

# Business view magazine

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 10 | OCT 2023



**BREAKHOUSE INC.  
BLENDING THE BEST  
OF BRANDING WITH  
ARCHITECTURAL  
EXPERTISE**

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*Also in this issue* HOMES BY MANAGEN • MAIDPRO • THIEF RIVER FALLS REGIONAL AIRPORT



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*Dear Readers,*

It dawned on me the other day that time just seems to be speeding up in general. Some may attribute it to the aftereffects of living through an unprecedented global pandemic and the new normal seems different than what we have been used to. Others, just recognize that time is short no matter what the cause may be.

There simply never seem to be enough hours in the day or days left in the week to get everything done on the to-do list without feeling a little rushed in the process.

It was my youngest who tapped me on the shoulder the other day and gleefully reminded me that it was Halloween in a few short weeks. My first thought was to panic, and then I shrugged it off as just another indicator of how fast the time was passing us all by.

Here in the halls of Business View Publications, the feeling that there is too much to do and not enough time to do it resonates with the whole production, creative, and editorial team. This issue is brimming with features and we are in a flurry to produce to ensure that our pages are filled with all of the top features that are valued readers have become accustomed to.

This issue is just the tip of the iceberg. All of the issues that are upcoming for our Autumn publications will also be overflowing with prime business, regional, aviation, and industry profile features to keep our readers engaged.

For our October issue, we had a chance to sit down with executives representing some of the country's most dynamic companies to discuss their upcoming business agenda. We also spoke with representatives from a host of some of the fastest-growing regions across the US to determine how they are anticipating economic expansion and still putting their valued residents first.

Capturing the momentum of commercial and residential development as well as the design know-how to bring construction projects to life filled our pages for this issue. We bring you in-depth features with leading players in the field including Breakhouse Inc., Coastline Construction, The Matt Laricy Group, Homes by Managen, Johnson & Sons Paving, and Kelly Kustom Homes. All these homes and construction firms are forging ahead with prime projects and are dominating their local markets.

Astro Machine Works, C&S Supply, Elettric80, Spinnaker, and Stern Laboratories also topped our feature list of innovative, forward-thinking industry leaders we were

fortunate to profile in our October issue.

Each of the companies we profiled showed keen best practices and prime initiatives that will propel them further along their business agenda rounding out the year.

Economic growth is ripe and infrastructure initiatives have taken center stage for the municipalities that we interviewed. We sat down with city officials from American Fork, Utah, Cabot, Arizona, Carrollton, Georgia, Hillsborough, New Jersey to Spring Hill, Kansas among other thriving municipalities.

As business retention and attraction numbers continue to rise and upgrades to vital municipal services are in full swing for these regions, all without exception are ensuring that the needs of their residents take center stage.

Also flying through the final quarter of 2023, are some of the fastest-growing regional airports in the US and we spoke to their Airport Directors for a front-row seat into some of their upcoming plans to meet increased aviation traffic.

We were fortunate for this issue to profile Wheeling-Ohio County Airport, Thief River Falls Regional Airport, Sault Ste. Marie Airport, Pierre Regional Airport, and Decatur Airport among others for a first-class view into airport initiatives taking off in these busy aviation hubs.

With all our profiles we hope that our valued business leaders learn a little something new about their relevant business sector as well as something about key developments within other business sectors that may serve to increase productivity and represent a model to strive for.

As we continue to bring you features covering the very best in business, aviation, and municipal developments, we hope that you have a chance to sit down and enjoy our publication despite the lack of hours each day!



**Karen Surca**  
Editor in Chief

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- HURST-EULESS-BEDFORD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
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# BV<sup>m</sup> Opening Lines

## FAA PROPOSES RULE TO LIMIT COMMERCIAL SPACE VEHICLES DEBRIS

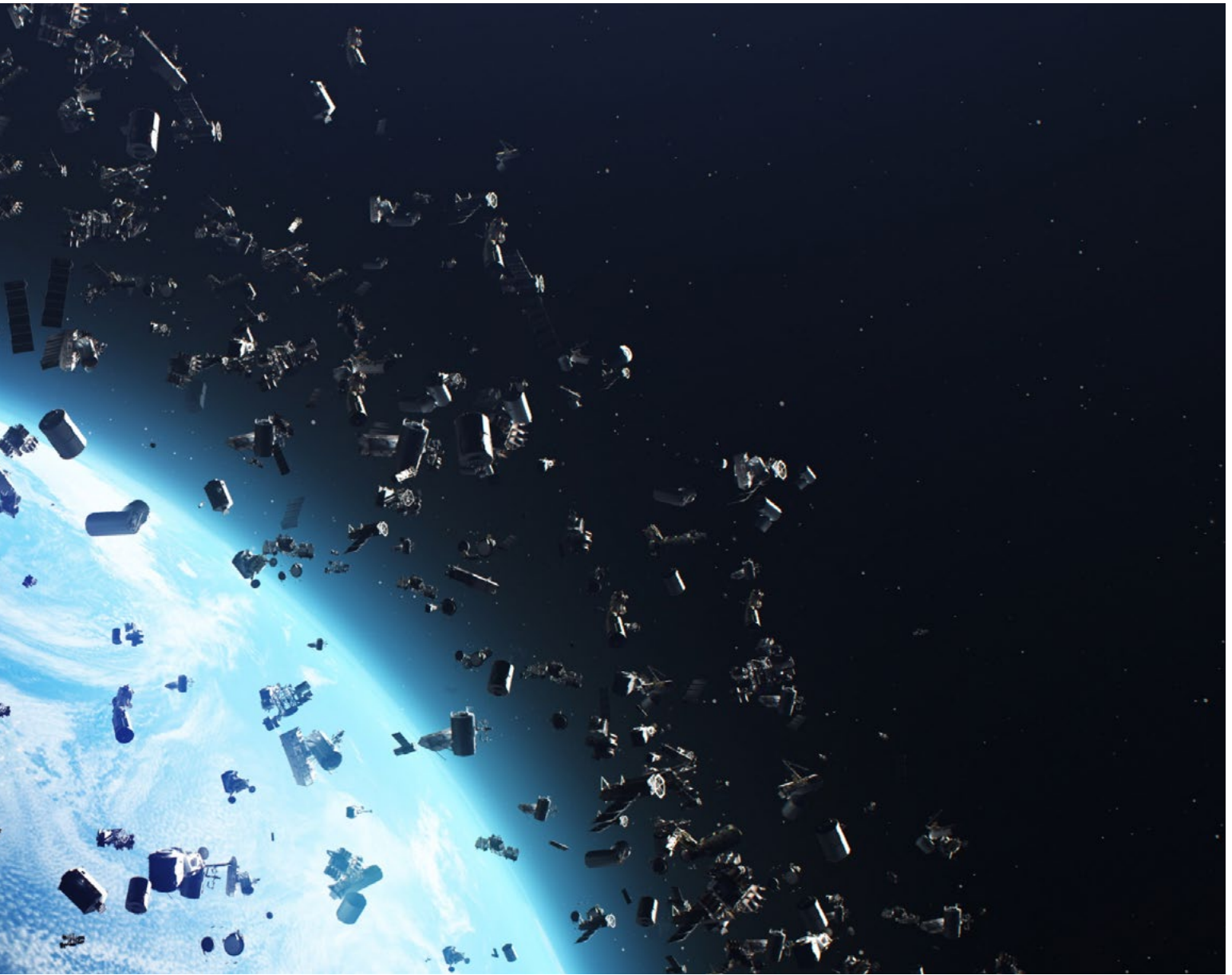
Source - <https://www.avweb.com/aviation>, Kate O'Connor, First published Sept 21, 2023

FAA has proposed a rule designed to limit new orbital debris from commercial space vehicles, citing the need to “reduce the potential for collisions with spacecraft and satellites to promote a sustainable space environment.” According to the agency, current estimates put the number of orbital objects measuring 10 cm or greater at over 23,000 with projections for objects between 1 and 10 cm coming in at one-half million. The notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) focuses on how

commercial operators will be required to dispose of the upper stages of their launch vehicles.

“If left unchecked, the accumulation of orbital debris will increase the risk of collisions and clutter orbits used for human spaceflight and for satellites providing communications, weather and global positioning system services,” the FAA said. “By strictly limiting the uncontrolled reentry of upper stages, the FAA seeks to mitigate the risk to people on the ground and in flight due to its significant size and mass and the uncertainty of where it will land.”





According to the agency, current estimates put the number of orbital objects measuring 10 cm or greater at over 23,000 with projections for objects between 1 and 10 cm coming in at one-half million.

The NPRM (PDF) lays out five upper stage disposal options including conducting a controlled reentry, moving it to a less congested storage or graveyard orbit, sending it on an Earth-escape orbit, retrieving it within five years and performing an uncontrolled atmospheric disposal or natural decay within 25 years. The FAA noted that the proposed rule would “align commercial space orbital debris mitigation practices with those accepted by the U.S. government for its space missions.” The rule will be open for public comment for 90 days following its publication in the Federal Register.



## NORTH ATLANTIC OCEANIC CLEARANCE CHANGES COMING IN 2024

Source - <https://nbaa.org/>, First published Sept 21, 2023

The North Atlantic (NAT) Systems Planning Group recently announced impactful changes to oceanic crossing procedures in the region – oceanic clearances with route, altitude and speed will no longer be issued after April 9, 2024.

New lost communications contingency procedures also will soon be published.

Andreas Meyer, the International Business Aviation Council's (IBAC's) director, ICAO liaison, explained increases in air traffic, plus the expanded use of data communications (DataComm), led to these changes.

"These procedure changes are the result of several years of discussions among stakeholders and regulators," said Meyer. "The current oceanic clearance procedures made sense in the past, but more modern and dynamic tools are better suited to meet the performance-based navigation and flight operations."

Most of the time, pilots are cleared for the exact route, altitude and speed they filed, Sam Schofield, specialty and enrichment instructor at FlightSafety International, explained.

"Unless you're getting a change to the routing, you're essentially cleared in accordance with your flight plan," said Schofield. "Pilots should be prepared – you won't get a





These procedure changes are the result of several years of discussions among stakeholders and regulators,” said Meyer. “The current oceanic clearance procedures made sense in the past, but more modern and dynamic tools are better suited to meet the performance-based navigation and flight operations.

full clearance like you’re used to.”

However, Schofield said these procedures are already being used in other regions and even in the North Atlantic in some cases, with controllers simply relaying “cleared as filed.”

“For operators working worldwide, the NAT will start to sound more like the Pacific has for a long time,” said Schofield. “The change is just how we hear things and what we should expect.”

Experts encourage operators to conduct recurrent international operations training to familiarize their pilots with this change. FlightSafety International is revising its international operations courseware to highlight new procedures.

## USDA INVESTS \$1 BILLION TO PLANT TREES, EXPAND GREEN SPACES TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Source-<https://www.americancityandcounty.com/AndyCastillo>

First Published, 18th September 2023


As communities across the United States work to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat, trees and green spaces have emerged as an economical and effective solution. To help cities and counties bolster their green spaces, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced \$1 billion in funding Thursday for 385 projects nationwide.

“These investments arrive as cities across the country experience record-breaking heat waves that have grave impacts on public health, energy consumption, and overall well-being,” said Tom Vilsack, agriculture secretary in a statement. The investment is “supporting communities in becoming more resilient to climate change and combating extreme heat with the cooling effects of increased urban tree canopy, while also supporting employment opportunities and professional training that will strengthen local economies.”

The grants, which are competitive and financed through the Inflation Reduction Act, are intended to help administrators combat climate change and improve access to nature for constituents “in cities, towns and suburbs in cities, towns, and suburbs where more than 84% of Americans live, work, and play. Communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. Territories and Tribal Nations are receiving funding,” a statement about the investment says.

The awarded organizations and communities were selected from 842 applications, which requested more \$6.4 billion in funding. Notably, the \$1 billion investment represents the largest single USDA Inflation Reduction Act investment



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to date in urban and community forests. The statement notes that the high number of applications is indicative of a substantial need for more trees and green spaces.

“Studies show that trees in communities are associated with improved physical and mental health, lower average temperatures during extreme heat, and increased food security, and create new economic opportunities,” the statement says. “This historic funding will help the Forest Service support projects that increase tree cover in disadvantaged communities, provide equitable access to the benefits of nature, and deliver tangible economic and ecological benefits to

urban and Tribal communities across the country.”

Those selecting the award winners took into account environmental justice, and used the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to help identify disadvantaged communities.

The mapping tool identifies disadvantaged communities that face burdens in the categories of climate, energy, health, housing including nature deprivation, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, workforce development, and other socioeconomic thresholds, the statement says.

Source- <https://www.americancityandcounty.com/>  
 Andy Castillo, First Published 19, September, 2023

The challenges of retrofitting legacy properties to modern standards can't be understated—both practically and fiscally. The latest investment of \$18 million in funding through the Green and Resilient Retrofit Program announced last week by the U.S. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is intended to help property owners participating in assistant multifamily housing programs overcome these challenges and modernize their buildings.

The investment, which is the program's first round and will be distributed in a combination of grants and loans, comes through the Inflation Reduction Act, which allocated more than \$800 million in grant and loan subsidies, and another \$4 billion in loan commitment for the housing department's retrofit program. The Green and Resilient Retrofit Program funding represents "a significant investment in communities that typically do not receive this type of assistance yet are often the most adversely affected by climate change," said Assistant Secretary for Housing and Federal Housing Commissioner Julia Gordon in a statement.

In total, the money will go to 28 multifamily properties across the nation, housing more than 3,400 HUD-assisted multifamily rental homes for low-income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Nottingham Towers in Waterbury, Conn., for example, will receive a \$743,283 loan, and Alpha Towers in Toledo, Ohio will receive a \$750,000 grant. "Today's awards from HUD will bring the benefits of clean energy and climate resilience to hardworking American families in states across the nation," said John Podesta, senior advisor to the president for clean energy innovation and implementation.

It is the first HUD program to simultaneously invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, climate resilience, and low embodied carbon materials in HUD-assisted multifamily housing, according to the statement. Investments under the program will be made in affordable housing communities serving low-income families.

## HUD AWARDS 28 MULTIFAMILY SUBSIDIZED PROPERTIES \$18 MILLION FOR GREEN ENERGY RETROFITS, MODERNIZATION



Specifically, the funding will enable building owners to invest in technologies like geothermal energy systems, heat pumps, insulation and air sealing, wind- and fire-resistant roofing, low embodied carbon materials, and other measures, that will reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions and make properties healthier and safer for residents in the face of more severe weather and changing climate, the statement continues.

This is the first round of awards that have been released, with additional rounds to be awarded throughout 2023 and 2024. HUD also recently announced almost \$30 million for housing organizations that serve people with HIV/AIDS. Another \$7 million in Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants will go to 14 communities—\$500,000 each—for neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment plans.

The grants are intended to improve resident outcomes and bring new amenities to high-





**Today's awards from HUD will bring the benefits of clean energy and climate resilience to hardworking American families in states across the nation," said John Podesta, senior advisor to the president for clean energy innovation and implementation.**

poverty neighborhoods. The program has a three-pronged approach that includes the redevelopment of distressed properties, and supportive services, while investing in economic development and neighborhood improvement projects.

A two-year planning grant will allow the new awardees to create and build support for a comprehensive plan, according to a statement. "Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plans lead to real results for public housing communities," said Richard Monocchio, principal deputy assistant secretary for Public and Indian Housing.

"Planning grants are a great first step to bringing partners and significant resources to distressed communities—and they better position communities to pursue the funding necessary to bring a community's vision to life."



Source-<https://www.americancityandcounty.com/>,  
 Andy Castillo, First Published 21, September, 2023

To combat rising climate pollution levels, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced Wednesday \$4.6 billion in competitive grants available to cities, counties, territories and Tribal governments. The grants, which are a part of the EPA's \$5 billion Climate Pollution Grants program, are funded through the Inflation Reduction Act. They're intended to spark community-driven environmental solutions, and to accelerate the nation's transition to clean energy.

"The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program is the largest program of its kind to help state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to develop

and implement a wide variety of greenhouse gas reduction measures," said Lisa Garcia, regional administrator for the EPA in a statement. "From devastating hurricanes to widespread flooding across our area, our region is experiencing firsthand the urgent need to make progress on climate action. These grants give our partners the opportunity to invest in a cleaner economy that can spur innovation and economic growth while building more equitable, resilient communities."

The funding is available through two grant competitions: one general competition and another specifically for Tribes and territories. Eligible applicants will compete to fund measures included in their climate action plans. The \$4.6 billion opportunity is the second phase of the



# EPA MAKES AVAILABLE \$4.6B FOR CITIES, COUNTIES AND TRIBES TO REDUCE CLIMATE POLLUTION



Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. The EPA previously made available \$250 million for communities to develop climate action plans.

Entries that achieve the greatest amount of greenhouse gas emissions reductions will be prioritized. Equity and climate justice will also be taken into account, among other criteria.

The “program recognizes that to tackle the climate crisis and advance environmental justice, communities need to be in the driver’s seat steering toward their own clean energy future,” said John Podesta, senior advisor to the president for clean energy innovation and implementation in the statement.

The statement notes the EPA expects to award between 30 to 115 applications grants between \$2 million and \$500 million under the general competition. Another 25 to 100 communities are expected to receive grants between \$1 million and \$25 million under the Tribes and territories competition.

The deadline to apply to the general competition is April 1, and May 1 for the Tribes and territories competition. Implementation grants are expected to be awarded in the fall of 2024 for the general competition and in the winter of 2024-2025 for the Tribes and territories competition.

# construction, contractors & realtors





## NATIONAL UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION (NUCA)



ONLINE ARTICLE

## POWER & COMMUNICATION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION (PCCA)



ONLINE ARTICLE

## CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



PIONEERING INCLUSIVE HOMEOWNERSHIP  
IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



NAVIGATING TOMORROW: THE CONSTRUCTION  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA'S VISION FOR THE  
FUTURE OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

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CONTINUING TO MAKE WAVES IN A DOWN MARKET

## TORCOM CONSTRUCTION INC.



A SUCCESS STORY IN A NICHE MARKET



CHBA EDMONTON REGION

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EDMONTON'S RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

AT A GLANCE

## CHBA EDMONTON REGION

**WHAT:** A home builders association educating and advocating for the residential construction industry

**WHERE:** Edmonton, Alberta

**WEBSITE:** [www.chbaedmonton.ca](http://www.chbaedmonton.ca)





## Playing a pivotal role in advocating for key sector-focused issues, CHBA leads the construction pathway

**T**he Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) Edmonton Region is a dynamic organization dedicated to advancing the interests of its members in the region's thriving residential construction industry. With a membership base that spans home builders, developers, renovators, suppliers, and industry professionals, CHBA Edmonton is focused on advocacy, education, and community engagement, while playing an essential role in shaping the future of housing in the Edmonton region.

### Advocacy and Industry Focus

Laura Bruno, CEO of CHBA- Edmonton, relays the strategic pillars of the association, which are devoted to advocacy and membership engagement.

She shares, “On the advocacy front it’s representing our members and working with our municipal partners in Edmonton and regional municipalities, on ensuring housing affordability and housing choice, reducing red tape, ensuring a good build environment. In terms of what we do as an organization, we’re a not-for-profit organization that engages and serves its core membership of builders, renovators, and general members by advocating on behalf of the residential construction industry in pursuit of our member’s success.”

While there are certain members within the association involved in mixed-use developments or who have commercial divisions, she underscores that CHBA exclusively represents the residential aspects of the industry.

Outlining the advocacy priorities that are part of the association’s three-year strategic plan, Bruno says CHBA Edmonton Region is focused on City Plan Implementation, Impacts of Energy Efficiency on Housing, and Permit Process Improvements.

She elaborates, “There’s a city planning framework, a growth management framework, and district planning, that all fall under that City Plan Implementation umbrella. So, we’re involved in all of those files.”

Balancing housing affordability with energy efficiency is also top of mind for CHBA, and the organization is continuously involved in discussions surrounding innovations in energy efficiency, including their implications for housing costs. CHBA is also committed to streamlining the permitting process, seeking to reduce red tape and enable builders to construct high-quality homes in Edmonton as efficiently as possible.

“One other piece of advocacy that’s important to us is relationship building,” stresses Bruno.



Laura Bruno

“We want to be building good relationships with administration at the municipalities, as well as elected officials in Edmonton and the region.”

### Shaping the Future of Edmonton’s Housing Landscape

Highlighting that Edmonton is one of the most affordable large cities in Canada, Bruno emphasizes the association’s commitment to preserving this reputation. “We’re fortunate to have supply keeping up with demand in Edmonton currently, however, that doesn’t necessarily mean that’s what’s going to happen in the future,” she says.

“So, it’s just about making sure that we’re continuing to be able to bring on products that allow new homebuyers, first-time homebuyers, new immigrants to Edmonton, to be able to afford a home.”

Of course, the region is not insulated from the external challenges of rising interest rates and labor shortages that are affecting communities across North America, and Bruno points out





that these factors have led to a decrease in the number of homes sold in the Edmonton market.

To tackle the issue of labor shortages, the provincial organization BILD Alberta has taken proactive steps by establishing a scholarship fund to incentivize individuals interested in pursuing careers in the construction trades.

“We’re doing what we can to partner with them, funding scholarships, as well as more proactively trying to promote people in the trades,” Bruno relays. She adds that CHBA at the national level is also working to resolve the labor challenges in the industry.

Regarding the financial uncertainty stemming from increased interest rates, she acknowledges, “There has been lots of conversation about how increased interest rates are impacting the ability of people to afford new homes. You can see it in the Edmonton market. So, it’s just about managing those cost pressures, with things that we can control in any way possible.”

This includes exploring strategies like constructing smaller units, increasing housing density, and facilitating secondary suites, and garden suites. These approaches aim to offset the rise in mortgage rates by either providing additional income through renters or offering more affordable housing options for the average consumer.

When describing the housing inventory in the city, Bruno explains that there has been a significant increase in the construction of apartment and condo buildings. This has been largely facilitated by the MLI Select program through CMHC, which introduced an innovative funding mechanism to promote the development of more affordable housing units, with a focus on affordability, energy efficiency, and accessibility as key criteria for eligibility.

However, she maintains that the preference among consumers still leans heavily toward ground-oriented homes. These include townhomes and zero lot line homes, where there is only one side yard, reducing home costs, and offering a



more compact and dense living arrangement.

### **Balancing Energy Efficiency and Affordability**

On the subject of sustainable building, Bruno admits, “Green building practices are very expensive. A lot of people, while they may want to build a more energy-efficient home, it comes with a price tag that the average consumer wouldn’t be able to afford.”

She conveys that several builders in the region are embracing sustainable approaches such as net-zero construction and introducing innovative products to the market. Additionally, there’s a growing trend of integrating solar technology into new homes.

“New homes are pretty energy efficient as is,

in comparison to the old stock,” she recounts. “It’s just about finding those incremental changes that we can make, that are affordable to the consumer, and that are going to have an impact on energy efficiency and overall greenhouse gas emissions. It’s a big conversation we’re having in Edmonton, on what the future of energy-efficient homes looks like.”

To connect and engage with members, CHBA Edmonton Region utilizes social media. “It’s one of the tools we use to educate our members,” portrays Bruno.

“We also have weekly association updates that go out, a monthly foundation newsletter, and we provide our members a quarterly economic framework.”





Additionally, the organization hosts several different events to provide education and inform members of the advocacy efforts being made. These include a monthly builder breakfast and a half-day education symposium called Building U. The association is also working on an updated website and is continually revisiting ways best to communicate with members.

“Communication is really important to us. We want to make sure that our members are aware of all the things that we’re doing,” she remarks.

CHBA Edmonton Region relies on robust partnerships across various levels, encompassing collaboration with local real estate associations, land development groups, and other building organizations. These partnerships extend

to provincial and national collaborations, such as with the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) at the national level and provincial partners like BILD Alberta.

“These entities work together frequently and share the common goal of advancing the industry’s interests in tandem with municipal partners,” says Bruno.

“I feel like the collaboration is a really important part of that, us working together towards achieving these collective goals.” The dedicated team CHBA Edmonton also plays a pivotal role in realizing these objectives.

“We have some core values as a team that are important to us. And the number one is to be member-centric. We are ultimately here for the betterment of our membership, and the betterment of the industry. We’re a small team, but we’re a mighty team. We get a lot done by truly working together to execute our strategic plan. A lot of that happens through good communication, trust, openness, and honesty,” she adds.

Moving forward, some of the key concerns for CHBA Edmonton Region include finding a balance between energy efficiency and affordability in housing. Bruno notes the importance of taking a deliberate and transitional approach to make sure that efficiency initiatives do not compromise housing affordability.

Additionally, the organization is focused on guaranteeing consistency in permitting and inspections within the city, while they work to streamline the construction process. Overall, she says CHBA Edmonton Region remains dedicated to advocating for its members and the residential construction industry, actively addressing these concerns.

As a final thought Bruno remarks, “Our vision is to be the voice shaping the future of our industry. That’s ultimately what we’re trying to do, as we continue to support our membership in building a great region.”

# CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (CMAA)

## NAVIGATING TOMORROW: THE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF FUTURE OF PROGRAM AND CO



### AT A GLANCE

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (CMAA)

**WHAT:** A leading association dedicated to promoting, supporting, educating, and developing professionals who lead the delivery of programs and projects within the built environment

**WHERE:** Vienna, VA

**WEBSITE:** [www.cmaanet.org](http://www.cmaanet.org)



# CONSTRUCTION OF AMERICA'S VISION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



**Implementing forward-thinking strategies, the Construction Management Association of America is paving the way for the industry's next chapter.**

In the fast-moving and ever-changing construction world, where the intricacies of roles and responsibilities often blur, the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) provides clarity and direction. CMAA also represents the voice of the sector, championing issues and addressing concerns on behalf of its members.

Established in 1982, during a period marked by the burgeoning growth of associations, the CMAA sought to clarify the often misunderstood role of the construction manager. This was a time when the lines between job site superintendents, project engineers, and construction managers were indistinct, leading to confusion and misunderstandings about the nature of each position.

Andrea S. Rutledge, CAE, the President & CEO of CMAA, recalls, “In 1982, the role, profession, and scope of work of a construction manager was poorly understood. What was emerging in the 80s was the understanding that the role of a construction manager went beyond merely overseeing the creation of a structure. It encompassed a broad yet specific set of activities centered around quality, scope, schedule, cost, safety, and function.” For nearly four decades, the primary focus of CMAA was to define the profession, enhance its professionalism, and build a competent workforce. This dedication led to the establishment of the first standards of practice and the introduction of the Certified Construction Manager (CCM) credential in the 90s.

Rutledge continues, “There’s a whole 35, almost 40-year body of work around defining the role as a professional service, expanding the understanding of the role to project owners, and building on the professionalism of those engaged in construction management.” However, the last few years have seen the association’s direction shift. Following a comprehensive strategic planning effort in 2021 and 2022, the CMAA Board of Directors acknowledged the vast achievements since its inception and recognized the profession’s evolving nature. “The profession is bigger, encompassing more disciplines and deeper expertise. It goes beyond single projects, addressing whole programs of work for various entities like airports, transportation departments, and city agencies,” Rutledge explains.

This realization prompted a change in the association’s mission and vision. The renewed mission of CMAA is centered on supporting and developing the professionals leading the delivery of programs and projects, with a vision to be the voice of the program and construction management profession and the premier resource for professionals in the built environment.

### **Navigating the Staffing Landscape**

In today’s dynamic employment landscape, staffing remains a pivotal concern for many industries. The program and construction management sector is no exception. With more job openings than there are professionals to fill them, the challenge of finding the right talent is ever-present. Rutledge sheds light on this pressing issue from the perspective of CMAA

“There has not been a day since I started at CMAA that







the members were not worried about the workforce,” Rutledge reveals. This concern is multifaceted, as the term ‘workforce’ can refer to program and construction management professionals working for member firms or agencies or denote trades and crafts persons delivering skills on the job site. The distinction is crucial, and Rutledge often clarifies which aspect of the workforce is being discussed.

The conversation around workforce preparation has evolved over the years. While a distinct skill set is required around construction science, sequencing, and contract administration, Rutledge points out the increasing importance of other skills. “There’s also another set of skills around managing people, change management, communication, presentation, negotiating, and business development,” she says. The focus is shifting towards a broader perspective on acquiring or developing these skills. Whether it’s through military experience, a liberal arts degree, or on-the-job training, all experiences are valuable.



### **Navigating Complex Challenges in Program and Construction Management**

The program and construction management sector grapples with many challenges in an era marked by skilled employee shortages, inflationary pressures, and supply chain disruptions. These obstacles, while daunting, also present opportunities for innovation and problem-solving. As the industry confronts these issues head-on, the insights and experiences of its members provide a unique perspective on the evolving landscape.



Rutledge shares, “It depends on the member and the day. Some are seeing the supply chain has ironed itself out. They’ve learned to manage their expectations and those of the project. It takes longer to get certain materials because we don’t source them from the same places anymore.” She likens the current situation to “three-dimensional wizard chess,” emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced. The situation’s complexity is undeniable with multiple pressures, pinch points, and influencing factors at play.

Yet, Rutledge observes resilience and adaptability among CMAA members amidst this complexity. “This is where our members thrive, in the problem-solving of those intersections of problems. They look for ways to address as many of these factors as possible with

the resources available,” she notes. While there’s a palpable sense of uncertainty, it’s not solely centered on the market, inflation, or supply chain. Rutledge elaborates, “The uncertainty is about the downstream consequences of inflation, the infrastructure bill, and the Chips Act. It’s about knowing when and how that money will start moving, its impact on existing programs, and the opportunities it presents, especially from the owner’s perspective.”

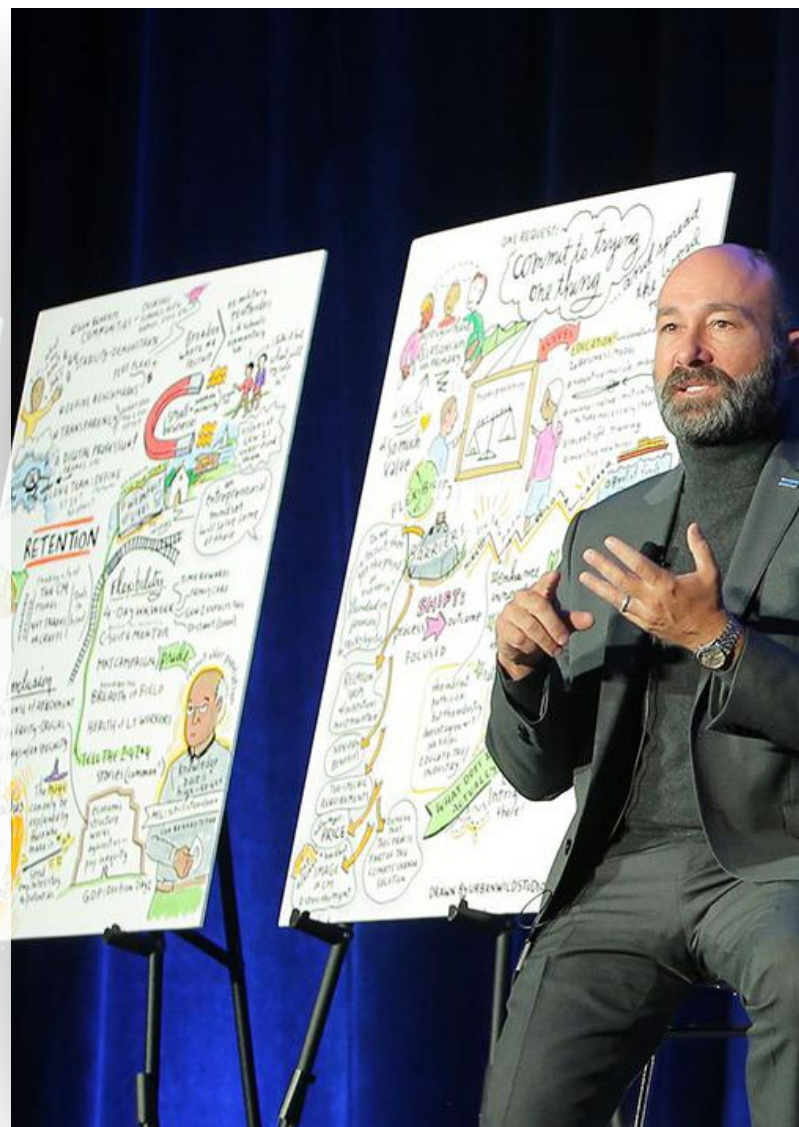
This intricate dance of challenges and solutions underscores the pivotal role of program and construction management professionals in steering projects through turbulent times. Their ability to adapt, innovate, and problem-solve is commendable and essential in ensuring the industry’s continued growth and success.

### Adapting to the Evolving Needs of Program and Construction Management

The sector, like many industries, is in a state of flux. With the challenges stated, there’s a pressing need for guidance and support. Amidst this backdrop, the CMAA plays a pivotal role, offering an overabundance of educational programs, credentials, and publications tailored to the unique needs of its members.

Rutledge elaborates, “We have a long list of education programs, credentials, and publications.” She highlights the association’s agility in adapting its credentialing program. “When I started in 2017, we had a Construction Manager-in-Training and the Certified Construction Manager. Now, we have a stackable credential system, including the Certified Associate Construction Manager program for mid-career professionals.” This system, she notes, provides multiple entry points and opportunities for learning, culminating in specific examination experiences.

The association’s commitment to staying updated is evident. “One of the things we’ve done well is to accelerate the frequency with which we update our education program and publications. From taking three years to update a publication, now we can get it done in about 9 or 10 months,” Rutledge shares. She also touches upon the association’s strategic decision to sunset certain



products, like model documents for construction management services, in favor of embedding essential contract knowledge into their education. This move led to the creation of publications like the “Contract Administration Guidelines,” which consolidates vital information on contracts.

The association recognizes the varied preferences of its members, with Rutledge adding, “Some people want to buy and read a book, while others prefer videos or podcasts. We are looking at all those different channels to deliver our content.”

In a world where information is abundant but time is scarce, the CMAA’s efforts to consolidate, update, and diversify its educational offerings stand out. By providing tailored resources and fostering a culture of continuous learning, the association ensures its members are well-equipped to





navigate the multifaceted challenges of the sector.

### **Embracing the Future: CMAA's Forward-Thinking Initiatives**

As the construction landscape rapidly evolves, the CMAA remains at the forefront, offering its members a blend of traditional events and innovative solutions tailored to address the industry's most pressing challenges.

Rutledge shares, "We brought back our in-person conferences in the fall of 2021. At the end of October, we will open CMAA2023 at the Gaylord National Harbor outside Washington, D.C. This fall event focuses on education and engagement and includes an expo. We expect 980 to 1000 attendees." Such events underscore the association's commitment to fostering community

and knowledge-sharing among its members.


But beyond events, the CMAA is deeply invested in several key projects. "We're always looking at the workforce," Rutledge states. "We're discussing how to continuously recruit and retain talent, especially understanding the generational differences in the workforce and their expectations." The association is also diving deep into diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, providing members with resources to introduce and sustain organizational initiatives. Rutledge adds, "Safety has expanded to include health and wellness, mental health, and public health. We're also exploring the balance between online virtual learning and in-person sessions."

Emerging trends are also on the CMAA's radar. "There's a growing need to design and build for resilience," Rutledge notes. "We're identifying subject matter experts in this area. There's also curiosity around modular construction and how it can be used for large projects." Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in construction processes is another area of interest. Rutledge observes, "AI is already present in the industry, especially with the adoption of building information modeling. The question is, what's next? While it may replace some tasks, it won't replace the need for human judgment and interaction."

As the conversation draws to a close, Rutledge provides a glimpse into the association's roadmap for the near future. "As we transition into 2024, our commitment to professional development remains unwavering," she emphasizes. The association's multi-year plan on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is set to continue, reflecting its dedication to promoting an inclusive environment for all its members.

Rutledge also hints at an expansion in the association's advocacy efforts. "We've initiated a modest advocacy program this year, centered on grassroots and indirect activities. This initiative is poised for growth in the coming years," she reveals. As CMAA looks ahead, it is evident that the association is geared to uphold its current endeavors and explore new avenues to further support and empower its members in the dynamic world of construction management.





BREAKHOUSE INC.


# BLENDING THE BEST OF BRANDING WITH ARCHITECTURAL EXPERTISE

## AT A GLANCE

### BREAKHOUSE INC.

- WHAT:** A leading design and branding agency with impressive commercial projects in the pipeline
- WHERE:** Halifax, Nova Scotia
- WEBSITE:** <https://breakhouse.ca/> also providing a podcast entitled: "Design Makes Everything Better"





## Breakhouse Inc. draws up the blueprint that best fits the brand while keeping its client's preferences front and center

**D**espite the recent overnight rate hikes implemented by the Federal Reserve and its Canadian counterpart, the Bank of Canada, it is fair to say that new construction is not about to slow down anytime soon in Canada and across the continent. The demand for new retail and commercial development is on the upward trajectory and design/architectural firms are keeping busy providing the blueprint of what these homes, stores, and commercial buildings will look like aesthetically.



Work is plentiful for those design firms that stand out from the pack in both the commercial and retail space providing great opportunities for companies to put their unique design stamp on both smaller boutique sized projects and those larger in scale.

For Breakhouse Inc. designing cutting-edge commercial spaces is what it does best. Standing out from its competition and setting the industry standard is nothing new for this high-end design and architectural firm. However, it is not just its sought-after designs and commercial construction documents that clients are gravitating to.

Breakhouse Inc. has moved beyond the competition based on another key criterion that gives it an edge in a market that can often be oversaturated.

Combining design insight in addition to branding is the secret building block in

Breakhouse Inc.'s client offerings.

"We are a blend between a branding agency and an architectural and interior design firm," Vincent Vandenbrink, President of Breakhouse describes.

"So we do both of those which allows us to provide a lot of design insight to build work like restaurants, hospitality spaces, and even larger developments in multi-unit residential with a really strong design point of view, because it is rooted in what the end user should experience," he continues.

Brand positioning is a unique offering he points out. "Our office bridges brand and built development which is unique in Canada in particular. There are some in Canada and also some in the US but it is not a typical offering."

### **'Breaking' down the brand evolution**

The move towards providing brand expertise





was not in the original design scheme for Breakhouse. Based in a beautiful area of the country, Halifax, Nova Scotia with design options to suit the uniqueness of this breathtaking region, the company started as a design firm of retail and hospitality (branching out to include large multi-unit residential design work).

It was through the design process that the idea of branding became a key component of the company's business operating principle that naturally fell into place.

"It wasn't intentionally isolated as an offering, it was always what we did, we just didn't realize 15 years ago that it was called branding" Vandenbrink remarks.

"We have always been doing design work within some retail and hospitality spaces and whenever we started our design work, we were asking a lot of questions about what kind of customer a client

would want to have or what sort of experience are they looking to create and what is the client's business position," Vandenbrink reflects.

It became clear to Breakhouse that messaging was the nucleus from which the design process took root.

"When we were working with a large brand and marketing firm client designing their offices. We were in what we call the discovery phase of our design process, which is essentially asking a lot about the company culture, how clients move into their space, and so on that someone in the meeting said – we were branders, not just designers."

Vandenbrink recalled that his colleagues went back to their offices and put their collective heads together to determine how to incorporate the notion of client branding and how to be able to offer this service along with the traditional











architectural and design divisions that were already clearly defined and established in the company.

“We realized that our core point of view in design is coming from a brand lens,” Vandenbrink recalls.

“It wasn’t until another company told us what we were doing that we realized that we’re a brand or branding agency as well,” Vandenbrink suggests. “Today our office is a mix of talent that can lead the variety of things we do. We have Creative Directors, Art Directors, Architects and interior designers.”

“Branding for us is essentially customer-focused design. With our brand perspective, all aspects of a design are woven in with the brand. Brand for us is more than graphics or a logo. Branded design is about thinking about the entire environment as a way to connect with customers.”

“Every touch point in a space from menus, furniture, signage, exterior design are all moments to reinforce the brand experience. So it is not just a secondary layer – like a bumper sticker on a car. For us the brand is what decisions you make to design the entire car.”

“When we approach projects like this, design is a business tool that helps customers connect with our clients.”

“The true strength for our clients is that our full team is engaged in projects. It is a deeply collaborative approach which means we bring to our clients a variety of viewpoints to any problem. What do they say- if you give someone a hammer all they see are nails? We’re like a Swiss Army Knife, we have so many tools, you just use the one you need.”



**'Breaking' down the design strategy**

When asked to describe Breakhouse's design strategy Van den Brink states that the company has broken their design approach into three clearly defined steps or stages involving research, creating, and delivering.

"We are very strategic in our thinking and our design solutions are not coming from a purely aesthetic point of view which is often the case for a lot of designers," Vandenbrink explains when asked to describe the company's design approach.

With the element of branding the process is viewed from another angle, he outlines.

"When you end up designing based on research into what let's say a restaurant is looking to do in its competitive landscape or a retail space, for example, we need to know how to position that best, so that it stands out and that is true to what the offering is intended to be and the experience we're trying to create," he outlines.

"This means that our design is looking to empower that strategic position."

"When we are doing that research and investigation first, then we know we're designing it around activating a business and it's great because it can give you an illustration of whether a design is on track or not because you are hitting it relative to specific markers of what the space has to do or the brand has to communicate," Vandenbrink continues.

The second stage of the design approach concerns working through the design with the client keeping the benchmarks of their branding in mind leading to the third leg of the designer stool- activation. "This last step is being part of the build or construction document process."









“So we see the project from the very beginning through to the very end, the only thing we don’t do is build it physically. However, we are always on site as our clients representative until the very end.”

### **‘Breaking’ down projects in the pipeline**

Van den brink is quick to illustrate some of the top-tier projects the company is currently involved in as well as projects in the design pipeline.

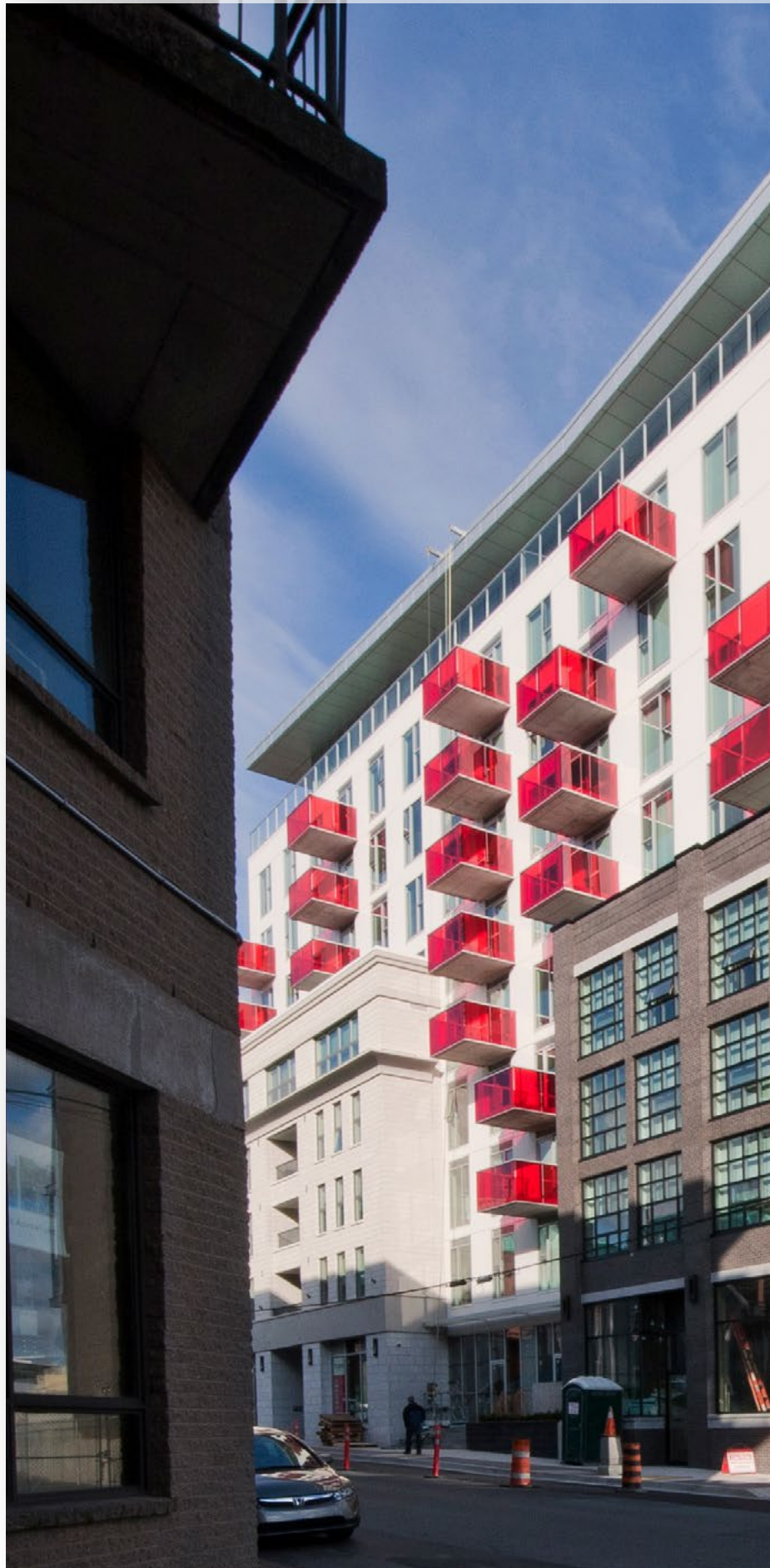
“We are working on some residential projects which are multi-unit however we are not involved in private projects such as single-family residential,” he notes. “Which makes sense if you think about it, a single family home is very personal, loaded with personal tastes, and no customers for our clients.”

“In Halifax, we are working on building a very large 450-seat restaurant and we are working very closely with the restaurant owner to develop and articulate what the full experience is going to be.”

“This is a seafood restaurant and we are working very closely to build a full interior design and patio design.”

“We are also working on a few other retail spaces including developing a retail technology space for St Mary’s University which will be a real innovation hub for the university to test out some of the retail technology that they are developing.”

“We are looking into doing some more of the multi-unit residential and we are in construction for a 29-storey, mixed-use development. This will be a hotel and a series of office spaces and apartments above that which includes a very large outdoor public space,” Vandenbrink details.







## **‘Breaking’ down partnerships and the road ahead**

Vandenbrink is cognizant that part of the success of Breakhouse boils down to the relationships the company values with partners and suppliers. Working in collaboration helps with both efficiency and provides for a seamless design strategy.

“They have [collectively] done so much for us over the years. Corp for example has been such an amazing partner for us and then Killam Properties which is a really strong community relationship company or REIT that does a lot of work with us and Kings Wharf.”

Working collaboratively and with the client in mind while helping to position clients on the branding end has paid off for Breakhouse. Success has followed, and the unique approach has been recognized throughout the region.

So what is next for Breakhouse?

“We are very much East Coast Canadian at heart and that is reflected in our general approach which is very heavily community focused. We love living here too.”

“Our expertise, however, is very much transferable, so this approach has lent itself to working in Vancouver, working in the US and even doing a project in Australia.

“We see ourselves as a strong North American design firm; we call ourselves a massive project boutique,” Vandenbrink adds.

The company has proven to provide leading design and brand positioning for a cross-section of clients and with so many projects in the pipeline it is clear that the company certainly will not be taking a ‘break’ from the dynamic business of design any time soon.

COASTLINE CONSTRUCTION

# PROVIDING THE BEST 'COVERAGE'

**Experts in both roof coverage *and* facilitating insurance coverage, Coastline Construction doesn't just 'claim' to do it all, they cover your roof *and* peace of mind**

**T**here may be many roofing companies on the market claiming to be the best in the industry, however, there are very few that offer to cover your roof expertly and help to direct you in the often daunting insurance process after the worst has happened. When damage has occurred after a catastrophic weather event the thought of having to navigate the intricacies of the insurance end may be too much for some to contemplate.

Living with the reality that a roof may be damaged in extreme weather resonates with Florida homeowners. Having just journeyed through two major hurricanes, the aftermath has left many with damages that could be potentially very costly and time-consuming to try to 'cover' on their own.







# BEST

AT A GLANCE

## COASTLINE CONSTRUCTION

**WHAT:** Primarily residential roofing contractor that 'ensures' its customers are pointed in the right direction for their roofing and insurance claims

**WHERE:** Fort Myers, Florida

**WEBSITE:** <https://www.coastlineconstruction.com/>

For leading roofing experts, Coastline Construction, the roofing process is viewed as a holistic one; how to cover the roofing damage right through to how to help the client through the often arduous insurance or legal channels when claiming damage compensation.

Based in Fort Myers, Florida, Coastline Construction has been seamlessly putting roofs on homes, often high-end, for years and this experience has cemented its top position in the Florida roofing and construction market.

The company has gone one step beyond its local competition and offers specialized direction to help distressed homeowners walk through the task of making claims for roofing damage.

### **'Covering' after the damage is done**

"Our specialty is helping folks out after there is a disaster such as hurricane Irma," Christopher Polino, Sales Manager with Coastline Construction begins.

"A lot of times people, when they start their insurance claim process, do not know which way to go. We have public adjusters that we can get them in touch with and we have all of our attorneys that we have a good relationship with to get them retained to make sure that customers are getting properly taken care of through their insurance companies."

Facilitating the entire roofing process doesn't end there.

"Once all the customers' claims settle out, we can come in and we can do the roof for the insurance proceeds. And as always, the homeowner is just paying the cost of their deductible and we put in a brand new beautiful roof on their home," Polino adds.

Polino is quick to point out that it is this end-to-end coverage for Coastline Construction clients that sets their services apart.

"You know any roofing company could put a roof on, we are not building rockets or conducting



brain surgery. The point we want to drive home is that we have your back as the homeowner or the business owner and whatever resource we have to give you, or whatever direction we can point you to get properly covered by your insurance company we will be there for you."

### **'Covering' all the necessary steps**

When asked about how Coastal Construction goes about providing a full coverage service, Polino is quick to break down the company's key steps.

"First we diagnose the damage [after the latest hurricane] when compared to hurricane Irma back in 2017, we have seen much more water damage."

"We have had to go in to help out with this damage and determine whether the damage





was contained to the exterior, so we look at the gutters or roofing soffits or anything about the exterior of the property.” Polino outlines.

“We then diagnose the problem so we can get them in the right direction.”

Polino was amazed at the veracity of the last hurricane to whip through Florida and has determined, based on the properties that they have evaluated, that the damage caused more catastrophic damage than anything he has seen since residing in the region.

Of course, stepping back, before diagnoses on a given property can be accurately made, the referral process begins.

“We receive a phone call or get a referral and

being the experts on how storms damage roofs, whether they are a flat roof, concrete, slate, or shingle we can then go to the ground, walk around the property, and start to build a case.”

Part of the diagnostic process directly relates to the very pressing concern of just how much a customer’s insurance provider will cover. To lay claim to monetary compensation, Polino explains that there should be clear signs or evidence that “the damage on the roof was not pre-existing and it was created during a weather event.”

The next step, Polino outlines is ensuring the legal protections are in place and that customers have legal channels they can pursue if they are encountering barriers through their insurance providers.

“Once we have identified the damages are [weather inflicted] we can now have a conversation about legalities.”

He is quick to add that the state of Florida is sometimes like “walking a legal tightrope”.

“There are certain things that we can do and there are certain things that we are not able to do,” he relays.

“We cannot advise anybody to put in an insurance claim in the state of Florida, but if the folks start asking questions about the insurance process we have the answers for them and we help guide them in the right direction- we just try to be the angel on their shoulder through the whole process.”

### **‘Covering’ trends and technology**

Like all the construction trades trends play out and technology continues to make inroads. To stay competitive, Polino insists that being on top of both is paramount.

“The roofing industry is an ever-changing industry.”

“One trend that we are utilizing what is called an ice and water shield in Florida to give the homeowners the peace of mind that

## COASTLINE CONSTRUCTION

their roof, even if the shingles are ripped off, is going to be watertight- they are not going to get those leaks inside,” Polino insists.

“We have also pivoted to the use of Peel Stick which is a much quicker installation and it is much safer for our guys when working on the roof.”

Other advances have been made in the roofing industry that Polino drew attention to.

“It amazes me the way technology has changed.”

“For our bigger projects, let’s say three stories or higher, there are some great things that we use like dumpsters that get elevated off the first story or the second story so we’re right at the roofline and you just throw the material off to make sure things are safe and we have a system that is called a catch-all system.”

He further illustrates a system that Coastline Construction utilizes which “is like a mesh netting that we surround our properties with to make sure that shrubs and bushes and AC units, garage doors and other everything is protected on the properties.

Polino points out that none of these developments were available several years ago.

More sophisticated, software-based technology is also progressing in the construction trades, Polino notes.

“Drone footage is huge for us especially if we don’t feel safe going up on a roof.”

“We can get a licensed drone pilot out there to draw on the property and access to see what we are working with and it is great for when we are producing jobs because we can use drone footage to create a great video of our guys working that showcases everything we do,” Polino adds.

The company’s CRM and office software technology is also a lifesaver, according to Polino.

“Our CRM is state-of-the-art.”







“I can give a roof quote to somebody in less than 60 seconds by just basically sitting at my computer desk, just through the use of satellites. I can get the measurement of a home in a couple clicks of a button and a full estimate to someone in less than a minute.”

### **‘Covering’ the next few years**

Looking ahead, Polino is geared up for a productive end to the fourth quarter of 2023 and a prosperous 2024 that lies ahead.

“We have partnered with a solar company and we are now able to offer a full solar service for our clients. There is no better time to install a solar system than when the roof is being ripped off.”

“This is currently being offered to our customers as an upgrade.”

Top of the mind for Polino continues to be the quality of service that Coastline Construction can provide for its valued client base.

“Every time that we walk in a room, we want to be professional. We want people to feel these guys know what they are talking about because in most cases we could be in a marriage with these folks for as long as 18 months depending on how long it takes for their insurance claims to settle out.”

“From day one we want these folks to feel comfortable.”

As for future directions for the company Polino summarizes it best.

“We are taking big steps into commercial flat roofs. Our business was a big residential business when Hurricane Irma hit back in 2017. Now we are looking forward to taking the next big steps toward one day becoming a full-time commercial roofer where we are just taking on those big projects,” he concludes.

Based on the success earned by the company to date, this step can easily be achieved for a company that puts comfort and peace of mind first when ‘covering’ its customer base.





**T**he dream of owning one's home is alive and well. To translate these long-held desires held by potential homeowners only the best custom home builders can construct that dream into a reality.

For Homes by Managen, creating custom home options is what they do best and their respected work has positioned them as a leader in the Edmonton market in new home construction.





HOMES BY MANAGEN

# 36 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Translating homebuyer's dreams  
into houses that they can  
call home

## AT A GLANCE

### HOMES BY MANAGEN

**WHAT:** a small, family-run business specializing in custom-built homes in the Edmonton and greater Alberta area, turning heads since 1987

**WHERE:** Edmonton, AB

**WEBSITE:** [www.managen.com](http://www.managen.com)










Serving Edmonton and the surrounding area since 1987 and a member of the Canadian Home Builders Association, the company is well known for building customized single-family homes, tastefully appointed estate homes, maintenance-free bungalow communities, and prestigious infills.

Homes by Managen was founded by Paul Kehler, Gail Kehler and Pat McKenna. The trio is known for their extensive experience in new home design and construction with contemporary design leanings. Mr. Kehler passed away earlier this year, but his tradition of excellence carries on.

Today, McKenna is the owner and on-site superintendent. He brings more than three decades of experience in new home construction and project management to the table. He is also an experienced framer and is primarily responsible for the day-to-day construction process, monitoring, scheduling, and more.

Troy Beattie is the company's project manager.




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## HOMES BY MANAGEN

With more than 16 years of experience in new home design and construction, Beattie brings his expertise to each project. He is primarily responsible for project estimation, sales, and coordination. He enjoys working as part of a team coordinating efforts to deliver timely and well-thought-out designs.

We recently spoke with McKenna and Beattie, and they told us more about what makes Homes by Managen synonymous with excellence in Edmonton.

“We’re a rather small boutique company,” says Beattie, which means I am lucky enough to be hands-on from the beginning build to the end. “I get to meet with the clients. I put together pricing and specifications.

After that comes working through the design side of the construct; getting all the proper permits in place; and signing off on all the contracts. Then it’s full steam ahead.



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McKenna informs that the company has cut back on staff this year, going from about seven to three. Yet it's a family company, so being smaller just makes sense. Subcontractors fill up any holes, and it all comes together, par for the course in the homebuilding industry.

Beattie extols the late Mr. Kehler.

"A lot of my expertise comes from working closely with Paul over the last 16 or so years," he says, revealing that he started in the banking industry as an underwriter before transitioning into the homebuilding profession.

McKenna spoke of his duties, including work as a framer. Framers are construction industry professionals, responsible for building and repairing the wooden frames (the walls, floors, and roofs) of structures. They help construct residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Framers also put doors, windows, and fixtures into place. McKenna says it's his responsibility to keep jobs moving forward and focus on paying attention to the details.

"That's a big part of it, actually," he says, "and the rest of it is scheduling and quality control."

"Pat's a problem-solver," says Beattie. "You run into challenges along the way, he's in there, getting things back on track. There are no real problems; only solutions."

### **Recovering from COVID**

The Canadian housing industry was pretty hard hit by the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully, Homes by Managen and its fellow construction companies are now in the long process of recovery, as Beattie notes.

"The construction industry's history was deemed a necessary entity that kept moving during COVID," he says, "and we did suffer from plants being shut down, just like other small businesses that we deal with."

He adds that COVID-19 presented its challenges. It slowed down the housing construction



industry and necessitated a different approach. Beattie says we were able to pivot instead of hosting an open house and in-person meeting we turned to video tours and skype meetings.

It also meant fewer construction projects. Under normal conditions, Homes by Managen builds seven to 10 homes, each with an average size of some 3,500 square feet, in a year. Right now, the company has scaled back a bit and has three or four on the go at present, as Beattie informs.

Each has a price tag ranging from \$900,000 to \$2.5 million, and one house may take an average of 10 months or as long as two years to build in some of Edmonton's most prestigious neighborhoods.

"We are building generally larger custom homes," says Beattie. "But we certainly do build a lot of single-family homes in the million-dollar range."

### A breed apart

What sets Homes by Managen apart?

McKenna says it's simple.

"I think probably one of the key things is that we're very customer-focused," he says, "and we're very open to making changes and not just repeating what we've done in the past. I think that helps, but mostly it's the focus on the client to where we almost look at it as a kind of mini marriage, where, throughout the build, we're going to be involved in each other's lives heavily for the next year or so."

Being able to create homes customizable to the client's specific requests is a thing in which the company takes great pride, as McKenna notes.

"We start with a lifestyle meeting," he explains, to discover "all the things that you need in a home, and then we come up with a design. We keep tweaking that design until it gets to the point where you're 100 percent satisfied with it."

What does a Homes by Managen house look like? Stunning. Take this showcase home, for instance: a two-story executive family home in a lovely





cul-de-sac, with three bedrooms, a laundry room, four bathrooms, an upper-level bonus room, and a first-floor den/office that are all included in 3,147 square feet of luxury living space. Throw in some high-gloss kitchen cabinets; a mud room with built-in cabinets with high-gloss doors and a wood feature wall; and a stucco exterior so strong it's resistant to those pesky woodpeckers; and you've a real showplace.

Being small has its advantages, McKenna remarks.

"Larger companies don't deal well with changes," he says, citing the bureaucratic red tape in which bigger homebuilders are apt to get lost, adding, "We have an open-door policy with our customers as well. They're welcome to visit the site, as long as it's safe to be there then."

Beattie discussed making homes energy-efficient. The National Energy Code for Building sets guidelines for this.

"It lifts the whole industry," he says, "so we try to not do just the minimum. We try to do a little bit above that, as far as energy efficiency goes."

Ensuring that a home is properly tight will help keep warm air in during the winter and cool air in during the summer. To that end, Homes by Managen has window packages that Beattie notes are far above the Canadian national standard.

As well, the company is going green. More and more of its new homes come with solar panels or are at least solar-ready.

McKenna adds that the company carries on its caring customer-centered approach, even long after the home is finished.

"We continue with that relationship," he says, "making sure that everything is 100 percent satisfied with the homeowner—with what we've accomplished together."



We even renovate houses for past clients long after they've been built. If the homeowners decide they want something else, we'll come in and take care of them. We're a small, quality-oriented company that has the flexibility to deal with anything that the customer can throw at us.

"We do a timeless design," he adds. "You can take most of our designs, and 20 years later,

they're not looking dated. We don't throw a lot of current gimmicks at our homes. We take proven stuff from the past and meld it with some of the stuff in the future. Our customers are then given timeless homes that they're not going to be tired of in a couple of years."

Beattie shared McKenna's assessment.

"I'd say our style is contemporary," he observes.



“We usually try to steer our customers towards something that’s going to stand the test of time and not be just something that they might have picked up as an idea at a home or garden show or something. It’s why we’ve recently started renovating. We do renovations, but we’ve had quite a few of our past customers from 20 to 25 years ago. They say, ‘Hey, we love our home, but we want to bring it up to date,’ and so we’ll go in and renovate it for them as well.”

A critical goal is to make sure Homes by Managen customers love their homes and

love where they are, as Beattie points out.

“We want them to love the bones of their home,” he says, “and to love everything in the house.”

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/PARTNER

■ **1685 Kitchen Design Studio Inc.**

[www.1685kitchens.com](http://www.1685kitchens.com)

■ **City Glass.**

[CityGlassLtd.com](http://CityGlassLtd.com)







JOHNSON & SONS PAVING

# SMOOTH ROAD AHEAD FOR JOHNSON & SONS PAVING

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## AT A GLANCE

### JOHNSON & SONS PAVING

- WHAT:** A family-owned company that does concrete, asphalt-paving, and much more A transport, trucking, and logistics company
- WHERE:** Menomonee Falls, Wis.
- WEBSITE:** [www.johnsonandsonspaving.com](http://www.johnsonandsonspaving.com)





# D ONS

**J**ohnson & Sons Paving is a commercial asphalt-paving contractor that is well known all over the Badger State. It offers a full range of asphalt and concrete construction services for customers in southeastern and southwestern Wisconsin, including Milwaukee, Waukesha, Madison, Racine, Kenosha, and their surrounding areas, and indeed now all over the entire state.



## JOHNSON & SONS PAVING

Its asphalt maintenance and repair services feature a host of functions, including seal-coating, hot crack-filling, line-striping, excavation services, asphalt-patching, paving, and a whole lot more.

According to Johnson & Sons President Jason Johnson, the company offers stormwater management: critical in a place as wet as the Badger State. Also the company's owner and founder (he created it on his own, nearly a decade ago now), Johnson pointed out that Johnson & Sons Paving is uniquely suited to snowy Wisconsin, as it offers 24-hour snow-plowing, shoveling, and ice control for commercial clients. Johnson & Sons integrates civil engineering, skilled crews, responsive project management, and state-of-the-art equipment on all of its asphalt and concrete construction projects.

As the name suggests, Johnson & Sons is a family affair. Jeff Johnson handles sales and is in charge of the sales staff, as his brother, Jason Johnson, explained when we recently caught



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up with him. Jason Johnson has three sons and a daughter, and he plans on his sons (currently 14, 12, and 10 years of age) one day joining him in the business, hence the name, as he pointed out to us. Indeed, the boys are getting a jump start, their proud dad says, and they are already learning to run some of the company's equipment.

Mr. Johnson informs that his company can handle any project, big or small, from residential driveways to such large commercial efforts as roadways, parking lots, campgrounds, and much more.

"Anything that gets asphalt," he says, "we can pave it."

Johnson continues that he maintains a demanding schedule. He's on the job on a year-round basis, often putting in five-, six-, and seven-day workweeks.

"Just whatever we've got going on," he says, "getting everything ready. The phone starts ringing, usually before six o'clock in the morning, and it doesn't stop until sometimes eight, nine, or 10 o'clock at night."

Right now, on the concrete side of the business, Johnson's crews are working on Main Street in downtown Waukesha. They're also engaged in smaller such jobs throughout southeastern Wisconsin. In terms of asphalt-paving work, they're engaged in multiple projects, including parking lots for apartment complexes, condominiums, grocery stores, and more, also all over the southeastern part of the state.

Johnson also pointed out a major ongoing project. In Kohler-Andrae State Park in Sheboygan County, Wis., the company has a major paving endeavor scheduled for September.

Snow removal work is a Johnson & Sons specialty. Johnson points out that some customers are so happy with the









company's work that they ask for it by name and won't do business with anyone else.

"We don't do it on a large scale," he reveals, "because it's very wearing on the equipment, but we take care of our good customers who want us to do their snow removal."

Stormwater management is another forte for the company.

"Everything has to do with the direction of water," says Johnson. "Oftentimes, because of where we are located, catch basins need to be rebuilt."

He continues that Wisconsin is more than just the heart of America's dairyland. With all that snow, Wisconsin can be very wet and soggy. Further, with more than 15,000 lakes, the Badger State can be quite marshy as well.

That's where catch basins come in. They are used to redirect water in an aim to prevent flooding. They are, of course, common on public streets, but they may also be installed on private properties as well. Catch basins collect rainwater or melted snow, transporting the runoff to a sump, réservoir, or treatment facility.

Residential catch basins need to be installed at the lowest point of a property. Large properties or those with uneven terrain may require more than one catch basin or drainage ditch. Catch basins use a grate to filter out large débris while collecting water in an underground tank. Most of this débris consists of sticks or leaves, though sometimes trash can collect inside a catch basin as well.

Ensuring that your property or municipality has good catch basins is among the things Johnson & Sons does best.

"Sometimes, they need to be readjusted," says Johnson, "and we can do that right in the field, as we're doing a paving project."

### **Good customer relations**

Paving smooth relations with its



valued customers is also of top priority for Johnson & Sons.

“We like to get to know our customers and what their needs are,” Johnson notes, “because it’s a relationship between us and our customers.”

He adds that municipal paving projects are typically awarded to companies that are the lowest bidders; entities that probably don’t have a vested interest in the communities they are serving. However, Johnson & Sons takes a much more personal approach, as Johnson points out, getting to know its customers and what they like and what they need, thus resulting in a more individualized outcome, unique to a given customer. Driveways may see one or two vehicles a day, whereas roadways may see hundreds or even hundreds of thousands on a daily basis, including heavy truck traffic.

“That makes a difference,” Johnson observes, adding of his company’s thorough knowledge of its customers’ needs, “We then design a pavement around those needs.”

### **Paving the way to a successful future**

Johnson & Sons Paving has grown exponentially since Johnson started the company in January of 2014. Back then, at first, he was the lone employee. Within the first year, the company had 15 employees. Today, with its concrete and paving operations combined, Johnson & Sons has about 120 employees.

“Our mission has changed a lot,” Johnson reveals, citing multiple crews for preparation work, paving, concrete, striping, and other efforts. “As we’ve grown, the mission has changed.”

Two years ago, he adds, the company created its own asphalt plant so that it could make use of its own material. This allows Johnson & Sons to have full control over the materials going into its customers’ parking lots, driveways, and roadways.

Over the next few years, as Johnson speculates, the paving industry will continue to change and evolve.



“We are involved in oil,” he notes.  
“We are involved in fossil fuels.”

That part of things won’t change, he adds. Yet there are efforts to include new plastics, polymers, and other such products into the manufacture of asphalt in order to make it last





longer. However, as Johnson points out, the basic need for paved surfaces won't go away.

There is, he notes, a current push for electric vehicles, but they will still have to travel on paved roads, so that means the big picture won't be changing.

"Over the next 10 years," he says, "I believe we're going to see a very similar need in the asphalt world as we've seen in the last 10 years."

Will Johnson & Sons continue to be a viable voice for the paving industry? You bet, says Johnson.









"I have 10, 12, and 14-year-old boys who want to work for the company someday and carry on when I'm no longer here," he says. "We are not looking back. We are going to continue to build and do the best possible asphalt and concrete paving that we can for our customers."

The secret to the great success that Johnson & Sons enjoys? It's quite simple, says Johnson:

"Putting the customer first."

Whatever Johnson & Sons' customers expect, its employees exceed, as Johnson further points out. Whether it's repaving a parking lot removing a client's asphalt or new construction paving and grading, Johnson and his workers like to leave it better than it was before.

"We try to take care of everything on an in-house basis," he adds. "We don't use a lot of subcontractors."

Controlling their own schedules and materials is important to Johnson and his employees, as he points out. That's critical, as is being a good steward of the company that he created and looking out for its people and the clients they serve so well, as Johnson shares.

"I'm an engineer," he remarks, "and I'm a business owner. Taking care of my employees and taking care of our customers first are the most important things for me."

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **Wisco Oil LLC**  
Wiscooils@gmail.com

KELLY KUSTOM HOMES

# CONSTRUCTING HOMES TO SUIT EVERY TASTE

Providing unique construction options,  
Kelly Kustom Homes builds the  
homeowner's dream

## AT A GLANCE

### KELLY KUSTOM HOMES

- WHAT:** A builder of custom homes around Calgary and beyond
- WHERE:** Langdon, Alta.
- WEBSITE:** [www.kellykustomhomes.ca](http://www.kellykustomhomes.ca)







# HOMES

**F**or Kelly Wenstrom, building a home is never a one-size-fits-all approach. The owner and chief executive officer of Alberta-based Kelly Kustom Homes, Wenstrom believes in the individualized approach to building dream homes. Every home is built to customize the desires of the homeowner and forms the construct of their shared vision.

We recently spoke with Wenstrom, 61, and his daughter, Alex Carter, the business's



sales manager and designer. They told us more about how they are quite literally building up the Calgary area and beyond with this family-owned business that Wenstrom created in 2005.

Wenstrom has been in the homebuilding industry since 1985. He always knew he wanted to work for himself, and when the time came to build his first home, he wasn't

happy with the available floorplans, so he took it upon himself to design his own.

Sometimes doing it yourself is the only solution. This DIY spirit sparked his great passion for home design and building. He started his own construction company 27 years ago, and from there he began to learn the full process of homebuilding.





Carter has been happily following in her dad's footsteps since she was 6 and saw her first new home coming up. A 2010 graduate of Mount Royal University in Calgary, Carter is known for her keen eye for helping clients.

"Officially, I took home a pay-cheque for the first time in 2021," she reveals, quipping adding, "I just worked for free for a while!"

Since Kelly Kustom Homes began 18 years ago, it has built 70 customized homes for some 130 happy clients.

"We will build anywhere in Calgary and near surrounding areas within Alberta," says Wenstrom.

"As a family-run business, we only use quality materials and trades we trust. We feel that everybody deserves their dream home."

Carter concurs.

"A lot of times, custom comes with a very hefty price tag, but for us, we're a small company, and we're in small communities," she notes. "We give a lot of people the opportunity to build custom without having to go into that million-dollar range, and that's pretty rare."

It's this smaller-is-beautiful, customizable approach that sets Kelly Kustom Homes apart from big-box competitors that might advertise



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as being “custom,” but have only limited options, Carter observes. She and her father go out of their way to ensure their clients are comfortable and happy with the finished results.

Wenstrom extols his daughter’s level of commitment and meticulous work. She works closely with clients, assisting them in selections, colors, interior decorating, space design, and more. Carter says the company’s average bungalow house features some 1,700 square feet. Two-story counterparts may have as much as 2,100 square feet.

### A real family affair

Being a small, family-owned business has its advantages. For Wenstrom and Carter, it’s just the two of them. As with many homebuilders, subcontractors handle everything else.

Unlike many of their Stateside counterparts, Canadian home builders often have a necessarily abbreviated building schedule, re that wintry weather in the Great White North. Yet Kelly Kustom Homes is different.

“We go year-round,” Wenstrom informs, “but if it gets too cold, we have to stop. The one thing with the Calgary area is that the weather changes dramatically fast.”

This can delay exterior work, Wenstrom allows. Relatedly, Carter notes some aspects of the building process may cost more, vis-à-vis the time of year.

“A lot of times,” she adds, “we will hold off and wait for better weather because it’s going to save the client some money.”

Speaking of America, Wenstrom says the largest difference between homebuilding in the States versus Canada is labor costs. The costs of some materials are also factors. For every \$100 American builders spend, their Canadian counterparts spend an additional \$30, as Wenstrom reveals. It adds up.

“Our lot costs are a lot higher here,” he adds,







“and development costs are a lot higher here than they are in parts of the U.S.”

Wenstrom cites New York City and Los Angeles as examples. Prices there may be as high as \$1,000 a square foot. Yet Canada can be similar, as Carter notes, sharing her father’s summation.

“You want to build in Vancouver?” she rhetorically asks. “Well, I hope you’re a millionaire!”

### **Busy days, dream homes**

Carter maintains a busy schedule. On this particular day, she’s meeting two clients to finalize flooring. Then the cabinet colors must be agreed upon.

“Mostly I’m there to offer an opinion when an opinion is needed,” she adds. “A lot of times, I become a marriage counselor. Part of my unlisted duties is when couples disagree or they have to talk things through. I’m there to keep them on track.”

When it comes to building a dream home, nothing is ever 100 percent smooth and to-plan, as Carter allows. Yet she perseveres, finding solutions and doing everything she can to keep clients happy through long months of close consultation and collaboration. It is, she observes, truly rather like a marriage.

Wenstrom’s schedule is no less busy. He often finds himself working out of his truck, chasing down calls on his cellular telephone, going from one job site to another, and walking through builds in progress.

“The first part of my day, I start in the office,” he shares, “and I catch up on all my scheduling and e-mails. I schedule or reschedule because something’s gone awry at one house. Or at another, a trade can’t make it. Then I have to reschedule for five different people that I go to. I try to get to each job site at least every other day.”

What is it that gives Wenstrom his greatest job satisfaction?

“The design process,” he observes, “and then once that house is framed, and you get to see your design, the room spaces and things like that, and at that point, you can see whether you did a good job or not, what works or what doesn’t work.”

Once a house is framed, and everything begins taking shape, it all comes together. Clients then get a better feel for the house about to be completed. Then Wenstrom meets the clients to go on a walkthrough with them, and everybody’s happy. This is a source of great joy for him.

Looking to the future, Carter says that she sees nothing but positive annual growth for Kelly Kustom Homes. She doesn’t foresee the company ever being a big-bucks builder. Yet offering that customized, individualized approach, something at which small family-owned businesses excel, will help Kelly Kustom Homes retain its special niche and a unique place in the world of homebuilding.

“I still want to be able to offer something to the clients that are new to the industry,” says Carter, explaining how first-time homeowners can often find the process overwhelming, but Kelly Kustom Homes wants to “still be able to give them a quality home: one that’s not only in their budget but also that they can be proud of.”

As Carter notes, each home is unique and different in its way, whether due to a different floor plan or a different exterior and so on.

Wenstrom decries the “Pleasant Valley Sunday” neighborhoods so popular Stateside these days: cookie-cutter homes, all of them quite the same, with only a few feet of space between each one to maximize land use. No, it’s not illegal. Yet many mayors and other public officials lament that it’s certainly unethical.

“It should be illegal,” Wenstrom declares, complaining of 10 homes crowded









into a space where only two should be.

However, Kelly Kustom Homes avoids the bigger cities. By building in smaller, more rural areas, lot size and land use are not the great concerns they would be when trying to build a new home in a city, as Wenstrom points out.

The company's secret is focusing on the quality

of the home, not the quantity of cash to be derived from building it, as Carter shares.

"I think the main thing is that we strive for quality," she declares, "quality over everything else. That's what is most important to us when we're building. We don't want to put something down that is going to fall apart or that is going to deteriorate and not look nice





and diminish the value of where we live.”

“Secondly, we value family, and we want to build homes for people who want to create families, whether they already have them or they’re working toward them or they’re empty-nesters now, and they want somewhere that their children can always come and have a home ready,” she concludes.

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **Regal Building Materials Ltd.**  
[regalbuilding.com](http://regalbuilding.com)

AMERICORP - LARICY

# CONTINUING TO MAKE WAVES IN A DOWN



## AT A GLANCE

### AMERICORP - LARICY

- WHAT:** Top-performing boutique condo real estate agency with winning strategies in place
- WHERE:** Chicago, Illinois
- WEBSITE:** <https://mattlaricy.com/>



# MAKE N MARKET



**Despite the woes of the Chicago condo market, Laricy Properties continues to dominate the local competition**

**“** In today's day and age, the prevailing theory is to hire as many people as possible and many don't care about the quality; we're more about quality than we are about quantity.”





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## AMERICORP - LARICY

This key philosophy, directly uttered by the CEO of the highly successful boutique real estate agency, Americorp, forms the backbone of a business principle that has landed Laricy in the number one spot year after year in the highly competitive Downtown Chicago condo market that arguably has seen its share of ups and downs.

 **The numbers tell the story. Last year Laricy finished as the number one brokerage for transactions year to date and “we are number one in every category.”**

For Matt Laricy, owner of the Laricy Properties, a division of Americorp, the housing market's shift downwards that took place coming out of the global pandemic was not unexpected.

Although some realtors were ill-prepared to handle the pendulum shift from a market that was on fire to one that has gone down a whopping 37% this year alone, Laricy, as he is well-known in the local condo market to always do, anticipated such a shift and made the necessary adjustments to lessen the blow.

Already enviably positioned far ahead of even its number two competitor, Laricy has looked ahead and predicted the movements of a downtown Chicago condo market that has been on somewhat of a roller coaster ride for the last several years. As a top performer, Laricy set forth this year to ensure a far less steep reduction in revenue than others in the same housing space have felt of late.

### **Making waves using the right approach**

Laricy quickly points out that he did this by putting in work processes that keep the client

in the loop and utilizing tried and true methods that he argues, many have been lost along the way when so many other realtors remain heavily focused on transactional business models.

“Many realtors are trying to play catch up and get a good system in place whereas we had had that good system in place to help make client’s lives extremely easy.”

“For someone to be able to lean on us and I can say here are the facts of what it means to be in the business it helps to de-stress things,” he elaborates.

“We try to do a hybrid approach,” Laricy argues. “I believe in today’s day and age people want everything done and they want it done now.

“What we are trying to do is alleviate any part of the process that our clients don’t want to have to worry about and stress the importance to them of how we are going to make the process easy,” he adds.

“We have a dress code; men have to be in suits and ties and women have to be in business attire,” he elaborates

Although professionally turned out, Laricy insists his staff are approachable and that the real estate process is seamless for their clients.

“We are alleviating any part of the process or systems on our clients because we don’t want to have them worry about pretty much anything. We stress the importance of how we are going to make this easy.”

He notes that this naturally draws his team more into the relationship aspect of the process.

“I’m with you a little bit more, I’m talking with you a little bit more so I am naturally going to be forming a little bit better formal friendship with you.”

“I do believe that in our job, the only way to succeed and to exist and continue to grow is



by making sure that the relationship with our clients is there that we have their back, and that they like us which is why we continue to try to build that bridge,” he summarizes.

“Most agents hire junior agents and they will schedule appointments until they are good enough and then the junior agents are put in the field and the agency runs the risk of losing





that person and then they end up hiring somebody else; this doesn't look good."

"I have somebody that specializes in each thing. If you are going to list your property, I have someone who is just going to handle all of the listing paperwork. I have another person who just specializes in doing showings."

"We have a real-time person who handles different areas. These days the communication with the client and the back to what I call, back-to-basics

The numbers tell the story. Last year Laricy finished as the number one brokerage for transactions year to date and "we are number one in every category."





“So, we continue to make waves.”

“We are also hands down the biggest most reviewed agent online, with 1000 or more reviews than the next guy; I think we do a fantastic job.”

### **Making waves in a down market**

“Look, the market in Chicago is down. The numbers are about 37.5% year to date from this time last year and this is just a stat. Most people’s businesses are way, way down year over year.”

Laricy attributes these numbers to the general tendency for sellers to “stay frozen” due to the fact they are locked into low interest rates. They don’t have anywhere to move, and do not want to lose the rates they have.

“Even our sales are down about 15% year to date. So, although we are lower than where we were last year, we are still beating the average substantially.

“At this point, I am at least 10 million above the number two person right now and I am about 100 sales more than the number two person right now.”

“We are doing extremely well and we are on pace to finish around 275 million in sales and roughly 500 transactions which will put us down about 20 million for last year, however for the environment we are in we are crushing it,” he highlights.







Although buyers may be hesitating as rates head northward, Laricy argues that there are other factors at play to hamper the Chicago condo market that may not be immediately obvious. He draws attention to the work-from-home philosophy that is stalling the return of many to the downtown offices and downtown living.

He also points to the fear of crime in the downtown area as continuing to be a factor working against robust condo sales.

'I tell people that you can't worry about the rate because when the rates do go higher you can take your money and put it into a market for a completely safe harbor and money is to be made.'

"We try to stress to our clients that there is money to be made and other avenues to get wealthy," he stresses.

The rates have been up for a few months now, he adds, and the initial shock is wearing off as people get used to the new higher rate environment.

Working remotely for many, however, as well as those safety concerns among potential buyers continues to be a stumbling block for the downtown Chicago market.

"A lot of people said 'Hey I can work from anywhere' so why not work somewhere that is hot," he describes.

### **Making waves in a market rebound**

Although firmly convinced that workers need to get back to downtown offices sooner rather than later and this will lead to better productivity and a revival of the downtown condo scene, he is starting to see the trend in this direction and views it as only a matter of time before most workers are back at their office desks.

"We are starting to see a change. Our inventory levels are half of what they were at this time last year, but our prices have still dropped again for this year, not a lot, just by a couple of percent."



"I think we are in three and half years into a five-year cycle," Laricy predicts. "Typically, real estate goes on a four to six-year cycle with an average of five and I think we are coming out of it. We have bottomed and we are seeing a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel."

Laricy says the Chicago market is now seeing some of those international buyers slowly coming back, as well as couples who plan to have children or those who already have a family who are willing to live downtown before switching gears in the suburbs.

### **Making waves into the next couple of years**

It is clear that with the right mix of a relationship-driven approach and setting in place the mechanisms to make the process a stress-free experience, Laricy has been able to outperform its competitors.

Being able to predict market fluctuations and





providing clients advice on the best timing to buy condos in the Chicago market has also kept Laricy ahead of the real estate game.

So what is next for Chicago's top condo real estate performer?

"It's going to be to take advantage of the front five to six months market next year in what is an election year," Laricy answers.

"If you look historically the person in power always tries to use something in the housing market to show that it is better than it is to try to capture those votes."

"What that does is create a buying frenzy in the first half of the year," he continues.

"By the middle to end of June the market is going to completely and utterly die, so

what I am going to do is to take advantage of this information and put all the systems in place to allow my team to crush it with a phenomenal start predicted."

"Then in the latter half of the year when others start pulling advertising money; that's when I'm going to double down."

Predictions like this are just another example of how Laricy is dominating the local market.

"It is a game of thrones," Laricy concludes.

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **Lincoln Title Company**  
[lincolntitlecompany.com](http://lincolntitlecompany.com)



# A SUCCE N

## AT A GLANCE

## TORCOM CONSTRUCTION INC.


- WHAT:** A general contracting firm
- WHERE:** Toronto, Ontario
- WEBSITE:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/torcom-construction-inc/about/>



TORCOM CONSTRUCTION INC.

# SS STORY IN A NICHE MARKET

**Constructing the best options,  
Torcom Construction hammers  
home the solutions**



**I**n the world of general contracting, there are two main criteria with which to gauge the success of any individual construction firm. The first is procuring the job or project and the second is doing the job or project well, which also includes getting it done on time and within budget. By those measures, Torcom Construction Inc. is constructing the best options and hammers home the best solutions for its clients.

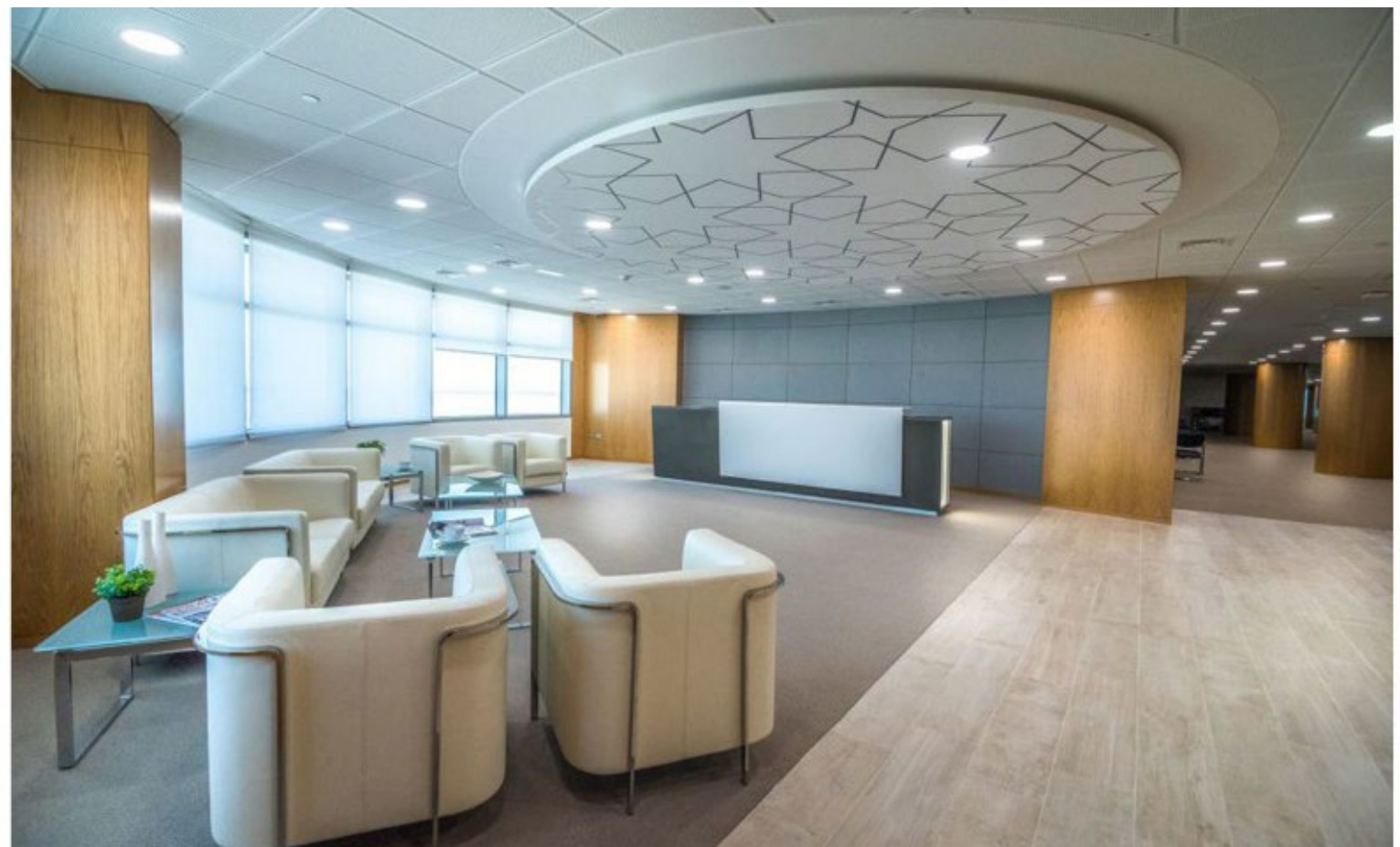
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of public buildings also positions it as a leading contractor that is highly sought after in Canada's largest city. Strategically located with offices above the subway stop at the intersection of Sheppard Ave. and Yonge St. in Toronto, Canada and with dozens of completed projects throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), including Mississauga and Brampton, Torcom is in the business of getting the job done in a niche market.

### Securing the job

With the high demand for new construction in and around the city and in particular the continuing need for the completion of public buildings, working with the best contractor becomes paramount. With years of experience in the public project space, Torcom has cemented its position as a company that holds the valuable experience to carry out the job.

Company President, Artin Chitilian explains how Torcom is able to secure the many projects it has under its construction belt.

"It's a public tender process. We participate in the tendering process and we bid for projects against other bidders. If we're low on a bid, we're awarded a job."

The type of public projects on which Torcom concentrates (it has completed over 35 school projects in the GTA, since its founding in 1985), generally come with firm-fixed-contracts, which means that the bid price is what the client will ultimately pay, regardless of what the contractor may make or lose on the deal.

Chitilian outlines that knowing how to create and tender a bid that will be the lowest among the competition, but with the presumption that a profit will be made on the bid by project's end, is key to a company's long-term sustainability. For the method to work continually, a general contractor must work with trusted and dependable subcontractors.

"The way we normally market jobs is going through the tender process and they have to be part of it to get those projects,"







notes project manager Sina Saedi.

“We work hand-in-hand with the trades and after successful projects, we’ll expand the business with them; we’ll try to get them involved in different projects one after another.”

“Our prices are secured during the tender process by reliable subcontractors with which we have good relations,” adds General Manager Greg Chitilian.

“We can pick up the phone and discuss the prices with them.”

### **Constructing the job**

In order to succeed on any given project once it is secured is the name of the construction game and Artin Chitilian points out that “You have to make sure that you have the correct subcontractors that can perform, the right employees, and the right project managers and superintendents. It’s important that the people you employ are experienced in the work that they’re doing, that they do a good job, and that they’re proud of their achievements. That’s how we look at the industry. We’re proud of the people working for us.”

Having that powerful formula in place is what has allowed Torcom Construction’s relatively small staff of about a dozen managers, accountants, and estimators, to succeed in the ICI (Industrial, Commercial, Institutional) sector for close to 40 years.

“Schools are our niche,” says chief estimator Vache Madian.

“We also do some community centers; we’ve renovated libraries across the GTA; old age homes, as well. We’ve done work with TTC (Toronto Transit Commission), upgrading some of their stations to barrier-free. Downtown, we worked for the CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) Commerce Court.” Commerce Court, an office building complex on King and Bay Streets in Toronto’s financial district. The four-building complex is a mix of Art

Deco, International, and early Modernism architectural styles. Part of Torcom's work – somewhat unlike most of its other projects -- was removing asbestos insulation inside one of the taller building's structural steel elements and replacing it with safer fireproofing.

"We did renovations on 19 floors over six or seven years," Madian reports.

### **The pandemic changes the construction game**

Of course, in normal times, when prices are generally stable and good workers are available, projects like the ones Madian mentions can be brought in on time and on, or under, budget pretty regularly. However, the last several years have been far from normal due to the havoc that the COVID-19 pandemic unleashed upon the wider population and economy.

"Shortage of labor and material is something that we've been dealing with for the past three years, every day, on every project," recounts Garo Kababejian, a Torcom project manager.

"For the past three years, we've seen a very unstable market as far as prices go; prices of material shot up, some by 50 or 60%," he continues.

"It has become very challenging to maintain schedules and costs. After you submit your bids, you get accepted. Then, suddenly, you realize that your suppliers can't honor their prices because the material is not available, or it's a long lead, or the prices have gone up by 30 or 40% from the day that they tender. So, they give you a new number and you've got 15 days to make up your mind otherwise the price will change again. So, it's been challenging."

Saedi agrees.

"The shortage of material during COVID impacted us on every single project. Either an item was not available, or there were long lead times, or we had to look for substitute material. It was a constant effort for all of us to maintain the timeline and stick to the given schedule."











“With school boards, you have a solid timeline to hand over the projects and it was always a difficult situation. We see some improvement in some items, but most of the major suppliers are still affected by the COVID impact. It’s not like before in the olden days,” he continues.

The only option for construction companies when

rising prices have blown a hole in the initial budget is to ask for a concession from the project owner; in many of Torcom’s cases, that’s a school board or other public or governmental body.

“We try to give as lean a price as possible, but it has been a challenge for the past few years because when the raw material prices





are up – steel, concrete, fuel surcharges – you have to carry whatever you can carry and then ask the school board for reconsideration,” Greg Chitilian explains. “That has been the process not only for us but for all the other companies.”

### A bright future looms

Going forward, Artin Chitilian seeks to continue to

aggressively go after more school projects in the GTA, even though the price tag for a new school has gone up markedly.

“Prior to the pandemic, they were maybe in the \$20 million range,” he states. “Now, the price has probably gone up one-and-a-half times. We have seen some recessing of the prices, but it’s not going to be to the level that it was prior to the pandemic.” Madian sees continued work on renovations. “A lot of schools are doing window replacement and ventilation upgrades,” he notes.

“And some school boards are moving towards adding childcare in all their schools. Those are starting to pop up.”

Kababejian expects to see a continual busy pace in the GTA’s construction market over the next few years, at least, and that Torcom will be well-supplied with projects in its niche market.

“It’s very busy in residential space and the schools follow,” he predicts.

“When there are a lot of people moving into an area, they need schools.”

Artin Chitilian concurs.

“We have good relationships and we know how to handle the projects here. We have a good reputation for building our projects on time and within budget. That’s our main objective. So, we look forward to working within Toronto and the GTA and building more schools for our kids.”

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **The Michelin Construction  
Group Inc.**  
mail@michelingroup.ca

# clean and green







## CANADIAN MINISTER OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES - NUCLEAR



SEARCHING FOR THE BEST ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR ALL CANADIANS



## HATCH



ENERGETICALLY ENGAGED IN NUCLEAR



## STERN LABORATORIES INC.



STERN LABORATORIES SERVES THE NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY WITH ITS UNIQUE CAPABILITIES

# SEARCHING FOR THE BEST ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR ALL CANADIANS

## The Canadian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources points the lens to a greener and cleaner future

**O**ur world is facing an existential threat in the form of climate change, and as a global energy transition is underway, governments and industries are looking for reliable, non-emitting forms of energy to help achieve their clean growth goals. Concurrently, geopolitical dynamics such as Russia's unjustifiable war against Ukraine are pushing like-minded countries towards stable and secure supplies of energy that

are produced with high ESG standards.

To achieve our climate, economic, and security goals, Canada must be open to the deployment of all non-emitting technologies and energy sources. Nuclear power is one source that can help address potential demand gaps and help us reach our climate targets. My thinking on this is supported and informed by the thinking of the international community.



SOURCES - NUCLEAR

# Power Century

CANADA



IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency  
Atoms for Peace and Development

AT A GLANCE

MINISTER WILKINSON

- WHAT:** Canadian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
- WHERE:** Canadian Parliament, Ottawa, Canada
- WEBSITE:** <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/>

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), a pathway to net zero by 2050 without nuclear will be both slower and more expensive. Reaching net-zero emissions with less nuclear power than envisioned in IEA's net-zero pathway could cost global consumers about \$20 billion more a year by 2050. In its Canada Energy Futures 2023 report, the Canada Energy Regulator projects significant transformation for Canada's electricity sector, with much of that transformation coming from growth in wind, hydro, natural gas with CCUS, bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), solar – and nuclear.

Nuclear energy is already an important part of Canada's energy mix, and our country is uniquely placed to take advantage of major areas of growth that will be driven by the transition the world is going through toward a lower-carbon future. What we need at this moment is a thoughtful, collaborative, and ambitious economic strategy that will create wealth in every region in the country - while ensuring we achieve our ambitious and necessary climate goals.

Canada began a legacy of nuclear excellence as the second country ever to produce nuclear power. Now, as a tier-1 nuclear nation with nearly 70 years of technological leadership, Canada has a full spectrum of nuclear capabilities that includes developing and exporting Canadian Deuterium Uranium (CANDU) reactors, pioneering developments in nuclear medicine, and developing a world-class regulatory system. The Canadian nuclear industry contributes \$13 billion annually to our economy, provides 70,000 direct and indirect jobs, supports a supply chain with more than 200 small- and medium-sized enterprises, and exports \$1.4 billion worth of uranium annually.

Most of the country's nuclear fleet is located in Ontario, where over half of all electricity is safely produced from CANDU reactors. Ontario was the first jurisdiction in North America to phase out coal power, thanks in large part to its substantial nuclear fleet. Nuclear energy has also been prominent in New Brunswick, where it supplies approximately 40% of the



province's electricity, while uranium mining, refining, and fuel fabrication occur in Ontario and Saskatchewan. Thanks to Saskatchewan, Canada is home to the largest deposit of high-grade uranium on earth. We produce over 70 percent of the world's supply of Cobalt-60, the most common isotope used in radiation therapy and medical equipment sterilization.





Nuclear power is also one of the reasons Canada has a relatively clean electrical system, currently providing 15% of our electricity. That means that our nuclear sector has helped Canada avoid approximately 45 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, compared to electricity produced from natural gas. In a country where 83% of our electricity comes from low- or non-

emitting sources already, nuclear continues to be a complement to the strong renewables sector that we are always continuing to develop.

The building of a non-emitting electricity grid across Canada to enable the energy transition is an enormous undertaking. As more sources of intermittent renewable energy come



We've been supporting these types of developments with programs like the Strategic Innovation Fund, which invested \$20 million to advance Ontario-based Terrestrial Energy's reactor design. Through the same fund, we invested \$50 million to help develop New Brunswick's Moltex Energy reactor and technology to recycle CANDU spent nuclear fuel into new fuel. And we invested another \$27 million in financing for Westinghouse Electric to help advance micro-reactors in Saskatchewan. The recent federal budget provided significant financial and policy support to develop and deploy SMRs, advance uranium exploration, and spur nuclear supply chain opportunities.

This included \$70 million in research to minimize waste generated from reactors; create a fuel supply chain; strengthen international nuclear cooperation agreements; and enhance domestic safety and security practices. And \$50 million for the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to develop appropriate regulations for small modular reactors and to work with

online, baseload sources of energy – such as nuclear – will need to be part of the mix to ensure that Canadians have uninterrupted access to electricity. To achieve our climate and economic goals, Canada needs to be open to the deployment of all non-emitting technologies and energy sources.

The Government of Canada is supporting the deployment of nuclear in multiple ways. I believe part of the future of nuclear power lies in small modular reactors, and as an early adopter of SMRs, Canada could realize a significant share of the global market. For example, the first 5-megawatt Micro Modular Reactor design is set to be deployed in 2026 at the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories' site at Chalk River, with subsequent units across Canada to follow. A much larger 300-megawatt project will come online at the Darlington generating station by 2028 and is expected to be one of the first commercial SMRs in the world.





international partners on global regulatory harmonization. These investments are in addition to the ongoing \$1.2 billion revitalization of the federal Nuclear Laboratories at Chalk River.

Around the world, nuclear power has helped avoid about 55 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over the past 50 years – the equivalent of two years of global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As a reliable source of non-emitting energy, nuclear provides roughly 10 percent of the world's electricity. And this is a space in which Canada can play an important role - to export natural resources and technology to the world.

Today, we're seeing growing international interest in our nuclear industry from countries like Romania, looking to refurbish their own CANDU reactors and build new reactors, while countries such as Poland, Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Kenya, and Ghana have expressed strong interest in Canada's nuclear technologies.

The message here is clear: nuclear is not a silver

bullet to address the threat of climate change. It is and will be an important part of Canada's low-carbon energy mix and will continue to play an important role in achieving Canada's low-carbon future. Nuclear, including SMRs, will continue to complement and enable variable renewables, such as solar and wind. It is a safe, well-regulated, non-emitting energy source that can provide a reliable and affordable source of power to fill a rapidly growing demand for electricity.

Canadians understand the advantages of nuclear energy. And in every province and territory, they understand the reality of what type of world we will be leaving our children if we do not achieve a net zero world by 2050. As I said, nuclear is not, on its own, a climate strategy nor is it a silver bullet to combat climate change. It is, however, one component of an overarching strategy that seeks to make significant emissions reductions on a pathway to net-zero and it does so in a manner that ensures Canada's continued and future prosperity.



A background image of a forest floor covered in green moss and fallen tree trunks, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

HATCH, LTD.

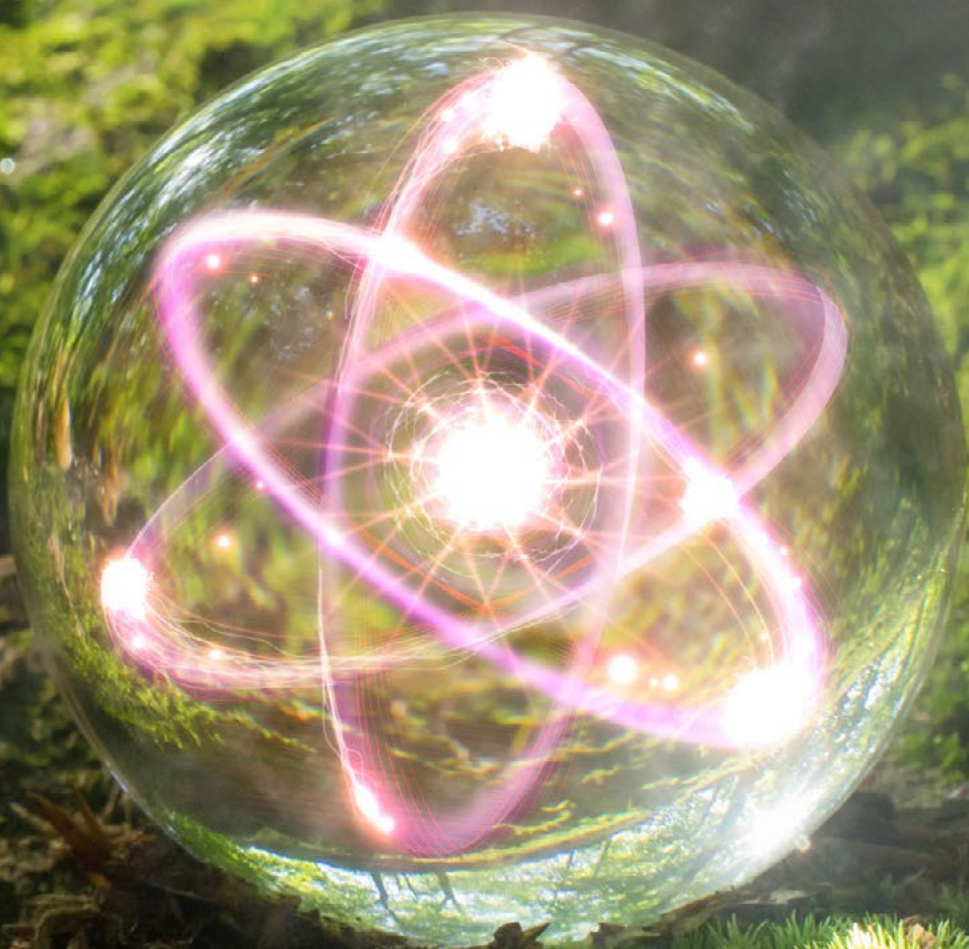
# ENERGETICALLY ENGAGED IN NUCLEAR

**Delivering energy on multiple fronts  
and engineering leading solutions**

## AT A GLANCE HATCH LTD.

- WHAT:** Global engineering, project management, and professional services firm.
- WHERE:** Mississauga, Ont.
- WEBSITE:** [www.hatch.com](http://www.hatch.com)





**A**lthough the jury may still be deliberating on what source of energy may be the front runner in the energy sector, there is a clear verdict across the continent that turning to cost-efficient and alternative sources of energy has never been more pressing. As the electricity grid throughout North America ages with increasing demands to decarbonize, utility providers and industry are turning to leaders on the energy front to provide second-to-none services, expertise, and industry-driven advice.



One has to look no further than Hatch Ltd. (Hatch) which has built its respected position as a global leader in the energy sector. An internationally recognized company with Canadian-based roots, Hatch provides vital services, engineering expertise, and advisory support to many energy-related businesses including nuclear, thermal, hydropower, renewable power generation and transmission distribution; as well as upstream, midstream, and downstream oil and gas. With global offices on six continents, Hatch has more than \$75 billion in projects currently under management.

Tackling the industry's toughest challenges while looking for solutions to the climate change threat lies at the very heart of the work that Hatch undertakes every day. As part of its far-reaching services and wide portfolio base, Hatch firmly believes that their clients should include nuclear energy as part of a winning portfolio of sustainable non-emitting energy sources.



CNL signing November 2022

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To help shed light on the role that nuclear plays as part of an overall comprehensive approach to energy solutions, Business View sat down with Hatch's Director of Business Development, Mario Pieries and Hatch Global Nuclear Director, Amar Jolly to discuss its multifaceted services and their unique role that has solidified Hatch's place among the top Canadian energy-related businesses.

Jolly's purview relates to nuclear endeavors and Pieries oversees the development of nuclear business at Hatch, they both support industry and government by way of incorporating nuclear as a decarbonization solution.

According to Pieries, Hatch is perfectly positioned to provide cutting-edge and much-needed engineering, project and construction management, and operational support to evaluate and implement feasible decarbonization solutions for clients in the three major areas of energy, mining and metals, and infrastructure.

"Organizations are concerned about climate change and reducing carbon. We are seeing a lot of different clients and partners emerge who are very much interested in being on the leading edge of the energy transition. Or energy transformation as we call it."

Hatch is also able to provide the ideal mix of engineering proficiency with advisory services to help guide their clients through a transforming industry. With a special emphasis on the valuable role that nuclear can play when viewed as part of a multifaceted approach to tackle energy efficiency and the challenges that the sector has recognized.

"We do quite a bit of work in this space. We have the ability at Hatch to not only provide a fully engineered solution incorporating new and novel decarbonization technologies but also act as advisors and consultants to ensure organizations do their homework, conduct front-end studies, evaluate risks and opportunities that might impact the success of a project including permitting and stakeholder consults." Says Amar Jolly.

Having the expertise in specialized areas within a very broad sector also helps to propel Hatch's business forward.

"Given our prominence in the mining and metals space, we support a lot of companies who are concerned about reducing their carbon footprint and making sound economical energy choices, all of which support the ability to leverage nuclear as a part of a clean non-emitting form of energy mix," Jolly continues. "We thought about an energy transition, for us it's an energy transformation. As we believe it's going to take all energy sources, not so much a transition from one to the next. We're looking at how we can be more sustainable and less carbon-intensive to eventually be net neutral" he reveals.

"We need to be able to produce power and energy in this kind of manner. How do we do that? Our colleagues in renewables—wind, solar, and storage—are going to play a big part,

but if you want baseload and firming power, you don't have a lot of options. You currently have hydroelectric and nuclear power, with fusion emerging as another potential means."

"We know nuclear is going to play a pretty big role in this transformation, but we're the converted. We're already working in the nuclear sector. We've gone deep into this space. We understand nuclear inside and out, but what about the public perception issues with nuclear energy?"

Nuclear energy hasn't always received the most favorable press exactly, as Jolly acknowledges. Yet statistically, despite its reputation, it's the safest form of energy there is.

"It has a lower operating cost basis as compared to other forms of generation."

"The other perceived problem is what do you do with the waste? We are focused on addressing those two big concerns as part of solving this



BUILT FOR THE CHALLENGE  **Alberici**







kind of world challenge that we talked about with climate change. On the waste side of things, we look at it as the nuclear industry has a big advantage over a lot of competing technologies.”

“It’s a closed-loop system, we account for the waste through its lifecycle unlike other sectors and industries” he summarizes.

“We know where everything comes from, but conversely, when we decommission and deal with our waste, everything is categorized, segregated, and put into containers. We have full control and traceability on all that waste. Nothing goes out in a smokestack; nothing gets thrown into a landfill. We know what and where everything is,” Jolly adds.

This is, he stresses, an enormous advantage of nuclear.

“We’ve demonstrated, as an industry, how to operate safely for decades now.”

“Given the safety culture in the nuclear industry, personal and worker safety in operating plants is taken with high regard and as such performance concerning safety incidents is better than other industries.”

He also stresses that as a company policy, Hatch takes safety very seriously, applying a defense in depth approach with redundancies built into systems to reliably ensure the utmost safety.

### **“Hatching” a sustainability energy mix**

To better understand the evolution of the company, Jolly draws attention to its founder, Dr. Gerry Hatch, who created it back in 1955.

“Dr. Gerry Hatch was a remarkable person,” he says.

“He started the company with some like-minded individuals, four or five people in the early days. It was an employee-owned company and still is an employee-owned company today, with 10,000 people worldwide in just the 68 years that you mentioned.”

The company was born out of the recognition that



there existed at the time a noticeable gap in the sector for companies whose primary focus was on technology and bringing it forward as the core operating business principle. Hatch's origins were based on providing that strong technical depth that was lacking, coupled with the utilization of technology to advance and enhance services.

"What makes us different is we're not afraid to embrace new technologies," Jolly relays. "We don't shy away from those first-of-a-kind projects, where there is an element of ambiguity and a

need to roll up our sleeves technically. We look to partner, collaborate, get involved, and try to push technology advancement in order to solve the tough challenges around the world."

### **Changing climate, changing mission**

As the industry has changed over time, so too has Hatch's overall business mandate as it has pivoted to meet current challenges and provide services that are contextually relevant for its valued clients.





As Pieres notes, one major adaptation relates to the reality that “the outlook has changed.”

“We have a climate change challenge facing us today; and as citizens of this Earth we are making a lot of commitments to better the world for our children and the next generations to come.”

As a direct result, Pieres highlights that Hatch’s current mandate has been “focused in the last eight years on helping those heavy industries that are emitting a lot of

carbon, and looking at novel ways to find solutions to decarbonize their operations.”

### **A transformation in action.**

“We are going to need plastics. We are going to need oil, gas, metal, and steel to build roads, provide power, make consumer products, and so forth for the time being. Our directive has been helping those industries and elevating our presence concerning nuclear amongst other clean energy forms,” he elaborates.

Pieres is adamant that nuclear must be part of a diversified portfolio of sustainable energy sources, that is combined with oil and gas, mining, and metals for a successful energy future. He points out that industry-wide, there is much interest in this combined approach and in making fossil fuels safer for continued use.

“In the last eight years, we have upped our game in helping technologies advance,” says Pieres.

Jolly also adds that Hatch is one of Canada’s Greenest Employers.

“This is a major focus for our company,” he says.

“Tackling climate change will require a major shift to less carbon-intensive forms of energy. This is a core focus, and at Hatch, it comes right from the top, straight from our CEO (John Bianchini) and our board of directors. To look at how we can provide greener energy solutions.”

“This means our designs are more ESG (environmental, social, and governance)-friendly and sustainable. We incorporate new materials and technology, [including] space allocation and how we deal with logistics, how we transport materials to and from sites. Is there pre-fabrication? We know module yards or fabrication yards and package things up in a smart way. For us that’s just regular design work that we’re doing day to day,” he expands.

Jolly says Hatch has signed on to the United Nations Sustainability Goals and are owners of actions on Canada’s



Mario Pieries



Mimi Wilde



Megan Goodland



Jim Sarvinis





Amar Jolly

federally stewarded Small Modular Nuclear Action Plan to decarbonize industry.

“We’re incorporating the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals into our work,” he says.

“We have a climate change practice that provides services to all our clients in all of our sectors to meet climate change challenges. A hot topic is hydrogen. We have a whole group dedicated to hydrogen and storage. There are several initiatives like that that focus on how we can support this

energy transformation we’ve been talking about.”

It is clear that this is a job that Jolly is passionate about and his passion is mirrored in the work of his colleagues at Hatch as they continue to provide leading solutions to very real challenges that remain.

“Having interesting challenging work,” he says, “and great people to work with is another thing that makes Hatch special.”

## PREFERRED VENDOR/PARTNER

### ■ Saskatchewan Industrial & Mining Suppliers Association

[www.simsa.ca](http://www.simsa.ca)

The Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association (SIMSA) is leading the supply chain development for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and fuels in Saskatchewan, with MOUs for exclusive supply chain development MOUs with GE-Hitachi, X-energy, and the OCNI for Saskatchewan. We are also pursuing all nuclear fuel manufacturing opportunities. Our more than 300 members’ sales currently total \$13.7 billion, with over 32,000 employees.

### ■ Alberici Constructors, Ltd.

[alberici.com](http://alberici.com)



STERN LABORATORIES

# STERN LABORATORIES SERVES THE NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY WITH ITS UNIQUE CAPABILITY

## AT A GLANCE

### STERN LABORATORIES INC.

**WHAT:** A Canadian-owned private corporation that conducts reliability and safety experiments for the nuclear industry

**WHERE:** Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

**WEBSITE:** [sternlab.com](http://sternlab.com)



# S R TH TIES

**Reliably providing the necessary testing of new reactor designs, Stern Laboratories has taken the lead for decades**

**E**very sector faces a set of ongoing challenges. The nuclear power industry is no exception. Despite any challenges that may have come into play including any safety or efficiency concerns, this unique industry has grown substantially over the last few decades.

The proof is in the numbers. Today, there are 436 nuclear reactors in operation in 32 countries with a combined capacity of about 390 gigawatts. There are 92 commercial reactors in the U.S. at 54 plants, and 19 in Canada at six. The world's largest plant is the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station in Ontario, on the banks of Lake Huron. Globally, around 10% of the world's electricity comes from nuclear; in Canada, that number is a little over 12%; but in Ontario, nuclear energy produces about 60% of the province's electricity.

## Stern Laboratories was born

Before a new nuclear plant can be built and operated, its owners and designers need to know that the new facility will be reliable, efficient, and safe, so testing its components before any shovel hits the ground is a key step in the development process.

Stern Laboratories of Hamilton, Ontario has been a leader in the field of testing and reactor simulation since 1962, when its founder, Frank Stern, launched a research and development laboratory for Westinghouse Canada, an early builder of CANDU (Canada, Deuterium Uranium) pressurized heavy-water reactors.

In 1988, Westinghouse sold its atomic arm to another company, which then sold it to Stern and the employees, becoming today's employee-owned, private company, specializing in the design and construction of complex experimental facilities and devices to simulate different types of nuclear reactors' systems



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and components. Its customers include corporations, government laboratories, reactor owners, nuclear facilities, nuclear regulators, reactor fuel vendors, private laboratories, and universities, both within and outside of Canada.

### **New designs emerge**

Gordon Hadaller, President of Stern Labs believes that today, his company is on the cusp of another one of nuclear power's upward trajectories.

"These are quite exciting times in the industry," he states.

"There are lots of new components in the form of SMRs -- small modular reactors." This newest generation of nuclear reactors represents a variety of sizes, technology options, capabilities, and deployment scenarios, and portends to offer many advantages over previous systems, including relatively small physical footprints in sites unfit for larger nuclear plants; reduced capital investment; provisions for incremental power additions, known as 'uprates;' and

enhanced safety and security controls.

"Reactor designers and operators need to demonstrate that their reactors are safe under a broad range of conditions," Hadaller explains.

"So this usually requires simulating the heat transport system of the reactor from the fuel channel that generates the heat to the removal system for extracting the heat -- the cooling towers and heat exchangers -- as well as the appropriate pumps and control systems to operate pressure and temperature."

"The key thing we have here is the largest lab in North America devoted to nuclear heat transfer; we have 17 megawatts of DC power and we can use that to power up fuel simulators to simulate the core parts of a nuclear reactor. Having that hardware and the hydraulic facilities to pump liquid around gives us a unique position in the industry."

"We have lots of customers coming to us for help in completing their designs and also providing the data required to license their designs," he continues.

"Over the years, we've been doing work for a lot of the SMR vendors like NuScale, B&W mPower, and KAERI (Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute), which has a SMART (System-integrated Modular Advanced Reactor) reactor. And of course, there are companies like GE (General Electric) that have a new BWRX-300 (Boiling Water Reactor) reactor. We also work on projects for Westinghouse and Rolls-Royce, as well. These are the people that are looking to use our facilities."

### **Stern's capabilities**

Stern Labs has a staff of 32 experienced technologists, technicians, and engineers, another valuable asset for its many clients.

"We have a couple of PhDs and several Masters Degrees," Hadaller reports.

"A lot of them are long-term employees and most of this work requires experience to be

able to do it successfully. Most of them are in mechanical engineering because you need the nuclear engineer for the physics of the reactor, but a lot of the plumbing and things like that are mechanical. And that's what we mostly work on – setting up these simulations for pressure, temperature, and power.”

Project Manager, Richard Van Lochen talks about a normal workday at the lab: “It depends on what programs are going on at the time,” he begins, “but typically, an engineer is working with a technologist or multiple technicians, setting up hardware, preparing for a test program, or running test programs. We do various daily tests to keep our quality systems and our data acquisition systems up to par; we have a fairly extensive quality program that requires lots of checks and balances, whether that's on the documentation side of things or the testing side of things.”

“There are lots of different activities going on that involve the whole team and require coordination with the whole group to make sure everything happens as expected. We like to keep our customers engaged and meet their requirements, as well. Often a customer will come to us with a general design or program and we'll work with them to make sure that the program they're implementing will be cost-effective and meet their end goals,” he details.

### **Educating the public**

In addition to supplying its array of services to its clients, Hadaller believes that a necessary part of Stern Laboratories' agenda is addressing one of the public's main fears concerning nuclear power – the safe storage of nuclear waste, when reactor fuel rods, which has a limited life span of one to two years, need to be replaced. “We've been operating these reactors in Canada since 1971, and all the spent fuel will fit inside the boards of three hockey rinks. So the volume of spent fuel is relatively small, compared to the amount of power we generate,” he relays.

“The power is clean and the industry has done a good job of looking after its waste, unlike the fossil plants, where everything goes up into the



atmosphere. In fact, in Canada, every time a fuel bundle comes out of a reactor, some money goes into the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) for its long-term disposal. We might bury it, but we also might recycle and reuse it because a reactor only burns up about two-and-a-half percent of the fissionable isotopes. So, there's lots of fuel that can be reused.”

The other thing that people don't understand, according to Hadaller, is how nuclear plants also produce isotopes that have many commercial and medical applications. “The medical isotope business is quite significant,” he states.

### **A Nuclear Power Renaissance**

Hadaller believes that an uptick in the siting of new reactors is due to several factors, most specifically, the growing emphasis on the perils of climate change which is spurring increased ventures in the decarbonization of the electrical grid, and the equally growing awareness that having one's own, independent energy system is a hedge against the vicissitudes of the fossil fuel market and the shifting international politics that can affect its global supply and transport.





“These things are making nuclear power a much better system to put in place,” he offers.

“In Ontario, they’re saying that by 2035, we’ll need to double the electricity grid, and that’s a huge task in a fairly short period. Nuclear plants are extremely expensive to build, but they are a long-term investment; once they’re built the fuel costs are relatively low, so it’s kind of inflation-proof power over the long run. Some of the Pickering units put in 1971 are still running after 50 years. That’s quite a good investment for the province.” (The Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, located on the north shore of Lake Ontario in Pickering, Ontario, is one of the oldest nuclear power stations in the world and Canada’s third-largest, with eight CANDU reactors.)

Hadaller says that some of these older plants are now being primed for uprates: “Ten years ago, there wasn’t a lot of hope for the industry. It looked like the plants were just going to run their course and then be shut down. But in Ontario, 12 plants have life extensions on them. The nuclear operators in Ontario are customers of ours and they’re renewing their

fleet with life extensions and looking at new builds, as well, so we expect there’s going to be some business that will trickle down to us.

“There are four new SMR plants planned for Darlington; these are BWRX-300s and shovels are in the ground. There’s also talk about a large nuclear plant in Ontario, again. So, this is a huge change in the last five years. We also have contracts and negotiations with customers in Europe that we’re working with on some of their projects and power upgrades. I’m also pleased to see that in the U.S., The Inflation Reduction Act includes life extensions on existing plants. So we see opportunity.”

### Continuous improvement

Having recently celebrated its 35th anniversary, Hadaller says that Stern Laboratories will continue to make improvements to its processes and procedures. “The experiments we do are extremely complicated,” he says in conclusion.

“They often have some challenges that need to be solved and we’re always looking to make sure we apply lessons learned so we meet our customer expectations, or exceed them if we can. That’s what we’re striving for. We have a unique view of the industry because we’re working across a wide range of customers. That means we can often try and use some of the things that we used in one jurisdiction to help others,” he adds.

“That’s something we bring to the table for a customer. We’re always learning new things, and things look bright as far as we can see.”

## PREFERRED VENDOR/PARTNER

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# franchising



## INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION



ONLINE ARTICLE

## MAIDPRO FRANCHISING



CLEANING UP WITH TOP-RATED SERVICES



W

## AT A GLANCE

# MAIDPRO

- WHAT:** A well-established house cleaning franchise
- WHERE:** Boston
- WEBSITE:** [www.maidprofranchise.com](http://www.maidprofranchise.com)





MAIDPRO FRANCHISE

# CLEANING UP WITH TOP-RATED SERVICES

**A Leading franchise model,  
MaidPro is sweeping the  
competition**

**T** There was a time when everyone tried to clean their homes from top to bottom while juggling other life demands. With today's busy lifestyles, very few households have the time nor inclination to clean from top to bottom. When contemplating hiring a professional service to get the job done, one must look no further than MaidPro, a leader in the industry.



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For MaidPro, the job of cleaning is always carried out to the highest professional standards, providing superior service and top-of-the-line cleaning processes, and whose reputation is backed by the highly successful Threshold Brands.

Threshold Brands is the umbrella organization under which MaidPro and many other fine franchises can be found. Threshold Brands Vice President of Franchise Development, Ron Bender, sat down with Business View to speak and discuss MaidPro as part of our ongoing coverage of North America's most successful franchises.

**With more than 270 franchises in the United States and a growing number in Canada as well, Bender notes that MaidPro is among North America's most successful franchises.**

### MaidPro's Journey

As Bender explains, MaidPro was founded in 1991, as the brainchild of Mark Kushinsky and co-founder Richard Sparacio. The duo identified a gap in the market when Kushinsky couldn't find a quality maid service that catered to his needs.

Six years later, in 1997, MaidPro began franchising the concept to other would-be business owners, and its trajectory has been nothing short of impressive since. As Threshold Brands Vice President, Ron Bender, highlights, MaidPro epitomizes the entrepreneurial spirit.

"This is a relatively standard scenario in franchising," Bender says, "where



you as a consumer go looking for a service, you can't find one that solves your needs for whatever reason, so you look to start a business to provide the solution."

"Mark is a consumer. He was looking for quality work at a good price. He wanted a solution that fit his family, and he couldn't find it, so he started a small local company that just took off."

### MaidPro's Green Commitment

In an era of increasing environmental consciousness, MaidPro stands tall with its voluntary adoption of eco-friendly products.

As Bender notes, New England has been known for being at the tip of the environmentalist spear, he adds, and thus it's not for nothing that MaidPro is headquartered in Boston. Such products may be more expensive, but the eco-friendly factor is an idea that resonates with consumers, as Bender points out.

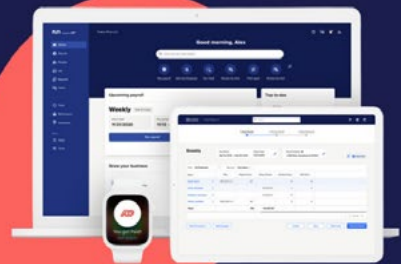


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“We’ve negotiated some great deals with some terrific vendors,” he says, “and we specifically went out looking for those vendors who were offering eco-friendly products, manufacturing and the distribution as well. We want to be as green as possible.”

That environmentally conscious outlook is yet another important factor contributing to MaidPro’s overall success. With more than 270 franchises in the United States and a growing number in Canada as well, Bender notes that MaidPro is among North America’s most successful franchises.

### **MaidPro’s Accolades**

MaidPro isn’t just a momentary success story in a post-pandemic world; it’s the product of dedication from franchise owners and their teams for over a decade.

“We are very highly rated in quite a wide variety of industry programs,” he informs, “We have been recognized in various coveted platforms

including the Entrepreneur Franchise 500, The Franchise Business Review, Forbes magazine, and many others. It’s more than a post-COVID success or a flash in the pan,” says Bender. It is rather a long-term program built up by dedicated franchise owners and the committed professionals they hire to do the actual house cleaning and with a very personalized, individualistic approach as well.

Local franchise ownership, Bender believes, offers a touch of personalization.

“When you get services from a franchise, as opposed to a large corporate location, I think you get more personal service, just because there’s a local owner involved. Those local owners are much likelier to hire and promote people from within their community.”

The way this affects MaidPro is that its franchisees get to determine exactly how they will market themselves. They can do only residential cleaning, or they can do



some small commercial cleaning as well. It's up to the individual franchisees.

Franchisees can market their business through home shows, digital advertising, and other local methods. However, Bender emphasizes the importance of word-of-mouth from customers. Positive reviews and referrals are crucial to a franchise's success, he states.

### **Training and Trust**

Getting to know clients and cultivating trusted relationships are also essential, Bender shares.

"When you have someone come into your home to clean, among all of your most precious possessions, then it's important to know who is doing the work," he declares, "if we don't hire and train the right staff, or if our clients see different people every two or three weeks, then the relationship can start to decay, the trust factor goes away, and the satisfaction does decrease."







MaidPro offers training and career-related opportunities in a culture of continuous learning. The company's level of satisfaction has fostered loyal relationships with its customer-base and franchisees throughout the years.

"That's an incredible part of our mission," says Bender. "We want to open doors, not only for the franchise owners but also for their employees to pursue their dreams. This gives us tremendous satisfaction."

The culture of continuous learning, a collaborative team spirit, and individual growth, Bender says, all combine to form yet another key to MaidPro's success.

"Good employees want ongoing training. They want to learn new skills and then practice those skills for the future. Whether that future is with MaidPro or with someday owning their businesses. We think it's our responsibility as employers to assist our valued employees in learning by



giving them more opportunities.”

To this end, the company has rolled out an extensive online learning platform, empowering employees to hone their skills. Bender informs that the platform was first presented at Threshold Brands’ annual all-brands conference in March 2023, and it has since proven a huge factor in ensuring employees do a better job.

Further, he adds, “We are helping franchisees to develop their staff’s skill set and show them exactly how valuable they are. This learning-management system was not something that was required to do business, but we did it because we think that people are the greatest critical factor in the success of our franchisees.”

### **A Mission Evolving with Time**

MaidPro’s mission has seen a positive transformation since its inception. The founders Mark and Richard created a business model based on exceptional service and a culture of camaraderie and trust among staff, franchisees, and customers.

As for the road ahead, Bender envisions more expansion, a broader service spectrum, and continuing with the approach of enriching the lives of customers, employees, and franchise owners.

The company has always been focused on keeping good employees on a long-term basis, thus ensuring positive, close relationships with clients.

That positive MaidPro culture is contagious and has since spread throughout the portfolio of Threshold Brands’ franchises, he emphasizes. Bender says expanding services into other commercial streams of













revenue, continuous improvement in employee recruitment and retention, and even greener products are all in the cards for the company's future.

Through it all, the bottom-line common denominator for MaidPro remains its people, as Bender enthusiastically points out.

To sum up MaidPro's spirit, Bender says it's about "being the best cleaning service you can get." The emphasis remains on nurturing the right people, and as Bender passionately asserts, when you invest in people, the rewards are boundless.

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

### ■ Threshold Brands

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# manufacturing & technology



## ESOP ASSOCIATION



ONLINE ARTICLE

## NATIONAL CENTER FOR EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP



ONLINE ARTICLE

## CONVEYOR EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURES ASSOCIATION (CEMA)



ONLINE ARTICLE

## ASTRO MACHINEWORKS



EXCELS WITH THE ESOP MODEL

## E80



KEEPS THE WORLD MOVING

## NORTHERN COMPOSITES



COMPOSITE PICTURE OF A LEADING COMPANY

## SPINNAKER SCA



CHARTING THE FUTURE OF LABOR AND AUTOMATION IN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT





## AT A GLANCE

# ASTRO MACHINE WORKS

**WHAT:** a nationally-known company that specializes in custom machine building, precision parts machining, and the reverse engineering of components

**WHERE:** Ephrata, Pa.

**WEBSITE:** [www.astromachineworks.com](http://www.astromachineworks.com)





ASTRO MACHINE WORKS

# EXCELS WITH THE ESOP MODEL

**Specializing in precision parts machining, Astro Machine Works builds the winning solutions**

**S**pecializing in custom machine building, precision parts machining, and the reverse engineering of components for decades, Astro Machine Works is one step ahead of the competition and is passionate about the work that it undertakes every day.

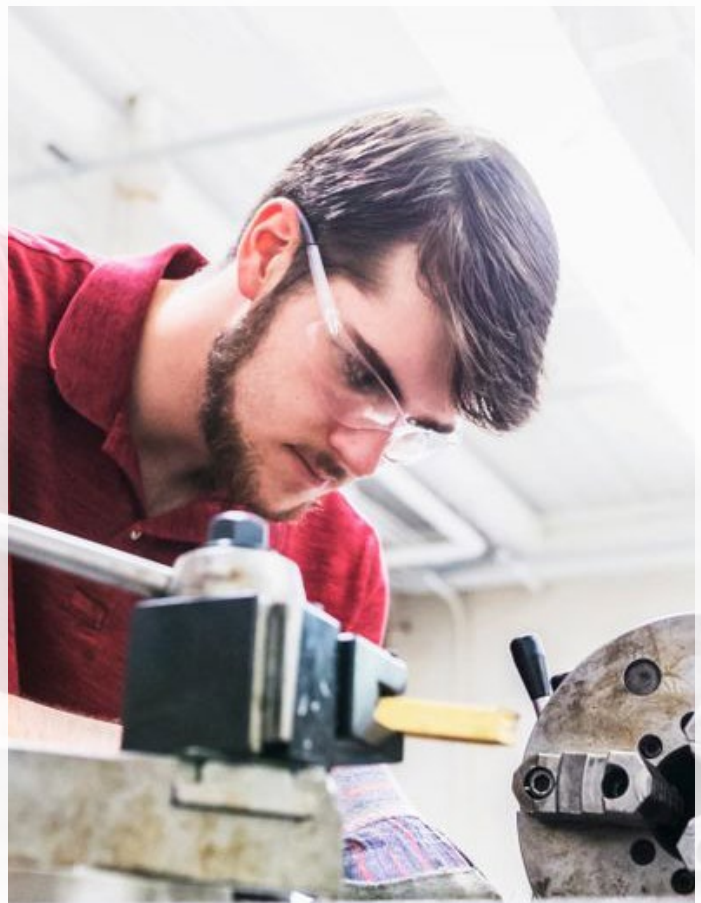
Founded 39 years ago, the mission of this small but highly effective company, about 115 employees strong, is to serve the custom machinery and precision parts needs of the area's top regional and national companies—all done to the most exacting standards possible.

We recently spoke with Astro Machine Works President and Chief Executive Officer Eric Blow (one of its four original owners from 1984), Commercial Sales Team Manager Brian Hess, and Human Resources Manager Charissa Gift.

Speaking from the company's 72,000-square-foot headquarters in the eastern reaches of the Keystone State, they told us more about the company. Blow, along with Astro's Private Equity Partners, was also instrumental in spearheading the company into the ESOP (or employee stock ownership plan) model it successfully enjoys today. ESOP's are increasingly popular with many companies these days.

It was a natural transition to an ESOP model for the CEO of an already successful operation and a reflection of his passion for the business.

"I love what I do," he says. "I love the people I work with, but nonetheless, we're all going to retire at some point. Basically, I wanted



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to start a (personal) succession plan, which I did do, officially back in 2016, knowing that gave me approximately 10 years.”

In the machine shop/fabrication shop industry, Blow adds, owners are notorious for selling their businesses behind the scenes and giving their employees a short-shrift wish for good luck and a quick goodbye. He didn’t want to do that.

“I wanted everybody to be part of it,” says Blow, adding that he also wanted “the people who got us to where we are today to have a bite of the apple, if you will.”

“We began researching ESOP’s, what they were, and how they worked, and we arrived at an altruistic conclusion: We wanted this beneficial plan for the entire Astro Machine Works company. It would mean not only looking out for Astro’s people but also the long-term well-being of the company itself.”

“It set up everybody for a very stellar future,”

he continues, “for many, many years to come.”

Blow reveals that in 2006, Astro joined up with a local private equity group. All options were put on the table and thoroughly checked out and discussed, and the one everyone kept coming back to was the ESOP model. Going with an ESOP would give all of Astro’s employees a piece of the action.

### **A variety of services**

Astro Machine Works does a lot, says Blow. It performs CNC (or computer numerical control) machining. This is the automated control of machining tools—such as drills, lathes, mills, grinders, routers, and three-dimensional printers—via computerized means. A CNC machine processes a piece of material—which may be as varied as metal, plastic or a composite—to meet specifications by following coded programmed instructions and without a manual operator directly controlling this operation. Astro also does



welding, fabrication, and mechanical assembly.

“We are a custom machine builder,” says Blow, “so we actually build full-blown automation equipment that people would use to up the efficiency and productivity within their plants. Therefore, we can do all the welding and fabricating of any framework or base. We can do all the machining of component parts that might go on that machine. We can do all the mechanical assembly of that machine. We can do all the plumbing of any pneumatic or hydraulic systems.”

With several electricians on staff, Astro can also wire the main control cabinets, as well as do all the on-board wiring. This includes wiring PLCs (or programmable logic controllers, as Blow points out): basically, the computer that makes the machine do what it should be doing. Further, Astro also conducts its own in-house testing.

“Our claim to fame is having all those many services under one roof,” says Blow, as well as citing the company’s ability to sell each and every one of its services individually.

It’s that overall quality—being a kind of machine shop jack-of-all-trades, with all these services available under one roof and all at expert levels, to boot—that sets Astro Machine Works apart from its competition.

“Our diversity of service has really been a key cog in our operation for some time,” Blow points out, adding that this is a luxury many such companies simply do not have.

Hess shares that assessment.

“Once we get in and get to know a customer, and they get to know us, and what we can do,” says Hess, they see that “we really take more of a personal approach to how we handle our customers. We do things in how we service our customers that most other companies don’t do.”

That leaves customers in a very unique situation, says Hess, adding that they really don’t need to go anywhere else.







“Other than to come to Astro,” he continues, “because of the service—how we service them.”

### **Special relationships with customers and workers alike**

Talking of that special relationship with customers, Hess notes that when they learn Astro has a highly successful ESOP model in place and is 100 percent employee-owned, they realize they’re dealing with a very winning and highly reputable company.

Gift concurs.

“It’s definitely having a positive impact,” she says of the ESOP.

When employees come to work and know they’re part of the actual business, says Gift, with shares and thus a stake in the company, too, they work harder and take greater pride in their work.

“Not that they didn’t before,” she adds. “It just gives a different element, a different level, to why you’re coming to work and what you’re doing each day.”

Using the ESOP has also been very beneficial to Astro's rate of employee retention, especially during the days of COVID, as Gift points out. She adds that the company thus boasts a very low turnover rate.

"People want to stay here," she says, "and they want Astro to be successful."

Employee engagement—taking ownership over their careers and what they're doing—is the name of the game when you make use of an ESOP model, as Gift emphasizes. Being an open-book management company, Astro shares all of its financial information, says Gift, and all of its employees are up to date and informed about all such facets.

"We have a great culture here," she says, "and people are just very engaged. They ask a lot of questions. Those are the main impacts (the ESOP) has had."

Sharing Gift's point of view, Blow adds that the company brings in new, entry-level people every year, whether they're technically needed or not. That ties in with Astro's eye to the future of its workforce.

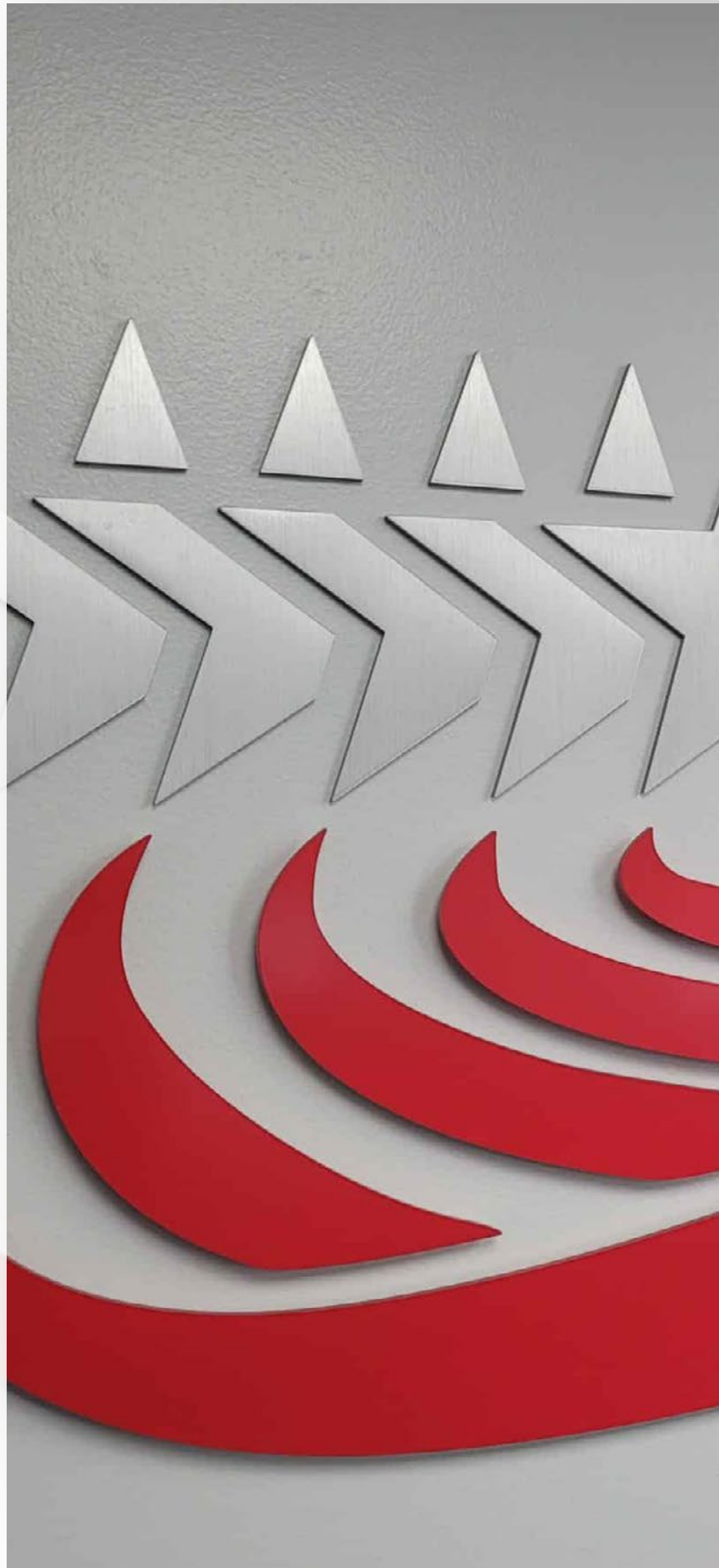
"In my opinion," says Blow, "you can always tell how good somebody's culture is by how they treat the new people."

He adds that Astro's seasoned veterans will trip over themselves to help new employees. Plus, this ties in with the ESOP way of doing things. They have a vested interest in getting new workers on board and up to speed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In countless other companies, government-mandated COVID restrictions made people simply not want to work—the phenomenon known as "quiet quitting," as Blow notes. But at Astro Machine Works, that fortunately did not happen.

### Looking to the future

When looking at what's ahead for Astro













Machine Works, Blow points out that in his considered estimation, continued growth and even greater prosperity are the watchwords for the next decade or so.

“It’s the bottom line,” he emphasizes, citing a years-long process of putting in place all the missing pieces of the puzzle, adding that, “As a small company, you tend to start out small and wear many, many hats. We were no exception.”

Over the years, Blow continues, Astro added a company controller (Brian Martin) in order to better address the financial aspects. In 2010, human resources was added, and Gift came on board. At the same time, a quality manager (Henry Robinson) was added. Since then, a safety manager (Brian Brown) has been added. Further, new positions have been created for managing information technology (or IT) and other areas.

Concluding with the topic of the ESOP, Blow emphasizes that for Astro’s people, it’s all about openness, trust, sharing.

“Rewarding them for their success,” he concludes.

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **Hatts Industrial Supplies, Inc.**  
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## AT A GLANCE

### E80 GROUP

- WHAT:** A global company, headquartered in Italy, specializing in automatic intralogistics solutions for manufacturers and distribution centers of consumer goods.
- WHERE:** North American headquarters is in Chicago, Ill., and its northern Italian global HQ is in Viano, Reggio nell'Emilia.
- WEBSITE:** [www.e80group.com](http://www.e80group.com)





E80 GROUP

# KEEPS THE WORLD MOVING

**An Italian company maintains deep links in North American markets**

**E**80 Group is a global company, headquartered in Italy, that specializes in automated intralogistics solutions for the manufacturers and distribution centers of consumer goods, supply chain-related matters, and storage.

Also known as E80, its North American HQ is in Chicago, IL. It offers laser-guided vehicles for material handling and automated warehousing, ASRS, automatic palletizers, robotic labeling systems, case picking systems, and wrapping systems. The company caters to food, beverage, tissue, and other such diversified sectors.

We recently spoke with E80 Group Inc. EVP of Sales Andrea Pongolini, and he told us more about this vast organization centered around materials handling functions. Pongolini credits Enrico Grassi with birthing the company in 1980. Grassi is still the major shareholder and the company's president.

"It started as a software company," Pongolini recalls.

"After a few years, Mr. Grassi realized that to provide tangible benefits to our industry, we had to provide both hardware and software. We started to produce and design the innovative hardware needed for our project. Nowadays, E80 is a leading provider of material-handling systems that allow our customers to fully automate the production facility and distribution center."

He adds E80 can control with its proprietary software platform all the logistic business decisions from raw packaging materials



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Andrea Pongolini

to finished goods handling and shipment. To adjust for the North American market, it made some changes, Pongolini notes.

“In 1994,” he recalls, “E80 had only 48 employees, but we had the bright idea to open our first branch outside Italy. As Mr. Grassi used to say, ‘If we succeed in the U.S., we can succeed anywhere else in the world,’ and that was right. Right now, North America is our most important market, with many references that vary from large, international companies to privately held companies.”

Indeed, it is. E80 has more than 100 employees in its Chicago office, 40 in Houston, and more than 200 in Monterrey, Mexico. There is a comprehensive support service.

“We have been implementing local service, 24/7 remote support and a key account structure to support our customers in the long-term,” says Pongolini.

He adds that what he calls an integrated supply chain approach has been a key factor



in the company's success since 2016.

He explains, "we have been partnering with strategic suppliers, which today are part of the E80 Group. Our short supply chain helped us during the pandemic. In fact, we were able to minimize the project delays because most of our system's components are manufactured internally."

One thing the company has seen in recent years is that both its current and potential customers have gained a deeper appreciation for the significance of automation in the support of their business. Many of E80's potential customer clients who initially hesitated to embrace automation as an initial capital investment have taken the plunge.

"Presently," says Pongolini, "we have seen a lot of our clients returning to us and expressing interest in automation driven by their newfound understanding of the automation intangible advantages and their ability to demonstrate these advantages."

### **A must-have**

Today, intralogistics automated solutions are seen as a must-have implementation for any business with a chance to grow and keep a leadership position. The trend E80 anticipated is that it always believed end-to-end automation and integration have been the key factors to delivering customers tangible results.

"We also enhanced our software and our hardware to provide more opportunities to our customers. Now E80 is positioned to be a one-stop-shop company, able to provide real turnkey solutions, and we look forward to helping our customers take full advantage of total automation, spanning from raw and packaged materials to the loading of finished goods onto trailers. To sum it up, our overarching vision has always centered on seamless end-to-end integration, and we're now actively working to seize this significant trend."

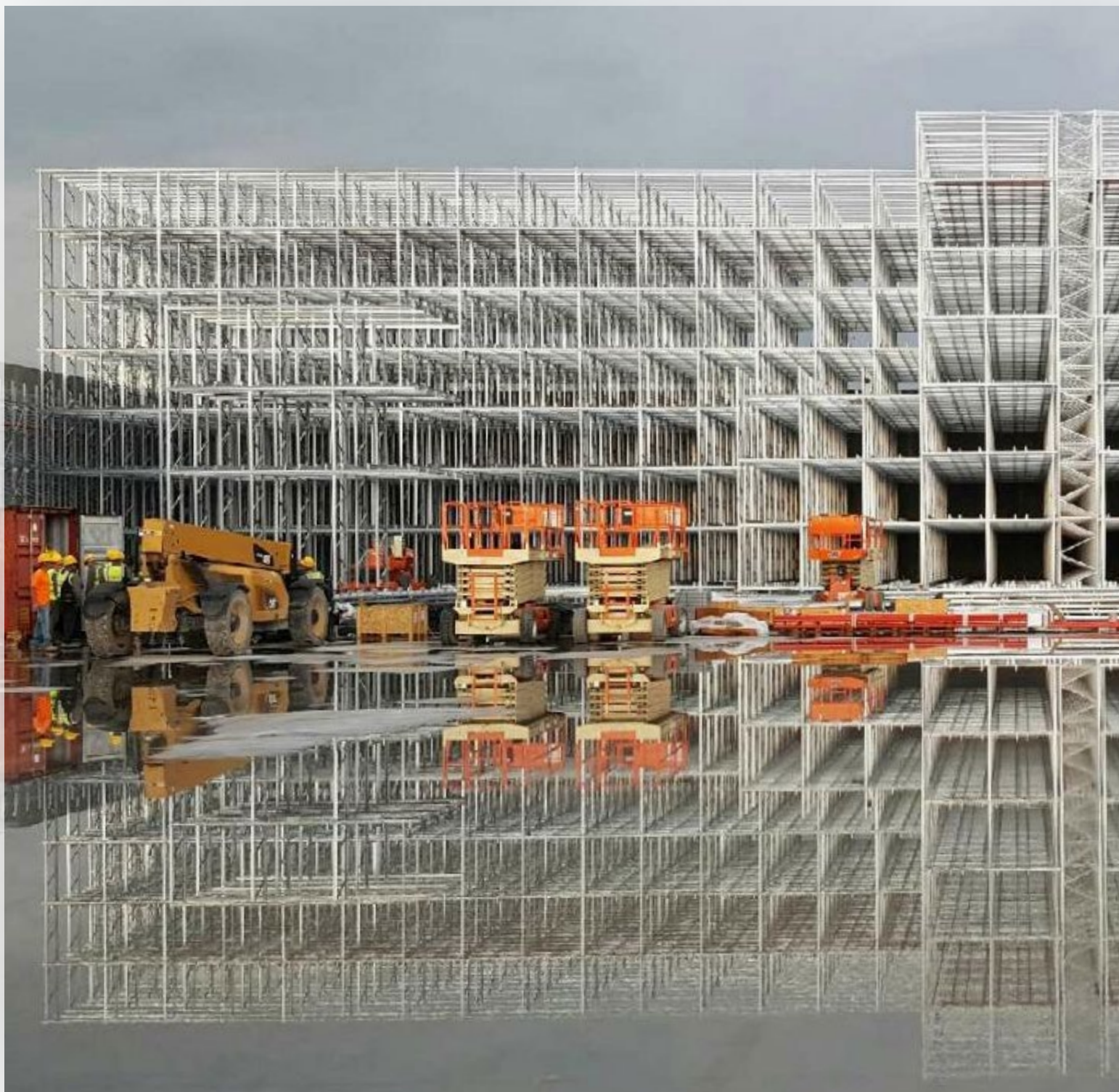
E80 doesn't look only at one part of automation. The company believes in fully integrated and automated systems, as Pongolini emphasizes.











“Many providers usually don’t have the technology to fully automate customers’ plants,” he reveals, “focusing on a few automation solutions, for instance going from A to B. Instead, E80 partners with the customer. We look at the plant or distribution center in its totality and globality. We do a simulation of the whole plant. We came up with a solution to automate

every single movement within the four walls of that facility, including software integration.”

E80 offers comprehensive software solutions that seamlessly handle hardware management and cater to all customer requirements, integrating with existing ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and WMS (Warehouse





Management System) systems.

“This, from our point of view, is the end to end,” says Pongolini. “We have software and hardware solutions that can turn a manual plant or manual distribution center into a fully automated solution.”

### **The role of AI**

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a big part, too.

“We already rely on AI to make predictions and decisions about what our systems are doing,” says Pongolini. “It is still in its infancy, from our point of view, but we are already experimenting and



trying it.” It’s bringing profitability to E80’s table.

“From my point of view,” says Pongolini, “we have always provided solutions that give tangible benefits to our customers. In this way, we have built up a long-term partnership and repeat business with them. Our customers know what they need to increase their profitability and they are not shy when it comes to telling it to us.

So, we always try to listen to them. Our investment in R&D and new technologies have been guided by our customer’s needs. We believe this is the only way to grow and progress, we want to do it along with our customers.”

### **A good customer base**

He also described the company’s customer base.

“We have been focusing historically always on the CPG (consumer packaged goods) industry,” says Pongolini, “so the majority of our references are in the consumer goods companies. We work with all the big ones in North America. These are very recognizable brands. When you go to the supermarket in the main aisles, you will see all of our customers.”

Right now, in North America, E80 is implementing 50 large automation systems. Some

of them are greenfields, and some of them are at existing facilities that will be completely upgraded from manual to automatic.

“I’m going to give you two examples to show you the type of project we are executing,” says Pongolini. “For instance, right now we are implementing a greenfield. It’s a bottling plant that will have seven high-speed bottling lines. E80 will supply equipment and software for complete automation, spanning from palletizers at the end of the production lines to trailer loading.

“Also,” he adds, “E80 will supply palletizers, stretch wrappers, labelers for end-of-line applications, LGVs for raw and packing material handling, packaging material delivery, finished product pickup, and trailer loading. Additionally, an ASRS system with







cranes for storing approximately 60,000 pallet positions and empty pallet inspection systems will be implemented. This comprehensive material handling automation initiative is expected to yield significant cost savings, enhance plant efficiency, improve product quality, and enhance safety.”

E80 is currently working on another project that involves enhancing and upgrading an existing one-million-square-foot food industry distribution center, as Pongolini points out.

“We are going to transform it,” as he reveals, “from fully manual to completely automated by replacing all existing forklifts with AGVs (automated guided vehicles) and implementing a fully automated layer and case picking system. What makes this project unique is the size.”

“We are going to be able to fully automate the case-picking operations. We are also going to use all the existing racks so no modification would be required. We are planning to do this implementation without any disruption to the day-to-day customer activities. That makes it very challenging.”

With great support comes great results, says Pongolini.

“Right now,” he says, “I would say 80 percent of our business in North America is from repeat business from existing customers. We are very proud of that!”

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/PARTNER

### ■ E80 Group

[www.e80group.com](http://www.e80group.com)

Group offers intralogistics automation systems for CPG factories and distribution centers. Its end-to-end integrated solutions optimize material flow, ensuring cost savings, safety, and performance. From ASRS high-bay warehouses to AGVs/LGVs, and end-of-line robots, E80 integrated technologies enhance operations and efficiency, all managed through E80 proprietary software.



A large commercial airplane is shown from a low angle, flying over a runway. The sun is setting, creating a warm, orange glow. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. In the distance, another smaller airplane is visible on the runway.

NORTHERN COMPOSITES

# A COMPOSITE PI OF A LEADING COMPANY

AT A GLANCE

## NORTHERN COMPOSITES

**WHAT:** A distributor of high-quality composite materials

**WHERE:** Hampton, N.H. and Greensboro, N.C.

**WEBSITE:** [www.northerncomposites.com](http://www.northerncomposites.com)  
[www.krayden.com](http://www.krayden.com)



# CTURE



**Northern Composites;  
armed with the technical  
expertise and developing  
the products that the  
market demands**

It takes many intangibles to climb to the top of the manufacturing sector. For one company, Northern Composites, the route has been a seamless one. A leading supplier and manufacturer of structural materials, adhesives, tooling, and consumable products, Northern Composites provides what the industry demands.

With locations in Hampton, N.H., and Greensboro, N.C., the company has grown a lot since it started in 1965. It has done so by anticipating pertinent market trends, delivering high-quality materials on time, providing unsurpassed technical expertise, and developing a variety of proprietary products





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to meet the changing needs of its customers. About three-quarters of Northern's business these days is tied to the aerospace industry.

We recently spoke with Northern Composites' General Manager Richard Hewett. He told us more about what Northern has been up to since we first featured the company in the pages of Business View in 2019. Hewett notes that for the past 58 years, Northern has been a manufacturer's rep and a distributor of products.

"Then in 2016," he notes, "we broke away from one of our anchor suppliers and partners: a company called Richmond Aircraft Products. They had gone through multiple acquisitions, and it didn't work for us anymore. We launched our brand in 2016, and that was a pretty dramatic change of position for us. All of a sudden, we were a manufacturer, and we weren't contractually tied to a territory as we had been for the last 50 years, and so off we went, wondering what was going to be next."

What came next was measurable growth.

"It became pretty apparent," says Hewett of the period of 2019-20, "we needed some help to promote our products in other parts of the country. We had historically been an eastern United States company, and now we were free to sell wherever we wanted to."

A more organic growth, putting warehouses in other places, might well have been feasible. Yet Northern Composite's leadership wanted to move more quickly than that, as Hewett notes. Thus the company started looking for people who might be interested in selling its products. After many conversations with a lot of different people, it was evident that there were people who were interested but who were, in fact, much more interested in owning Northern rather than simply selling its brand. Northern Composites is a valuable brand indeed, and these other people wanted a piece of that pie, Hewett reveals.

Northern Composites leadership determined that selling was the route to take. They approached Generational Equity, which specializes in promoting and selling companies of Northern Composites' size (< \$150M). Northern was finally able to do a deal with Krayden in January of 2021 which enabled the company to operate more or less autonomously.

### **A productive partnership**

It is a prosperous partnership, as Hewett observes, with Northern Composite able to take advantage of Krayden's infrastructural strength, including 55 sales staffers throughout North America, multiple locations in the States, Canada, and Mexico, and warehousing space closer to customers. It's a nice distribution network Northern can tap into.

"That was the intention all along, and it's working out well," says Hewett, whilst at the same time acknowledging a few bumps in the road that aren't anything truly significant to worry about and are only normal, after all.

Such is the nature of any merger, he adds,

with two company cultures coming together.

In addition to the aeronautics industry, Northern Composite also conducts a significant amount of business with Japanese chemical giant Mitsubishi, a sister company of the probably more famous automotive manufacturer of the same name (the former known for carbon fiber and composites); Henkel Aerospace, a German-based company with locations worldwide (aerospace paste and film adhesives, Frekote® mold release and Alodine® Turco® surface treatments, and quite recently, Oxeco, Ltd., a surface treatment company.

“We’re always looking to add to our product line,” he observes, extolling the aforementioned companies.

BFG Industries is the companies oldest line, known for specializing in fiberglass, aramid, carbon fiber, and hybrid reinforcements. A logical business extension given that back in the 1960’s, Northern Composite itself started as a fiberglass company.

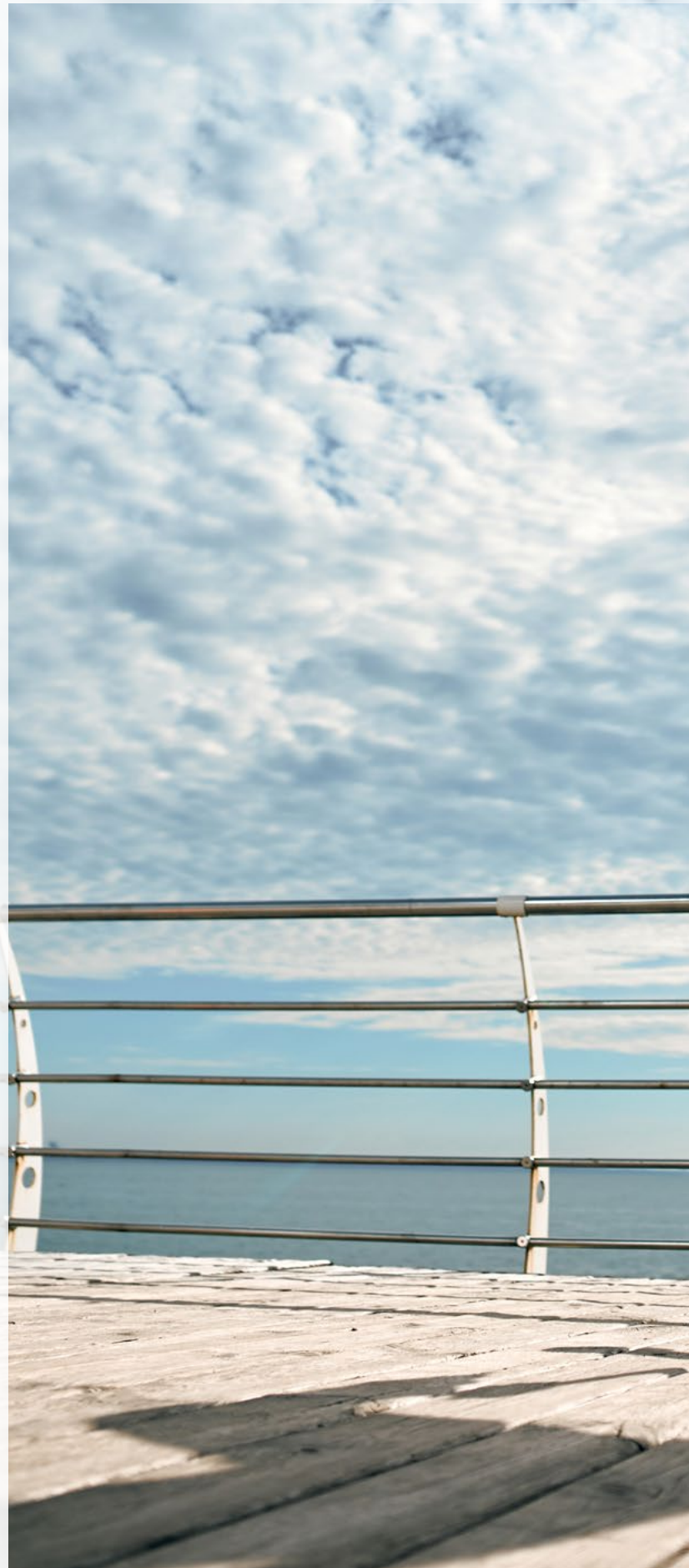
Another partner for Northern Composite is Holcim, known for specializing in sealants and Tacky Tape®.

Complementing the list is American Fiber and Finishing which specializes in wiping cloths, tack cloths, and other such related items.

Another positive outcome of the merger, he notes, has been that the Krayden business has taken over a lot of Northern Composites’ business services. This includes accounting, IT matters, HR duties, and more.

The flavor of Northern Composite’s operations has changed a bit in recent years, as Hewett notes. Utilizing Krayden’s sales force enables Northern Composites’ staffers to concentrate more on business development and tech support. It also facilitates more cross-pollinating efficiency.

“I think over the years to come, you’ll see that









is what Northern Composite will metamorphose into,” he says, “a brand of composite materials, as opposed to a distributor. The distribution part of it will be Krayden, the much larger distributor, so the name on the door may change at some point. Our facility in Greensboro is largely unchanged. That’s where we do our conversion. We’ve added personnel down there, as well, as we’ve taken on more manufacturing and converting in-house.”

Northern Composite several years ago opened its second warehouse there as the location for a new stocking and service facility. This was done to better serve the company’s customers

in the Southeast and the Midwest. Northern Composite also became a Hysol Aerospace adhesives distributor for Henkel Aerospace.

### **The future landscape**

Hewett predicts that his industry will continue to evolve.

“The use of composites is expanding all the time,” he says. “New products are coming out. It’s finding its way into new applications all the time.”

In recent years, businesses have discovered the importance of going green.



Recycling blades from old windmills is one such example, as Hewett notes.

“There’s a lot of new technologies coming out, new products,” he says. “For us, the important thing is to stay relevant and to keep up with that. It’s quite a job.”

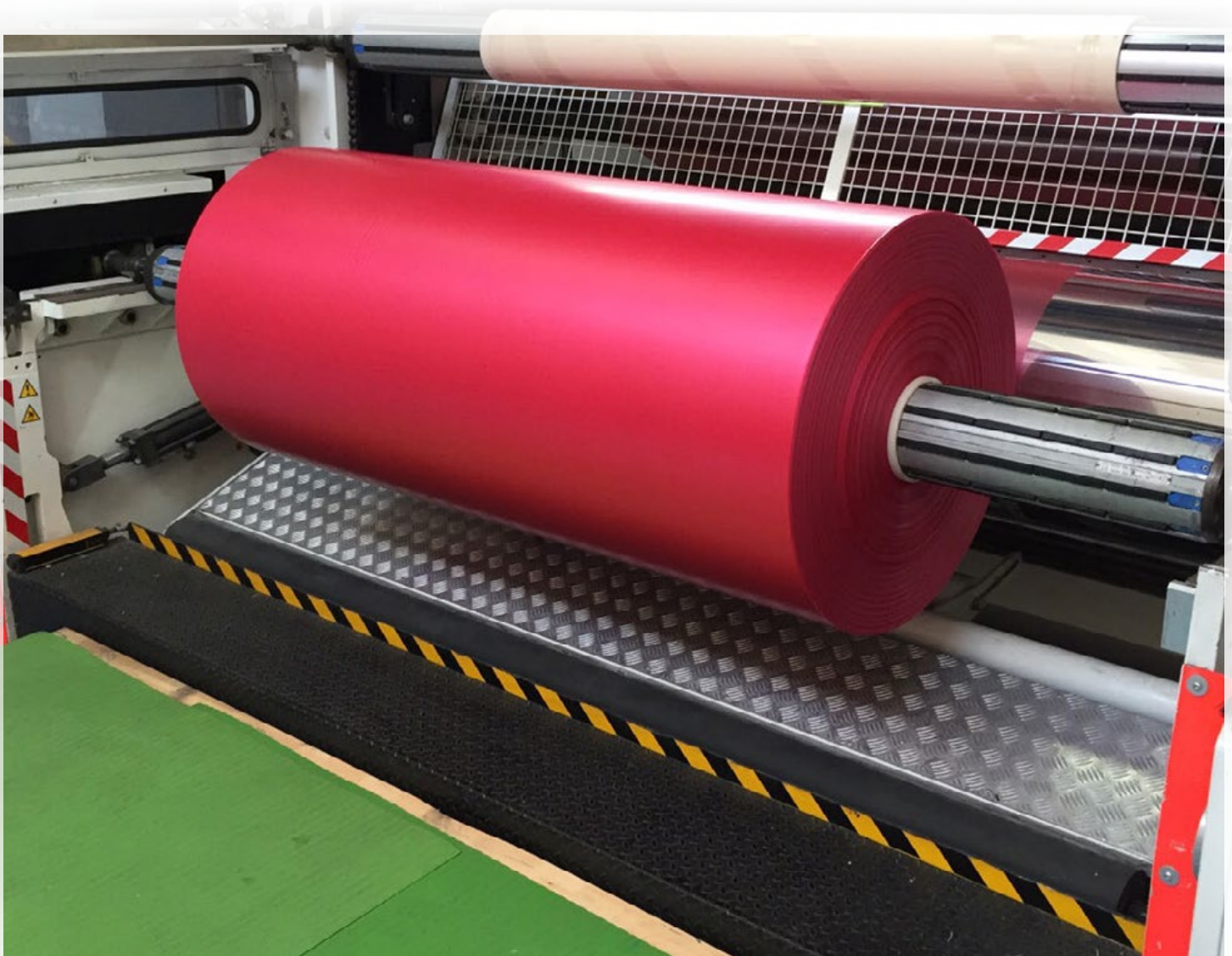
Hewett himself enjoys investigating new products. If there’s a potential use within a Northern Composite product paradigm, and it’s something the company’s customers might find appealing, then they’ll pursue it further.

Just recently the company commissioned a new “hot-knife” slitter in Greensboro. This will be used to slit PFG peel plies for our customers and perhaps for PFG as well. This is

an important part of our continuing investment to increase our in-house capabilities

“The industry in general, I think, is definitely on an upswing,” he says. “There’s no real question about that. Aerospace is bouncing back. COVID knocked everyone for six. It was a pretty good downturn, and we’re still feeling the effects of that as people use up inventory that accumulated as we came out of COVID. They were buying like crazy because they didn’t know what was going on. Now they find themselves with too much inventory. I think that will eventually wash out in 2024, and we’ll start to get into some solid growth.”

At the end of the day, says Hewett, Northern Composite is firmly focused on service.











"I think one of the things we've always prided ourselves on is service," he says.

"We're a very customer-oriented company. It's important to us. We try to instill that in all our employees. If you're not in sales, at Northern Composite, then you're supporting sales. That's all we do, so everybody's in sales. We pride ourselves on the tech support we give. We understand the products we sell. We're very careful about making recommendations, and we're very proud of the fact that we turn things around very, very quickly. If somebody orders a product before one o'clock, it'll ship the same day. That could be a tube of adhesive, or it could be two pallets of material going to Boeing. It doesn't matter."

He emphasizes that customers form Northern Composites' lifeblood. The company's customer service team has recently expanded from three to five staffers.

"I put them up against anybody," he declares. "They do a great job, and we communicate well. Sometimes it's not good news, but you've got to share the news, whether it's good or bad."

"I think a lot of our competitors sometimes are reluctant to do that, and they tend to leave customers in the dark. That's never been our way. You have to communicate. I think our customer service and industry knowledge stand us in good stead."

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **Precision Fabrics Group, Inc.**  
[www.precisionfabrics.com](http://www.precisionfabrics.com)

# CHARTING LABOR AND IN



## AT A GLANCE

### SPINNAKER SCA

**WHAT:** A company specializing in designing and building agile supply chains optimized for the complexities of the modern world, offering services such as strategic consulting, program and change management, and technology implementation.

**WHERE:** Denver, Colorado, USA

**WEBSITE:** <https://spinnakersca.com/>





SPINNAKER SCA

# THE FUTURE OF AND AUTOMATION IN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

**Tackling labor shortages and technological shifts with a multi-faceted approach, Spinnaker SCA maintains a competitive edge**

In a world where supply chain complexities are not just challenges but opportunities, Spinnaker SCA emerges as a citadel of transformative solutions. Focusing on enabling not just people, processes, and technology, but also policies and metrics, the company is not just another supply chain consultancy; it is a catalyst for change in an increasingly intricate global landscape. Trusted by iconic brands and global manufacturers alike, the firm specializes in designing and building agile supply chains that are optimized for the demands of a complex world.

Spinnaker SCA offers a comprehensive suite of services that range from strategic consulting and change management to operations consulting and process reengineering.

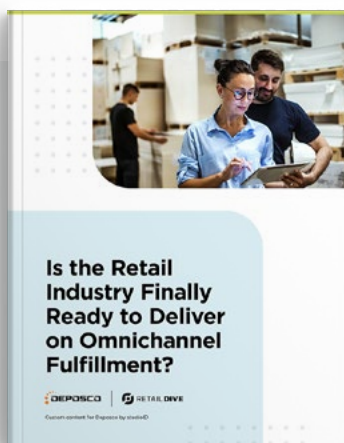


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Supply chains have changed dramatically over the last few years. Between unprecedented disruptions, the increasing labor crunch, and ever-changing customer demands, businesses are constantly rearchitecting their execution strategies to stay competitive. Concerned about the ability to retain quality labor, 92% of supply chain leaders believe that a warehouse management (WMS) or order management system (OMS) will make them more profitable, particularly in busy seasons. Of those surveyed, 70% are actively investing in these systems, which offer both automation and additional software to raise the output and experience of their employees. The Deposco Bright Suite fulfillment platform offers a cloud-native warehouse management system that acts as the critical nerve center for any business's operations -- providing the highest degree of certainty, speed, and visibility in the order fulfillment process. The platform consolidates data across the many touchpoints introduced into today's supply chain, automating manual workflows, reducing errors, and boosting efficiency. Deposco's end-to-end platform significantly reduces labor onboarding times, improving job satisfaction while reducing turnover and time to bring on seasonal staff during busy periods. Regardless of the path that your organization takes, Deposco allows you to stay ahead of your competition and focus on your goals.

**For more information, visit:**  
**[www.deposco.com](http://www.deposco.com)**

## SPINNAKER SCA

Their technology implementation and managed services are designed to unlock business and technology capabilities, thereby accelerating transformation.

The firm's expertise spans various domains including Supply Chain Design and Analytics, Supply Chain Planning, Omnichannel/ Order Management, Distribution and Warehouse Management, and Logistics and Transportation Management.

 When it comes to the services and products offered by Spinnaker SCA, Garcia emphasizes the breadth of the company's capabilities. "While today's focus may be on automation, it's crucial to understand the broader scope of our services in planning and supply chain management consulting,"

Transitioning to the inner workings of this transformative entity, Joel Garcia, the Senior Vice President of Supply Chain Execution, provides an invaluable lens into the operational architecture of the company.

"In essence, Spinnaker SCA operates across three core business lines," Garcia begins. "The first is our Management Consulting team, which focuses on strategic assessments and transformation roadmaps, software selections, and managing supply chain transformations focused on our "5 Lenses" framework (People, Process, Technology, Policies, and Metrics). The

second is our Supply Chain Planning team, which has expertise implementing S&OP, Demand Planning, Production Planning, Replenishment Planning, Inventory, Production Scheduling, etc. solutions from most leading technology vendors.”

However, it’s in the third business unit—Supply Chain Execution—where Garcia’s expertise truly shines. “My domain focuses primarily on applying our 5 Lenses approach to distribution operations, encapsulating technology and everything else that occurs ‘inside the four walls,’ so to speak. This involves recommending and implementing the required systems, facility and operational design, program management for greenfield startups, and overseeing the multitude of work streams required to establish a new building. This includes everything from automation and building systems to change management and training.”

Spinnaker SCA’s ambitions don’t stop at mere operations. The company is also at the forefront of technological innovation in supply chain management. “We have a robust focus on robotics and advanced automation as well as warehouse orchestration. This is complemented by our expertise in traditional warehouse management systems, labor, and transportation,” Garcia elaborates.

### **The Remote Work Paradigm and Technological Ingenuity**

Garcia further offers a nuanced perspective on the company’s operational model, particularly in the context of remote work. Spinnaker SCA has always had a remote work policy and as such was seamlessly able to advise several clients through COVID with how to set up work from home and how to be successful in a remote environment.

“Our business model has always been inclined towards remote work, even before the pandemic,” he explains. “We’re in pursuit of seasoned practitioners, many of whom are already rooted in specific locations. Our focus is primarily on North America, but we do undertake global projects, especially for companies that are North America-based but have a global presence.”



### **The Advisory Role and Beyond**

When it comes to the services and products offered by Spinnaker SCA, Garcia emphasizes the breadth of the company’s capabilities. “While today’s focus may be on automation, it’s crucial to understand the broader scope of our services in planning and supply chain management consulting,” he notes.

“We act as advisors and architects, helping organizations understand their order profiles and demand patterns. Our advisory services extend to identifying suitable advanced automation solutions, particularly for organizations that traditionally weren’t targets for automation.”

On Spinnaker SCA’s advisory business, Garcia elaborates, “We assist organizations in understanding their demand patterns and help them explore what pieces of advanced automation may work for them. Once a solution is selected, we transition into program management mode, guiding them through vendor selection, procurement, and installation, all the way to operationalizing the solution.”





He highlights a unique project that exemplifies the company's multifaceted approach. "We're currently engaged with one of the largest shoe distributors in the world, working across five geographies. They're deploying Manhattan Active, and we're helping them strategize on how to integrate a vast landscape of automation tools across all these regions."

### **Navigating Unique Markets: The Hawaii Case Study**

Garcia also delves into the intricacies of operating in a unique market like Hawaii, a locale that presents its own set of challenges and opportunities.

"Hawaii is constrained by two significant factors: expensive real estate and labor shortages. These constraints, however, make Hawaii a fertile ground for automation, particularly advanced automation. "Given the limited availability of labor and the high cost of real estate, automation offers a viable solution. It allows for higher density in storage and better throughput, essentially doing more with less," Garcia elaborates.

The return on investment (ROI) in automation is

not as straightforward in Hawaii as it might be in larger markets. "In a traditional distribution center, you might reduce the workforce from 300 to 40, but in Hawaii, you're starting with maybe 100 employees and reducing that to 50 or 40. The ROI is more challenging to achieve," Garcia notes. "This is where our advisory services come into play, helping clients find ways to make these solutions financially viable.

Distribution across the Hawaiian Islands adds another layer of complexity. "Everything enters through Honolulu and is then distributed to other islands via barges, which are a public utility in Hawaii with fixed tariffs and demand," Garcia says. "Additionally, Hawaii has a significant military presence, creating what could be considered a separate sales channel with its own pricing and service level agreements."

Garcia underscores the importance of understanding both hard and soft factors when applying technology solutions across different markets. "While hard facts like dollars and labor lines per hour are crucial, soft factors around specific demographics

and nuanced regional variants are equally important,” he states. “These soft factors, often culture-based, help us create compelling business cases for automation solutions. You only gain this nuanced understanding by actually working in these markets.”

### **Navigating the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Shift in Advisory Services**

The Covid-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge for businesses, and Spinnaker SCA was no exception. “During the pandemic, much of our work centered around helping organizations stay operational while adhering to social distancing requirements,” Garcia reveals. “The challenge was that there wasn’t a one-size-fits-all standard. Different states, counties, and organizations had varying preferences on what they needed to do to stay operational.”

The pandemic also led to a significant labor shortage, further emphasizing the need for automation. “We found that labor was not coming back. Labor variability has become one of the most important things to manage, and we have to manage it by starting to deploy consistent automation,” he elaborates.

“While automation is crucial, it’s important to note that you still need human beings. The focus now shifts to a different type of worker with different skill sets.”

### **The Perfect Storm: Automation, AI, and ROI**

As global economies experience a “perfect storm” where automation technology, artificial intelligence, and ROI considerations are converging, Spinnaker SCA is right in the eye of the storm. “Before Covid, distribution was becoming somewhat static in terms of innovation. But now, we have the computing power to manage advanced systems, more players in the automation space bringing costs down, and a heightened need for these solutions,” Garcia explains.

This confluence of factors has led to a shift in advisory services, helping clients understand how









to operate in this new, dynamic environment.

Further underscoring the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in managing administrative tasks within the supply chain, Garcia notes that “One of the key advantages of AI and ML-based systems is their ability to encapsulate the tribal knowledge that employees possess, especially given today’s high turnover rates. These systems can look at everything in the warehouse and make informed decisions, answering questions like, ‘Is this the best use of that resource right now, machine or human, to make us the most efficient?’”

He further explains the evolving hierarchy of systems within a Distribution Center (DC). “Traditionally, Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) were the most advanced systems in a DC, with Warehouse Control Systems (WCS) and Labor Management Systems (LMS) being subservient to it or reliant on its data. Now, each of these systems is getting smarter, capable

of optimizing work within their purview. What is emerging are higher-level systems that can orchestrate all of these together, ensuring that the right orders for the day are being released to optimize customer service and to optimize and best balance the use of automation and people.”

### **Strategic Partnerships: The Backbone of Spinnaker SCA’s Ecosystem**

When it comes to strategic partnerships, Spinnaker SCA is discerning yet collaborative. “Manhattan Associates and Blue Yonder are a significant part of our business, especially from a WMS perspective,” Garcia states. “We also work with several material handling providers that we commonly recommend, such as Locus Robotics, Tompkins tSort, and AutoStore.”

He emphasizes the impartiality of these recommendations. “We don’t have any commercial agreements that benefit us when recommending these providers. Our focus is solely on providing





the best solutions for our clients,” he clarifies.

The company’s relationship with AutoStore is particularly noteworthy. “We have a direct relationship with AutoStore, allowing us to size and perform advisory services directly. If a solution is viable, we then go to a reseller to get it deployed,” Garcia adds. We are working on creating similar relationships with other advanced automation providers.

### **Navigating the Future: Labor, Automation, and Flexibility**

As industries grapple with labor shortages and technological shifts, Spinnaker SCA has its eyes set on the horizon. Garcia identifies warehouse orchestration as a technology that will be “heavily needed” in the coming years. “This ties into AI and ML, which are crucial for automation technologies like co-bots and autonomous robots that help augment the workforce,” he adds.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Spinnaker

SCA’s future focus is its attention to labor management systems. Garcia believes that these systems will have to adapt to support gig workers and offer flexible work schedules which we know the workforce wants. Managing flexible schedules consisting possibly of overlapping 2, 4 and 6 hour shifts can create a daunting planning task for warehouse operators trying to manage inbound and outbound SLAs. Labor management systems need to evolve beyond the tracking and reporting of standards and into robust labor planning and scheduling systems.

“Our focus will be on solving this labor issue through warehouse orchestration, advanced automation, and managing labor,” he explains.

In an ever-shifting landscape where change remains the sole constant, Spinnaker SCA’s commitment to innovation, labor solutions, and strategic partnerships makes it a paragon of adaptability and foresight in the evolving landscape of supply chain management.



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# retail



## ESOP ASSOCIATION



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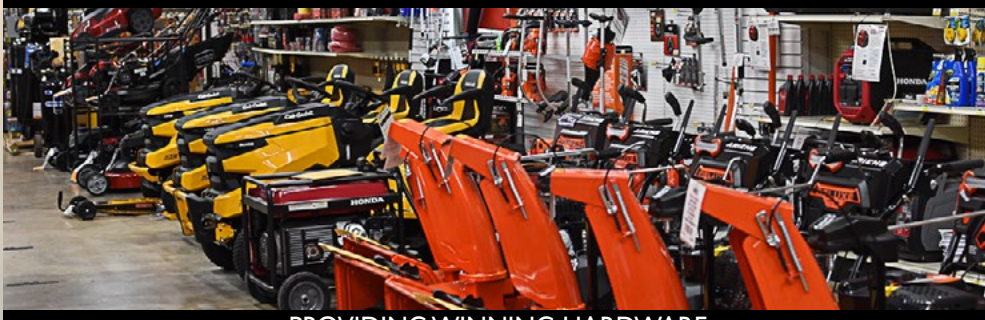
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## ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT



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## C & S SUPPLY



PROVIDING WINNING HARDWARE  
SOLUTIONS

PR



## AT A GLANCE

### C&S SUPPLY

**WHAT:** An ESOP-owned hardware and farm supply store

**WHERE:** Mankato, Minn.

**WEBSITE:** [www.candssupply.com](http://www.candssupply.com)

Front of store  
Photo: Karen Werling





C&S SUPPLY

# PROVIDING WINNING HARDWARE SOLUTIONS

Minnesota company's 60-plus years  
of proudly local excellence

**B**y all measures, C&S Supply Company, Inc. has stood the business longevity test. A presence for 66 years now, the company's origins trace back to Daniel Corcoran of Mankato, Minn., and R.D. "Wick" Sherwood originally of Wichita, Kansas, hence the "C" and the "S" in the company's name.

Moving on from an original store on North Front Street in Mankato, the company's headquarters has been at 1951 N. Riverfront Drive since 1963, and the building has increased from 12,000 to 45,000 square feet.

Thirty-one years ago, C&S Supply became a member of True Value Hardware. It is also a major supplier of work clothing, nursing uniforms, footwear, farm, horse tack, hardware items, and power equipment sales and service. From Carhartt, Dickies, Key, Georgia Boot, and Stihl to Cub Cadet, Weber, and many others, you name it, C&S has it.

Employee-owned for the past 16 years, its principal managers are Robin Schendel, Corey Kapaun, Erin Selle, and Megan Thrun. Having an ESOP (or employee stock ownership plan) is extremely beneficial to the company and its approximately 40 employees (some full-time, some part-time, from teenagers to retirees).

According to Corey, having an ESOP paradigm for the company just makes more sense. It helps keep things local, and it means the company won't be taken over by some other outsider corporation or a big-box store, as he points out.



Our Small Engine Repair Shop  
Photo: Karen Werling

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“That happens to a lot of other stores of our type and size,” Corey observes, citing companies unfortunate enough not to opt for an ESOP model. “They get swallowed up by some other store that has multiple locations. Then it just becomes another big box.”

He credits C&S Supply co-founder Corcoran, who later bought out Sherwood in 1985, with creating the company’s ESOP model. Corcoran’s vision, as Corey points out, was to maintain the company as a local entity and to reward its hardworking, longtime employees. An ESOP was the perfect way to do that.

“That was a nice thing he did for all of us,” Corey says of Corcoran’s foresight and generosity.

It took a lot of careful planning and research to create the ESOP for C&S Supply, but in the end, as Corey notes, it all paid off and was well worth it. Further, he praises Erin for her handling of the company’s ESOP-related aspects,

### Staying focused

Robin says the company relies heavily upon service and inventory.

“We are known around the area to have what you need in stock,” he says. “We don’t tend to get into frilly things. We stay focused on what we’re good at, and if we can continue to do that, then that’s what draws customers in.”

Throughout the industry, traditional brick-and-mortar hardware stores are decreasing. Yet Robin says he doesn’t see that happening with C&S. The company is doing business up a storm, he says, citing more than 300 charge accounts with contractors in the Mankato area. Plus, of course, there are the general hardware, power equipment (and they service what they sell in their on-site small engine repair center), and specialized work clothing facets to the company’s business, all moving like gangbusters.

“We’re unique in the way that we do business,” Robin says, “compared to a regular farm retail.”

Erin notes the company's ratio of employees to the store's square footage. It's a very noticeable difference, she says, versus the competition that C&S has, such as Fleet Farm, Home Dépôt, and other establishments.

"That's because we want people visible from all angles on the floor in the store," says Erin, "and they're also walking around the store, asking everybody if they can help. Go to Home Dépôt or something like that, and you might have to search around for somebody. You're not going to have to do that here."

As well, Erin adds, C&S employees are quite often veteran long-termers, so they're quite knowledgeable when it comes to the professional advice they give to customers.

What does the future hold for C&S Supply? The company intends to keep on keeping on, says Corey.

"Retail-wise, we're going to look for areas to expand in," he observes, "but we're going to keep doing what we're doing, as far as being in front of the merchandise. We have a lot of good contacts with our reps—with the people that we use as suppliers. We can talk to them and find out where things are going and where any shortcomings are coming from. We can react faster than other companies, and I think that gives us a benefit, going forward."

Erin shares his assessment, adding that the company will "not grow, grow, grow," save in the one Mankato location, and indeed that it has no intentions of doing otherwise. Maintaining the same course, sure and steady, is what C&S aims to do, as she points out.

"We're not trying to grow the company in multiple locations," she says.



Our large selection of Nuts & Bolts  
Photo: Karen Werling





“We’ve been around for 66 years. We know exactly what we’re good at and what our perfect size is. We just know what our needs are. We have survived big-box stores coming into town. We know what kind of storms we can weather.”

Corey expounded upon this same theme.

“Robin and I have both been here for more than 33 years,” he observed. “We’ve seen stuff in our years here, where we’ve gotten out of certain areas and expanded in others, and I can see us having to do that. You can’t sit still.”

Corey adds that what your strengths are today may not be the same within five years of normal business growth. Things change, but going to conferences and buying shows and generally keeping one’s collective ear to the ground will serve you well, as he points out.

“That benefits us in being able to make changes a little quicker than others,” he shares.

Robin concurs.

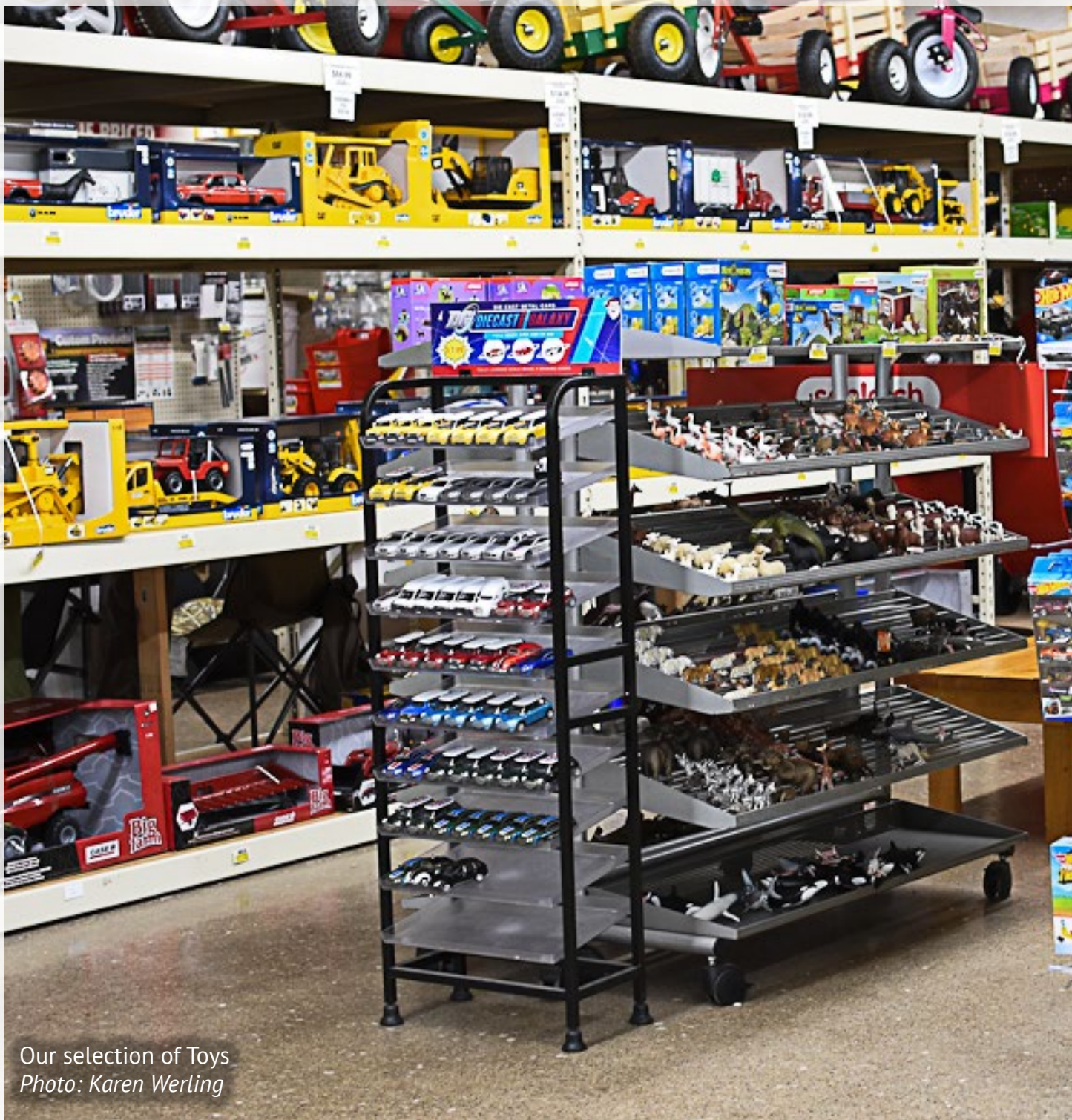
“The buyers are also the people who help sell it on the floor,” he says, as opposed to buyers who are 10 states away and have no proper handle on what is being bought, sold, or asked for.

“That makes us a little more unique, and like Corey said, we keep morphing into different things.”

### **More hardware**

Thirty to 40 years ago, Robin continues, the company “sold farm supplies like crazy,” whereas today, that has changed into a greater emphasis on selling hardware items and work clothing. You find out, he says, what “you need to be deep in,” in terms of inventory.





Our selection of Toys  
Photo: Karen Werling

“Or sometimes you may have people come in and take several hundred feet of chain at a crack,” he reveals. “Most places aren’t set up for that kind of thing, but we recognize that’s something we can take advantage of, and we do, and they come to us because of that. You take advantage of the situations, and you know that it is going to work out for you, usually, in the end.”

Maintaining a sense of humor also helps keep you and your business grounded, as Robin notes.

“Now and then, we get skunked,” he says with a chuckle, “but usually, we’re pretty good at it.”

There’s something to be said for keeping things small and local. C&S Supply does a lot of business with the City of Mankato and the counties of Blue





Our large selection of Work Boots  
*Photo: Karen Werling*

Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur, as Robin points out.

He adds that being able to serve customers well and offer them expert advice are key factors in the ongoing success story of C&S Supply.

“I think that a lot of it is the service that we give and the knowledge that we have,” says Robin, “and the experience that we have. We want

our customers to be treated the way we want to be treated. I think that a lot of times when they walk in, they know us, and they know who they want to talk to. I think there’s a lot of that. We’re business people, but we’re approachable.”

Giving back the community flows seamlessly through the customer approach C&S



Riding Lawnmowers and Stihl Equipment  
Photo: Karen Werling





Supply practices every day as well.

“We contribute several donations to our local community throughout the year to places like United Way, Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, Bundle Me Warm program, Pap Joe’s Pals, and many other individual benefits and silent auctions. We also donate to local schools in our area to help provide safe and fun graduation and prom parties for their students.”

Further, as Robin I points out, many customers come into C&S Supply because they know it uses the ESOP model. The fact that the company is local and employee-owned is not only more advantageous for its employees, but it also serves as a more attractive factor for the people who come in to shop at C&S. It’s the sort of thing folks care about, and that matters a great deal to them.

“They tell us, ‘We appreciate you,’” Robin says, emphasizing the family feeling that comes with being local like that, “and ‘That’s why we come and see you.’”

---

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### ■ ESI Equity

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Determining an objective value for your business is critical. ESI Equity excels in providing reliable business valuations, specializing in ESOP-owned companies for over 30 years. We have experience with a broad spectrum of industries and geographic areas. All relationships are confidential, objective, and professional.

BV<sub>m</sub>

# aviation view





### CAPE GIRARDEAU REGIONAL AIRPORT



COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SOLUTIONS LANDING  
LOCAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### DECATUR AIRPORT



FLYING INTO AN ECONOMICALLY  
TURBULENT FREE FUTURE

### DRYDEN REGIONAL AIRPORT



YOUR NORTHERN GATEWAY

### KINGSTON AIRPORT



LANDING INITIATIVES TO SERVE THE REGION

### PIERRE REGIONAL AIRPORT



FLYING INTO A WORLD OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### SAULT STE. MARIE AIRPORT



LANDING IN THE HEART OF A REGION KNOWN FOR  
ADVENTURE

### THIEF RIVER FALLS REGIONAL AIRPORT



INBOUND INITIATIVES TAKING OFF, LANDING  
MUCH GROWTH AHEAD

### WHEELING OHIO COUNTY AIRPORT



A GATEWAY TO A THRIVING REGION



CAPE GIRARDEAU REGIONAL AIRPORT

# COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SOLUTIONS LANDING LOCAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



## AT A GLANCE

### CAPE GIRARDEAU REGIONAL AIRPORT

**WHAT:** A community-focused regional hub providing solutions to broader industry challenges through its commitment to excellent facility standards and impeccable hospitality

**WHERE:** Midwestern Missouri—Scott County

**WEBSITE:** [FLYCGI - Cape Girardeau Regional Airport](https://www.flycgl.com)





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**B**y now, there has been a well-documented recognition of the need for more certified, high-quality pilots and personnel within the aviation industry nationwide. What hasn't been discussed is the cascading effect of such a shortage on airport operations. While larger airports might be filling in the gaps, the pilot shortage is felt most at smaller, regional airports from coast to coast.


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## Ireland Architects

Stephanie Ireland, Principal Architect

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 Springfield, Missouri

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from check-in  
to take-off





“

Executing a design/build project like this on a tight timeline is like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle in a race against the clock.

Our challenge was to conceptualize the Basis of Design, respond to client modifications, and address contractor feedback—all while guaranteeing critical deliveries and syncing with everyone, from TSA to the City of Cape Girardeau.

Our strategy? Robust organization, transparent communication, unwavering attention to detail and occasional morale-boosting bagel.

Ultimately, it's a dance between structured project management and on-the-fly adaptability.

”



*Stephanie Ireland  
Principal Architect*

## CAPE GIRARDEAU REGIONAL AIRPORT

The strain of trying to maintain high level services at some of the nation's local airports has been offset, however, by the creative use of funds and clear priorities set forth by each of these airports' dedicated staff.

One shining example of this aviation ingenuity can be found at the Cape Girardeau Regional Airport, proudly serving as a gateway to Southeast Missouri. This local gem



**These services have been working like a well-oiled machine for years, as the airport hasn't had any harsh weather-related problems like flooding and drainage problems since the early 1990s.**

maintains a long-standing record of high performance and picturesque accommodation, all while providing a sustainable solution to the larger shortages plaguing the industry.

### **A Sustained Standard of Excellent Service**

The Cape Girardeau Regional Airport has a rich history dating back to 1943 when the United States Army Air Forces founded it. At the time, it was known as Harris Army Airfield.

Technically, it wasn't a military base but was primarily used as a pilot training airfield assigned to the AAF Flying Training Command, Southeast Training Center, operating under contract to the Cape Institute of Aeronautics.

Since then, the airport has been expanded into what it is now—a city-owned, Part 139 commercial airport.

Since the airport's primary responsibility



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The Sikeston Area Economic Development capitalized on the town's strategic location, providing businesses with access to two interstates, two ports as well as rail. This, coupled with an affordable cost of living, makes it an ideal place for entrepreneurs and established companies alike.

But Sikeston isn't just about business; it's about community. The Sikeston CVB supports everything from major events like the PRCA Sikeston Jaycee Bootheel Rodeo to the Downtown Wine Festival. Our events showcase the town's vibrant spirit, offering visitors authentic Southern hospitality.

Whether you're considering a visit or looking for a new place to grow your business, Sikeston is a shining example of what makes small-town America great. Come and discover all that Sikeston has to offer – you won't be disappointed.

**For more information, visit: [www.sikeston.net](http://www.sikeston.net)**

is to ensure safe and efficient travel for all who utilize its facilities, it focuses a significant amount of its efforts on maintaining federally enforced standards.

Airport Manager Katrina Amos explains more about this process in-depth regarding the daily responsibilities of her staff members, saying, "my airport operations staff is responsible for maintaining 700 acres of airfield here. So, that's everything from



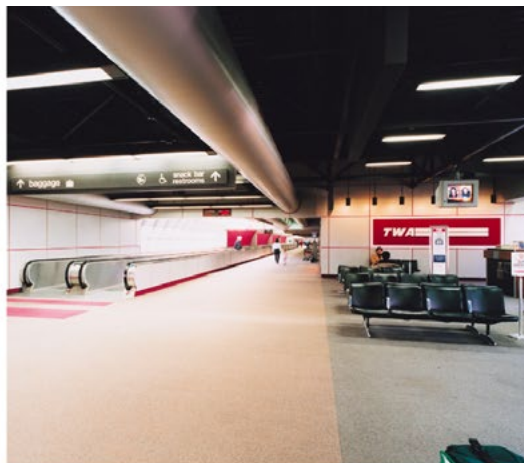
**These upgrades are warmly welcomed, as they allow the airport to continue supporting aircraft it's been supporting since it became a regional airport.**

airfield lighting system, runways, taxiway maintenance and repairs, mowing... You know, ensuring that our airfield [complies] with Federal Aviation Administration regulations."

Air traffic mostly touches down on the airport's primary runway—Runway 10/28—which has a length of 6,500 feet and a width of 150 feet. But there is also the secondary runway—Runway 2/20—spanning 3,997 feet in length and 100 feet in width.

Amos' staff also works with the airport's Fixed Base Operator, Cape Aviation, which she supervises to provide inbound and outbound aircraft with expedient fueling, towing, and maintenance services.

These services have been working like a well-oiled machine for years, as the airport hasn't had any harsh weather-related problems like flooding and drainage problems since the early 1990s



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### Federal Support for Key Upgrades

While maintenance and upkeep are essential parts of the job, that's not all Amos focuses on. She also places a considerable emphasis on upgrading the airport's standards to keep up with the shifting effects of advancing technology and passenger expectations.

Cape Girardeau has experienced a considerable surge in commercial traffic since 2017, when it was reintroduced to regional jet service, starting with SkyWest Airlines, allowing passengers to use the airport to easily access larger hubs to go wherever they needed nationally and worldwide.

Since Cape Girardeau is a Part 139 regional service, that makes it an essential service airport that the U.S. Department of Transportation subsidizes. This support allows the airport to provide service to a larger airport in their area and enhance their own passenger and aircraft amenities.

Those enhancements are certainly needed because, over the years, the airport's traffic has

grown substantially, exceeding a qualifying federal milestone of 10,000 outbound passengers in 2019. This is a critical metric, as it qualifies Cape Girardeau as a primary airport, which makes it eligible for \$1 million in FAA Airport Improvement Program funding.

In addition to that, the airport is one of the few that have been awarded \$17.5 million in Cares Act funding, which is already being put to good use.

Amos explains that thanks to a combination of federal and local funding, the airport has been able to overhaul key pieces of infrastructure, saying, "we were able to reconstruct Taxiway B so that we can continue support larger aircraft, such as Air Force One and military aircraft like C-130s, and C-17s."

These upgrades are warmly welcomed, as they allow the airport to continue supporting aircraft it's been supporting since it became a regional airport. Beyond the runway improvements, Amos also plans to allocate funds toward building a new terminal.

“You know, travel has changed,” she explains, “people expect different amenities... creature comforts that you experience at St. Louis International [Airport] or Nashville... [people] want those same experiences on a smaller scale.”

The current terminal is 13,100 square feet, and the new terminal will be 20,100 square feet. The extra square footage is being added in anticipation of future growth opportunities that have yet to present themselves.

It's this kind of forward consideration that makes Cape Girardeau Airport so consistently reliable as a top-tier hub for its customers.

### Forward Thinking to Solve a National Issue

While all of this extra space increases the quality of the airport, there is another reason why so much construction is underway. With the nationwide shortage of pilots and aviation professionals still looming, Amos is already bolstering an airport service that has already been acting as a solution.

Congratulations to  
Cape Girardeau Regional Airport  
for its continued growth and success.

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SCAN TO LEARN MORE







In a larger context, Cape Girardeau's general aviation and flight instruction services have substantially increased over the past few years. It has offered private flight instruction through Cape Air Charter since the 90s, but in the past ten years, the airport has also seen a sharp rise in helicopter flight instruction.

The increase in hosted aviation education attracted the attention of Southeast Missouri State University and the U.S. Aviation Academy, which partnered with Cape Girardeau in 2021 to bring a professional pilot program to its runways.

According to Amos, the goal is to "create a pipeline to try to offset some of the shortages that the airline industry is going to experience." Since being implemented, the pilot program has shown that it will strongly contribute to solving the pilot shortage.





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The university program's original goal was to enroll roughly 30 students by year three; however, the university currently has up to 105 students.

By accomplishing over three times its original goal, the pilot program has effectively tripled the airport's daily operations, from its pre-COVID average of about 80 to an incredible 250 daily operations.

As the professional program continues to grow rapidly, so too has the number of additional aircraft that have traffic on Cape Girardeau's runways. So, to combat the limited capacity, Amos has already commenced a large T-Hangar project scheduled to conclude by June 2024.

The project will construct 20 new T-Hangars to support the airport's growing hangar waiting list and influx of additional aircraft as Southeast Missouri State University's expansive pilot program continues. That extra activity is expected to draw the attention of the surrounding communities,









commercial or otherwise, all going through rapid changes in aviation.

So, this project also prepares Cape Girardeau to meet companies' inevitable cargo, freight, and charter demands as the industry evolves with more advanced technology like Unmanned Aircraft Systems (drones). This will equip the airport to become a robust economic tool that can immediately serve and develop the region.

### **A More Hospitable Outcome for Aviation**

Overall, Cape Girardeau's consistent commitment to the excellence of its facilities, coupled with its foresight and consideration for those it serves, has made it so that the airport can provide the highest level of service without compromising on the warm hospitality that so many larger airports seemed to have lost as a result of the pilot shortage.

Amos expands on this concept, highlighting

that most passengers nationwide may be a little anxious while interacting with the TSA during their travels. However, that sentiment is completely missing at Cape Girardeau, as the airport's TSA agents have consistently been reported to be friendly, courteous, and always willing to assist passengers.

"I think having a small regional airport is much more user-friendly for business travelers and those in the retirement community," Amos says, "I think our customer service is unmatched and - our local TSA agents have done an excellent job."

Cape Girardeau Regional Airport is a reminder that even when shortages make operations difficult and deteriorate conditions, focusing on the community's service will foster recovery and position an organization as an industry leader, providing solutions for current and future challenges.





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DECATUR AIRPORT

# FLYING INTO AN ECONOMICALLY TURBULENT FR FUTURE



## AT A GLANCE

### DECATUR AIRPORT

- WHAT:** A busy airport right bang in the middle of Illinois
- WHERE:** Five miles east of Decatur, Ill.
- WEBSITE:** [www.decaturn-parks.org/airport](http://www.decaturn-parks.org/airport)



NY  
EE

## The “big, little airport” is a key economic driver in central Illinois

**A**s the flying public regains confidence post-COVID, regional airports are gearing up to meet the demand. The Decatur Airport is no exception. With operational upgrades in the pipeline, this gem of an airport is doing what needs to be done to capture this increase in aviation traffic.



## DECATUR AIRPORT

A notable public airport, comprising some 2,200 acres and classed by the Federal Aviation Administration as a regional general aviation facility (we have commercial air service), Decatur Airport is situated just five miles from downtown Decatur in the heart of Macon County, right bang in the center of Illinois.

Uniquely amongst American airports, it is owned by the Decatur Parks District. Airline service is subsidized by the federal government's Essential Air Service program to the tune of some \$2.6 million on an annual basis for this 11th-busiest commercial airport in the Land of Lincoln.

We recently spoke with Decatur Airport Director Tim Wright, and he told us more about this bustling hub of airborne activity.

"The Decatur Airport has the sixth-longest runway in the state of Illinois," says Wright, citing three runways of 8,496, 6,799, and 5,298 feet in length, adding, "We're able to accept the

An advertisement for Hanson Inc. featuring silhouettes of business professionals in an airport terminal. The scene is set in a large, modern terminal with floor-to-ceiling windows. Several people are silhouetted against the bright light coming from the windows. In the background, an airplane is visible in flight, and an airport control tower stands prominently. The overall atmosphere is professional and dynamic.

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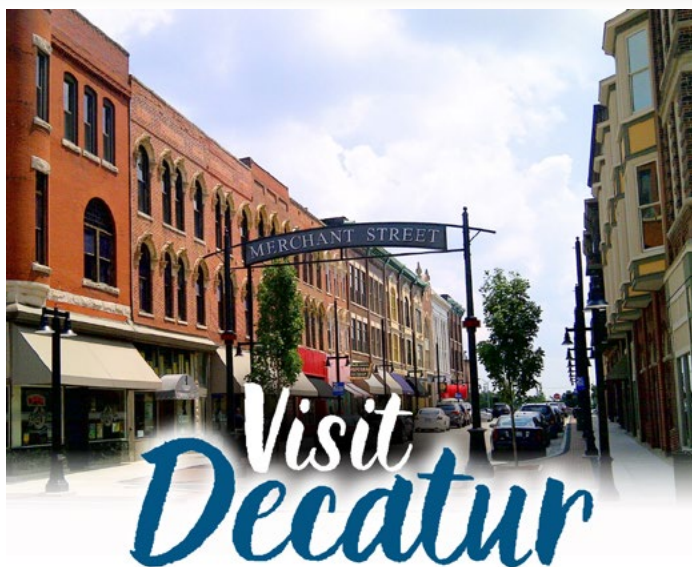
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majority of the corporate and commercial aircraft that are built and serve across the United States.”

He adds that the airport currently enjoys United commercial service to and from Chicago’s famed O’Hare International Airport. With a population of over 70,000, Decatur boasts a large corporate community, with many Fortune 500 companies, such as ADM (or Archer-Daniels-Midland) and Caterpillar. Decatur’s facility is designated as a gateway airport because of all the corporate traffic from the local business community, as Wright notes.

He also spoke of the airport’s FBO, or fixed-based operator: Gaitros Aviation, LLC. Gaitros has the two biggest hangars for corporate jets.

Post-COVID, security at the airport has remained the same, as Wright reveals. Homeland Security facilitates the airport’s security program.

The COVID factor also ties in with the nationwide pilot shortage. Wright cites the airport has several CFI’s on the airport for flight instruction and





not far away from Decatur is Parkland College Institute of Aviation in nearby Champaign. With its available scholarship programs and more, the institute is helping shore up this shortage crisis.

### **A welcoming facility**

Wright notes that the Decatur Airport is a business-friendly and welcoming place. One such helpful feature is free vehicle parking available on a long-term basis.

“It’s one of the amenities we have that we feel the local community and those in central Illinois enjoy,” he says. “They enjoy how well-lit the parking lot is. You can drive to the airport, park for free, and catch your flight. Then, whenever you return, you can be in your car and then back home within about 15 minutes.”

He continues that the airport also features a monitored foreign trade zone. Plus, there’s storage available as well.

Wright spoke of infrastructural improvements.

The new Snow Removal Equipment building and Aircraft Rescue Firefighting fire house of 28,600 square feet opened in August 2023. Old hangars have been removed, and there’s space for snow removal equipment. Further, regarding safety, the firehouse and maintenance facility are now housed under the same roof, replacing two separate such facilities, each 50 years old. This new and centralized location will be crucial in the event of any emergencies, says Wright.

“That’s key for us,” he adds. “Now we’ll have the room for the majority of the equipment. It’s got the latest and greatest whenever it comes to an emergency response. The doors, when the alert bell goes off, are automatically raised. That’s one less thing that the firemen have to worry about in a response type of situation.”

Further, the airport boasts another critical factor, as Wright points out. It is home to the United States Army Aviation Support Facility: the number-one such entity for the state of Illinois.

“We do have a military presence in regards







to the army,” he reveals. “That is an aviation unit that flies helicopters from this airport.”

That military capability is an important component for any such airport, as Wright points out.

Further, he notes that the State of Illinois recently conducted an economic impact study for all the airports in the state. The report analyzed 85 public-use airport facilities: 81 public and four private airports.

Data were used to measure the economic impact at each airport, as well as each transportation department region and at the statewide level. Completed in 2020, the study talks about the myriad jobs related to local aviation and the enormous economic effects created by the Decatur Airport and its fellow facilities across the entire state.

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, the state’s public-use airports generate some \$95.5 billion in total annual economic activity, resulting in almost half a million jobs that can be traced to the aviation industry. The study also finds that aviation accounts for more than 4.2 percent of the gross domestic product for Illinois and almost five percent of the state’s jobs.

By demonstrating the aviation business’s significance to the state economy, the Department of transportation’s analysis reinforces the value of actively addressing airport and aviation system needs. The data not only bring home the importance of investing in the state’s aviation resources, but they also help Illinois airports to position themselves for incoming federal investment through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Wright continues that the airport is reducing its burden upon the electric grid. Within the next several years, it will see upgrades to all the airfield electrical lighting to LED (light-emitting diode) lighting. The electrical vault will be upgraded and have more safety features as well.

## DECATUR AIRPORT

“Some great things are happening to better reduce our footprint,” Wright observes.

Further, with all that space, the airport is more than capable of taking on more business and expanding yet again with ever-widening boundaries. Plenty of room for that, says Wright. East of the airport is farmland, so constriction is not an issue. Plus, opportunities also abound for warehousing.

### The Wright stuff

Wright also talked about how his professional career well and truly took flight. He reveals that he began at the airport back in 2004. He loves his job. You might say that it keeps him grounded.

“I started here as a firefighter for the airport and worked my way up through the organization,” he informs, “to where I was the operations manager.”

Nine years ago, he became the director. He loves serving Decatur in this capacity.

“We’re a strong community,” he declares, extolling a city full of kind people who “really help each other out. Being here for almost 20 years at the airport, I’ve seen growth. Never once did I think that we would be dealing with a pandemic and watch aviation pretty much be ground to a stop. Still, it’s been fascinating to see aviation return after COVID.

“It’s the big, little airport,” he jokingly adds of the facility. “We’re a big airport, but we still keep the hometown values. We enjoy being part of the community, both locally here in Decatur, and then also part of the aviation community. It’s my staff, and it’s the people that use aviation that motivate me. I’m proud of the airport. I’m proud of the history and the tradition that has taken place over the years here at the airport.”

What are Wright’s goals for the Decatur







Airport as he looks ahead to the future? One is finding a big business that would like to be located in central Illinois at an airport and then begin that expansion to that growth on the north side of the airport for business development.

He also rectifies public misperceptions and fears of flying. Statistically speaking, as Wright points out, flight is still far and away the most secure way to travel.

“Aviation is still one of the safest modes of transportation in the world,” he says. “I think that people need to restore their faith in the aviation community. The key is—and I’ll use this for pilots as well and all the people who work at airports—we need to be mentors. We need to go out and help.”

He hopes more young people will choose aviation as a career.

“Do they want to go into aviation?” he rhetorically asks. “They need to encourage people to take back an interest in aviation. I agree with that 100 percent.”

“It starts with the youth, and it starts with igniting that passion, because there’s one thing we’ve learned, and I’m sure you would agree. That is, to work in aviation, you have to love it. Absolutely. You know, they say that if you love your job, you never work a day in your life. For the last 20 years, I guess I’ve never worked!”

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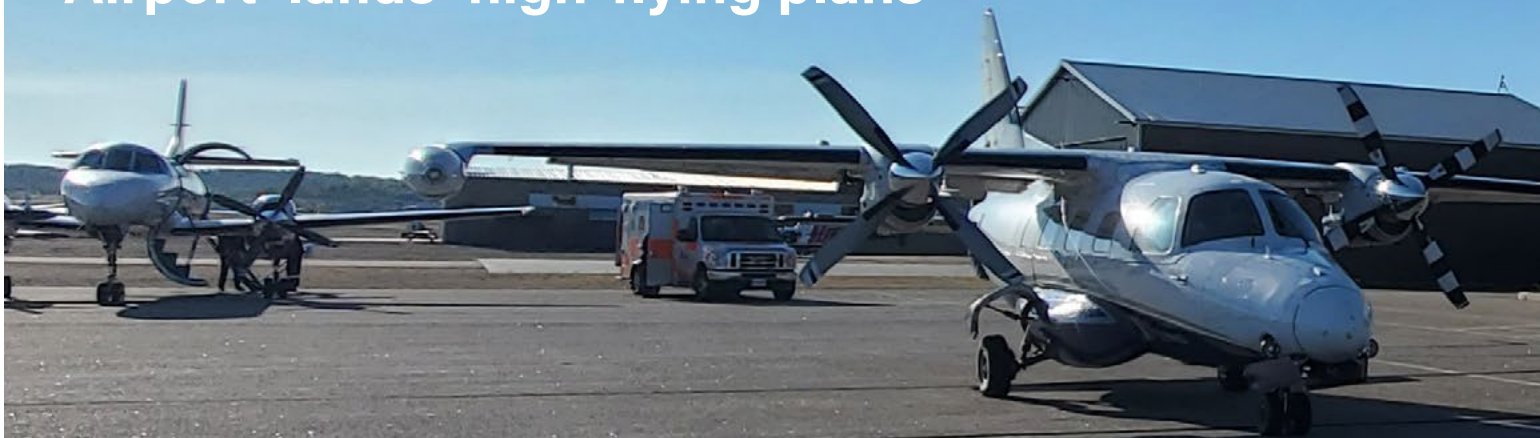
## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

- **Hanson Professional Services, Inc.**  
[www.hanson-inc.com](http://www.hanson-inc.com)
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DRYDEN REGIONAL AIRPORT

# YOUR NORTHERN GATEWAY

Serving the Needs of the Community  
to Grow the Region, Dryden Regional  
Airport 'lands' high-flying plans



## AT A GLANCE

### DRYDEN REGIONAL AIRPORT

- WHAT:** A commercial and General Aviation Airport in Dryden, Ontario
- WHERE:** Dryden, Ontario
- WEBSITE:** <https://www.dryden.ca/en/explore/airport.aspx>  
<https://loomex.ca/>  
Instagram @drydenairport  
and on Facebook as "City of Dryden Regional Airport"



# ERN

## DRYDEN

**A**s you fly over the Wabigoon Lake, sunlight beaming off pristine blue waters while thousands of shades of green dot the landscape of Northern Ontario, you can find yourself lost in the beauty. This same natural splendor will surround you still as you land in Dryden. This is the second-largest city in the Kenora District of Northwestern Ontario, and since 1910, when it was first settled for lumber, it has grown into a pulp and paper industry. The city is halfway between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay along Highway 17.



## DRYDEN REGIONAL AIRPORT

Dryden today is a place where you can blaze your own trail – just imagine strolling along the waterfront, or snapping a photo with Max the Moose, a huge roadside attraction and statue that has become the town's mascot. You could enjoy a hike on one of the many urban trails, go shopping, or indulge in incredible hunting and fishing. Dryden is where the rugged beauty of Northwestern Ontario meets the bright lights of city life and is the transportation, business, and service hub for the surrounding area.

"An overview of the airport and how it came to be," begins Pat Hoag, Airport Manager for the Dryden Regional Airport, "We are in the middle of two major cities, in two provinces, Ontario and Manitoba, and right in the heart of Northern Ontario. The airport is about 10 kilometers North of the city and was built in partnership with the town of Dryden and the Department of Transport back in 1969."

"Airport ownership was transferred to the



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municipality in 1996. At that time, we operated multiple airlines with passengers flying regularly, Dryden was a hub for travelers in Northern Ontario. In addition, we also had commercial freight flights. Like all airports around the world, Covid hit hard. We are on the road to recovery: we have the safety systems, beautiful terminal and convenience of air travel ready to go,” he continues.

Dryden Regional also supports the region as a transportation hub for firefighters who work on Forest Fires throughout the country. This year the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has flown 737s from Dryden to transport fire crews to Alberta and British Columbia. Dryden has also been a haven for communities further north, Hoag says, “we have acted as the transportation hub where evacuees can fly into Dryden on smaller aircraft and then load them onto larger 737s to fly to urban areas where they can be temporarily housed.”

He goes on to explain that the airport is on 238 hectares of land, with a 6000-foot precision approach runway with ILS capabilities, allowing them to accommodate a multitude of different aircraft up to a 737-800. There is a terminal with 1100 square feet.

Pat is a key employee at the airport and long-term employee at The Loomex Group <https://loomex.ca/>. (The Loomex Group is an aerospace operations firm that currently manages six other airports in Ontario including Greenstone, Nakina, Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough, Earlton, and Detour Mine.

Along with The Loomex Group, Morgan Aviation is a critical service at the Dryden Airport. "Morgan is our FBO supported by World Fuels," Hoag explains. "They provide all the fuel services and support, as well as a small lounge for pilots.

Bearskin Airlines began in 1963 by providing charter services to the remote First Nations reserves in northern Ontario, using bush planes equipped with floats in the summer and skis in the winter. Today at Dryden Airport regular passenger services turn to Bearskin Airlines for everything from flights and baggage handling to chartered flights by anyone who requires it. We see a lot of cross-country flights from aircraft of all sizes."

"The goal for the Dryden Airport is to increase scheduled passenger traffic as we were before COVID," Abdullah Al-Maltrook, Marketing & Communications Manager at Loomex states.

"Airports enable economic growth in cities, so we know a strong airport means a strong local economy". With world-wide concerns for the economy, we want to ensure the airport is known for contributing to the community."







Al-Matrook continues, “tourism is strong in Dryden, offering vast trails to explore and avid hunting and fishing camps. These are very important components of our community involvement and sources of economic stimulation.

Recently, Dryden Regional received funding from Northern Ontario Heritage Fund for terminal improvements making the passenger experience convenient and modern.

The airport supports several industries including MAG Aerospace Canada, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) Fire Management Headquarters, Northern Youth Programs, Expedition Helicopters, Provincial Helicopters, Wilson’s Business Solutions, National Car Rental Service, and NAV CANADA.

“We have space both airside and groundside for leasing,” Hoag explains, “and are always looking for good neighbors and commercial opportunities.”

“Our top initiative is increasing the passenger experience and travel through the airport again,” Hoag concludes. The City of Dryden has incredible assets in the airport, it is a hub for critical healthcare, safety, economic stimulation, and hosts community events- what more could you want! Come out, let’s put us on the map!”

---

## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

■ **Conlin Bedard LLP**  
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KINGSTON AIRPORT

# LANDING INITIATIVE TO SERVE THE REGION



**L**eaving the aviation woes felt during the pandemic in the jet streams of flights coming in, Kingston Airport is busy gearing up for increased aviation activity as we head towards 2024. Meeting renewed activity with operational upgrades, the airport is also poised to prosper in the months ahead.



# VES

With the pandemic left in the jet stream, Kingston Airport takes off to new heights



## AT A GLANCE

### KINGSTON AIRPORT

- WHAT:** A regional airport serving Kingston and beyond
- WHERE:** Kingston, Ont.
- WEBSITE:** [www.ygkairport.com/](http://www.ygkairport.com/)



Located in an area renowned for its scenic beauty and a tourist draw in its own right, Kingston Airport takes pride in its role as a gateway for such a spectacular corner of the province.

Owned and operated by the City of Kingston, this hub of aircraft activity recently enjoyed a facelift of more than \$16 million in major renovations, including in 2019, a 1,000-foot extension of its main runway to accommodate larger aircraft and a 40-percent expansion in the size of its airport terminal, according to Kingston Airport Director of Strategy, Innovations, and Partnerships Craig Desjardins.

We recently spoke with Desjardins and with Kingston Airport Manager Aron Winterstein. They told us all about the current excitement of positive activity at the airport, originally built in 1940, serving the city of some 132,000 people.

“It’s the regional airport for southeastern Ontario,” Winterstein informs. “Currently, we’ve got general-aviation flights coming in, in the form of private charter jets, military cargo

flights, and medical aviation and private flights. We’re working right now to regain our scheduled commercial air service operations, which got paused by Air Canada in 2020.”

He adds that the airport has a runway that is 6,001 feet long and a hundred feet wide. Aircrafts serving hospitals and other medical purposes (transporting patients, live organs for donations, and so on) make regular use of the airport.

There are several important medical facilities in the area, including those affiliated with Queen’s University and one serving Indigenous communities located in Ontario’s remote rural areas. Kingston, as Desjardins points out, is quite the medical hub.

When COVID hit, as Desjardins elaborates, Air Canada, which had flight service coming in from Toronto, opted to pull out of Kingston. Today, he adds, airport officials are looking to find a major carrier that will come back to fulfill that role as the facility proves its renewed resiliency, vitality, and viability. This





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## KINGSTON AIRPORT

will only have a highly positive economic impact on the region and neighboring provinces.

“One of the challenges that we’ve faced since COVID is that air carriers have started upgrading or updating to larger aircrafts,” Desjardins continues.

That means fewer flights to do the same volume of service with Kingston and its proximity to the surrounding airports of Toronto, Ottawa, and Montréal and, in neighboring New York state, Syracuse, and Watertown. Solving this problem may require the assistance of the Canadian government in the form of federal grants.

“Regional airports require some support to bring air service back, because of the changes in the aviation sector,” Desjardins observes.

He spoke further about Kingston Airport’s physical improvements and infrastructural upgrades, as well as the facility’s economic impact on the entire region and beyond. Kingston Airport, as

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Desjardins points out, is set to be the first hub for digitization, an initiative of Nav Canada.

“They’re at the point where they’re selecting their technology,” he reveals.

“They’re going to validate their new digital technology at Kingston. Then Kingston will become, in the middle term, a hub that will serve us and provide the services of air traffic control for up to 22 other airports across Canada. As a future, current, and growing tenant, we’re certainly very pleased to see this presence at our airport. It does contribute to, I think, a more well-rounded business model for the airport.”

### **A huge economic boon**

Ontario is known for the beauty of its scenic waterways, as Desjardins points out. It’s a significant part of the provincial economy, and a regional airport, such as Kingston’s, likewise can be a huge economic player, with rippling effects benefiting a large geographical area. Having inbound air travel for individuals for sports tourism, conferences, and much more forms a significant opportunity to grow, as Desjardins emphasizes.

This, he adds, is “a very important part of our economy, so again, we’re excited to see how the airport plays a pivotal role in our community’s growth.”

Winterstein cites the airport’s ample land, which means even more growth opportunities. That means new space for new buildings.

“We’re currently looking to get a partner to support the building of a new hangar facility that would be able to house guests’ private—as well as commercial—aircrafts,” says Winterstein, adding that this would also be very attractive to a new airline.

He adds that Central Airways is the airport’s FBO or fixed-base operator. The company works with World Fuels Services to provide fuel to military, commercial, and private aircraft.

## KINGSTON AIRPORT

There's also a helicopter maintenance company: AOG Heliservices, Inc., which is an approved Transport Canada maintenance organization located at the east end of the airport. It offers avionics, painting, interior refurbishing, modifications, and upgrades, as well as custom configurations of every type and much more. Its hangar area is some 3,800 square feet, with a component room of about 600 square feet. AOG Heliservices also offers environmentally controlled storage areas, offices, and hangars.

### It takes a team

Desjardins extolled the team effort that makes the Kingston Airport's operations possible.

"The airport is owned and operated by the municipality," he points out, "but we work incredibly closely with tourism (Tourism Kingston, the local tourism information office), and we can't say enough about their support in collaboration concerning the airport."

On the economic development side, the Kingston Economic Development Agency is part of the City. Again, we work incredibly closely with them to make sure that we're servicing all of our business clients in our community."

Winterstein returned to the topic of the improvements of four years ago. These also included upgrading the instrument landing systems and expanding the terminal by some 40 percent. He also spoke of economic factors, including supply chains.

"One of the things we're seeing more broadly in Kingston is the impact of supply chains," he remarks, "and very positively, as we see companies wanting to co-locate here."

One such industry is the aforementioned health sector, as Winterstein notes of one of the region's biggest economic drivers.

"It's not just health care services," he clarifies. "It's health and life science technology, so again, co-locating with the universities and the hospitals on one side, but then







you also have the work that we're doing around the clean technology sector."

Plus, with one firm and field supporting another, it stitches together a kind of vibrant economic tapestry or ecosystem, as Winterstein notes.

"There are the big firms that draw the billion-dollar investments," he says, "but then you have all the firms that support those organizations. Some of them are smaller and create pieces of the puzzle, but again, access to the rest of the world is a critical piece for them as part of a supply chain. We're very excited to see how that unfolds."

Making sure the airport is available—with available land and available space to lease to companies—is also crucial, Winterstein notes.

What of the future? It's all about utilizing the airport as the great economic engine that it is, supporting existing businesses, and helping create new ones by showing just how attractive and business-friendly Kingston truly is, as Winterstein declares.

"I think," he says, "the two main priorities that we've got to hear on the airline side of things will be to attract a connecting service back to Kingston, so that we can support the existing and new businesses and the traveling public, through the airport. That will be priority number one on that front. Priority number two would be to get service into the northside of our airport so that we're able to attract new businesses in the future."

Desjardins shares this assessment.

"I can't disagree at all with Aron," he observes. "I would say, short term, it's about getting that scheduled service back. In the medium term, it's about building the business of the airport more broadly, making sure that we are looking at a new hangar that will be built to serve our clients."

"Again," he adds, "from the City's perspective,

# KINGSTON AIRPORT







it is always about capital infrastructure investment. With all the operations we have at the City, they constantly require maintenance and reinvestment to ensure that we have high-quality infrastructure.”

Winterstein says this means more hangars, the paving of runways and aprons, and more items in the longer-range plans airport officials have carefully crafted. The recently-completed master plan contains what Winterstein characterizes as an “exciting vision, blending aviation-related growth and commerce.”

All this, he says, will make the airport “an incredible platform for economic growth and opportunity for our local community.”

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## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

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PIERRE REGIONAL AIRPORT

# FLYING INTO A WORLD OF OUTDO ACTIVITIES

**An airport that is poised to grow into the next generation of services riding on the headwinds of the beautiful capital city of Pierre, South Dakota**





OR


## AT A GLANCE

# PIERRE REGIONAL AIRPORT

**WHAT:** A growing general and commercial aviation airport

**WHERE:** Pierre, South Dakota

**WEBSITE:** [www.cityofpierre.org/648/Airport](http://www.cityofpierre.org/648/Airport)



**N**estled between the Black Hills and the East Bank of the Missouri River, Pierre South Dakota (pronounced Peer) has a storied history going back to a trading fort, Fort Pierre, dating back to the very early 1800s. Imagine the sunlight glittering off the fabled river, the black hills in all their magnificence unfolding a backdrop right out of a painting – is it any wonder that for thousands of years, people have settled this spot and that it eventually became the state's capitol?

## PIERRE REGIONAL AIRPORT

History aside, and there is plenty, from the shores of Lake Oahe to the Fort Pierre National Grasslands, Pierre has a rich diversity of game and year-round hunting. Grouse, Pheasant, waterfowl, prairie dogs, and deer offer a challenge and a thrill while the list of fish, ranging from Atlantic Salmon, Walleye, and trout through almost every freshwater sport fish imaginable will keep the angler on the water for their entire visit.

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Just want to get outdoors? Miles of trails, watersports galore, biking, and kayaking - this place has everything to make it indeed an outdoors lover's paradise, in between the museums and restaurants of course.

And indeed, the best way to get there is to fly to Pierre Regional Airport.

Pierre's first airline flights were around



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1935, on Watertown Airways. Inland Airlines and successor Western Airlines served the airport from about 1938 until 1984; in the 1950s Pierre was one of six stops on a Minneapolis-Los Angeles Convair 240 flight. Over the years many regional carriers have flown a variety of aircraft, from small bush planes to North Central Airlines Douglas DC-3s which arrived in 1959, and since that day, jet service has been a constant.





Today service to Denver is provided by Denver Air Connection, and they are in the process of expanding their offerings at the airport.

“We took a step back during Covid, just like everyone else,” explains Brian Cowles, Airport Manager. “We are currently up to about 14,000 operations this year, so we are very busy. We have a modern terminal here, our previous terminal I think was built sometime in the late 40s, or early 50s, and it was just an old basic cinder block building that they had to periodically go through and make changes to. After 911 we decided to create a whole







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new terminal, as there were serious security requirements and other factors to put in place. So, what we did in the last decade was to create a terminal with space for up to three airlines. We could host three different airlines here and have ticket counter space for all of them. The airlines themselves would have office space as well. We have an automated baggage belt that goes right out through the TSA inspection area, and then from there into the baggage handling room and then loaded onto the aircraft. We now have a jet bridge as well so that people do not have to go out into the elements.”

Pierre Regional Airport covers 1,834 acres at an elevation of 1,744 feet and has two asphalt runways: 7/25 is 6,880 by 100 feet while 13/31 is 6,900 by 100 feet. The Denver Air Connection offers daily flights with Key Lime Air and continuing flights through United Airlines. Mustang Air also offers charter services as well as operating as the FBO, with full fueling, maintenance, repair, and hangar capabilities as well as flight instruction. The airport has six full-time staff and two part-time staff. They often share duties and are all trained in ARFF firefighting and rescue techniques, including Cowles.

### **Flying into top operational upgrades**

“It is one of the best FBOS that I have ever encountered working at different airports,” says Cowles, “The owner is Jim Pietz, who also has businesses down in Fort Myers, Florida. He runs an aircraft sales and service business down there. He winters in Florida and comes up here when it is above freezing – they have a very nice facility here. They offer flight instruction, charter service, aircraft service, and sales and of course, they handle the fueling for the airlines here. All of their staff is very good at what they do and I have never had any kind of complaints.”

“They are getting ready to expand one of their hangers,” he continues, “I believe the current footprint is 115 by 115 feet and when they expand it they will have a storage hangar



for other people's aircraft. They have one hangar now which also serves as their service workshop. This new hangar will free up space in that service hangar so that they can get more work in and be more responsive to customers whenever they have service needs or whatever for their aircraft."

Cowles goes on to describe how the airport is still laid out in the two-runway triangle pattern of an army air base during World War Two, which is where Pierre Regional got its start. It was laid out in this manner so that they could do multiple

take-offs at the same time. It started as an actual B-17 bomber base and then, towards the end of its career with the Army Air Corp, it switched over to P47 and P40 fighter aircraft base. The P40 was the first Warhawk. And the P47s were called Thunderbolts. Pietz flies a restored P-51 Mustang and is deeply involved in air shows and the aviation community. This is where the name Mustang Aviation derives from. The hope is that he will be putting on an air show here next year.

"We have always been a pretty big part of this





area,” Cowles points out, “Our airport covers all of central South Dakota, as far down as the border of Nebraska and up to just outside the border for North Dakota – that’s pretty much our service area for the airport. And we provide several services, whether it be agricultural spraying, which is a big thing around here, of course, or a medical flight. We operate a medical flight service here for Avera Hospital. By ambulance, you – if you had somebody who needed some life-saving procedure, it was 2 – 2 and a half hours in an ambulance down I90 to either get to

Sioux Falls or Rapid City to get to a large medical facility and now we can fly you directly there.”

### **Flying ahead**

“I would say that this is probably the economic center for this region of this state,” he continues.

“We have a very large pheasant hunting season every year. It starts in about a month and we are a large center for those folks coming in who want to do pheasant hunting. As I mentioned, we are also agricultural spraying. We operate a lot of







the ag-sprayer aircraft out of this airport. We have medical flights, and the airport itself offers employment through various agencies here at the airport. I think we support 120 plus jobs here and in the most recent economic impact study, we account for 56 million dollars coming into this region of the state. We also have a pretty good cargo service here between UPS and FedEx. They fly stuff in here every morning and fly back out every evening.”

“I think the main thing that you need to know about Pierre Regional Airport is that there is definitely the opportunity for the airport to grow and provide more services for more people.”

“We also have so much more we could offer to people just moving into the area and needing an airport for pleasure or business travel. This entire region has the opportunity to attract new businesses and then, of course, more residents because of new businesses. The number one thing that we have here for anyone who is interested is an amazing opportunity.”

---

## PREFERRED VENDOR/ PARTNER

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A photograph of the Sault Ste Marie Airport terminal building at sunset. The building is a modern, single-story structure with large windows and a flat roof. A sign above the entrance reads "Departures" and "Departs". A control tower is visible on the roof. The sky is a mix of orange, red, and purple. A car is parked in the foreground on the left.

SAULT STE MARIE AIRPORT

# LANDING IN THE OF A REGION K FOR ADVENTU

**Weathering All Storms to Maintain  
Canada's Only Not-for-Profit Airport,  
Sault Ste Marie Airport takes flight**

## AT A GLANCE

### SAULT STE MARIE AIRPORT

- WHAT:** A commercial and general aviation airport at the heart of the Great Lakes, Canada
- WHERE:** Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, Canada
- WEBSITE:** <https://saultairport.com/>



# THE HEART KNOWN RE



**B**illed as Canada's Adventure Town, Sault Ste Marie offers a sense of unique charm with the excitement of adventure added in. Imagine flying in over the myriad of colors dotting the fall landscape – hills and mountains covered with color give way to deep reflective lakes, all the while on the shores of the Great Lakes and in the middle of, quite literally, everything.

## SAULT STE MARIE AIRPORT

“Sault Ste. Marie is actually at the heart of the Great Lakes, the heart of Ontario, and some will argue we’re also at the heart of Canada,” says Terry Bos, President, and CEO of Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation.

“There’s a lot of natural beauty in the area and I think that’s the main attraction, whether it be fishing on the big lakes or heading up north and fishing on the inland lakes. There’s a lot of good hunting up to the north as well. In the wintertime, we have a large ski hill, Searchmont Resort which brings a lot of people in for the ski season. We also have a lot of cross-country ski trails.”

“We have a long snow machine trail that ties in and runs throughout the North, and in the summertime, we have now gotten into mountain biking and the city’s been working on building trails for that. We have a beautiful boardwalk that runs across the entirety of our downtown area and along the Saint Mary’s River, as well as a hub trail named after our former mayor



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that’s called the Rowsell Hub Trail which goes around the entire city for 16 kilometers, and you can either bike it or walk it,” Bos describes.

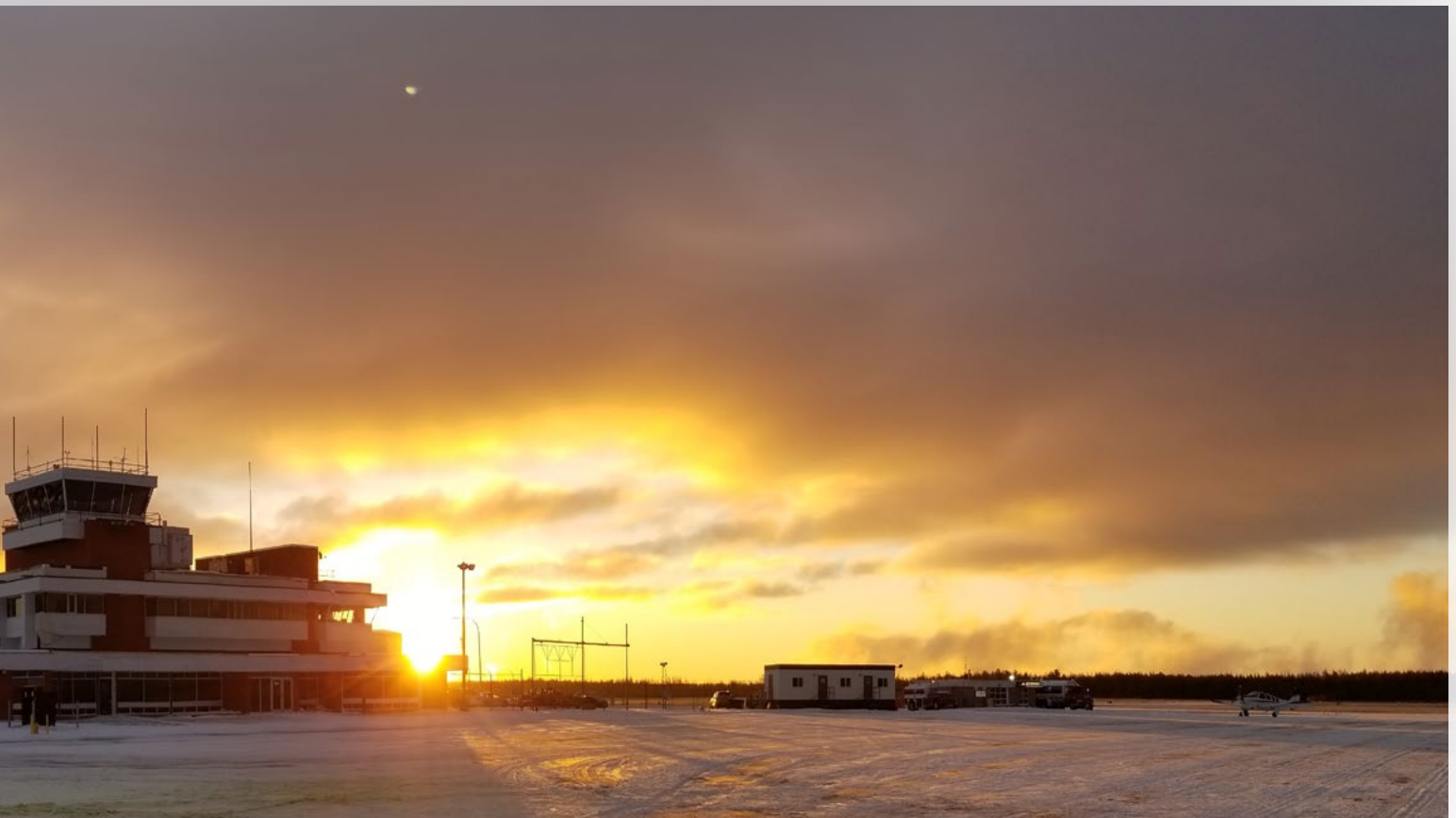
It is no wonder that the tourism slogan is Take the time, live in the moment, find yourself.

The Canadian government opened the airport in 1961 and operated it until 1998 when it handed control over to the newly formed Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation. The corporation has since become the only private regional sized not for profit airport. That means there is no alignment with any governmental or municipal entities.

This also means it does not benefit from either government funding or civic tax benefits.

“So, we are very unique,” Bos chimes in, “We have two 6000-foot runways, and we currently have three airlines who fly out of our airport, Air Canada, Porter Airlines, and Bearskin Airlines. In the past, we have also seen seasonal travel to the south with Sunwing. We have two





cargo flights a day with FedEx and Skyline.”

“We are home to the water bomber base for Ontario with the Ministry of Natural Resources. We are also fortunate to have Sault College, which is a flight training school here in Sault Ste. Marie and a private flight training school, Sault Academy of Flight.”

“We have a major MRO, maintenance repair operation, with JD Aero and they do a lot of work for many airlines including Horizon, WestJet, and Porter. We also have a second FBO on site, Executive Aviation who does fueling with World Fuels. We redid our main runway in 2001 and we redid our secondary runway in 2021. We have also done three expansions to our terminal to meet our growth since we took over when we were about 140,000 and then went up to about 215,000 passengers.”

Covid had a major effect on air travel everywhere, but it seems Canada is bouncing back, albeit slowly. Before Covid Sault Ste. Marie saw some 210,000 passengers per year and somewhere

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## SAULT STE MARIE AIRPORT

in the range of 60,000 aircraft movements. Right now, they estimate being back up to about 75 percent of the pre-2020 numbers. A little over 150,000 passengers. This is, however, a far cry from their record low in the 2020-21 season of 20,500 passengers.

“Some of this depends on whether the airlines can ramp up enough to meet the demand,” Bos admits.

“We have taken a hit because the bigger markets are taking up more of the aircraft than there are limited aircraft as well as limited flight crews. So, unfortunately, it’s the regional markets that have had to have reduced flight schedules. We normally go to our summer schedule with Air Canada on May 1st and that didn’t come into effect this year until July 1st and there were still only three daily flights, with Porter running another two.”

All of which circles back to the pilot shortage, and the current shortage across the aeronautic fields. Airports throughout North America



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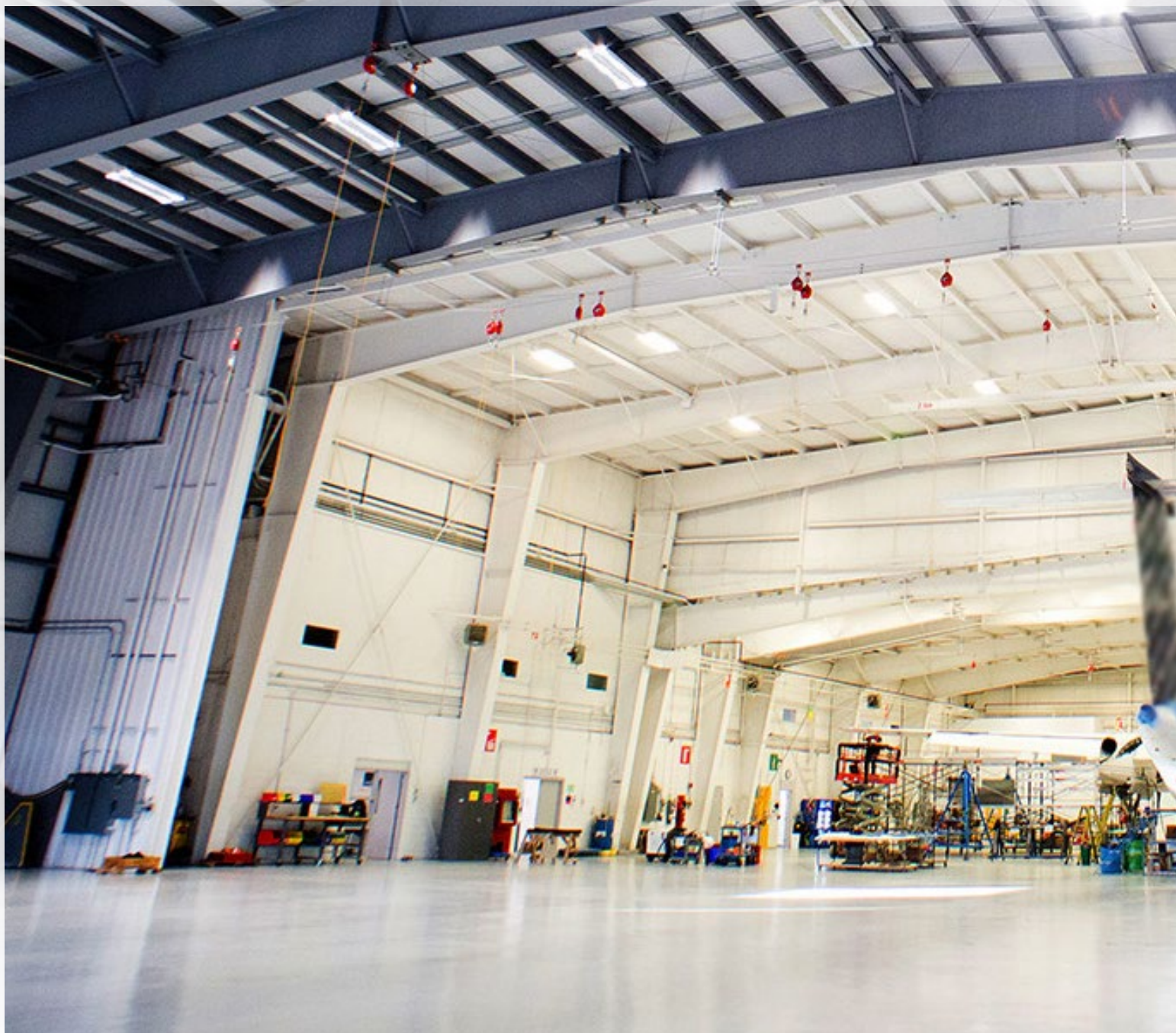


seem to be building community engagement and promotion of the industry into their very core understanding of why they exist.

Airports make good cheerleaders for pilots, and Sault Ste Marie is no exception. The Sault College flight program is part of their South College Campus and has operated from the field since 1998. They celebrated, along with the airport, a 25th anniversary this spring. In honor of that SSMADC has created four new scholarships of \$2,500 each for first year aviation program students at Sault College. The College has 11 of their aircraft based at the airport.

Most of their activity takes place in the warmer months, but they are also there for winter flying as well. For the general enthusiast, there is also the Sault Academy of Flight, which offers training for the private instead of a commercial pilot license. Given the sport hunting and fishing environment in the area, this can be a popular undertaking. There are between 20 to 25 General Aviation aircraft housed at the airport in T-hangars – which are currently full.





“Our last major upgrade was in the summer of 2021,” says Bos, “because of Covid the government of Canada made a capital assistance program accessible to regional airports, which allowed us to do some much-needed upgrades to our crosswind runway, including resurfacing and runway lights – but those funds were only in place for two years. With the assistance of AVIA NG who carried out the engineering, design, and project management, the project came in on time and within budget, so was a great success.”

“That was a \$13 million project that was on the

books for almost a decade. We’re still looking to do some work on our terminal to bring some of the front end of the terminal into the current century. I guess you could say we want to give it a facelift. We upgraded the airside ten years ago, but the terminal itself needs to be modernized.”

“We are always looking for ways to expand our GA population and offerings. We are looking at a million-dollar project to redo our car park area next year. One of the final things we have in planning is to move our administrative offices from under the tower on the second floor down





to the main area to make us more accessible, a little more public-facing, and allow us to interact more with the passengers. For right now it is trying to get our passenger numbers back up by increasing the services, and the comfort of the services we offer. Then we will be in a better position to move forward,” Bos outlines for us.

Sault Ste Marie Airport is also the home base for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources water bombing fleet. They spend the winter in the airport getting all their maintenance and servicing done, and then

during the fire season, they are often based out of other airports further north.

Every couple of weeks they bring a plane in to switch crews or for some repairs – even though the local area has been spared during this fire season, it has still made up a significant amount of airport operations.

“We have been working with Northstar Consulting when it comes to placing our airport and promoting it to customers,” Bos adds.





“They do a lot of our economic development work. As a not-for-profit, we have a lot fewer partnerships than some other airports, but we do try to treat our clients and tenants, even our passengers, as if they were family. I think that goes a long way to creating an environment of growth where people want to help enable one another. We just had a restaurant and a barber shop both open at the terminal, Hogan’s Homestead will be providing food services, and I think it is unique to have

our own barber shop on the premises.”

“I think, unfortunately, at this point, we’re still in survival and recovery mode,” he concludes.

“We did lose a lot of customers for quite a period and we’re just following the market to see where that recovery is. So obviously we’re keeping in touch with our airline partners to see if we can attract additional aircraft back to Sault Ste. Marie, whether that be our existing





airlines with some return flights coming back, or perhaps attracting new airlines.”

Anticipating what is needed, he adds, “We obviously will be working with Sunwing to hopefully be able to bring them back this winter. We had some great success with them at the end of last winter. We want to get our passenger levels back up to where they were and then we can start working on our capital and expansion plans once we are on stable footing.”

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- **Blackstone Energy Services**  
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THIEF RIVER FALLS REGIONAL AIRPORT

# INBOUND INITIATIVE TAKING OFF, LANDING GROWTH AHEAD



## AT A GLANCE

### THIEF RIVER FALLS REGIONAL AIRPORT

- WHAT:** Leading aviation hub making rapid advances in terminal infrastructure and cargo industry accommodations
- WHERE:** Northwest Minnesota
- WEBSITE:** [Thief River Falls Regional Airport](#) | [Visit Thief River Falls \(visittrf.com\)](#)





# S ARE G MUCH

**Savvy project management and strong legislative support propel Thief River Falls Regional Airport to new aviation heights**

**W**ith the pandemic safely off the radar, airports across the country are welcoming an increasing demand for air travel and cargo distribution. To capture this aviation growth, those airports with up-to-date infrastructure in place and planned upgrades in the works to ensure smooth travels are taking off to heights seen before COVID hit.

One airport up to the job at hand is Thief River Falls Regional Airport. Situated in a key aviation hub, this airport is capitalizing on the rebounding numbers and is flying smoothly into the year ahead.



# Thief River Falls, MN

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Thief River Falls, MN is a great destination for your next convention, meeting or sporting event. Thief River Falls is the hub for northwestern Minnesota for tourism, economic development and transportation. The Thief River Falls Airport offers easy access from any airport in the nation. Considering scheduling your upcoming event at any of our numerous locations. The Ralph Engelstad Arena is a world-class hockey rink that can easily be transformed into a basketball court or large event space. Add in tours and speakers from DigiKey Electronics, an international electronic component distributor. Or consider a visit to Arctic Cat, a snowmobile manufacturer that was born in Thief River Falls in 1960. An event isn't fun unless you add in a visit to our local microbrew Rivers & Rails Brewing. Maybe a tour of the Peder Engelstad Pioneer Village to get the historic background of Thief River Falls. Or enjoy our numerous outdoor activities in every season. Check out VisitTRF for more information to schedule your next convention, meeting or sporting event.

**For more information, visit:**  
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### Minnesota's Manufacturing Backbone

Established in 1945 as a public airport and later becoming an airport authority in 2010, the Thief River Falls Regional Airport has become an integral component of the daily operations of many of Minnesota's largest companies.

The state's northwest region has an incredibly robust manufacturing and distribution base focusing on—but not limited to—electronics components. Thief River Falls rests comfortably as one of the aviation giants responsible for processing, tracking, and reporting that cargo to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

 That success has allowed the airline to carry out a stable yet substantial twelve round-trip flights per week.

The airport authority is the third largest transporter of cargo in the state. According to Airport Manager Joe Hedrick, not many other airports can handle such dense payloads, saying, "I know of several [distributors] around the state, and they just don't have near the same amount of cargo going on that we do."

Thief River Falls conducts about five cargo flights daily in their operations. In addition to the feeder planes that fly out daily, its largest two operators are a pair of CRJ-200 aircraft that fly out Monday through Friday toward Louisville, KY, and Memphis, TN, the respective hubs of UPS and FedEx.

Each of those planes can hold a payload capacity of approximately 23,300 pounds, so with just those two alone, Thief River Falls can handle the bulk of its cargo demands.

### An Airline For The People

While its presence in cargo distribution is top-notch, Thief River Falls Airport isn't lacking at all when transporting passengers. Another one of its operational characteristics is its active regional airline.

Denver Air Connection, a subsidiary of Key Lime Air, also operates out of the airport, providing charter and scheduled passenger services to Minneapolis. The airline typically uses the Dornier 328 and Embraer 145 regional jets for service, with both jets capable of carrying thirty and fifty passengers, respectively.

It was no easy beginning; the airline service first connected with Thief River Falls Airport in 2020 during the height of the COVID era.

Initially, the airline's passenger numbers were sub-par—for obvious reasons—but it consistently performed with a 99% reliability rate, allowing it to withstand and grow through the loathsome



### A high-flying partnership

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Our thanks and appreciation go out to Joe Hedrick and his entire staff, not just for their part in DigiKey's daily operations, but also for their vital contribution to the economic success of the entire region.

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travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

Hedrick speaks kindly on Denver Air's success against such towering odds, saying, "I would say 2022 was the first full year of no travel restrictions... so we finished that year at a twenty-four-year high. So it was very, very successful."

That success has allowed the airline to carry out a stable yet substantial twelve round-trip flights per week.

### **A Track Record of Earned Federal Support**

The presence of Thief River Falls' regional airline was generated by the consistency of their cargo operations, which drew considerable attention to their eligibility for federal aid.

The longevity of its air travel services was also supported by the 1978 Essential Air Service Program, a federal subsidy program that provides air transportation to isolated communities and covers the deficits of the

air carriers that provide the service.

Even today, the airport authority has done so well with its airline that it qualifies for an increased level to the federal entitlement program organized by the FAA.

Because they have met the entitlement requirement of enplaning over eight thousand passengers, Thief River Falls is granted \$600,000 in federal support every year. This speaks to the airport's tremendous airline growth, as it has doubled its total passenger traffic since 2019.

Hedrick confirms that consistency of growth, stating, "there's another level after you enplane ten thousand people; your entitlement goes to one \$1 million per year... right now... we're hovering around [nine thousand]... and we like where we see ourselves."

Their strong performance has also earned Thief River Falls Airport much consideration when communicating with federal legislators about their most challenging issues.

This provides them with a roadmap to gain the experience and official certifications they need to reach the regional level, where they can find larger-scale commercial flight opportunities.

### **Accommodations For Key Workers**

It's not just federal support that has allowed Thief River Falls Airport to serve its region well; it also emphasizes prioritizing partner-passenger accommodations.

Much of its financial support has been focused on completing a twenty-year master plan of overhauls and upgrades led by Hedrick himself.

"We completed an LED lighting upgrade for our main runway, the parallel taxiway, and the apron... New wires and conduit in the ground, new regulators, so the entire system... has been replaced on the airfield," Hedrick says, referring to the difficulties on the airfield when facing harsher weather conditions.

## THIEF RIVER FALLS REGIONAL AIRPORT

Additionally, the airport is constructing a new concrete apron that it will use to support a 30,000-square-foot air cargo hangar that is also currently under construction. The project was born from a need for more space for the airport's CRJ-200 aircraft—which had an existing hangar only large enough to accommodate one aircraft at a time.

This meant that mechanics tasked with troubleshooting issues, pilots, and workers loading cargo would all have to do so in an environment totally exposed to the elements if assigned the CRJ-200 docking outside.

And considering that Minnesota weather can, at times, drop to a staggering -30 degrees, legislators like Senators Amy Klobuchar, Tina Smith, and state legislators are definitely in support of this, as all of these projects have been secured and funded with approximately \$26.5 million in federal grants.

# CONGRATULATIONS!



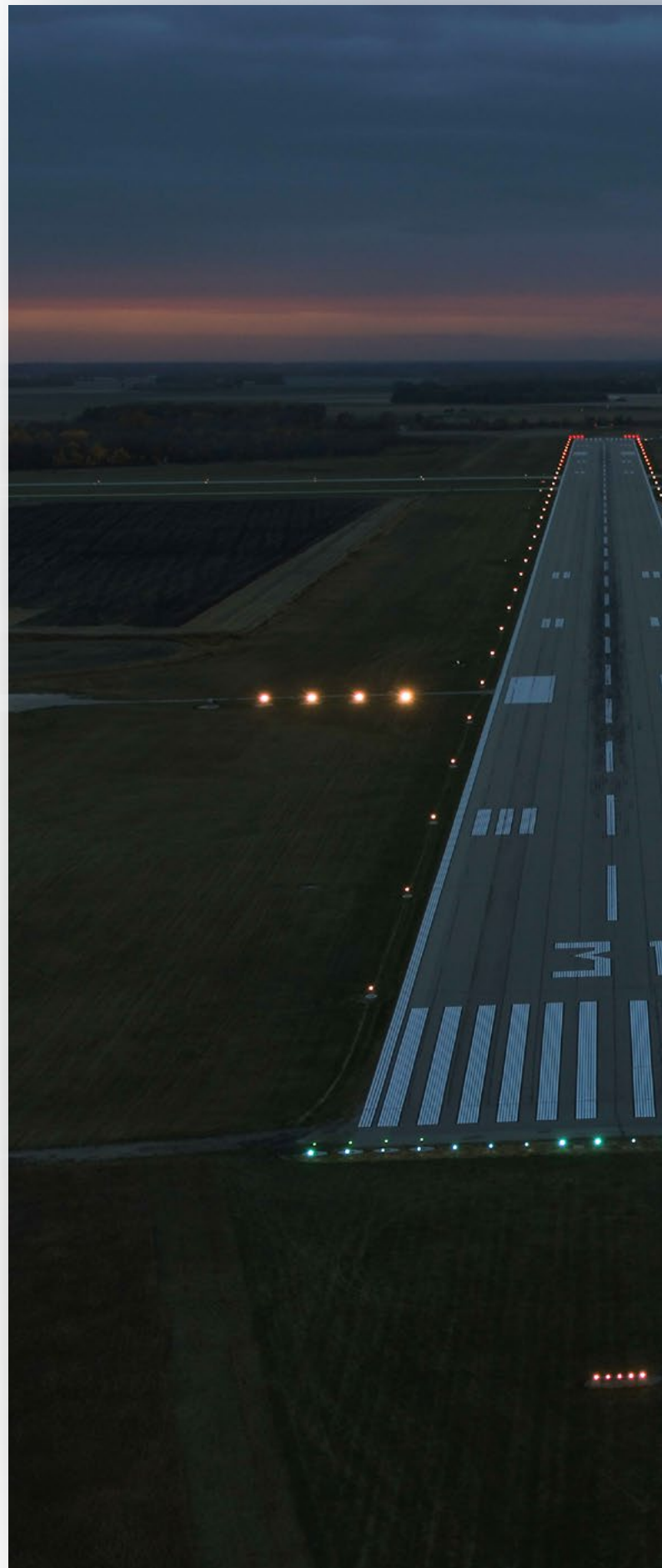
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## Corporation Considerations

Such a large sum of money hasn't only been secured for the airport personnel; many hospitals and companies also rely on the corporate flight services that Thief River Falls Airport provides to fly in medical specialists and conduct business.

Hedrick mentions a few key players that rely on them, saying, "So Arctic Cat is also based here. Arctic Cat is now owned by Textron Inc., and Textron has a lot of businesses. They own Cessna and E-Z-GO... Bell Helicopters... so they're flying in on a regular basis to conduct business in town."

In addition to these giants, there's DigiKey Electronics, the fourth-largest electronics components distributor in North America and the fifth-largest distributor worldwide—bringing in annual revenue of over \$5 billion.

Thief River Falls Airport handles approximately 20% of its total product



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alone, so with such major corporations flying in and out, proper infrastructure and storage is an undisputed must-have.

With all that aircraft traffic, there's a documented need for such an improvement to the airport authority's facilities, especially its runway. This is why Hedrick has taken things a step further and prompted the FAA to approve and extend their runway to 8000 feet by 2028-2029, which the aircraft needs to operate without any issues, including in inclement weather.

## Putting The Passenger First

Hedrick's incredible securing and funding allocation, while beneficial to workers and businesses, ultimately keeps the individual passengers at the core of its logic. Every upgrade will benefit airline travelers as well, whether directly or indirectly.

However, that doesn't mean that there won't be upgrades meant specifically for them. Because



of its growing passenger numbers and the longevity of its terminal, Thief River Falls qualifies for a competitive supplemental grant offered by the FAA via Congress.

Only 79 airports in the country receive this kind of support. Under Hedrick's direction, Thief River Falls has secured an additional \$270,000 to study the existing terminal and provide options for growth.

While more funding is being requested from state and federal sources, there is already an intention to design a new state-of-the-art terminal that considers security needs and improves the passenger experience.

It must be mentioned that the inspiration behind every dollar allocated is to increase safety and convenience for everyone involved, from the pilots to the mechanics to the passengers.

With such stellar financial management, it's



The Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit membership organization for businesses and organizations in the Thief River Falls community.

We promote local shopping and businesses, support and advocate for our members, provide opportunities for personal and professional development, and plan local events to attract and retain people in Thief River Falls.

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clear that financial viability is a primary focus. But unlike many institutions nationwide, Hedrick keeps the bottom line firmly intertwined with the needs of the people and professionals that the

Thief River Falls Regional Airport serves daily.

Pennington County is surely under the wing of top-notch authority because it's not every day that you see such well-balanced professionalism.

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WHEELING-OHIO COUNTY AIRPORT

# A GATEWAY TO THRIVING REG

Key Partnerships in aerospace  
and education cruise  
Wheeling-Ohio County Airport  
to higher altitudes

## AT A GLANCE

### WHEELING-OHIO COUNTY AIRPORT

- WHAT:** An innovative airport establishing its presence as an economic driver and industry pioneer through sustainable technology and thoughtful partnerships
- WHERE:** West Virginia
- WEBSITE:** [Wheeling - Ohio County Airport | Departments | Ohio County WV | The Official Site of the Ohio County Commission](#)



# AVIATION



**T**he aviation industry has regained traction over the last year and flight numbers tell the story. Meeting the demands of an industry that has more than bounced back after a slow journey through COVID, is no easy task; only the airports that are prioritizing key initiatives while sticking to their operation upgrading plans can truly capture this momentum.

## An economic engine for the County

The airport has two runways spanning 5,000 feet and 4,500 feet, respectively. It has remained promptly updated on its maintenance standards, completing two projects involving seal coat crack repair, asphalt patching, and repainting this year alone.







The airport also secures convenient amenities for its pilots and technicians. It provides free Wi-Fi, a snack and food area, and an FOB, providing a consistent supply of Jet A, 100 low lead fuel, and ground power units.

The airport remains firmly tapped into the daily operations of the various companies conducting business around the area. There is a large presence of commercial retail, manufacturing, and natural energy providers. So, leading companies like Form Energy, Mon Power, Appalachian Power, and Rural King all send aircraft through the airport as part of their normal operations.

According to Airport Manager Russell Escue, Wheeling-Ohio County Airport also handles many private aircraft traffic sent in by charter companies, saying, “some days the ramps are full... [there’s] no indication of what the day’s going to bring... If something is going on in Wheeling, like a meeting or a big convention, that will bring people in,” he says, commenting on the dynamic nature of the airport’s daily traffic.

In addition to commercial traffic, the runways are frequented by local hospitals that use them for medical evac.

So, with such a diversity of aircraft moving through the runways, it only makes sense that Escue prioritizes maintenance standards and proper conditions to accommodate the airport’s patrons.

### **Innovative Advancements in Sustainable Technologies**

With such a wide range of institutions using Wheeling-Ohio County Airport for business, there remains a large opportunity for collaboration among those commuting parties. The pleasant results of such collaborations have already emerged within the area.

Chief Development Officer Kevin Price for aviation, who works for the Regional Economic Development Partnership (RED), expounded on this sentiment, saying, “new technology



is coming quickly... especially with things like eVTOL, which stands for electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft. That technology... it's here."

Price predicts that eVTOL technology will make a big "splash" on the West Virginia market over the next 24 months.

To put the mainstream holding power of eVTOL tech into perspective, current small charter aircraft—like King aircraft or large corporate helicopters—cost about \$1,500 – \$1,800 an hour to operate. However, the current eVTOL aircraft coming onto the market will have the same passenger capacity with only a \$500 per hour price point to operate.

The massive gap in the operational costs

between the two technologies is extraordinarily sustainable. According to Price, "you're going to see that really open up the charter world quite a bit and really make a big difference in the State of West Virginia."

The advance signals growth for the charter sector and a surplus of opportunities for the region as a whole, as the current cutting-edge presents a new demand for research, development, and component manufacturing.

For the area's residents, that means a massive influx of new jobs and a growing need for training and industry expertise. So, Wheeling-Ohio County Airport has been collaborating with local universities to supply the future demand before it even arrives.





### Shaping the Future Through Education

To meet the current and upcoming needs of aerospace-related jobs, Wheeling-Ohio County Airport has established a partnership with Marshall University and West Liberty University.

The two universities have created a new, joint aviation program called the Bill Noe Flight School that aims to meet the nation's projected need for commercial pilots, mechanics, and crew members over the next 20 years.

Fortunately, the Wheeling-Ohio County Airport sits reliably as the program's foundation, as its students will use its facilities to undergo the program's curriculum.

This program allows students to gain hands-on experience with general aviation, component manufacturing, or final aircraft assembly, depending on their interests.

On its own, Marshall University has an Aircraft Maintenance Technician program that will be coming to the Wheeling Airport in addition to its partnership with West Liberty.

Additionally, Marshall University created a brand new School of Aviation with a four-year professional flight program and a two-year Aircraft Maintenance Technician program that has already drawn the attention of legacy airlines like Delta and American.

Price states that airlines are partnering with

## WHEELING-OHIO COUNTY AIRPORT

universities like Marshall and West Liberty, and “if the students want to fly commercially... they’re offering incentives like full tuition. And if [the students] agree to work for them for two years, they pay off their tuition.”

This grants students an incredible chance to not only gain top-notch education but to do so while graduating debt-free with the bonus of having a two-year job guaranteed the instant they finish.

And this doesn’t even factor in the incentives revolving around other non-trade programs

like aviation business management.

Ultimately, this means two amazing things. There’s now a direct route toward filling the aerospace industry’s growing job demand. And West Virginia, as the state, now has a durable anchor to hold on to as it grows as an industry leader and creator of local and non-local jobs.

And all of this has been facilitated by the presence of one critical entity: The Wheeling-Ohio County Airport.







### **A gateway to Industry advancements**

However, the advancements don't end there, as Wheeling-Ohio County Airport's strong presence within its state has also triggered the emergence of a new industry sector for West Virginia to potentially pioneer.

This results from synergy between newly developing technologies and the state's already established presence as a natural gas provider.

Just as eVTOL tech is changing the playing field for charter aircraft, there are also "a

lot of new technologies out there to create sustainable aviation fuels," says Price, hinting at the compatibility of this new efficient tech and West Virginia's abundance of natural resources.

Much of that technology is based on natural gas and hydrogen, resources the state is already exploring via its already built-out production facilities. With the pace of development and the extent of potential regarding sustainability there is much potential for growth in this area.

Price teases the possibility, saying, "there







is a huge [chance] for West Virginia to be able to take those technologies and become a nationwide leader in sustainable aviation fuels; who knows?”

### **A Diamond in the Rough**

Based on the decisive moves and investments Wheeling-Ohio County Airport and its partnered institutions have made, it's pretty clear who knows.

The biggest takeaway is a clear message from the Airport conveyed by both Price and Escue.

“We want to be the biggest contributors to the overall economic impact of the area.”

So far, they have followed through immensely on those words and are poised to do so in bigger and bolder ways in the future.

With the airport's optimal geographic location, the state's surplus of raw materials, and the chain reaction of new, emerging technologies and industries, the Wheeling-Ohio County Airport is undoubtedly one of the most integral components to the success of West Virginia as a whole.

Amazingly enough, it made all of this progress seemingly under the radar. But as time passes and the mainstream eye becomes increasingly aware of who is behind these incredible gains, the airport's efforts are sure to earn an exclusive and, hopefully, permanent spotlight as one of the nation's trailblazing aerospace establishments.

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