated employees, hard work, smart growth and developing honest long term relationships with our customers, suppliers, and partners. We are Niagara's complete concrete contractor.

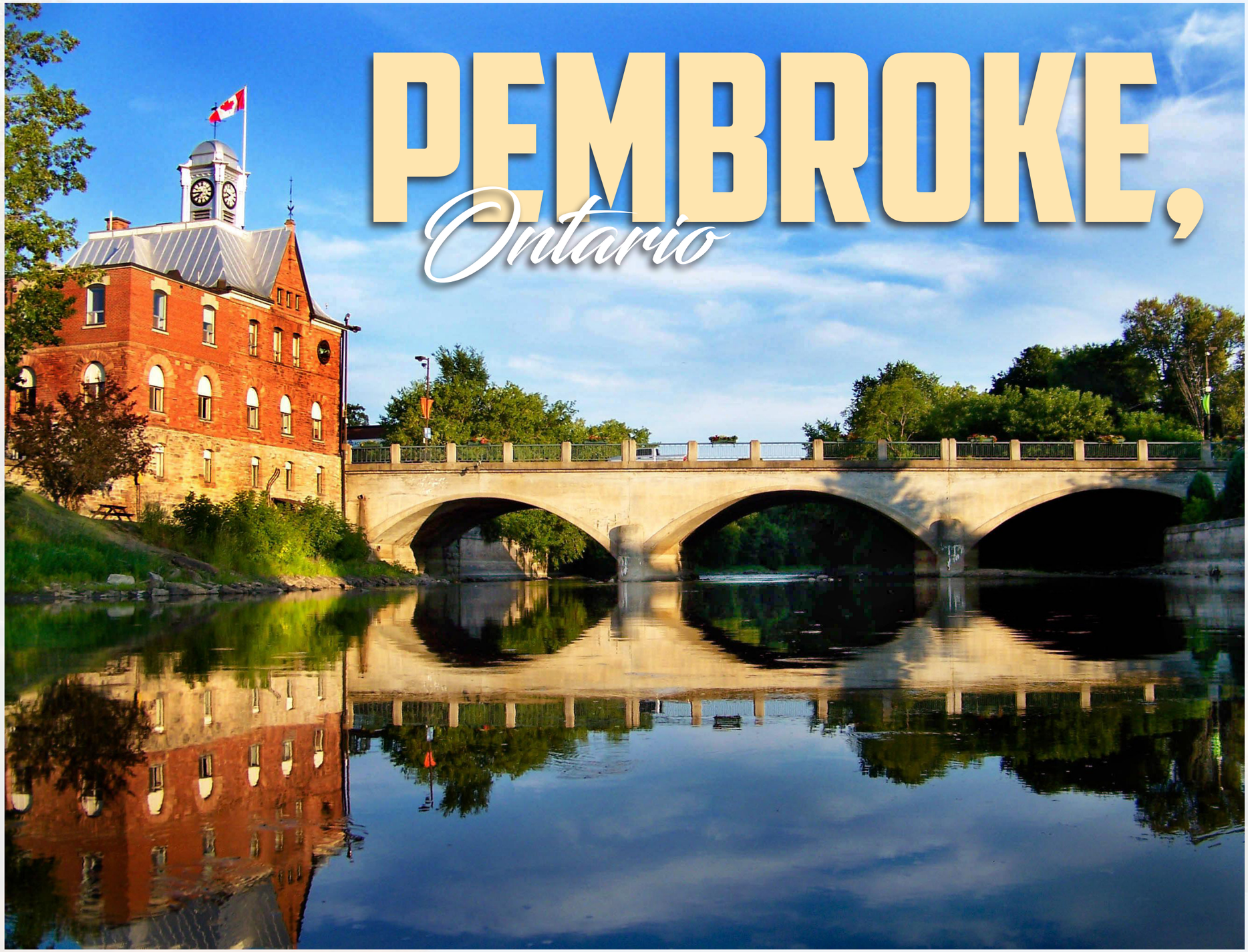
■ Sani-Gear Fire

www.sanigear.ca

Sani-Gear Inc., established in 2003, located in Kitchener, Ont provides industry-leading fire suit cleaning, repair, alterations, and complete inspection. Our SOLE focus and expertise lies in the cleaning and maintenance of existing bunker gear. We provide our services both on an annual scheduled basis or as-needed. Through our commitment to outstanding quality and unparalleled customer service, Sani-Gear has gained the trust of, and provides services to, many fire departments across Canada. We tailor the service provided to each fire departments unique needs.

■ Norjohn Contracting & Paving Ltd.

www.walkerind.com



PEMBROKE, *Ontario*

THE HEART OF THE OTTAWA VALLEY

Pembroke, Ontario, a municipality of approximately 14,000, sits at the confluence of the Muskrat, Indian and Ottawa Rivers in the Ottawa Valley, some 90 miles northwest of the capital. Originally named Miramichi, Pembroke is indirectly named after Sidney Herbert, First Admiralty Secretary from 1841 to 1845 and son of George Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke. It became a police village in 1856, a town in 1878, and a city in 1971.

Historically, forestry and farming formed the backbone of the local economy and remain important today. Local timber products include lumber, plywood, veneer, hydro poles, fiberboard, and office furniture. Two other major employers in the area are Garrison Petawawa, a military base in nearby Petawawa, and Canadian Nuclear Laboratories. "Those are two big drivers," says Heather Salovaara, Pembroke's Economic Development Officer. "And the Laboratories are undergoing a major revamping, right now, which is creating a lot of jobs. We have some businesses that are spinoffs from

AT A GLANCE
PEMBROKE, ONTARIO

WHAT: A city of 14,000

WHERE: On the Ottawa River, northwest of Ottawa

WEBSITE: www.pembroke.ca



those industries – one that makes lighting signs with tritium from the nuclear laboratory, and one that makes bomb suits for the military."

Pembroke also serves as service hub for the area, which has a daily population of about 74,000. "Those are people who live within a 45-minute drive from Pembroke, who are coming here to do their grocery shopping, to see their doctor, to drop their kids off at school and daycare – those sorts of things," Salovaara adds. Finally, the local economy also benefits from tourism, aided partly by Pembroke's location on the Trans-Canada Highway, as well as being a gateway to the Ottawa Valley's natural, cultural, and recreational areas, such as Algonquin Park, a 2,946-square-mile expanse of forest, rivers, lakes, and wildlife.

Today, Pembroke is focused on its economic development – a priority that the City Council specified in its most recent strategic plan. To accomplish that, without raising taxes on its residents, Mayor Mike LeMay says that the city needs to broaden its assessment base. "To do that, we have to get manufacturing in; we have to improve the businesses in town; we have to make sure the businesses we do have, stay. So, what we've been doing over the last couple of years is just developing tools and programs to put into place."

Salovaara details some of the programs that have been promulgated to encourage investment in the city. "One of the first ones that Council undertook was our Community Improvement Plan," she begins. "We put ours in place in September 2016. We have ten grants under our plan; they're designed, primarily, to help commercial and industrial property owners. And we do have one grant for residential property owners of upper-story units in our downtown corridor. The majority of the grants that we've seen taken advantage of are for façade improvement – the brickwork or the lighting or the signage on the exterior of a property.

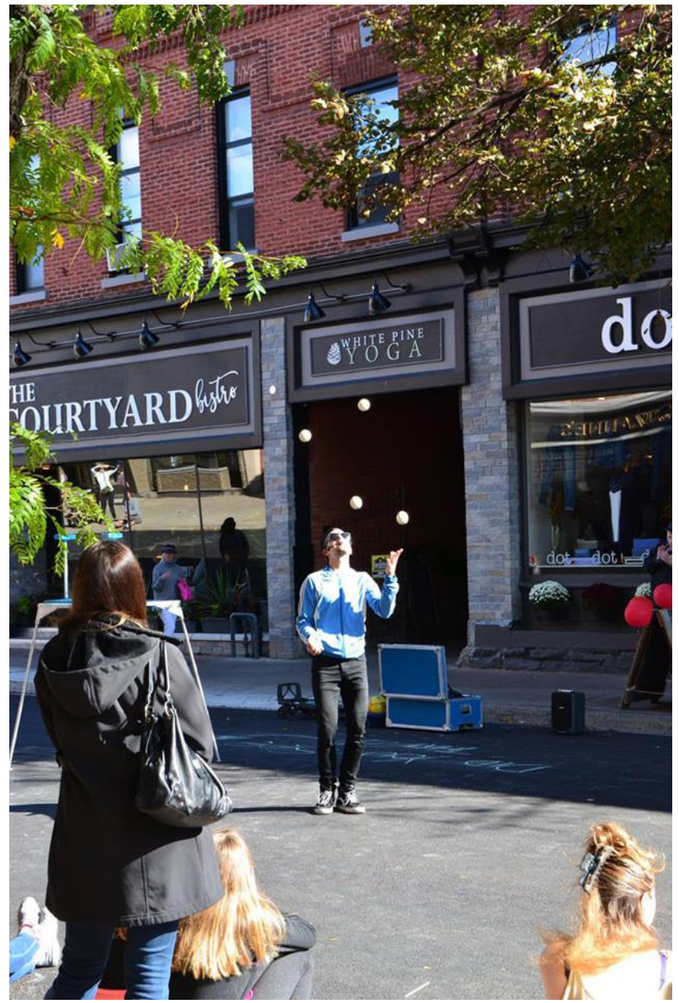
"The Downtown Housing Grant is another one – to encourage landlords in our downtown to improve the residential spaces they have to attract people to live downtown, because we know when people live downtown, it looks nicer, and you see more customers down there, which attracts even more commercial tenants.

"We do have eight other grants, as well – some small, some very large, that can reduce the taxes that a business pays over a ten-year period. Our Council initially allocated $100,000 to roll out to property owners in the city. At the beginning of this year, we had about $24,000 left and Council topped that off by another $50,000. So, they definitely invested a good amount of dollars in the program.

"We did a review in December 2017, and found that we had a 473 percent return on investments; so, basically, for every dollar we're giving out, we're seeing $4.73 invested in our community. This year, for our 2018 budget, Council reduced the industrial property tax rate by 22 percent. So, we're trying to make ourselves more competitive to bring industry to the area."

Helping Pembroke to attract industry has been aided by its recent certification by the Province of Ontario as an "investment-ready certified site," based on all the preparation it has done to





prepare its city-owned land for business. "We have a 28-acre parcel of land in our industrial park," Salovaara reports. "We've done all the background work to make it shovel-ready; we've done all the environmental assessments and we've got all the services in place – water, hydro, gas, and a fully redundant, fiber optic loop."

In addition, as one of 40 sites across Ontario that are certified as investment-ready, the Province helps to market Pembroke at international convocations. It also pays for half of its marketing costs when the city advertises its benefits to realtors and business owners across Canada and the United States.

Some of that marketing has already paid off, according to Salovaara, who explains that an out-of-town developer just purchased a $1.5 million portfolio of downtown real estate. "When they purchased it, it was not worth a whole lot because the buildings were not in good shape," she says. "But they've already started to completely transform the spaces. Our grant is helping them out – they get $5,000 for a storefront that they're spending $60,000 on. So, it's encouraging some of our local investors to buy more properties, as well, and to fix them up."

"We consider everyone coming into the city as partners and that has really helped us, because now we have developers who have a fair amount of money and who are investing in the city and staying here," adds LeMay. "A few years ago, business people were buying up city blocks in small municipalities and then using them as a straight tax write-off, and Pembroke happened to be one of those. So, our main street was basically a derelict area. But in the last three years, it has really improved. We're open and willing to do what we can to make sure that a business feels welcome here, but also, it's important for us to retain what we have. That's why we like to develop these partnerships and work closely with the various businesses coming into the city."

Another advantage for new businesses that want to establish themselves in Pembroke is the presence of Algonquin College's new Pembroke campus, which opened in 2012 on the city's waterfront. It began with 300 full-time students, and today it has 1,000, 50 percent of whom come from out of town. The college adds to the cultural life of the city, while providing an educated workforce for the area. Not coincidentally, the growth of the college has spurred investment in student housing. Today, there are three privately-run student residences in the city.



The city has also made significant improvements to its infrastructure, including a $1.2 million program to replace all of its street lights with LED technology – a move which has already saved some $60,000 on street lighting maintenance and promises to ameliorate all of the city's upfront costs by 2022. It has done some wastewater plant upgrades, and it has invested in solar panels. In 2015, it also saw the establishment of a new Ontario Provincial Police station at the city's industrial park, and a brand new fire station will open there this summer.

"This is a huge investment that the city is making in our local services," says Tourism and Communications Officer, Heather Sutherland. "Our previous fire station had been built in 1860 with an addition added in 1963. They have outgrown their facility. We have a new aerial fire truck that currently has to be stored in a different facility because it doesn't fit in our current fire hall. The new hall will be ready in June; it's a $5 million, modern facility, fully funded by the City of Pembroke."

Speaking of tourism, Sutherland says that Pembroke is currently in the process of creating a strategy for the city, "with goals and projects over the next one to two years to further build our tourism sector. It's a new focus for the city, now," she relates.

"The first couple of years, the stress was on economic development and trying to get businesses within the city, which is working quite well," says LeMay. "But also, we found that we needed some help as far as tourism is concerned, so we hired Heather as a tourism person and now marketing is one of the main strategies that we're getting to work on. When we look at where we are on the Ottawa River, we have a gold mine, here. We have the largest group of heritage murals in the Province of Ontario, and the area is the whitewater capital of the Province. So, we've got a million things that we have to start marketing. That's going to be a focus as we move forward. We are on the cusp and things are going well, and we just want to keep working at it."



PREFERRED VENDOR

■ **G.P. Splinter Forest Products Ltd.**
g.splinter@nrtco.net

supply chain, logistics & transportation

IN THIS ISSUE

THE ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT COMPANY



WELCOME ABOARD

HALIFAX TRANSIT



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS ONLINE



CASE SNOW MANAGEMENT

Handling the winter weather



PLATINUM STORAGE GROUP

Self-storage success is all in the family



AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

Serving the motor coach industry



GREATER RICHMOND TRANSIT COMPANY

On tap for a historic year



STARK AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Safe, responsive, and dependable



CENTRAL MACHINERY SALES

Agricultural and construction equipment



THE ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT COMPANY

WELCOME ABOARD

The Alexandria Transit Company (ATC), known locally as DASH, an acronym for Driving Alexandria Safely Home, is the city-owned, non-profit, public bus system in Alexandria, Virginia, a city of 153,000. DASH provides safe and reliable, fixed-route bus service within the city and connects its passengers with Metrobus, Metrorail, Virginia Railway Express, and all local bus systems. It also operates the very popular King Street Trolley, which offers daily, free rides in the city's central tourist district.

"DASH was formed in 1984 by the local officials, here, who recognized the need for public transportation services to provide connectivity to Washington, D.C.'s regional Metro system, which had opened in the late 1970s," says ATC's CEO and General Manager, Josh Baker. "We had 17 buses and 30 drivers," adds Marketing and Communications Manager, Allyson Teevan.

AT A GLANCE THE ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT COMPANY

WHAT: A city-owned, non-profit, public bus system

WHERE: Alexandria, Virginia

WEBSITE: www.dashbus.com







"The organization, today, looks a lot different than it did then," Baker continues, "but our mission remains the same – we subscribe to a model of customer safety and service as our priority. We operate a fleet of 85 transit buses; we service just shy of four million passengers, annually, and we have just shy of 200 employees. Our annual operating budget is approximately $17 million; of that, approximately $3.5 million is composed of fares paid by the rider. Other revenues include charters and grants and marketing programs. We are subsidized heavily by the locality, but our operating ratio is pretty strong, relative to other systems. We are known as one of the top transit systems in the country, and have repeatedly been recognized for our quality customer service, our reliability, and our on-time performance."

Not content with those accolades, Baker says that ATC, in an effort to expand and enhance its already superior services, is currently getting to work on a "transit vision plan, which is a rethinking of how people in Alexandria move around and how we provide services to them." He explains, "The transit industry as a whole has seen a declining ridership base because of changes in the way that people live their lives and the way they move around - things such as telecommuting; shared ride services, such as Uber and Lyft; bike shares; and a more urban-centric workforce have really changed the demands for public transit, nationwide. So, we have been engaging our community in a number of ways to ensure that our services meet their needs and where we do, that's great, and where we don't, we try to work internally to understand how we might effectively provide those services."

One way in which DASH has increased its system's effectiveness was when it introduced its



"Plan Ahead…Pay it Forward" campaign, in 2014. "It was a strategic move to try to reduce what's called 'dwell time' at passenger stops - the amount of time that a bus is stationary, loading or unloading passengers, which affects its on-time performance and the satisfaction of the riders," Baker says. The company spent a year researching the situation and found that significant dwell time was often caused by passengers adding value to their SmarTrip cards, after getting on the bus.

"There was a lot of downtime, where folks were adding value to their card," says Teevan. "Some of our busiest routes at peak hours were experiencing up to 15-minute delays. We were receiving a lot of complaints from passengers and even bus operators. So, what we did was we stopped allowing the adding of fares to SmarTrip cards on the bus."

Teevan admits that the move was somewhat controversial and ATC expected a certain amount of resistance from riders who were used to the old system. With the implementation of "Plan Ahead…Pay it Forward," passengers would only be able to adjust their SmarTrip accounts at a kiosk at a Metro station or online, but no longer at a bus's fare box. "But, we moved forward with it and there was no negative output," she recounts. "In fact, we received numerous comments within a month, saying 'thank you' because we were able to get folks to and from their destinations on time." "We did a massive marketing campaign to help make sure that the public was educated and aware," Baker adds, "and the results were very positive. We increased our on-time performance, reduced our dwell time, and increased our customer satisfaction."

This past fall, in an attempt to offer new and innovative ways to bring more people onto its buses, DASH partnered with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and cre-



ated the "Student Ride Free" initiative. "Our strategic partnership set up a program for all high schoolers in Alexandria to use our services free of charge," Baker notes. "By showing their student I.D., they can ride anywhere at any time. That's been an incredibly successful program that we're very proud of."

DASH's bus fleet is composed of full-sized transit buses with a rated useful life of 12 years. "We pride ourselves in having a very well-maintained fleet with high reliability," says Baker, "and we attempt to replace buses when they reach their 12-year mark. We anticipate that by the end of 2019, we will have completed our most recent round of fleet replacements in an endeavor to get all of our older style buses that are high polluters off the road, and reduce our carbon footprint."

Several years ago, in an earlier replacement round, ATC began ordering hybrid electric/diesel transit buses. "A diesel engine paired with an electric drivetrain, much like a hybrid car," Baker explains. "But we have found that the technology did not prove itself to be as efficient as we would have liked, and it resulted in increased costs of operations and maintenance, which have not been offset by the minor improvement in fuel economy. So, instead, we turned our focus to reducing our carbon footprint by purchasing nothing but clean, low-emitting diesels to replace the old diesels that don't have any pollution controls.

"And we've set ourselves a long-range plan to move to a fully electric fleet. In fact, we recently did a demonstration of a fully electric bus for a full week. We ran it on our routes; we collected the data from it to understand the feasibility of future implementation of that technology. Fully electric buses are expensive, but we have been on the forefront of trying to implement that technology. I believe that we're looking at 2021 to try and start getting electric buses in the fleet."

Baker, who came on board as CEO in early 2017, believes that a lot of what the company has accomplished over the last few years, and what it intends to accomplish going forward, has been due to its corporate culture. "People want to work here because it's a family-oriented environment," he claims. "We see everyone as important. We're not the highest-paying system in the region; we may not have the greatest benefits of anybody in the region; but what we do have is a dedicated workforce that believes in what we do. And much of what we do internally, from a management standpoint, in order to foster that, is spending time with the workforce to understand what is important to them and how we make sure management supports them."

"We've created a culture where the employees feel that they have a voice and that they're heard when they have concerns," asserts Teevan. "Management does a very good job of motivating and appreciating employees. And they're dedicated to DASH. And we are customer-focused. Everything we do, we do with the mindset of what is going to improve the ridership experience."

The Alexandria Transit Company – Welcome Aboard.







PREFERRED VENDOR

- **Clever Devices**
  www.cleverdevices.com

HALIFAX TRANSIT



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Halifax Transit is a Canadian public transport service operating buses and ferries in the Halifax Regional Municipality of Nova Scotia. Founded as Metro Transit in March 1982, Halifax Transit provides service along two ferry routes (five ferries), 57 conventional bus routes, and five express routes (332 conventional buses), as well as operating 39 Access-a-Buses, a door-to-door paratransit service for those who cannot use the fixed route service.

In the 2nd quarter of 2017, Halifax Transit's conventional bus ridership was 3.99 million, its ferry ridership was 644,600, and Access-a-Bus ridership was 38,800. Operations are overseen from headquarters in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. With a staff of 960, the company is a major employer for the region. After more than a decade working for Halifax Transit, including the last two years as Director, Dave Reage knows the public transit service inside out, and has keen insights into its future in the region.

Reage shares, "Metro Transit was formed in the early '80s through amalgamation of the transit systems of Halifax, Dartmouth, and

AT A GLANCE
HALIFAX TRANSIT

WHAT: A public transport service operating buses and ferries

WHERE: Halifax, Nova Scotia

WEBSITE: www.halifax.ca

the outlying county area, and we rebranded in 2014 as Halifax Transit. We've really been working to change the face of transit, focusing on the customer experience. The challenge any transit system has is getting people who own a car to leave their vehicle at home. We're trying to identify the barriers that are keeping people from taking transit and how we can tackle those. Enhancing infrastructure is one solution - having climate-controlled transit terminals and bus transfer points to make the experience comfortable for riders. Positive results are also coming from the Halifax Transit Technology Program – a multi-year program that takes us from having very little tech to being one of the most technologically advanced systems in Canada, if not North America."

The first big project for the new system was CAD/AVL (Computer Assisted Dispatch and Automatic Vehicle Location), which incorporates GPS on the buses, so they can be tracked in real time and generate data regarding on-time performance. That data is used to adjust the service for improved reliability. For the public, it means they can pull



up an app and locate their bus on a map. If it's running late, they can make decisions based on that. Fare management and, ultimately, electronic fare payment is another tech solution on Reage's wish list. "Transit is one of the few places where you still use cash," he explains. "We want to make it more convenient; have an app where you tap your phone on the fare box to pay. That's where we're headed. We're still a few years away, but we're looking at



bringing in new technology to revitalize the transit experience and make it more attractive."

The public transit industry in Canada has been declining, despite record investment by federal, provincial, and local governments. Reage notes, "We've been flat for a while, but in the last few months, we've seen ridership pick up a bit. We've done a lot of changes this year, increasing and improving service, and we've seen positive impact from that. For the past three years, we've been working on the Moving Forward Together plan, which is redesigning our entire transit network, all the routes, etc. We're into year three of a five-year implementation of that, and I hope what we're seeing is a reverse of the trend of flat and declining ridership and we can start moving upwards."

The Moving Forward Together plan was the most successful public consultation, in terms of number of people engaged, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has ever done. Rather than the traditional town hall meeting, Halifax Transit had members of a street team approach random citizens out walking, or at the grocery store, and give a 10-second outline of the plan, along with a card and website link where they could learn more and fill out a survey. "That type of innovative approach is the reason we had such a large response," says Reage. "The last time we did a plan like this we got 2000 and our goal was to double that. This time it came back with 16,000 and blew our expectations out of the water." Halifax Transit is also



investing in research to better understand public perceptions around Transit and how they can be used to help people choose Transit over driving their own vehicles to get where they are going.

Halifax Transit operates one of only two large-scale public transit ferry operations in the country. The other is Sea Bus in Vancouver, BC. Reage says, "It's a fairly rare form of public transit in Canada but, I can tell you, it's the best way to get to work. It's such a relaxing experience and an icon of Halifax. We recently launched a new ferry, the Vincent Coleman. So exciting! Since 2014, we've bought four new vessels and we have one more to come in August."

These new ferries will ply the waters for 30 to 40 years, year-round, in the ice-free harbor. Halifax being a hilly city, prone to winter snowstorms, buses can have issues climbing the hills, but the ferries rarely get canceled. "We had Hurricane Juan in 2003," Reage recalls, "and the ferries didn't run during the storm but next morning, when the city was in shambles, the ferries were out there sailing across the harbor, a symbol of normalcy."

Municipal taxes and fares pay for the bulk of transit funding. Additional financial support comes from the federal government through the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund, including 50 percent cost sharing on some capital projects. The Province of Nova Scotia also contributes, to the tune of $2 million per year. Emission requirements for all Halifax Transit diesel engines are based on U.S. EPA standards. Reage says, "Any time we replace an old bus with a new one, we gain some efficiency, as well as a reduction in particulate and greenhouse gas emissions. But the path we're starting on now is around battery-powered electric buses; no tailpipe emissions. That's the way of the future. It's already happening in small droves across the country. We just received council approval to enter

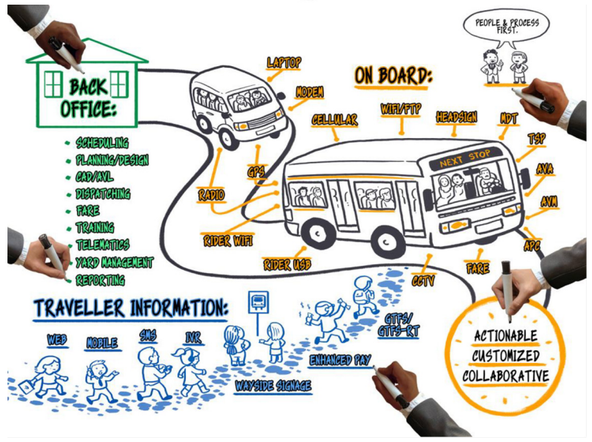


into partnerships for electric buses. The vehicles should be here next year, and we'll do some pilots to get a sense of how they run in the network."

Halifax Transit is partnering with Nova Scotia Power for energy storage solutions. In the model they're contemplating, charging stations are located at the terminals. A bus would go out on an hour-long round trip, come back to the terminal for a 10-minute top-up charge, then go out for another trip. Reage explains, "The challenge to that model is that Nova Scotia Power would prefer to sell us energy overnight, which is cheaper through time-of-day billing. We're looking at how we can charge these stations up overnight, to take advantage of lower electricity costs, and then release it during the day. Another fuel solution is compressed natural gas, and we'll be doing a study comparing the two. Ultimately, I suspect we'll have a mixed fleet of electric and diesel, with some natural gas, instead of a purely diesel fleet."

Buses are acquired through a purchase process. Nova Bus out of Montreal and New Flyer in Winnipeg are the two major players in Canada that manufacture diesel buses. They are both in the electric bus market as well, while a few other companies manufacture electric buses

Barrington Consulting



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only. Currently, the Halifax fleet is a mix of Novas and New Flyers.

Looking ahead, Reage says, "We have a couple exciting projects coming up. One is a commuter rail that's in the study phase. If we get council approval to proceed, we could see the service operating in Halifax within the next five years, which would make us one of the smaller cities in North America to operate a commuter rail system. The other big one is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). We should have a good plan for that in the next few months. We have a real opportunity to be one of the rare systems with three modes – bus, ferry, and rail. It really speaks to the diverse geography of Halifax."

Another key focus is transit priority. Halifax streets are very narrow, especially in the historic downtown, so they don't have the luxury of transit-only lanes. That means being more creative in terms of small and large investments at strategic pinch points to help buses move through traffic more efficiently. According to Reage, "We can put the best service or the best routes out there, but if they're stuck in traffic, we're not getting the return on the public money that we need. The other elephant in the room is autonomous vehicles. It can be a huge opportunity or risk.

"Consider having large buses as autonomous vehicles… when we train new drivers, we tell them, "driving a bus is only 25 percent of your job, the other 75 percent is safety of the passengers, and customer service." So, how would that play out in a fleet without drivers? I think overall public acceptance of any autonomous vehicle will be a challenge until it becomes commonplace. But particularly if you get on a bus with 30 strangers – are you okay with there not being someone on there working for transit?"

VENDORS

■ **Barrington Consulting Group**
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Since 2004, Barrington Consulting Group has provided customized, cross-industry, business and IT consulting services. Headquartered in Nova Scotia, Canada, the company also has established offices in New Brunswick, Canada, and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. It services the following industries: healthcare services, the private and public sectors, driver and vehicle services, government registries, and intelligent transportation systems.

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Facilities Management



IN THIS ISSUE

AT&T PORTABLES



INTUITIVE STEPS IN THE WIRELESS DIRECTION

CASA COLINA ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTER



FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

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AT&T Portables

AT A GLANCE
AT&T PORTABLES

WHAT: AT&T National Authorized Retailer

WHERE: Based in Lorton, VA

WEBSITE: www.attportables.com

INTUITIVE STEPS IN THE WIRELESS DIRECTION

"We come from a long line of merchants," explains William Beg, CO-CEO and founding partner of Portables, a family-owned National Authorized Retailer of AT&T. "My two brothers and I wanted to open our own business. We had worked in our uncle's electronics store in high school and decided to go out on our own." From there, William and his brother John Beg built a business that includes 45 retail locations and provides access to one of the nation's leading wireless network providers.

For nearly three decades, the founders of Portables have shown an innate ability to tune into their market, their potential partners, and potential locations. The story of the com-



pany's growth begins in 1991, inside the Potomac Mills Mall in Woodbridge, Virginia. Shortly after opening as an electronics store, with an inventory of cameras, video cameras, televisions, and stereos, "we saw a great number of customers coming in with wireless devices," explains William Beg. "So we connected with Cellular One at the time to start selling their products and services. Within a year, we transitioned our business out of electronics and into wireless communication."

The brothers hit the ground running. They also laid ground for the foundations of a regional sales network. With operations in six states; Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania, the company begs for, and boasts about, its management structure. As one of ten national authorized retailers for AT&T, Portables knows the importance of accountability. The company's management structure operates within four layers: store managers report to district managers, who then report to regional directors, who are overseen by the Vice President of Sales. This organized approach to management has led to ample opportunities for growth. Last year, Portables landed in the 36th Annual Inc. 5000 List of America's Fastest-Growing Private Companies.



John Beg, CO-CEO/CFO, believes it is the company's organizational culture that has attributed to its three-year sales growth of 122 percent. He explains that everyone at the firm enjoys and finds pride in their work. He describes the investment in employees with, "We reward people who work hard. There is nobody here who can get in your way of succeeding except yourself. Every level of this organization gets the same type of treatment. He explains that he can validate Portables' organizational culture, as he's held many of the company's roles.

In order to maintain success and fuel further growth, the company founders tap into the same intuition that helped them build their business. Because of their success in opening 45 retail locations to date, the company enjoys the trust of AT&T. As William explains, while the firm does seek out and bid on new endeavors, "AT&T usually comes to us because we are such a great operator. They have us look at new opportunities where they feel they need distribution."

But it's not just about the real estate acumen. For Portables, it's also about understanding their partner's needs and next steps. William describes the situation, "AT&T's needs change on a day-to-day basis. We learned early on that to have the best relationship with your partner, you first have to identify your partner's needs. Then you must address those needs and deliver. We've done that pretty well, and we feel that's why AT&T contin-

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ues to give us more opportunity."

Like AT&T, Portables has embraced the recently purchased Direct TV as an asset to their consumer offerings, delivering the product to customers who walk through their doors. In order to do so, Portables manages grassroots marketing endeavors to stay front and center within the communities where they operate. Portables partners with other small businesses in the communities they reside within to drive business and earn repeat customers. When it comes to direct marketing, the endeavors are in partnership with AT&T. Not only does partnering with the communications company save in marketing and advertising dollars, it requires minimal staff time and ensures brand consistency across all mediums. With AT&T behind the wheel of marketing media, Portables' time can be spent planning future growth. William says, "We hope to hold 150 locations within three years."

Portables is currently the Number 1 choice for AT&T customers in the Mid-Atlantic region. The company's success, growth, and future prospects are paired with employee appreciation. John acknowledges that vision and preparedness have been key to succeeding in the high-paced, ever-changing environment of wireless communications. John extols the company's employees. Upon being named among the fastest-growing private companies in 2017, William responds with: "The formula to our success lies within our people. It is their determination, drive and desire for achievement that has fueled Portables' growth and success. Our people own this honor and achievement."

It is obvious that the company's commitment to hard work and strong partnerships, paired with intuitive decision-making and organization, will facilitate the coming years' growth. Portables is well on its way to meeting its mission, which is to be the leading provider of AT&T's products and services in the communications industry by offering an extraordinary experience to all of its customers.



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FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

The field of addiction recovery is both full of resources and filled with fluctuation. It is undoubtedly difficult for individuals seeking addiction treatment to find the correct course of action amongst the myriad of options. The mark of a superior addiction treatment center, however, is simple: it's one of trust. Casa Colina has built its facility, staff, and patient support system on trust. A 20-year dream finally realized, Casa Colina is a 90-day men's treatment center just outside of Dallas, Texas, that offers its patients a fully immersive experience that lays the groundwork for a healthy life ahead.

Casa Colina is the product of its founder and Chief Executive Officer, Chico West, a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Experiential Therapist; and the father of a patient he once helped. "The man that owns the property that Casa Colina is located on is the father of a young man I worked with 10 years ago," West recounts. Long after the young man received treatment, the relationship with the family continued and, according to West, the father, "called me in the fall of 2014 and said, 'I just bought this property and it's perfect for a treatment center.' I had shared with him over the years that I wanted to open a 90-day all-male

AT A GLANCE CASA COLINA ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTER

WHAT: A men's residential treatment facility

WHERE: Waxahachie, Texas

WEBSITE: www.casacolinatreatment.com

treatment center."

Chico mulled over the land, the feasibility and the potential surrounding opening his facility, and, "In spring of 2016, I decided to pull the trigger." Casa Colina admitted its first patient in February of 2017. West explains, "We're set up as a residential treatment center. As such, we are required to have staff that is awake 24 hours a day. We have two gentlemen on staff who are resident assistants that work overnight. There are 22 people on staff right now, with the 16 current residents. And all our staff lives nearby."

When asked what sets Casa Colina apart from other centers, West outlines the program he and his team offer: "We're 90-day versus your typical 30-day model. While we are 12-Step focused and we get them involved with outside meetings and working with sponsors, we also address trauma through programs such as equine therapy and psycho-drama workshops." Casa Colina offers a full suite of services, from intake to after-care, as well as programs that address the entire family's health and wellness. Patients at Casa Colina can expect cognitive behavioral therapy, dual-diagnosis treatment, family therapy and programming, and individualized treatment plans. Further, the center treats mind and body for whole health.

"We don't offer the residents any soft drinks or sugar drinks; we're big on nutrition and wellness; our chef and assistant chef create healthy diets," West insists. "We have a wellness instructor who comes and works out with the guys five days a week. We have an equine instructor two days a week." The site is abundant with ways to stay active. Situated on the 220 acres are a fully outfitted gym, bike trails, a fishing pond, and a swimming pool.



West continues, "We are licensed for 23 clients and we stay at around 15-16 clients on average. We get guys from all over. In our first year we've gotten men from Texas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, California, Arizona, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Oregon."

Casa Colina works to ensure that the men and their families receive the most appropriate treatment possible, regardless of the client's ability to pay. West explains, "We work with clients who can't afford the standard rate. And we work with families on a needs-basis. If we don't place them in our facility, we will find them another facility that is like-minded. Over the past year, we've referred 40 to 50 people to other facilities."

This openness to working towards the







patients' best interest is just the beginning of the process. For those who do enter the program at Casa Colina, a well-equipped and wellbeing-centered staff awaits. West explains, "When I set up Casa Colina, I wanted to make sure I had staff that was, first and foremost, healthy. So as staff, I always ask 'are we taking care of ourselves?' If we are healthy, then we'll be better able to help others. So we're always checking in with each other mentally, physically, and spiritually, as well. This lays the foundation for treatment that is consistent and long-lasting." Over the twelve-week program, the men develop relationships with one another and the staff, becoming part of the community. "The guys who come through our programs feel heard and listened to and feel that they are part of the Casa Colina family," West adds.

Part of the community feeling is due to the facility's dedication to family. West describes his views on program success: "We look at success in several ways. Are the guys maintaining sobriety after they leave the program? And has the family system changed? Is the family getting out of rescuing - getting out of being the sobriety managers of their loved one? We see that as success too, if the family is getting healthy too and ending those old behaviors."

As West continues to grow his community of men who have conquered their addictions, he hopes to facilitate growth through future expansion. As he explains, "Long term facility-wise, I'd like to expand to a total of 40 beds and increase our staff. I'd also like to have a few more offices and group rooms for those new individuals." Treatment-wise, he'd like to dig deeper. "I would like to really grab hold of the trauma and psycho-drama piece and incorporate it more into our practice. I'd like to have those intense workshops with the clients, and possibly with the families as well, more often."

With his eye on the future, and plenty of room to grow, Casa Colina Addiction Treatment Center is set and ready to build its network of men, their families, and the professionals who help them work toward wellness and a healthy life. "Our mission is: to give men and their families the tools to achieve a lifetime of sobriety," says West.









PREFERRED VENDOR

- **Gordon Highlander**
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construction view

IN THIS ISSUE

BHHS HOMESALE



READY AND WILLING

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BHHS HOMESALE

READY AND WILLING

It may seem odd to hear a realtor say that he “kind of likes recessions,” but according to Pete Slaugh, Managing Director of BHHS Homesale, a member of the Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Company, serving the Baltimore, Maryland, South Central, and Southeastern Pennsylvania real estate markets, it’s part of the business model of this award-winning firm, and a reason why it prospered during the Great Recession, while many others in the sector did not.

“During that Recession, and during recessions in general, is when we grow the most, because the white flags are going up

AT A GLANCE // BHHS HOMESALE

WHAT: A member of the Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Company

WHERE: South central Pennsylvania and Maryland

WEBSITE: www.homesale.com

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From one Berkshire Hathaway Energy company to another, MidAmerican Energy Services, LLC congratulates Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Homesale Realty (BHHS Realty) for being chosen as part of this editorial series and for its' strong contributions to the growth of the U.S. housing market. Well done BHHS Realty!

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- Utility procurement.

MIDAMERICAN ENERGY SERVICES PROGRAMS IN ACTION

At Campbell Crossing, a Lendlease privatized housing community located at Fort Campbell, a Building Energy Management System (BEMS) was implemented through a partnership with MidAmerican Energy Services. MidAmerican's BEMS solution utilizes streaming data to model and baseline each home. Real-time analytics are then used to identify energy waste and equipment performance issues before these issues lead to comfort complaints or equipment breakdown.

The program also engages both residents and Campbell Crossing's maintenance teams with online dashboards, a mobile application and real-time notifications to assist in the management of overall energy and operational costs. To date, over 19 million kilowatt-hours of electricity have been saved (16.6%) with an additional 14.0% reduction in natural gas usage, eliminating more than 16,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to the savings, energy maintenance costs also have been reduced by increasing equipment life and reducing after-hours emergency callouts.

"The MidAmerican Building Energy Management Service innovation not only helps us achieve our sustainability goals, but it also allows our project companies to perform more efficiently. These efficiencies assist Lendlease in continuing our outstanding service to the military service members and their families that live in our homes," Phillip Carpenter, Chief Operating Officer, Lendlease Communities.

CONTACT US

For more information on how MidAmerican Energy Services can assist your organization, contact us at support@midamericanenergyservices.com or visit our website at http://www.midamericanenergyservices.com.



all around us by people who have not plugged into counter-cyclical revenue streams and they're struggling to keep their heads above water," Slaugh explains. "Then, we become the company of choice just to save their reputations and save their businesses. You can't make it if you rely completely on residential real estate sales."

"At the end of the day, our biggest business, which is residential real estate, is, by its very nature, a cyclical business," adds Company COO, Rod Messick. "One of the great things that occurred for our company during the Recession was that we were able to continue to reinvest in the company when a lot of our competitors were struggling because we had some counter-cyclical and some recurring revenue streams that the average brokerage company doesn't have – our insurance company has a renewal stream to it; our property management firm has recurring revenue."

BHHS Homesale was originally established in 1997, the merger of two companies - Slaugh & Co., a Coldwell Banker affiliate, and Concept 100, an independent realtor that shared the Lancaster, Pennsylvania market. The combined firm, which remained a Coldwell Banker affiliate, first expanded its reach into the Harrisburg area, growing both organically and through acquisition over the years, eventually claiming 35 percent of the marketplace. In 2008, the company left Coldwell Banker and joined the Prudential Real Estate Network, which was subsequently purchased by Berkshire Hathaway in 2013.

Today, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services has over 1,300 offices, nationwide, and BHHS Home-



sale is ranked #2 for closed units, with approximately 15,000, and is in the top ten for revenue, with over $3 billion in sales volume. "We have 28 real estate offices, just over 1,300 agents, and another 250-300 employees in our legacy markets in Central Pennsylvania and the Greater Baltimore Metro, which is our newest geographic area," says Messick. "That includes our real estate operation, our mortgage operation, our title and settlement services operations, property and casualty insurance, and also our property management firm. Real estate sales are about 70 percent of our total revenue. From the percentage of profitability, it's a third, because the margins are a lot smaller in residential real estate than they are in our other businesses."

"One-stop-shopping has been our mantra in developing all the things that are needed on the way to closing," says Slaugh. "The only two areas we do not own or operate are appraisal – we can't be appraising our own transactions – and the other is home inspection. Those two areas we don't do – the rest of them, we do." And it's that broad network of cyclical and counter-cyclical companies complementing one another that has been the basis of BHHS' success.

Regina Coia is President of Realty Operations. She came to the company six months ago, drawn away from a 32-year career in the Philadelphia market by her new company's culture and values. "We have two customers: our agents and their customers, our buyers and sellers," she reflects. "And we have a core purpose which is to help people achieve their dreams. We set the standards for excellence; we consistently hear from our leadership team and our agents and our employees terms such as 'excellence,' 'trust,' 'respect,' 'high energy,' 'professional,' 'inclusive.' But we don't claim success until our customer does. We want to earn our customers for life. We believe we achieve more, together, and we believe the quickest way to grow our company is to grow our people."

One of the ways in which BHHS Homesale helps grow its people is by not hogging the available sunlight. "None of our management team competes with our agents," says Slaugh. "We aren't listing and selling in competition with our agents in the field. We're here as managers to help them gain control of their business and make money. So, our role is management and not sales. Our branch leaders are coaches." "When you get to a lot of



the areas we service in Central Pennsylvania and the outskirts of the Baltimore Metro, competing managers and owners is a common occurrence," adds Messick. "We're really focused on the way our company grows by helping our agents grow their productivity."

And that productivity, according to Coia, is



exemplary. "We are really proud of our measure in the real estate industry, which is per person productivity - the average, calculated over an annualized period," she states. "Ours is 25 percent higher than the national average. For a firm our size, that is outstanding. Some of our individual offices are several hundred percent higher than the national average. So, we have people in this organization who are sustaining this business, and we support them in ways that other organizations don't even think about."

Going forward, Messick says BHHS Homesale will continue to be an "integrated home services business that focuses on a culture that supports its sales teams and employees for the benefit of the end consumer." It will also continue to focus on its legacy markets in central Pennsylvania, while concurrently



growing its newer Baltimore market both organically and through "properly-positioned mergers." Coia says that the company will continue to reinvest in its people and systems, "and to be ahead of the curve in what consumers are looking for."

As for Slaugh, he's not necessarily anticipating another recession, but if and when one comes along, he knows that BHHS Homesale will be ready and willing to take it on.

PREFERRED VENDORS

■ **MidAmerican Energy**
www.midamericanenergy.com

MidAmerican Energy Company, a regulated electric and natural gas utility company, engages in generating, transmitting, distributing, and selling electricity. The company operates through two segments: Regulated Electric and Regulated Gas. It holds interest in a portfolio of generating facilities with various energy sources, such as wind, coal, nuclear, hydro, and natural gas. It serves 800,000 retail electric customers in Iowa, Illinois, and South Dakota, and 800,000 retail and transportation natural gas customers in Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois, and Nebraska. The company was originally founded in 1990 and is headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa.

■ **Delta Media Group**
www.DeltaMediaGroup.com

Delta Media Group is an all-in-one business and marketing solution provider that has been dedicated to serving the real estate industry for over 20 years. Delta's mission is to help people do more through technology and to make their lives better.

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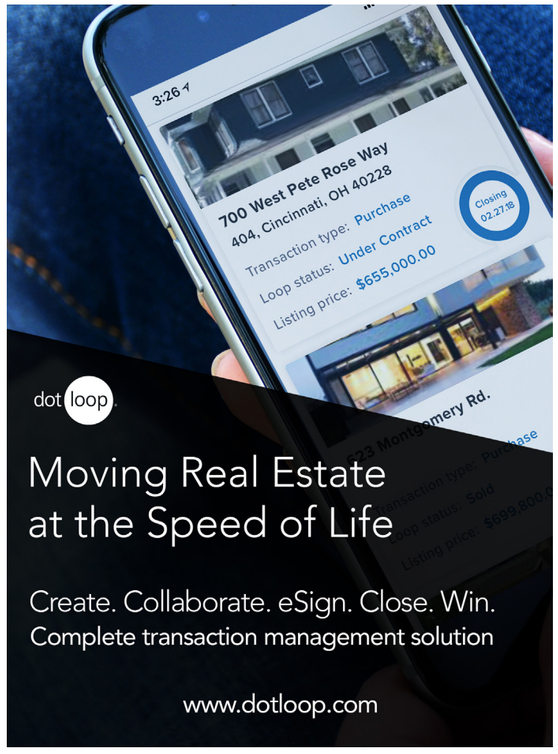



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A STANDUP COMPANY

Coldwell Banker D'Ann Harper Realtors is the leading residential real estate brokerage in the South Texas/San Antonio area with nine offices, 430 sales agents, and more than $1 billion in annual sales. "We encompass downtown San Antonio, all the way north, through the hill country of Texas; from San Antonio to the south Austin area on I-35; all the way over to I-10 going west toward El Paso; and all the way into the Bandera area, as well," says Leesa Harper Rispoli, President of the iconic real estate company that her mother first founded in 1986.

"My mom started the company in 1986 at the dining room table," Rispoli continues. "In 1989, she purchased all of the Coldwell Banker franchises in San Antonio, Texas. She has always been the sole broker and sole owner of the company until about 15 years ago, when I came into the company. She gave me a portion of the company and we continue to own it, together. And we have grown it to what it is today, with a lot of sweat and tears."

Rispoli reports that she had worked for 16 years in the public school

AT A GLANCE
COLDWELL BANKER D'ANN HARPER REALTORS

WHAT: An iconic realty company

WEBSITE: www.cbharper.com

WHERE: San Antonio, Texas



system as a teacher and administrator, before her mother called her and offered her a position with her real estate company. "When I came here, I was not in executive management," she recounts. "I was back in property management, learning that division." San Antonio, she explains, has a high number of homeowners who are in the military and want to keep their homes while on deployment, but don't necessarily want to manage them. "We secure tenants and manage that home for the homeowners until they come back and sell it or live in it again. When I started, we had 400 properties; when I left property management, we had 1,200 properties. Right now we manage about 1,300 homes. I was there for six or seven years before I did anything else for the company."

Clearly, Rispoli's mother, D'Ann, believed that her daughter had to work her way up, and was not, in any way, entitled to an executive position, much less company ownership, without displaying the appropriate due diligence. And Rispoli has adopted that same attitude toward her own progeny. "I have two beautiful



LEESA HARPER RISPOLI,
PRESIDENT

daughters," she states. "Our oldest daughter works in the title industry and our younger daughter is a credit analyst in a bank. I had a career before coming to work for my mom, and it's my philosophy that my children need to have successful careers elsewhere, prior to joining a family business. Is it my dream that our girls will come in and help run this one day? Sure. But they need to earn it."

Another operating principle of the company is its insistence that its agents focus only on their area of specialization, while leaving the operation of its other divisions to the experts in those areas. "We do not allow our agents to practice property management," says Rispoli. "We have 24 employees that just work in that division. We want our agents producing via listings and sales; we don't want them to dabble in property management, dabble in commercial. There are a lot of companies out there that allow their agents to do property management. We pick up those homeowners all the time, because they just don't know what they're doing."

In addition to its property management division, D'Ann Harper Realtors specializes in farm and ranch properties, residential sales, and relocation services. Its newest division is called Coldwell Banker Global Luxury. "Coldwell Banker has had for many years, what was called 'Previews,'" Rispoli explains. "It was a marketing division for the upper luxury homes. About a year ago, they rebranded it and now it is called 'Global Luxury' and it is an international franchise. Coldwell Banker is only going to be awarding 33 offices

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in the United States, and we have one of the 33. That has become an absolute game changer in my market. This time, last year, we had 20 listings that were in the luxury market, which in the City of San Antonio, is 500K, on up. Now, today, we have 72 homes listed in the Global Luxury program."

While D'Ann Harper Realtors may have begun on a dining room table, the company has always been technology-driven. "It's technology and innovation that drives a company into the future," Rispoli maintains. Over the years, it has implemented numerous advancements in sales agent and employee workflow, including the construction of innovative CRM tools, custom web portals and virtual servers, public websites, and advanced networking that connects all the offices across San Antonio and surrounding areas. Thus, all sales agents have access to 24/7 technical support, and the tools needed to carry them ahead of others in the marketplace. The company reaches out to its extensive customer base through a monthly real estate guide and a weekly, 30-minute TV program.

Most key, however, to D'Ann Harper's success over the years has been its strong company culture, first created by a woman who, for years, according to Rispoli, was "well-respected and recognized for her endeavors in the real estate industry. My mom has won every single award imaginable here in the City of San Antonio and she has won national awards," she says, proudly. "What separates us from our competitors is we have the legacy of being a standup company, known for always doing the right thing. We do business one way, and that's the right way. If a person operates a business on the fringes of ethics, they're not going to be a partner with us for long. I never want to lose sight that it's about ethics and hard work."

"Culture is very important to our company and maintaining the culture that we have built is so very, very important," Rispoli adds, in summation. "I feel so privileged to be given the opportunity to lead a company that has such a solid foundation that has been built over 35 years, and to be the steward of an iconic and reputable company that embraces the future."

PREFERRED VENDORS

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COLDWELL BANKER

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REALTORS

A LEGACY IN EAST TENNESSEE REAL ESTATE

When it comes to the family real estate biz, George Wallace and Jim Wallace are brokers, owners, and, quite literally, brothers in arms. The east Tennessee legacy started in 1936 with Charles Wallace and his father, James Wallace. In 1945, Charles' brother, J.A. Wallace, joined the company, then, in 1974, his son Jim signed on, followed by Jim's brother, George, in 1983. The long-time affiliation with Coldwell Banker began in 1988. With the jovial siblings leading the way, Coldwell Banker Wallace & Wallace Realtors has now become the go-to agency for home buyers in eastern Tennessee.

Wallace & Wallace has seven offices, 350 agents, and 40 employees serving nine counties in the greater Knoxville MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area). Under their purview are residential sales, commercial sales, property management, a title company, and a marketing services agree-



AT A GLANCE
COLDWELL BANKER WALLACE & WALLACE REALTORS

WHAT: East Tennessee's premier, full-service real estate firm
WHERE: Knoxville, Tennessee
WEBSITE: www.cbww.com











ment with a mortgage company. About 90 percent of the business is residential and 10 percent commercial. Rentals in the property management division include about 300 single family homes and some small commercial properties.

"Our emphasis has been on the upper bracket of the market," says George Wallace, "with an average sales price, company-wide, of $215,000; the Knoxville average is around $205,000. In our core business, higher production offices, sales are closer to $300,000, which is significantly higher than the market. Our typical customer is someone who lives here and is in an upper-mid-level position, buying a $300,000 home, with 2.2 kids and a dog - and maybe a parakeet."

According to Jim Wallace, the company excels in three areas that separate it from other real estate companies in this market. "One strength is our superior training programs in the region. The other is support from brokers and staff to support our agent base. And the third is a marketing department that reaches out to serve our agents'



needs. We have an ongoing training program for new agents, for experienced agents, top agents – we do training for all different skill sets. We have a history of agents staying with us for a long time. Some have been with us for 30 years, quite a few over 20, and we've built those relationships. We're partners with our agents in helping them grow their business and retain it."

George adds, "We'll add 100 agents this year, many of whom come to us as experienced Realtors who see the value in our services. We've had the luxury of having both long-term relationships and new people entering the business. We're really blessed by that."

Claudia Stallings, Vice President of Residential Sales, concurs, "One advantage of being in business so long and being a pillar of the real estate community is we have a reputation for success. Of course, the Coldwell Banker name is recognized by clients across the globe, and the other thing that sets us apart from other real estate firms is that we are all about agent success. We have relationships with our agents and they choose us. When



> "One advantage of being in business so long and being a pillar of the real estate community is we have a reputation for success."
>
> **CLAUDIA STALLINGS,**
> VICE PRESIDENT OF
> RESIDENTIAL SALES

the agent is supported at the company level, the client receives a higher level of support. That's really how we're stacked. From the clients' perspective, it's important to know that their agent has our full company support behind them, as far as services and tools. You don't stay in business as long as we have if you don't do good business, and that's our base line."

Since the recession ended in 2011, the firm has been on a straight trajectory upwards. Inventory was low the last couple years for houses priced below $500,000, but there is still ample supply over $500,000. New jobs and new economic opportunities have come to Knoxville and helped the local economy. George jokes, "We keep changing football coaches here at University of Tennessee and that helps our business too. People come in and they come out. Seriously though, this influx outside the market has really helped our real estate business, and Knoxville has been able to attract new businesses to relocate here. Our own title company, Melrose Title, is an integral partner with us in delivering top quality service to our clients and agents."

Wallace & Wallace has just rolled out two unique company-wide programs. Adwerx uses big data that addresses the growing trend to more specifically target potential purchasers; to put the company's listings in front of people who are showing buyer-type activity online. They opted to go with Adwerx this year, to benefit agents and also sellers, by getting them the most exposure for their house. The second new program, CirclePix, has a very heavy social media presence that helps clients and agents, as well.

"We believe that social media is very important in the marketing of our properties," says George, "in addition to helping agents establish their business with customers in their sphere of influence and customers on the internet. These two programs are cutting-edge for a company with 1200 listings and more than 300 agents – to be able to put that out there on that kind of network is unique, and it's certainly a major undertaking for us. We're changing our emphasis from print advertising and moving into digital advertising and social media. It's a pretty big shift. We do very little in print ads anymore."





They may have distanced themselves from traditional print, but Coldwell Banker Wallace & Wallace does produce its own fabulous style of promotional material. A luxury magazine, in partnership with Unique Homes, that's target-marketed to the affluent in the community and gets delivered directly to mailboxes four times a year. In essence, it's more of a coffee table book showcasing the firm's high-end listings. No other player in town has anything like it.



And they're stepping up their game in other ways. In January 2018, a new Wallace & Wallace office opened in a very high-profile location in Knoxville. The site has a small footprint, about a third of the size of their other offices. Very con-



temporary and sleek in design, it serves an area with high-education, high-income households, and high property values. There are no assigned spaces; all the rooms are high-tech and private, where agents can come and go as they choose.

Stallings says, "We know agents need to meet their clients in a nice setting, so each of the office spaces has been designed with modern appeal, a large-screen TV, and a computer – more like a little conference room. Today's agents are quite comfortable conducting business from the phone in their hand, but we wanted to give them an opportunity to have a space where they can meet with their clients and prepare listing materials, because that's also important."

Looking ahead, Jim acknowledges, "We will have to be willing to adapt to the changes in technology, and to stay in tune with younger agents and their expectations for what they need out of their company. The consumer has changed, as well. We have to be able to react to the way the consumer shops for homes now, and always keep our finger on that pulse. It will be key to our agents maintaining the level of sales."



Several large national builders have moved into the Knoxville market for the first time and are developing properties they purchased in the region. Most of those developments began in 2017. The Wallace brothers say it's a big shift in the market, and they'll start to see the real impact of the numbers being produced in 2018/19. They are agents for some small local developer/builders, but none of the national companies.

Coldwell Banker Wallace & Wallace is a company with a long history, yet it's also progressive in its development of marketing and its appeal



PREFERRED VENDOR

- **Pillar To Post Home Inspectors**
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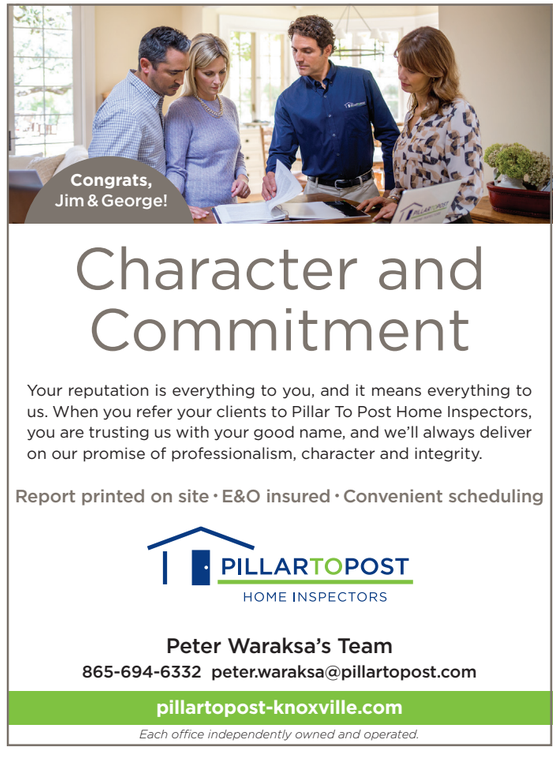

to agents. What started out as a small operation with one bookkeeper, one property manager, one salesperson, and a father and son in one office, has grown into a regional company with multiple offices and hundreds of agents. But its commitment to ethics and professionalism hasn't changed.

George assures everyone that the business is in good hands for the future. "Each one of our managers has worked as an agent, or in a different role in this company. We have been very intentional about promoting people within the company to the highest level of their capability. Claudia was an agent, then manager of one of our offices, and now VP of Residential Sales. This is the progression we run on. We've built a lot of commonality with each other, a lot of camaraderie, trust, loyalty, and that's our intention to continue to promote from within and put people in the right position according to their ability and talent. That's our plan; that's what we're working on."

LARSEN DEVELOPMENT

THE BEAUTY OF EXPERTISE

Larsen Development, Denver's premier design/build company, was founded 16 years ago, by Larry Larsen, an award-winning homebuilder with a degree in architecture from Kansas State University, followed by a stint in the U.S. Navy Corp of Engineers, where he oversaw the construction of hundreds of homes all over the world. He gained further experience in his craft by working for two major home building companies, before launching his own firm in 1986.

"My previous company built model homes and semi-custom homes," Larsen recounts. "When I started Larsen Development Company in 2002, the focus was to design and build one-of-a-kind, custom homes with a focus on affluent, infill neighborhoods. These are typically older neighborhoods where you tear down an old house and then build a new one. We specialize in the Greater Metro-Denver

AT A GLANCE
LARSEN DEVELOPMENT

WHAT: A premier design/build firm

WHERE: Denver, Colorado

WEBSITE: www.larsendevelopment.com

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area, and a lot of our work is in Washington Park. It's a very popular area, and we are the predominant builder there."

Being so long-established in the Washington Park neighborhood, both as a builder and as a resident, Larsen says that the primary source of his company's business comes from referrals. "I've been building for over forty years in Denver, and even people who dealt with my prior company will contact us," he explains. "We give our clients a list of every homeowner we've ever built for. We also generate business from holding open houses when we complete a home, but it's mostly word-of-mouth."

Larsen believes that his company differentiates itself from the competition in several ways. "The key thing that we do differently than others – we're truly design/build," he avers. "Some builders will say they are, but they team up with an architect and other designers to design a home for a client. We are a true design/build firm in the sense that we do all of the architecture and interior design in-house. We feel that is more beneficial for our clients."



"Another very important thing that we do in

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CARUSO KITCHENS

columbia CABINETS





Both Larsen and Englund are firm in their belief that the company's future fortunes will be the result of the fine work of its professional staff and its high level of customer service.



our design process is we listen," Larsen continues. "We're very good at listening to what clients want, and then putting it on paper for their approval and building. Some of our prospects have been with clients who initially hired a different architect to come up with some concepts and designs but that architect missed the boat. They will often let the architect go and come to us.

"Once we sign a contract with a client, the first step in the process is a very thorough interview. We will spend hours asking questions and showing photographs of what we've built in the past, as wells as reviewing ideas the client has, whether that be a picture from the internet or something they've seen driving around. Then our job is to reflect that in their drawings. Ninety percent of the time, the first cut of what we're showing them is right on the money. We try and focus on the client's needs, not what we want them to like. We're here to design a home that they love – that's our goal."

While Washington Park has always been Larsen Development's "bread and butter," according to Jeff Englund, Vice President of Operations, lately, the firm has travelled out to other areas where clients want their homes built. "We've branched out into the different affluent areas," he reports, "Columbine Country Club in Littleton, Greenwood Village, Observatory Park, and Hilltop. This allows us to design and build on lots that are wider than an average 50'-wide double lot, typical to Washington Park. We're able to get into bigger, more sprawling houses in these neighborhoods."

"Our recent trend has been to do larger, more spread out homes on a bigger lot versus the smaller lots that we build on in Washington Park,"



Larsen adds. "That neighborhood was built in the 1920s and '30s, mostly. So, we're moving into areas that were built in the '50s and '60s, where they had larger lots and you could do bigger homes."

While Larsen Development might be building bigger homes, the company, with its staff of 13, is not focused on getting any bigger, itself. "We don't see becoming a huge builder; we're not driven by growth," Larsen states. "Our objective, right now, is to do 12 custom homes a year. A key objective in the next few years is to continue to improve and get better at what we're doing. We want to continually take care of our clients and figure out better ways of doing what we do. We need to always be on top of design trends, new products, and technology. It's constantly changing out there."

What doesn't appear to change much in the company's business model is its long-term relationships with its subcontractors and suppliers. "They're the key to our success," Larsen admits. "We are very loyal to them and, in turn, they're loyal to us. We do not go out and change vendors at will. Over the years, we've developed relationships that are part of our team. I have a painting company that's been with me for 30 years; a lot of our vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors - 10 years."

"It's one big benefit for us: having such a loyal subcontractor and vendor base and being able to keep them very busy and happy," says Englund. "That way, we have the same people on our jobs day in and day out. Detail, quality, and performance are what make us who we are, and that comes from our team."

Both Larsen and Englund are firm in their belief that the company's future fortunes will be the result of the fine work of its professional staff and its high level of customer service. "We've got a great team, and we want to see them develop further," Larsen says. "A lot of companies are investing in marketing and trying to get their name and brand out there," says Englund. "We're kind of the opposite; we're a big family here; we're really into investing in our team and our clients. That's where our brand recognition comes from."

PREFERRED VENDORS

- **Caruso Kitchens**
  www.carusokitchens.com

For over 30 years, Caruso Kitchens has created thousands of award-winning, dream kitchens for Colorado residents. In addition to kitchen and bath design services, Caruso Kitchens also offers semi-custom and full-custom, furniture-grade cabinetry and storage units; granite, engineered stone, glass, and butcher block countertops; and a variety of high-end appliances. This past January, the Denver-based company won "Best of Design" on Houzz, the leading platform for home remodeling and design.

- **Venture Painting**
  www.venturepaintinginc.com

- **Pinnacle Hardwood**
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Pinnacle Hardwood is a family owned company and has been in business for 35 years. Pinnacle has been a trusted partner with Larsen Development for over 18 years providing turnkey solutions for their custom home clients. We provide the latest styles in countertops, hardwood flooring, carpet & tile.

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Ph. 303.755.2804 // Fax 303.745.4004

Technology View

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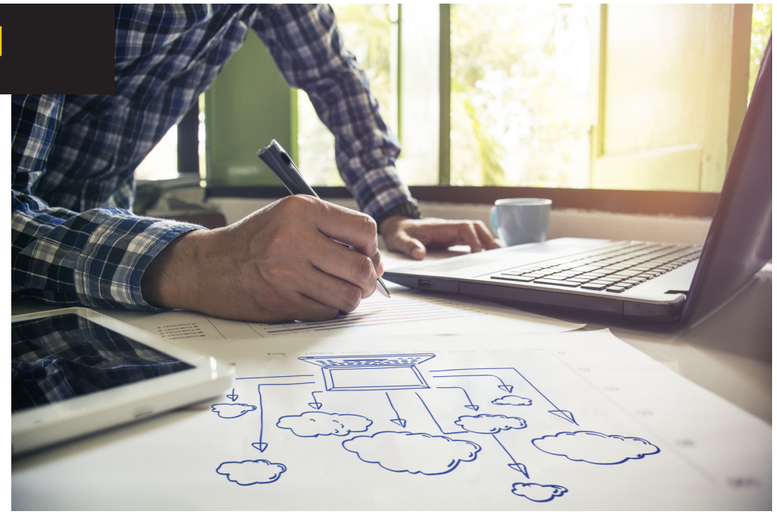

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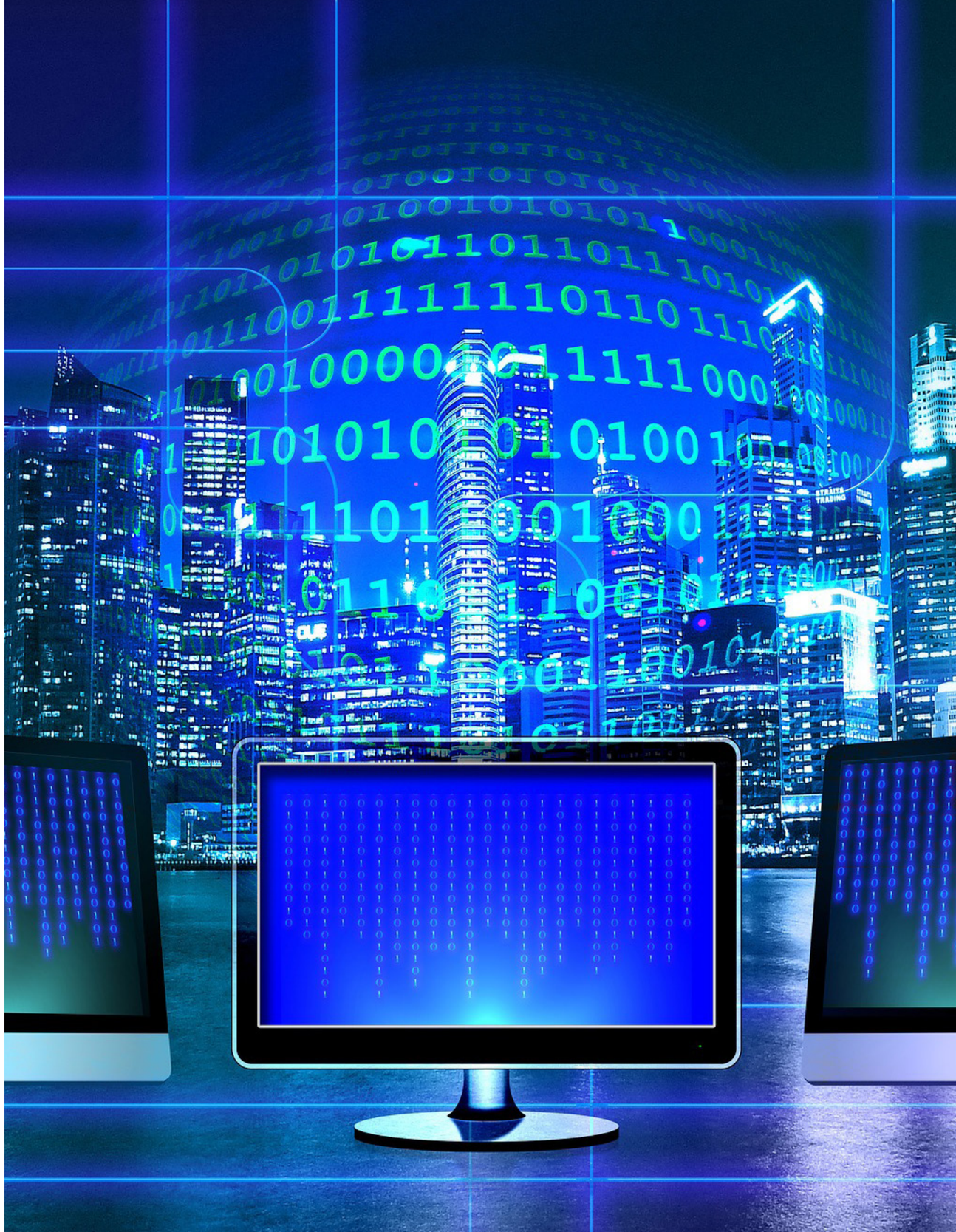






FX INNOVATION

LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, RESULTS

AT A GLANCE FX INNOVATION

WHAT: An information technology company

WHERE: Headquarters in Montreal, Quebec

WEBSITE: www.fxinnovation.com

Aptly named, FX Innovation is one of the most innovative companies in the information technology sector. From its Montreal, Quebec headquarters, the company works closely with clients throughout North America to ensure IT is creating value for business. Recognizing that global market demands require companies to constantly rethink strategies at rapid velocity, FX Innovation becomes a part of the client-supplier team, and vice versa, to find and implement the best, affordable solutions.

Business View Magazine recently spoke with FX Innovations President, David Marotte, and co-founder Georges Riachy, about the unique culture and business model that has placed the company on the Profit list of Canada's Fastest Growing Companies.

BVM: What motivated you to found FX Innovation?

Riachy: "Dave and I started FX Innovation in 2002; literally, a couple of people in a garage. We began by doing consulting services and IT with the mindset of building a company that delivers solutions. When we did the first plan – I remember doing it on a paper napkin in a restaurant – we wanted a flagship and recurring revenue to make sure we had enough money to finance the plan. That's why we went for consulting in the beginning.



"The business grew slowly. First, we moved from the garage to a sub-location with another company. We rented a one-room office in their building with four people sitting in it. Then we moved from office to office until we are now in our headquarters in Montreal, with about 200 people on the floor and 300 more on the client side. Our ambition was to use what we'd learned working for bigger corporations but do things differently, to make sure our employees were properly taken care of, so they could perform to the maximum and clients would be satisfied with their services. And we've built on that over 16 years."

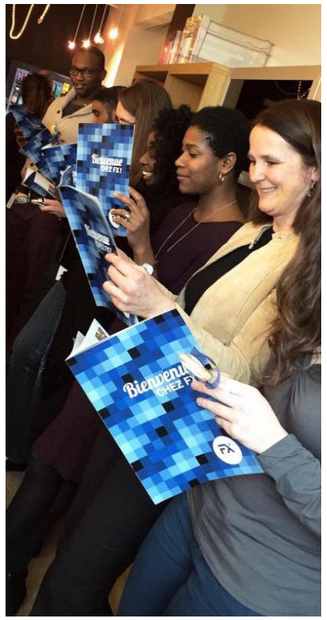
Marotte: "We currently help clients in Ontario, Western Canada, Boston, New York, and the Quebec region, but most of the work is done from our Montreal offices. We have five divisions: one is consulting. And we're very strong in cloud integration space, and one of the leading service mount integrators in Eastern Canada. We also do digital application development. And, lastly, managed services – managing infrastructure and hardware and servers for clients from our 24/7 operations center.

"At the time we founded FX, we were working for large, publicly traded companies, and we found that, sometimes, the short-term decisions you make to help the stock go up, has a long-term negative impact. So, George and I said, 'let's show these big guys that an innovative, creative bunch of people can get together and make decisions based on what's best for the clients, what's best for employees.' That's where the name comes from – the 'innovation' in FX Innovation stands for always being different in the way we do things; the way we talk to our clients; the way we recruit and onboard employees; the way we build our solutions. If we're not different, we don't want to do it.

"We pride ourselves on having a healthy work environment, where people can express their talent. Locally, we're very well known for our distinctive culture. We eliminated closed offices, we have constant communication, and very little hierarchy. We've built a company where



> "We pride ourselves on having a healthy work environment, where people can express their talent. We've built a company where people feel great and can perform to the best of their potential."
>
> **DAVID MAROTTE**
> FX INNOVATIONS
> PRESIDENT





people feel great and can perform to the best of their potential. We try to build that same vibe with our clients. We want them to feel they're working with an honest partner who'll do everything to maximize the value of IT for them. Currently, our best salespeople are our customers."

BVM: Who is your typical client and what services do you provide?

Marotte: "Close to 50 percent of our revenues are in the financial market – banks, insurance, we also do a lot in the retail sector. Medium to large companies where IT and digital are important to their business model are very interesting to us. We do all sorts of interventions. Sometimes they express problems and we propose solutions. Or they have the solution and want us to build it. Other times, they want us to manage part of their IT services, so they can focus on their core business strategies. We have a strong tech group that does what we call 'technology watch' – they tell us which technology is going to do more or be better for our clients and we try to integrate that to help them achieve what they need.

"We have a strong relationship and a strong presence with our clients, in good times and bad, because we believe that who you choose to do business with when you're in a bad situation makes a big difference. That's the value our clients find in doing business with FX, and this is the pride we feel every time we get a client out of a major issue and it comes out good in the end. It makes us feel 'mission accomplished.'"

Riachy: "A couple years back we put in place a



roundtable with CIOs of major institutions in Montreal, who are also clients, to demystify the cloud for them through expert speakers animated by our tech group and David presiding. We now do these roundtables on a quarterly basis. It helps these clients to get together and see that they have similar issues but no solution. We sit with them to understand the issue, we clarify the issue to make sure everyone is on the same page, and we end up finding solutions with them most of the time.

"Or we refer partners to help them out. This creates the synergy we have with our clients and employees because they are a major part of the success of this company. Sometimes there are competitors at the same table, but it doesn't matter because IT is IT. We help them identify issues and how we



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can help commonly resolve them, instead of them facing it alone. This is one of the major things that affects our clients."

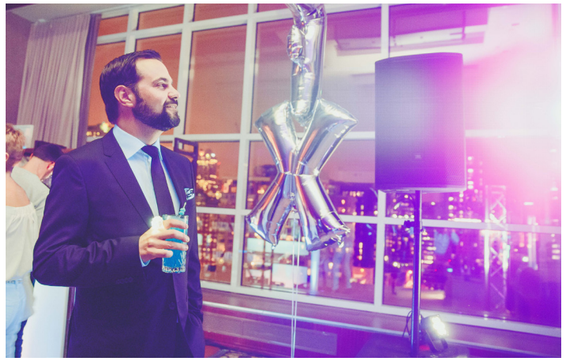
BVM: What role do partnerships play in your business?

Marotte: "We enjoy strong partnerships with Microsoft, ServiceNow, and AWS, and we belong to the Quebec Technology Association and YPO. And we just partnered with Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (an institutional investor that manages several public and parapublic pension plans and insurance programs in Quebec). They invested money in our organization to help us seize new markets in Canada and the U.S. with our solutions. We're very proud of that. We chose a partner that has experience and an alignment of vision and values with whom we can expand the business.

"It's also important for us to thank our clients and our great colleagues every day. They're the best partners we have. Philanthropy is another key focus for us. We've been blessed, and we want to give back to the community – not only at an enterprise level – we encourage our employees to get involved with their own municipalities. They come to us for ideas and we help them out. We're actively involved with the Canadian Cancer Society, the Alzheimer's Society, and Make-A-Wish, and several other organizations. If we are a good citizen, then we help our community grow and be healthy, and that's all the recognition you need."

BVM: Five years ahead, what are the priorities for FX Innovation?

Marotte: "Looking ahead, our priority is growth, while ensuring our clients and employees are satisfied. Expansion outside Quebec is a target. We're in the third year of a three-year plan for that, and we're executing on it. The plan is all about exporting outside of Canada from Montreal. That's a good base for us, and we want to grow it here over the next five years. We have a team of 37 full-timers recruiting in France and South America, and we hired two Americans, so we're doing a lot of work. Our employees are a good combination of experienced people and those fresh out of university. We need to hire senior people and combine them with extremely brilliant young people, so they can learn from each other."



Riachy: "We believe to succeed you have to be innovative, but also be yourself and maximize the talent in everybody. We have a saying in-house, 'You don't win the Stanley Cup with a bunch of superstars. You win it with a great team that is in perfect sync with the objectives and values.' That's what we think makes FX different from everybody else."

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■ **Gestion Sidev, Inc.**
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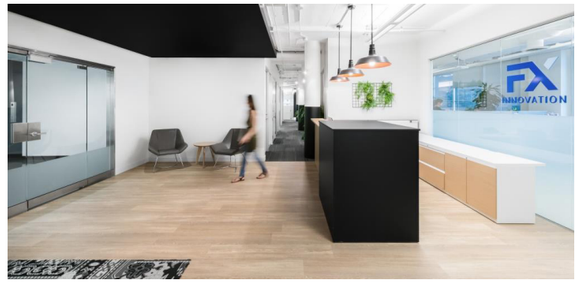

Professional Services

VALUE PARTNERS INVESTMENTS



TAKING THE FEAR OUT OF INVESTING

Starting up a business in a market dominated by the big banks and multi-billion-dollar mutual fund companies would be more than enough to cause family and friends to question your sanity.

Considering the long odds and the countless failed companies littering the financial services landscape, there would have to be some ultra-compelling reason to convince your loved ones not to call a team of mental health experts to haul you away for extensive therapy. Luckily for Gregg Filmon, he had that compelling reason.

Back in 2006, the now-president of Value Partners Investments (VPI) had spent nearly a decade in the industry. He shared the same view as Jim Lawton, a veteran independent financial planner, that investors needed a firm where advisors invested their own money alongside theirs, was open and transparent about all business decisions and always sought to reduce fees, find efficiencies and reward long-time clients. "That was the vision when Jim hired me and his son, Paul, (VPI's chief operating offi-

AT A GLANCE
VALUE PARTNERS INVESTMENTS

WHAT: A Mutual Fund Company

WHERE: Head office in Winnipeg, Manitoba

WEBSITE: www.valuepartnersinvestments.ca

cer)," Filmon says. "There were two us at the start that drafted the business plan and we've been executing on it ever since."

It wasn't long before they were joined by Steve Norton, now VPI's Executive Vice President. He and Filmon had worked together previously at one of Canada's largest mutual fund companies.

"Gregg left to start Value Partners and asked me to join him," Norton recounts. "I lived in Toronto at the time and thought he was crazy to start a mutual fund company in an ultra-competitive industry - in Winnipeg, no less - unless we were going to do some things very differently. There were tons of investment companies and more mutual funds than actual stocks out there. So, we stepped back and asked, 'Would we want to be a client of any of these businesses?' The answer was 'Yes,' but there were things we wanted to change."

Chief among them was transparency, something the VPI brain trust has worked very hard ever since to put front and center. "When you give money to an investment company, you want them to tell you what you own, why you own it, when you've made money and when you haven't. The industry wasn't doing that," he explains. Value Partners immediately unbundled its mutual funds, alerting clients how many shares they owned in individual companies and what kinds of dividends they were being paid.

That wasn't particularly sexy - or marketable - in the beginning, but it slowly grew on people and it's now a vital part of VPI's DNA.

Most of the company's more than 30 full-time employees work at the Winnipeg head office, while the rest work out of Toronto. In Winnipeg, they are joined by three to five co-op students



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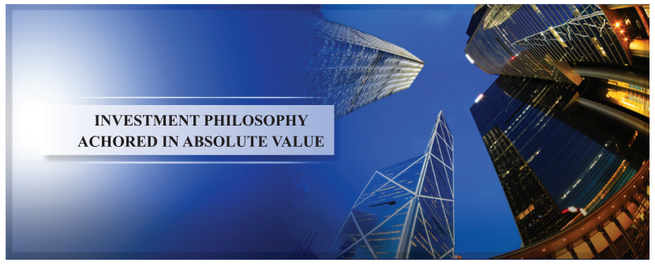
Our investment strategy is anchored in Absolute Value designed to achieve above-average, long-term rates of return while minimizing risk.



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from the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba and a few summer students, too. Together, they serve more than 20,000 clients across Canada. Nearly half of that client base is made up of households with account minimums of $500,000, which is more than 10 times the industry average. The corollary of that is Value Partners has established itself with older, more established investors.

"In the beginning, you have to make a decision about the types of advisors you're going to work with as a company," Filmon avers. "Most of our competitors want to work with every advisor and end up having every product in the world. We want to work with the best advisors in the country because they have the best clients. So, we don't have 300 different products. We have a small handful of pools that we believe are best suited for those people to achieve their goals. Transparency, combined with good investment decision making, good communication and working with great advisors, has led us to our level of success that we have today."

So, what kind of success is he talking about? Just 12 years after hanging up their shingle, VPI has amassed more than $2.5 billion in assets under management. It has been recognized by, among others, Profit magazine on its annual list of Canada's 500 Fastest-Growing companies. According to its criteria of five-year revenue growth, Value Partners has qualified for the last three years. Last year, it was ranked No. 369 with growth of 140 per cent.

Along the way, VPI has created more than $650

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We believe that our investment philosophy is very different from virtually every other Canadian investment counsellor. Because our clients do not require us to be fully invested we do not have to compromise our standards for quality and price in order to meet a fully invested mandate. In addition, PCM portfolios are concentrated and will hold a maximum of twenty securities.

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million in wealth for its clients. In fact, its Canadian Equity Pool was recently ranked No. 1 over one, three, and five years by Morningstar Canada, ahead of those aforementioned bank and industry giants. And the better the company does, the more it benefits from the most valuable form of marketing - word of mouth.

"If we make good investment decisions and keep clients informed, they respond by introducing us to other people," says Filmon. "We have a mantra here of speaking plain language. If you need $50,000 a year of income at age 65, there are only a few options. Putting the money under your mattress is one, but not a good one. When we say it's about working one-on-one and being accountable, it sounds boring and old school but in this industry, that's innovative as hell."

Of course, no company is an island and Value Partners and its people are active throughout the community. That involves coaching hockey teams and baseball teams and helping out with Christmas toy drives for the underprivileged. Staff members even donned their tool belts at the Habitat for Humanity build that former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, were a part of last year in Winnipeg.

Filmon is also on the board of Winnstock, an annual battle of the bands competition that has raised nearly $1 million for a number of local charities over the last decade. (He has also been part of the winning band on two occasions, fronting '80s cover band, Sound Advice, on guitar and lead vocals.)

"We are very supportive of all of our employees' efforts to leave the world a better place and strengthen our communities," says Filmon.



Community involvement has been a part of Filmon and Norton's lives since they were kids and they both followed the strong examples set by their mothers. Norton's mom, Ev, for example, worked with pregnant teens, while Filmon's mom, Janice, had a lengthy history of volunteerism be-





fore being named Manitoba's Lt. Governor in 2015. "We try to instill that culture of giving back at Value Partners and it pays huge dividends," Norton says. "Our staff loves getting involved and helping people."

Looking toward the future, the company's top priority is to continue making money for clients, as well as attract new advisors and clients and help them make good investment decisions. In today's uncertain economic and political environment, many people are understandably reluctant to invest. But Filmon believes that mindset prevents them from increasing their ownership stakes in great businesses and growing their wealth even faster. He points to the financial crises of a decade ago, which prompted many investors to sell their shares in rock-solid companies such as the Bank of Montreal, Tim Hortons, and CN Rail - locking in paper losses - because they got nervous when the stock market stumbled.

"Panic ensued," he recalls. "They sold and lost hundreds of thousands of dollars on a million-dollar investment. We believe if they had understood that the line-ups at Tim Hortons were just as long and getting longer, that the trains were still running on time every day, and that nothing had changed in the businesses they owned, far fewer people would have been scared and confused and sold out at a loss. And they would have had a wonderful experience when those companies went on to become worth a lot more money."

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The firm's dedication to its unique Absolute Value Investment philosophy has provided excellent long term-returns with low levels of risk for its clients, some of whom have been with the company since its founding. Patient Capital Management focuses on providing investment counsel to its clients and ensuring that their goals and objectives are being met through their investment portfolios. In order to ensure that the company's interests are aligned with those of its clients' all Patient Capital principals must invest their capital along with their clients' assets.

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