

THE ONTARIO BUSINESS REPORT

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Twenty-five years of whitewater adventure on the Ottawa River

Zigging and zagging through some of the world's most challenging water runs. Spinning. Dropping. Towering waves. Moments of calm as you psyche yourself up for the next attack on the rapids.

It's whitewater rafting at its best. And it's along the Ottawa River.

Twenty-five years ago, Joe Kowalski founded Wilderness Tours to give more people the opportunity to enjoy the sport that he

enjoyed so much. He had long organized rafting and canoe trips for family and friends into Algonquin Park. But when he flew over the Ottawa River and saw the fabulous scope of the rapids, it quickly became home to his business and the destination of hundreds of thousands of whitewater rafting fans worldwide.

"This is Canada's top whitewater river. It has great rapids and the water is warm," said Kowalski. "It's also in the top 10 worldwide,

in terms of popularity for rafting."

Wilderness Tours is very popular too. It is one of the top five largest rafting companies in the world with 180 employees in high-season and 35,000 people expected to shoot the rapids this summer alone. Kowalski invites each one of these guests to help Wilderness Tours celebrate its 25th anniversary, which is being marked with continuous events and programs throughout the summer.

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Wilderness Tours, one of the top five whitewater rafting companies in the world, expects 35,000 people to shoot the Ottawa River rapids with them this summer.

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Car trouble leads to economic growth, jobs for First Nation community

When Robert Schad, founder, president and CEO of Husky Injection Molding Systems (“Husky”), had his car break down when driving through Moose Deer Point First Nation, on Georgian Bay between Parry Sound and Midland, some young people from the reserve stopped and were able to get the car going again. As he drove away, Schad got to thinking how bright and mechanically minded these individuals were, and he wondered about their opportunities for the future.

Then he did more than just wonder.

Schad got together with Moose Deer Point Chief Ed Williams. Four years later, their discussions led to the groundbreaking ceremonies for Niigon Technologies, a multi-million dollar injection molding plant.

The event, held in June, was attended by the partners in the project, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Husky, The Schad Foundation and the provincial and federal governments, and included an elder prayer, a smudging ceremony, drumming and tree planting.

When the 14,000 sq. m plant opens next year, it will house up to 15 injection molding machines. It will manufacture computer, electronics, automotive and medical components for companies across North America in an environmentally responsible way.

“This first-ever Aboriginal sustainable community project is great news for the community and indeed the entire province,” said Finance Minister Ernie Eves. “The First Nation has not only developed a model that will create high tech jobs today, but will ensure a sound and prosperous future for all members of the Moose Deer Point community.”

Niigon, Ojibway for “the future”, will be owned and operated by the Moose Deer Point First Nation, which provided equity, land and human resources towards the project. The government of Ontario provided \$3.6 million in start-up and capital funding. Husky will provide the equipment, know-how and technical support until the community is able to manage the facility independently.



Present at the groundbreaking ceremonies for Niigon Technologies were: (from left) Brittany and Billy Jo Isaac, Moose Deer Point First Nation; Mayor Mike Kennedy, Township of Georgian Bay; Assistant Attorney General, Yan Lazor; Robert Schad, President, Husky Injection Molding Systems; Pat Tennant, Executive Assistant to Ernie Eves MPP; Andy Mitchell, Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Economic Development and MP for Parry Sound/Muskoka; Chief J. Edward Williams, Moose Deer Point First Nation and Jason Fisher, Councillor, Moose Deer Point First Nation.

Any company dividends will go into a trust fund set up to invest in social, environmental, wellness and infrastructure projects on the reserve.

“Not only will this project create opportunity and prosperity for the young people of our community, it will also serve as a model for improving the quality of life and self-sufficiency of Aboriginal communities across Canada,” said Chief Williams. “Our future is brighter because of this project.”

Historically, First Nation members with a post secondary degree have had to leave the community to find year-round employment. By providing sustainable knowledge-based career opportunities, Niigon will provide a strong incentive for higher education levels. The business is expected to provide up to 70 full-time jobs in a community where employment is primarily seasonal.

Peter Kendall, Executive Director of The Schad Foundation said that several First

Nation residents have already taken a program at the Canadian Plastics Training Centre at Humber College in preparation for the new opportunities. “They did exceptionally well,” he said. “One individual finished at the top of the class and others graduated with honours. Since then, the students have interned at Husky and they will become the start-up team for the facility.”

Clearly, one broken down car has made a big difference in the lives of many.

Moose Deer Point First Nation is well on its way to bringing jobs and sustainable development to its community. Niigon Technologies is considered a model for Aboriginal economic, environmental and social development across Canada.

As Schad says, “We see it as a win for everyone involved.”

From near closure to record profit a success story in Rodney

One year ago, the GKN Walterscheid plant in Rodney, midway between London and Chatham, was slated for closure. Today it is producing record numbers of quality machined components for agricultural driveline products and bringing in record profits.

"In March we had our first ever \$1 million month. Rejection rates are down to 0.6 per cent. Sales have gone up 75 per cent. Profit lines continue to double," said plant manager Frank Reeb. It's a remarkable turnaround brought about through sheer determination of management and staff.

Since it opened nine years ago, the Rodney plant had been consistently unprofitable. Its low fortunes were exacerbated by a downturn in the agricultural industry and poor labour relations. When utilization of the plant had fallen to less than 50 per cent and there was a second plant in Chicago that could pick up the slack, the head office in Europe sent word that, unless there were key improvements, the plant in Rodney would close.

Reeb was brought in to help effect the turnaround. He explained that his game plan consisted of three elements, "First, all sales are made through our parent company in Chicago, and we needed more sales. Second, we needed better labour relations. And third, we needed a good management plan to improve productivity and quality."

In such a make-or-break situation everyone pulled together. The plant made tremendous quality improvements, including moving from a batch system to a flow system. Union and management ratified a new five-year collective agreement through to October 2005. The growing competitiveness of the plant enabled the sales team in Chicago to aggressively pursue and secure new business, including contracts from three major companies.

"Head office is very pleased with the change," says Reeb. "They now see our plant as a strong supplier that is needed

to bring the product to market across North America."

There have been a number of changes in the North American agricultural market over the past three decades. With volumes steadily declining as the industry gradually changes from smaller family farms to larger agri-businesses, these changes include major technological advances, new companies with global manufacturing and distribution capabilities, and increased specialization of production facilities.

GKN Walterscheid has been at the forefront of implementing these changes. The company is known for the design and manufacture of the industry's broadest line of power transmission products, including drivelines and overload/overrunning clutches, which have been built into the world's leading farm implements for decades.

The two North American plants, in Chicago and Rodney, are a wholly-owned subsidiary of GKN Walterscheid which is based in Lohmar, Germany and operates worldwide.

"We are hoping to attract additional work from our operations in Germany," says Reeb. That seems likely since, as an indication of their satisfaction, the European head office plans to invest \$700,000 in capital improvements this year. "Seeing new equipment roll into the factory gives us just as strong a sense that we're on the right track, as does making new sales," says Reeb.

There are others who are equally pleased with the plant's turnaround. The GKN Walterscheid plant in Rodney is one of the main industries in the small town, and a majority of its 65 employees are local residents.

"We are all delighted that there is no more discussion of closure," Reeb says. "But we don't take it for granted. There are further improvements to make, and many new goals to set and achieve."

VIEWPOINT



The government of Ontario strives to provide the best customer service at every level. Our commitment is to quality, and we are privileged to work with public servants who are equally committed to quality.

Through our Quality Service Initiative, the government of Ontario has an aggressive strategy in place to improve customer service. Our trade agency, Ontario Exports Inc. has recently taken this commitment one step further.



By meeting exacting standards set through an internationally-recognized series of standards and guidelines, this organization has become the first government trade agency in North America to achieve ISO 9001 registration.

This is a remarkable achievement that took a great deal of time and effort on the part of management and staff. Equally impressive is the reason behind their efforts.

Ontario Exports regularly advises its clients, Ontario's small- and medium-sized exporters, to gain ISO registration so that their customers know that they are purchasing top-notch products and services. Ontario Exports wanted to send its own clients a clear signal that it practiced what it preached, that it was equally committed to quality within its own operation and it chose to seek certification for itself.

Congratulations to all those at Ontario Exports who worked so hard to achieve this goal. They are setting a fine example for their clients and are serving as a model for all other private sector organizations. They are also sending a very important message, that our government encourages all exporters in Ontario to hold the same high standards.

There is an old saying: success is a journey not a destination. Businesses, large and small, all across Ontario are taking this journey every day. Hundreds of thousands are committed to quality products and services, and with innovation, creativity and careful marketing these businesses are making their name on the domestic and international stage.

Our government encourages them in all of their efforts. That is why we have cut taxes and reduced red tape. It is why we have removed barriers to growth and improved trade opportunities. We know that business is critical to Ontario. Within this, high quality product and excellent customer service is most important of all.

We are proud to recognize all Ontario businesses, and all public servants, that strive to reach this goal of excellence each and every day.

Al Palladini
Minister of Economic Development and Trade

Weber Manufacturing Limited develops leading-edge tool making process

They've made everything including the kitchen sink. Over the past 38 years, Weber Manufacturing Limited in Midland has manufactured molds for hundreds of products.

Recently, they made a major investment in a new tool making technology.

"We've built the first large-scale production plant for the nickel vapour deposition process in the world," said Weber's president Reinhart Weber. "This is a significant departure from the conventional machining of steel molds."

Nickel vapour deposition (NVD) converts nickel powder into solid nickel shapes that can be used as mold cores and cavities for various molding technologies.

NVD uses a chemical process, unique to nickel, that is based on a 120-year-old technology. During this process, nickel deposits atom-by-atom onto a heated master (or "mandrel" as it is commonly known). This means that a nickel shell with a wall thickness of 6mm can be produced within 24 hours. The process replicates each and every surface feature of the mandrel, and the nickel is 99.998% pure.

The technology itself has been used by only a very few companies. Weber recognized the potential in the market; its Nickel Tooling Technology Division has been building the NVD process for the company's use since 1989.

It's been difficult and costly. First, the company had to develop the process equipment, then the mandrel technology and then the mold designs that used the NVD nickel shells. They had to develop the product and the market for the product. The final phase came in May, with the official opening of a new \$12 million highly-specialized NVD plant.

"The plant was designed and built within a remarkably short 12-month period," said Weber. "The champagne flowed when we celebrated the production of our first NVD nickel shell."

The new NVD plant has an annual capacity of 180 metric tons of nickel product. At this point, as the plant gears up to full capacity, it is running at about 54 metric tons. Weber says they intend to continue to increase volume, "We've exported our molds all around the world, primarily to Europe. We're entering the North American market only now."

The nickel shell molds will be used in products made by automotive suppliers, kitchen sink and bathtub manufacturers, for large truck body components, within the aerospace industry and more.

NVD nickel shells are outstanding in areas such as durability, dimensional stability and welding capability. A single nickel tool can also cost up to 20 per cent less than a steel tool. If multiple tools are required, savings can reach 50 per cent. This is because the mandrels are only machined and hand worked once. There have also been 10 nickel shells produced off the same mandrel.

Since Weber Manufacturing Limited set up operations in 1962, it has grown to three plants on eight hectares of land in Midland and employs 200 highly-skilled individuals.

Weber says, "We could have built our business anywhere but we like Ontario and we like the Midland area. We've been successful here."

The uniqueness of their NVD process and plant will ensure that success will continue.



Seen above are the nickel deposition chambers at Weber Manufacturing which are used for the nickel vapour deposition process.

St. Thomas company helps Boston's "Big Dig" do the job

They call Boston's "Big Dig" the largest, most complex, and technologically challenging highway project in American history. Arva Industries of St. Thomas is helping to make that challenge a little easier.

An engineering and manufacturing company that builds custom equipment for various industries, Arva Industries has built a special piece of equipment to lift and help position heavy ceiling tile for the \$10.8 billion project in Boston.

"They asked if we had a machine to do the job. We didn't, but I sat down with my partner and we devised a way," said Fred Smith, President of Arva Industries. "This one machine replaces three machines, and the development, from scratch, took about six months." The machine was delivered to Boston, and The Big Dig, at the end of June.

What is The Big Dig? It's all about re-connecting Boston to its waterfront. An elevated six-lane highway that runs through the centre of downtown, and is one of the most congested highways in the United States, will be replaced by an eight-to-10 lane underground expressway directly beneath the existing road.

When the underground highway is finished, the crumbling elevated road will be demolished and replaced by parks, open space and modest development. Construction also includes a tunnel beneath South Boston and Boston Harbor to Logan Airport.

The project spans 12 kilometres of highway and a significant amount of it is in tunnels which means a lot of ceiling tile for Arva Industries' machine to help install.

The one-of-a-kind machine has a tower that can be raised from three metres to about seven metres. The upper deck is more than 12 metres long and a little over three metres wide. It has a smaller undercarriage that is three metres wide.

"Essentially, an operator positions the machine and raises the tower," said Smith. "Using radio remote controls, he can move the 13,600 kilos pre-cast slabs with about as much flexibility as if he were moving them



Arva Industries built this roof panel installer to lift and help position heavy ceiling tile for the \$10.8 billion "Big Dig" project in Boston. The machine was tested in St. Thomas with a load of 30,300 kilos.

with his wrist, so that ultimately they can be hooked into place." The upper deck also doubles as a work platform.

Smith agrees there could be application for this machine in Toronto if the Gardiner Expressway was buried. In its recent report, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force has proposed that Toronto be reconnected with its waterfront. One recommendation is that the elevated Gardiner Expressway be removed in the central waterfront area, and a new transportation system be provided that better serves Toronto's downtown and waterfront.

Other cities also keeping a close eye on the Boston project, with an eye to improving the quality of life for their own residents, include New York City, Tokyo, London and Detroit.

"We shipped the machine by truck in June," said Smith. "Two of our employees went along, drove it into the tunnel and trained the operators." It will be in use for a while with the scheduled completion of

The Big Dig being in December 2004.

Since it opened in 1980, Arva Industries has been building similar unique and customized equipment. As one example, the company has built equipment for the Toronto Transit Commission, including snowblowers and railway wash cars and maintenance cars.

In addition to the design and manufacture of machinery, Arva Industries also performs engineering consulting, and rebuilding, re-manufacturing and repair of cranes and industrial equipment.

"We're still growing," said Smith. "We have other products that we've developed, and we're working on establishing markets for them. For instance, we're taking an old Caterpillar excavator and putting a crane boom on it making it a very fine tool for the drainage business."

With ingenuity and determination, Arva Industries is making sure that industries have the equipment they need to best do their jobs. Just ask the folks in Boston

Ontario Exports Inc.

first government trade agency in North America to earn ISO 9001 registration

Ontario Exports Inc. regularly provides business counselling to Ontario's small- and medium-sized enterprises to help them expand their export base. Often, staff recommend companies obtain designation from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to demonstrate their compliance with international quality standards.

The day came when the agency decided to take its own advice.

As a result, Ontario Exports Inc. has become the first government trade agency in North America to gain ISO 9001 registration.

"I'm very proud of our team at Ontario Exports Inc. which has now achieved the same recognized level of quality that it

encourages its own clients to pursue," said Minister of Economic Development and Trade Al Palladini. "I've always said that government needs to be run more like a business. This registration speaks to our own credibility as Ontario's lead trade agency."

Palladini made these comments at an event held to recognize the significant achieve-



Economic Development and Trade Minister Al Palladini (2nd from right) was joined by (from left): Anthony LaMantia, Ontario Exports Inc.; and Frank Cannataro and Nick Lucchese, Elistan Food Distributors at a press conference announcing Ontario Exports Inc.'s achievement of ISO 9001 registration.



Ontario Exports Inc. staff celebrate their membership in the ISO 9000 family of standards with Economic Development and Trade Minister Al Palladini and Deputy Minister Barbara Miller. Ontario Exports Inc. has become the first government trade agency in North America to gain ISO 9001 registration.

ment of Ontario Exports Inc., as well as to unveil the new graphics that will be used to identify its accomplishment.

The ISO 9000 family of standards, including ISO 9001, represents a consensus of 110 countries on good management practices which have been developed into a set of standardized requirements for a quality management system. They provide a tested framework that helps ensure that an organization can deliver products or services that consistently meet the customer's quality standard.

More than 300,000 organizations worldwide are ISO registered. Ontario represents 42 per cent of all ISO registrations in Canada and 11 per cent of all ISO registered companies in North America.

Attaining registration is a rigorous process. Staff and management at Ontario Exports Inc. worked together to review policies and procedures, and design new and better processes. They refined the organization's vision, quality objectives and its pledge to customers. Training sessions were held and on-site audits were conducted.

"Achieving ISO 9001 registration is a clear signal of our commitment to excellence and quality customer service," said Ontario Exports Inc. board chair William Saunderson. "We want our own export clients to exhibit these standards to buyers of Ontario products and services."

Achieving this registration is also consistent with the Ontario government's own common service standards to improve cus-

tomers service at every level. "This designation is a true measure of the quality and dedication of Ontario's public servants," said Palladini.

"It was well worth the effort. ISO 9001 registration not only underlines our commitment to quality service and to improved productivity and efficiency, it also makes a statement of credibility to our own clients. You can't beat that."

Premier Harris launched Ontario Exports Inc. in February 1999. This agency of approximately 40 full-time employees helps small- and medium-sized businesses learn about exporting and expanding into new global markets and connects foreign buyers with Ontario suppliers.

CDA Industries Inc. grows with Free Trade

There was a time when Vince DeVita was convinced that free trade sounded the death knell of his Ontario company, CDA Industries Inc. But as DeVita recently cut the ribbon on his brand new 72,900 sq. m plant in Pickering, he realized that CDA Industries was one of the first truly North American companies owing its success in large part to free trade.

CDA Industries is one of North America's leading point-of-purchase display companies with in-house capabilities for designs, engineering and manufacturing in wood, metal, plastic and wire. The successful marketing and merchandise company employs more than 300 workers in the Pickering plant and a total of more than 400 staff on both sides of the border.

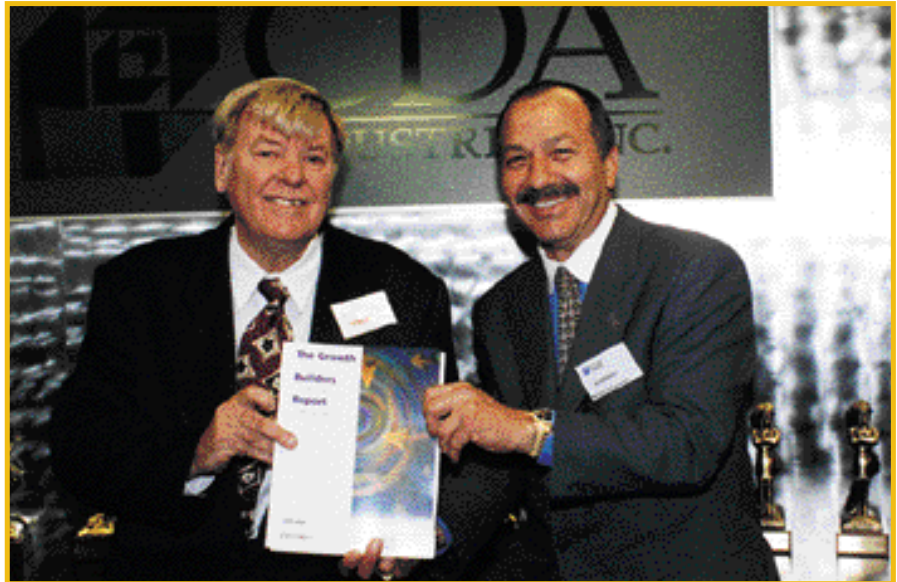
DeVita started CDA Industries in 1954, armed with a Business Administration degree from the University of Toronto and a \$100,000 bank loan. He had learned about the point-of-purchase industry working in the family business and was now on his own.

"In the first year of operations we hit 14 per cent profit," DeVita recalls fondly.

Operating out of a Scarborough plant, CDA became a successful enterprise that depended on hard work and good people.

"I've always said I could take five to seven people from my company and run any business except maybe the space industry," DeVita said. "The three keys to our success have been time, experience and money. You need all three ingredients to be successful. You have to work hard, gain the experience and have the money. Two alone won't do it."

But in 1987, when DeVita heard that free trade was about to become a fact of life, he panicked. Former Federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Pauline Browes, was the MP for Scarborough Centre, the riding where CDA was situated.



Economic Development and Trade Minister Palladini presented CDA Industries President Vince DeVita with a copy of the Growth Builders Report at the ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of the company's new 72,900 sq. metre plant. CDA Industries is a leading growth firm. Leading growth firms create over 35% of all new jobs in Ontario and the number is growing.

"I remember meeting with Vince in 1987 and he was quite concerned about the imminent arrival of free trade," said Browes. "He also made his displeasure quite apparent. We met about a year later and his views had turned around 100 per cent. He was very appreciative of the opportunity afforded his company with the negotiation of the FTA by our government. CDA became one of the first truly North American companies."

"Free trade was our saviour," DeVita agreed. "It turned the tide in the minds of Americans about dealing with foreigners. As soon as we put a plant in the U.S. it changed their mindset."

DeVita established an office at the CNN Center in Atlanta in 1989 and five years later, he built a 42,000 sq. m plant. His company now has annual sales of \$60 million.

"The market in North America is \$12 billion," DeVita said. "Of that, corrugated

and non-permanent point of purchase materials count for half. We're only interested in permanent P.O.P., which makes our market \$6 billion. We're projecting that our portion will be sales of \$100 million by 2002."

"Our advantage is that we can serve the southern and mid-western states from our Atlanta plant and we can serve the northern states from the Pickering plant," DeVita said.

It also helps that the company is able to produce 95 per cent of its display components in-house. What's in the future for CDA? The next stop is California.

"We're on the expansion trail," he said. "We'll build a plant in California by the end of 2002. We might also look at building an assembly plant in Brazil. But our flagship will still be in Pickering."

Ontario, Canada, North America and eventually global, CDA is going where many Ontario companies want to follow.

Maple 6 makes mathematical analysis easier for professionals and students

Waterloo Maple is a world leader in mathematical and analytical software. And it's another tremendous success story in Ontario's high-tech industry.

The company has just launched Maple 6, the latest version of its software that automates the calculation of complex, theoretical math. It gives users an error-free, instantaneous response to math problems, detailing all the mathematical analysis and equations used to solve them.

"This program can be applied to every field of engineering, science and technology and is typically used to do the theoretical analysis that goes into the design of a new product," said Ian Suttie, President and CEO. "For example, if engineers were designing a new engine for a car, they would use this math program to predict the performance in advance, rather than building the engine first and then seeing the performance levels."

A student version of Maple 6 is also available. It helps students better understand concepts in areas such as trigonometry, algebra and statistics, and it's used for broad applications by math and science students.

Waterloo Maple is a privately-held company that was established in 1988, as one of the original software companies in the Waterloo area. More than a million people worldwide use Maple technology and there have been more than 300 books written about Maple applications.

Ted Arnott, Parliamentary Assistant to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, applauded the company's success when he attended its recent launch ceremonies. "Your innovation and growth means further growth and innovation for the Region of Waterloo, for the Province of Ontario, and for

educators and businesses worldwide, who will advance with you," he said.

Waterloo Maple is one of only two companies in the world capable of its particular technology. "What sets us apart is that we still have very strong roots within the research community," said Dr. Tom Lee, Vice President of Marketing. "We maintain joint partnerships with research groups at several universities, and that allows us to

Centre for Computer Algebra. This new research centre brings two distinguished scientists to Ontario each year to occupy chairs in computer algebra.

"The research institutions interact closely with us, and they understand what we're trying to do in the market," said Lee. "Often they can find research projects that not only fulfill their intellectual requirements but also feed our business needs as well."



Waterloo Maple is housed in the award winning landmark site of the former Seagram Distillery (circa 1880) in Waterloo. A pyramid of 770 whisky barrels marks the entrance to the company.

provide advanced technology much faster. There is also a fair bit of government support for various types of research initiatives, and we take full advantage of that."

The technology used by Maple was initially developed by the University of Waterloo's Symbolic Computation Group. The company continues to maintain a research partnership with this institution, as well as with the University of Western Ontario, Simon Fraser University in British Columbia and four other universities in Europe.

To further assist in developing this knowledge, last year Waterloo Maple joined with the government of Ontario, through the Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund, and the Universities of Waterloo and Western Ontario, in establishing the \$4.6 million Ontario Research

In terms of staffing, Waterloo Maple has worked hard to attract and keep their highly-skilled employees. The company is proud of a program that helps its 110 staff members balance their career with their home life. It includes a concierge who is available to help all employees with time-consuming errands or personal duties, as well as a free health bar, flex time and stock options company-wide.

Also unique is the physical site. In 1998, the company moved into the former Seagram Distillery. The building had been a museum for many years and when the city offered to lease it out,

Waterloo Maple jumped at the chance.

"We wanted to invest in the community, and turn this building into something that would fit into the vision of the city, which is as a vibrant commercial centre for high-tech as well as other industries, and also to preserve its heritage," said Lee. The result is an eye-catching building that has revitalized growth in the area.

Within that building, on Erb Street West in Waterloo, the buzz is that the new Maple 6 is very successful. Users are upgrading and the company recently signed a major deal with a U.S. government agency, as well as with the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Suttie says, "Customers worldwide are recognizing that Maple 6 is a strong step forward in analytical and mathematical computations."

Twenty-five years of whitewater adventure on the Ottawa River

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A key component to the business's success is that it has made whitewater rafting a destination. "We're five and six hours from Toronto and Buffalo and areas with major populations," Kowalski said. "So we needed to package our rafting along with accommodation and meals, off-river recreation and entertainment."

Visitors can stay at a resort owned and operated by Wilderness Tours which Kowalski refers to as an adventure resort. "People come here to take in all the water activities as well as bungee jumping, mountain biking and various sports. It's an action-packed, adventure holiday," he says.

Corporate groups have also taken to running the rapids as a great team building exercise. Wilderness Tours plans to gear additional programs towards corporate training. They've just been selected by Algonquin College to provide all the outdoor instruction in a two-year diploma program on Outdoor Education, and will build on this association to take team building and leadership through rafting to its next level.

Kowalski gives the Harris government a certain amount of credit for his booming business. "I've seen a real change in business and consumer confidence since this government was elected, and that has had a 100 per cent correlation to the amount of business we get," he says.

The business has indeed expanded well beyond whitewater rafting. Wilderness Tours also operates a kayak school on the Ottawa River, which has introduced thousands of people to the sport of kayaking. It owns a ski resort at Mt. Pakenham, as Kowalski says, "to give our summer employees something to do in the winter."

It also owns and operates Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours which runs the rapids of the lower Niagara Gorge at Niagara Falls, long considered the Mt. Everest of whitewater rapids. "If you can imagine a World War II landing craft that has a space-age high-tech look and is powered by jet engines, that's a jet boat," said Kowalski.

Each one-hour tour takes 48 people into the ferocious currents of the Whirlpool. Do they get wet? No. They get soaked. They also get a first-hand, close up look at what the water does when it thunders over Niagara Falls and into the river canyon below. It's estimated that 100,000 adventurers will take Jet Boat tours this summer.

All water programs also have a family element, suitable for ages seven and up. Kowalski tells the story of taking his sister, Jill, rafting with her young family along the Ottawa River. They took a route along Ottawa's

calmer middle channel which still thrilled the children and had his sister exclaim that it was the best day the family had spent together. Considering that Jill's husband was an airline pilot and they regularly flew to attractions around the world, her comments spawned Wilderness Tour's gentle family adventures.

Twenty five years has seen a lot of growth and change at Wilderness Tours.

Kowalski is justifiably proud that his company is a strong voice for modern outdoor wilderness recreation in Ontario. He says, "Rafting appeals to a broad range of people. It's high energy and hip and fun. Wilderness Tours is proud to give a sizzling image to outdoor tourism in Ontario."

Wilderness Tours can be reached at 1-800-267-9166 or visit their Web site at www.wildernesstours.com



Wilderness Tours has expanded its business to include a kayak school, ski resort, and whirlpool jet boat rides on the Niagara River, in addition to its adventure resort.



BUSINESS BRIEFS

First Nation business celebrates self sufficiency and community spirit

Those who drive along Highway 6 just west of the town of Hagersville may well pull in to the New Credit Variety and Gas Bar ("NCVGB") to fill their tank.

They would be following in the tire tracks of many. "We just passed our one-year anniversary," said manager Dan Zemba. "We came in three years ahead of forecast and made a profit in our first year."



Dan Zemba, general manager watches as Chief Dan LaForme cuts the cake to celebrate the 1st anniversary of the New Credit Variety and Gas Bar near Hagersville.

The NCVGB is the only operation of its type in Ontario that is 100 per cent owned and operated by a First Nations community. Chief Dan LaForme and the Council of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation chose to invest in the business to create economic growth, but also to give band members work experience and teach them to manage a business. When individuals are fully

trained, they are expected to move on to other opportunities and free up their position for another trainee. Currently, there are 12 band members employed at NCVGB.

Profits from the store have been funneled back into the community. At the celebrations for the store's one-year anniversary, Chief LaForme presented cheques to assist the local recreation association, as well as to fund a graduation ceremony for students.

In this and many other ways, the entrepreneurial spirit of the 840 band members who live on the 6,000-acre reserve is flourishing. One band member has established a buffalo farm, which is attracting considerable interest. Additionally, a commercial and industrial development built by the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, and anchored by the NCVGB, has attracted several tenants many of whom have employed band members.

"We're interested in pursuing ideas that will help those on the reserve become self-sufficient," said Zemba.

UED forum focused on downtowns

More than 150 economic development related professionals including representatives from business improvement areas, chambers of commerce and downtown consultants from across Ontario attended the June 14th Downtown Forum, at the Novotel, North York. The forum hosted by the Office for Urban Economic Development, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade brought together expert speakers to talk about best practices and innovative ideas in downtown revitalization.

Joe Berridge, a partner with Urban Strategies Inc. and a speaker at the forum stated that our downtowns need a better image and presentation, beauty, a good balance of services including businesses catering to work and play, and improved environments. The consensus among speakers and attendees – a forum on the topic of downtowns was long overdue.

For copies of the presentations, visit the ministry's Urban Economic Development Web site at

www.ontario-canada.com/ued

Correction

In the May 2000 issue, the story entitled "Ontario Global Trader Awards celebrate international trade success" stated the six winning companies created 2,576 jobs over the last two years. In fact, these jobs were created collectively by the nearly 200 companies and individuals who competed for the awards.

We regret the error.

Masterpieces on exhibit at the National Gallery of Canada

Celebrate the light this summer as the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa presents the renowned exhibition *Monet, Renoir and the Impressionist Landscape*.

More than 65 paintings of the French landscape by artists including Monet, Renoir, Gauguin and van Gogh will be on view until August 27.

These masterpieces are on loan from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the organizers of the exhibition. The National Gallery of Canada is the first North American, and only Canadian, stop on the exhibition's tour.

"This exhibition presents a selection of the most prized Impressionist works from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, masterpieces which reveal the pioneering vision of a group of painters that revolutionized art and virtually created the modern landscape," said Pierre Théberge, Director of the National Gallery of Canada. "The Impressionists, led by Claude Monet, generated new ways of thinking about nature, painting and art."



Camille Monet and a Child in the Artist's Garden in Argenteuil. Claude Monet 1875

Monet, Renoir, and the Impressionist Landscape is a survey of the French landscape from its rise to prominence in the 1850s

to the end of the nineteenth century.

Tickets may be purchased at the Gallery or by calling 1-888-541-8888.

THE ONTARIO BUSINESS REPORT

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The focus of this newsletter is on business – news, trends, opportunities, challenges and issues affecting Ontario's business climate. Information is drawn from ministries and agencies across government and from other public sources believed to be reliable. All efforts are made to ensure timeliness and accuracy.

La version française du Ontario Business Report est disponible sous le titre Cahier des affaires de l'Ontario.

Comments and proposed contributions are welcomed. Please write by mail or fax.



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Rich Dad Poor Dad
Robert T. Kiyosaki

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Spencer Johnson

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David Chilton

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Thomas Stanley

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