

Throne speech reflects **priorities** of **Ontarians**



MaRS Discovery
District
[page 2](#)



Home comforts draw
visitors to Port Perry's
Settlement House
[page 8](#)



A growing
tradition
[page 11](#)



Open for business:
St. Marys
[page 14](#)

On April 30, the Ontario legislature re-opened with a speech from the throne that outlined the government's plans and priorities for the years ahead. Presented by the Honourable James K. Bartleman, lieutenant-governor of Ontario, the throne speech focused on a strong Ontario economy that will continue to support investments in health care and education.

"Ontario has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past eight years," said Ontario Premier Ernie Eves. "Only strong and experienced leadership will protect and expand the gains we have made so that the promise of Ontario can be enjoyed by all citizens."

Since 1995, the government has helped create more than one million jobs, announced 225 tax cuts, removed barriers to growth, eliminated a potential \$11-billion deficit, started paying down Ontario's debt and helped over 600,000 people get off welfare. Ontario's economy has grown faster than Canada's as a whole for the past six years, and private sector forecasters predict it will grow faster than that of any of the G-7 nations during 2003–2004.

continued on page 5



The Honourable James K. Bartleman delivers the throne speech at the opening of the fourth session of the 39th Parliament of Ontario

Photo credit: Jay Millington



Ontario

MaRS Discovery District

aims to create a global address for commercialization

Jim Flaherty, Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, high-lighted the ministry's \$20-million investment in the Medical and Related Sciences (MaRS) Discovery District at an unveiling at the construction site in Toronto on April 22. The unveiling was followed by an official launch of the project on May 12.



Architects' rendering of the MaRS Centre in Toronto that is now under construction

MaRS, which aims to accelerate commercialization of academic research, is already attracting attention from researchers and entrepreneurs worldwide.

That's because the MaRS Centre, a \$345-million, 1.3-million-square-foot convergence complex, is located right next door to the University of Toronto and its affiliated research institutes, one of the largest concentrations of medical research in North America. A stone's throw away is Bay Street, an important source of venture capital.

"The goal of MaRS is to help great science become great business," says John Cook, MaRS president and chief operating officer. "MaRS also represents a unique opportunity to capitalize on Toronto's and Ontario's expertise in bioscience, as well as in high-performance computing, software, nanotechnology and photonics."

Cook notes that, while it is located in Toronto, MaRS is designed to be the catalyst that brings together university and hospital research centres from all over the province, Canada and, ultimately, the globe. Development of new commercialization, scientific and network services, as well as phase 1 construction, are all well under way.

Phase 1 will provide space for companies in the incubation and post-incubation stages. It will also include research labs and professional services, such as Canadian and international venture-capital offices, legal firms, patent offices, accounting firms and human-resource consultants. Phase 2 will house more-developed companies.

To date, MaRS has raised \$100-million through the MaRS Development Trust, an innovative 30-year bond backed by a net credit lease, and another \$66-million through various sources, including \$20-million from the government of Ontario, \$20-million from the federal government, \$4.5-million (in-kind) from the City of Toronto, \$10-million from the Ontario Innovation Trust and \$5-million from the University of Toronto. More than \$11-million has come from private companies and individuals.

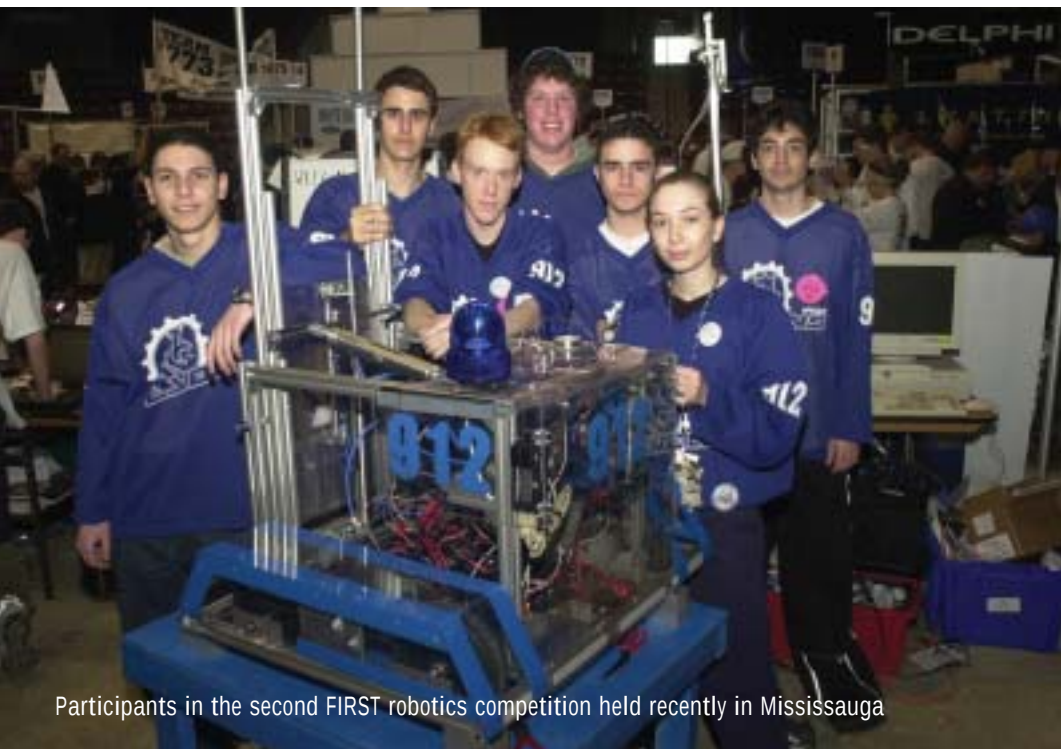
FIRST robotics competition introduces students to science and technology

The second annual FIRST Canadian Regional Robotics Competition has helped spark the next generation of scientists, technologists, engineers and entrepreneurs. The FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competition occurred March 28 and 29 in Mississauga, and included 53 teams from across North America – 38 from Ontario – each of which designed, created a prototype for, built and tested a robot.

“All robots are designed and built in six weeks by teams of 30 to 40 students representing a single high school,” explained Mark Breadner, Director of FIRST Canadian Regional Robotics Competition. “Each team is given a common set of basic components and a remote control unit, then the robot must be developed within specific size and weight limits. However, what the robot does is completely up to the team.”

The competitions are high-tech spectator sporting events, in which the robots compete against each other in timed challenges. For instance, in Stack Attack, opposing teams race to gather and stack the most plastic bins in two minutes. Individual teams are locally sponsored by a range of automotive, manufacturing, energy and finance companies, and supported by teachers and mentors. FIRST awards recognize excellence in design, teamwork and performance, as well as web site design, 3-D animation, desktop publishing, marketing and public relations.

continued on page 5



Participants in the second FIRST robotics competition held recently in Mississauga

The throne speech is a symbol of our parliamentary democracy. It traditionally tells Ontarians about the government's plans and priorities for the years ahead. On April 30, lieutenant-governor James K. Bartleman delivered a throne speech that followed in this tradition – with a special twist.



This throne speech was based on a historic consultation process that encouraged the participation of all Ontarians. Our government is committed to ensuring that our vision for Ontario reflects the interests of all citizens so that we can shape the future of this province together.

During the consultation, Ontarians told us of their priorities – a strong economy and good jobs, equal opportunities in education, health care they can count on, a healthy environment and strong communities – and presented their views and ideas on how to keep Ontario strong. We listened. And we responded. The throne speech sets out an ambitious action plan to keep our province both competitive and compassionate.

Our vision is fundamentally based on a strong economy. We know that a strong economy gives us the means to invest in Ontarians' priorities. And we remain committed to lowering taxes as a spur to job creation and greater revenues. Our government plans to move forward on another 17 proposed cuts including those to help our business community become even more competitive, innovative and successful.

The throne speech also highlighted government priorities, such as strengthening our health-care system, promoting excellence in education and protecting our natural environment for future generations. We plan to ensure that government is more accountable for the tax dollars it spends, our streets are safer and our borders are secure. Our plan also includes supporting the most vulnerable and building a better quality of life for every Ontario family.

Our government is committed to fulfilling the promise of Ontario. We will continue to make the tough decisions necessary to keep our province strong. We are committed to a competitive, innovative economy that will provide all Ontarians with hope and opportunity.

Jim Flaherty
Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation

EthicsCentre promotes corporate and social responsibility

Four Seasons Hotels, Nike Canada, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, Bank of Montreal, AstraZeneca Canada, Bell Canada – all very different corporations that have at least one thing in common.

*Company: EthicsCentre CA
Sector: Not-for-profit
Location: Toronto
Web site: www.ethicscentre.ca*

They're all members of EthicsCentre CA (Canadian Centre for Ethics and Corporate Policy), a not-for-profit organization that promotes the consideration of ethical values in the decision-making processes and practices of businesses and other organizations.

In the post-Enron, post-WorldCom environment, interest in business ethics is heightened, as shareholders and consumers demand higher standards of corporate and social responsibility.

"Today, companies and organizations are being judged not only on their financial performance but also on their ethical performance," says Ellen Mary Mills, executive director of EthicsCentre CA. "Increasingly, firms and individuals are being held accountable for their actions."

The centre's interests in ethical business standards go back much farther than the dramatic downfall of the two U.S. business giants and the aftermath. In fact, the centre's roots go back to the King Bay Chaplaincy, a ministry established in Toronto's financial district in the mid-1980s. It was a time of downsizing, and Rev. Graham Tucker, who founded the centre to help stressed employees, realized there was a need to apply ethical principles to the operations of businesses. He established a group of like-minded people to examine issues of ethical management and corporate policies, and the Canadian Centre for Ethics and Corporate Policy was born.

Today, the centre is a secular organization. Its members include more than 200 of Canada's leading companies and institutions, all interested in fostering principled leadership and ethical decision-making.

The centre fulfils its mandate through a number of activities, including its luncheon speakers series, seminars and conferences, which have featured some of the country's most respected experts on the subject of organizational ethics. The centre also hosts roundtables and senior management workshops, at which business leaders and ethics practitioners can share their views on ethical issues and dilemmas. And for organizations facing ethical issues, EthicsCentre CA has a roster of experts available for consultation.

"The challenge for many companies today is that they have to deliver not just to the outside world, their shareholders and consumers, but also to their staff, who are the ones creating, marketing and selling the products or services and who want to work for organizations in which ethics and decision-making compliment each other," explains Howard Kaufman, EthicsCentre CA Chair, and a lawyer with Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP in Toronto, member organization of the centre.

That means promoting ethical and socially responsible leadership at every level of an organization, but, as Kaufman points out, it's worth the effort. "Companies that are serious about ethics and corporate responsibility and who incorporate these objectives into their values and decision-making processes usually find that it results in a competitive advantage. It helps them recruit and retain employees, sell their products or services and, ultimately, contribute positively to the bottom line."



continued from page 1

Government strengthens industry competitiveness

The throne speech was developed following an innovative consultation process that gave Ontarians the opportunity to present their opinions and viewpoints to the province. Eves said, “I believe Ontarians don’t just want to be led by government. They want the government to take its lead from the people. We reached out and asked everyone in Ontario to tell us what we could do to keep Ontario strong and prosperous.”

More than 10,000 people participated in the consultation – online, by fax, by mail or in person. “Clearly, Ontarians feel passionate about the need to keep building on our economic prosperity, which is the foundation that allows us to invest in priority areas,” said Eves. “The throne speech outlines Ontario’s plan for building on the progress we have made.” Highlights include:

A Strong Economy

- Providing an additional 17 tax cuts for businesses, seniors and hardworking Ontarians.
- Introducing a comprehensive approach to Ontario’s energy sector, including increasing supply, creating an integrated conservation plan and ensuring stable pricing.
- Announcing a comprehensive rural strategy.

Quality Health Care

- Pledging to help hospitals deal with SARS-related backlogs, compensate workers, and protect and promote Ontario’s economy. The government introduced the SARS Assistance and Recovery Strategy Act on the first day of the session. The bill was passed by the legislative assembly in a single sitting.

- Investing \$1 billion in a new Cancer Research Institute of Ontario.
- Committing to purchasing an additional 20 MRI machines and five new CT scanners.

Excellence in Education

- Creating more than 135,000 new post-secondary student places – the largest capital investment in Ontario universities and colleges since the 1960s.
- Increasing annual investment in colleges and universities and requiring better accountability for results.
- Encouraging young people to pursue careers in the skilled trades.

Good Government

- Introducing legislation to provide quality auditors for health, education and municipal services to ensure that high-quality, effective services are delivered and that funding is used for its intended purpose.
- Requiring unions to operate on principles of democracy, transparency and accountability.

“Our government is committed to building on the strength of this province and providing Ontarians with all the opportunities afforded by a strong economy,” said Jim Flaherty, Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. “We look forward to continuing to work together with all citizens to identify and invest in priorities and to realize the full promise of Ontario.”

continued from page 3

FIRST robotics competition

“The FIRST Canadian Regional Robotics Competition is an excellent way to motivate youth and get them interested in learning,” says Jim Flaherty, Minister of Enterprise Opportunity and Innovation. “Our government is proud to be a sponsor of this competition. It effectively demonstrates how science and technology offer many exciting opportunities, and that science, math, engineering and invention can be fascinating. It also makes students aware of the skills and education they need to pursue a career in this interesting field.”

“FIRST is an investment in the young minds of Ontario,” says Breadner. “The students are challenged and extremely enthusiastic. They have so much fun they forget that they’re learning.”



Minister Jim Flaherty speaking at the second FIRST robotics competition

Innovation helps Pegasus Industrial Specialties create a niche for itself

When Pegasus Industrial Specialties Inc. decided it was time to expand into the Mexican market, it knew it would need some help.

*Company: Pegasus Industrial Specialties Inc.
Sector: Manufacturing
Location: Guelph
Web site: www.pegasus-glass.com*

“It’s a new market for us, and a very different one,” says vice-president Ron Trent, “so we turned to Ontario Exports Inc. [OEI] to help us get our foot in the door. We told them what we needed, and the in-market consultant in Mexico City helped us locate the right distributor for us. Then, of course, it was up to us to follow through.”

Fortunately, following through has never been a problem for the Guelph-based company, which develops and manufactures industrial and scientific glass products for a wide range of industries, including aerospace, automotive, pharmaceutical, environmental and chemical.

Pegasus got its start in 1993 and it has carved a successful niche for itself by staying on top of its markets – and picking up business that giants like Corning and Schott considered too small.

“Our size has really worked for us,” says Trent, who notes that the company employs just 12 people.

“Because we’re lean, we can move fast when we spot an opportunity, and that’s an important advantage in a competitive business like ours.”

Pegasus makes dozens of leading-edge glass products for thousands of clients in Canada and the United States – Xerox, General Motors, Tyco and JDS Uniphase are just a few of its customers. Last year, Pegasus posted sales of more than \$5 million, a figure that’s all the more impressive when you learn it’s double the company’s 2001 sales.

“The key to our success has been our innovation, both in terms of our products and our marketing,” says Trent.

The fast-growing company, which markets itself via its Internet site, trade shows and trade directories, knows its sectors inside and out and is constantly adding to its product line in response to industry demands.

Pegasus is also always on the lookout for expansion opportunities.

“Right now, approximately 60 per cent of our sales are international, mostly to the U.S.,” says Trent. “Mexico is looking promising, and from there we’ll move into Central and South America.”

He adds, “We’ll be using OEI’s in-market service for that as well.”

While Pegasus is clearly on the move when it comes to expanding its products and markets, the family-owned and -operated business will stay headquartered in Guelph.

“Guelph is a high-tech industrial center, so we’re able to get the kinds of workers we need,” explains Trent. “It’s also close to the U.S. border, which is important for distribution, and, of course, we have relatively low business costs.”

Rio Grande

With Mexico's GDP expected to grow by 3.3 per cent this year and 4 per cent in 2004, more and more Ontario companies are seeing the potential in exporting to our other NAFTA partner. Ontario Exports Inc., the province's export development agency, helps exporters and potential exporters tap into this growing market.

*Company: Ontario Exports Inc.
Sector: Exports
Location: Toronto
Contact: Fred.Sheehy@eoi.gov.on.ca*

“Competition is brisk since Mexico now has trade agreements with 30 nations,” said Fred Sheehy, international marketing consultant responsible for Mexico at Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI). “I advise companies that are entering the Mexican market to do some serious market research here in Ontario. Once they have a basic business plan to demonstrate that they’re export-ready, I refer them to our in-market consultant in Mexico City, who can guide them through the process of getting their product or service to market.”

The subtleties of the Mexican market extend far beyond the obvious factors of language, currency and regulations. Gabriela Esquinca is OEI’s in-market consultant in Mexico City and specializes in getting new exporters on the road to sales success (see Pegasus story, opposite).

“The key to doing business in Mexico is understanding that you are dealing with a different culture,” said Esquinca. “Mexicans like to do business with people they feel comfortable with, so a supplier has to gain their confidence and respect. You must be consistent with personal contact and followup. And you must make a commitment to the market.”

That market offers a lot of potential to Ontario companies. Mexico is now the Latin American leader in attracting



foreign direct investment, and inflation is at its lowest rate (five per cent last year) in 31 years. Sixty five percent of Mexico’s 102 million people are between the ages of 15 and 64. Sectors showing particular promise include automotive (OEM and aftermarket), environmental, construction, mining and advanced manufacturing.

“There are several market-entry strategies that are effective in Mexico,” said Esquinca. “Many companies use direct exporting, which includes using sales reps, agents, distributors or a sales trading company in Mexico. Others set up a subsidiary sales office or a partnership, or use local manufacturing. Every strategy has its place, and we help Ontario companies make the right choice.”

OEI’s in-market service provides exporters with sector-specific market information, opportunity identification and matchmaking services, trade missions, ground support for incoming visits to Mexico, contact lists and promotional services. They also help exporters bridge the language barrier, a crucial point for many new exporters.

“Ontario companies are often competing with American and European firms that have a long history in Mexico,” said Esquinca. “Our services can put them on an equal footing so they can compete and win.”



Home comforts

draw visitors to Port Perry's Settlement House

Port Perry is a pretty town perched on the shores of Lake Scugog, about an hour's drive northeast of Toronto, with a historic main street that draws throngs of visitors every year. One of its main attractions is a unique establishment housed behind a carefully restored Victorian façade – Settlement House Shops on Queen Street.



Daphne Mitchell



Settlement House

– and it has achieved continued sales growth every year over two decades of operation.

“We create an ambiance within our store that for years has attracted day-trippers from far and wide who prefer us to other shopping alternatives,” says Daphne Mitchell, who established Settlement House in 1978 with her husband Tom.

The philosophy is that a customer, no matter what his or her budget, will always find a treasure to take home. “Once we get people here, we have no trouble getting them to come back,” says Mitchell.

The store's success has been recognized nationally: Mitchell was named the 2002 Canadian Retailer of the Year by the Canadian Gift and Tableware Association (CGTA). The association represents more than 1,600 giftware manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers across Canada. The awards are based on visual merchandising and store design, business achievement, advertising/promotion and community involvement. (In 1997, Settlement House was named CGTA's Retailer of the Year for Eastern Canada.)

The store began as a 600-square-foot storefront and grew with a carefully deployed marketing strategy, starting with the store and the goods it offers. The store showcases better-quality merchandise and offer good value and superior customer service. The ambiance is created by two on-site display designers, and the original lighting layout was designed by a professional lighting consultant.

“When we select a market niche, we try to do it better than anyone rather than trying to do it all,” says Mitchell.

*Company: Settlement House Shops
Sector: Retail
Location: Port Perry
Web site: www.settlementhouse.com*

Settlement House offers 14,000 square feet of furniture, accessories, gifts and wares for the kitchen, bed and bath in a comfortable and inviting atmosphere. Carefully selected room displays show how the merchandise looks in homelike settings. It's a shopper's paradise that turns browsers into buyers

continued on page 12

Design, construction and development

How does a small Ontario company become one of North America's foremost engineering and architectural consulting firms? If you're Giffels Associates Limited (An Ingenium Group Company), you start by nurturing and growing a 50-year relationship with Ontario's premier automotive and auto parts manufacturers.

*Company: Giffels Associates Limited (An Ingenium Group Company)
Sector: Engineering and architectural consulting
Location: Toronto
Web site: www.giffels.com*

Since 1949, Giffels has established successful relationships with the top players in the auto industry, including their first customer, Ford Motor Company of Canada Limited. "Ford's Windsor plant, originally constructed in the 1920s, was

additions were completed, and a new 600,000-square-foot engine-cylinder-head facility was constructed. "It has been a continuous program of engineering and design aimed at modernizing Ford's engine production processes and enhancing output."

As a Tier 1 supplier, Ford named Giffels its architect/engineer alliance partner. Giffels Quality System (GQS) meets Ford's Q1 certification criteria, which requires that suppliers use a quality operating system as part of their regular business practices.

Ford Windsor Engine Plant: 530,000 square foot addition, for which Giffels Associates Limited provided facility design services, and process design services for the coolant piping and coolant equipment installation



completely rebuilt, with the addition of two large truck-engine plants," says Robert Hindle, president of Giffels. "We took Ford's one-million-square-foot plant, saved the steel skeleton, implemented an extensive environmental program and erected a new facility around the original shell." Subsequently, three major

Engineering, however, is only one aspect of this multifaceted group. An affiliated company, Giffels Design-Build Inc., has been equally successful in delivering integrated consulting and construction services. The concept originated in Europe and lets contractors offer complete turnkey solutions.

continued on page 12

Get cracking

In 2003, the Ontario Egg Producers are marking more than 25 years of having one of Canada's best-known trademarks. The association's 550 members are also celebrating the continued success of a \$300-million industry that employs more than 3,000 people and supplies more than 40 per cent of all eggs produced in Canada.

Organization: Ontario Egg Producers
Sector: Agriculture
Location: Provincewide
Web site: www.eggsite.com

“When we started in 1965, we built a barn for 5,000 birds and were getting five cents a dozen for our eggs,” said Carolynne Griffith, who along with her husband runs Art Griffith Farms Inc. near Petrolia. “Today, we have 27,000 birds and a supply-management system that ensures us a fair price for our eggs.”

Griffith is the chair of the Ontario Egg Producers (OEP), a farmer-funded industry group that ensures Ontarians a safe and steady supply of eggs at a reasonable price. The OEP has managed the province's egg industry since 1972 and kept family farms like Griffith's viable by assigning production quotas, setting prices and maintaining quality.

“We have about 550 egg producers in Ontario,” said Brian Ellsworth, general manager of the OEP, “and they range in

size from farms with 500 hens to large operations that have 300,000 hens. The average farm has about 20,000 birds and can support a family, with the owners doing most of the work. The typical farm is a small business with gross revenue in the \$200,000 range.”

The OEP also funds research to improve egg production volume and quality. The OEP supported research that led to the introduction of the very successful omega-3 egg that offers the extra health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids found naturally in fish, soybeans and flaxseed.

Larger farms like Griffith's are now fully mechanized, with computer-controlled ventilation, feeding, cleaning and conveyance systems. Chickens are fed and watered automatically, and eggs move from the cages to a packing and cooling room via conveyors. Constant monitoring of conditions ensures a high level of product quality and safety for all Ontario producers.

“Egg farmers who participate in our food safety program are audited by staff from the Guelph Food Technology Centre,” said Ellsworth. “Eventually, we want to have all egg producers certified in the program, which has very high standards.”

The supply-management system ensures that egg farms remain profitable at a reasonable size and returns a larger share of the retail price to the producer. Ontario producers get about 60 per cent of the retail price, while other jurisdictions return about 30 per cent to the farmer. Supply management also ensures that consumers pay a fair price. Retail egg prices in Ontario are roughly the same as U.S. prices.

“There's a whole generation of egg farmers who started out in the supply-managed system in the 1970s,” said Griffith, who recently delivered a lecture on supply management at the University of Windsor's Odette School of Business. “Most of us are still here, and we're able to pass on the business to our children. There's not a lot of that in farming.”



At the farm, egg collection is done automatically, usually twice a day.

A growing tradition

When the Wahta Mohawks moved from Oka, Que., to the Muskoka region of central Ontario in 1881, the wild cranberries they found were a natural source of food and income. In the early 1960s, the band set up a small commercial growing operation that has grown into what is now a 68-acre property. Today, Iroquois Cranberry Growers employs community members and helps support an economic base for local government.



Harvesting cranberries

*Company: Iroquois Cranberry Growers
Sector: Agriculture
Location: Muskoka
Web site: www.iroquoiscranberries.com*

“We have five full time staff, 10 during growing season, and 35 people working here during the harvest,” said Matthew Commandant, the manager of Iroquois Cranberry Growers. “One of the main things that makes us different is that we really care about our products. The employees all live here and they care about what they produce. We get a lot of visitors and we try to have a personal relationship with our customers.”

Each autumn, Iroquois sells 40,000 pounds of fresh cranberries by the bag to tourists and locals who come

to see the cranberry harvest and processing. The cranberry beds are flooded with about 24 inches of water to allow a picking machine to gently knock the berries off the vines and scoop them from the water. In the packing plant, the berries are air-cleaned, dried, graded in mills and inspected to ensure top quality. Most of the cranberry production is packaged to customer specifications, usually in 40- or 1000-pound boxes.

The company also makes its own juice and other cranberry products sold under the Iroquois Cranberry Growers label in health food and premium food stores across eastern Canada and in New York and Pennsylvania. The health benefits of cranberry juice are now well known and help prevent and treat urinary tract infections.

“We’re moving into value-added products,” said Commandant, who has been with the operation for 10 years. “We want to add more value here on the farm because there are huge benefits for us. We are introducing a new label that emphasizes that is a native product.”

Unlike mass-market brands, Iroquois Cranberry Growers cranberry juice is sold at full strength so consumers can dilute it with water or fruit juice to get the optimum proportion (27 per cent) of cranberry juice for health benefits. The company now has nine acres certified as organic and may add an additional 10 acres next year.

“Right now, sales from the organic operations don’t cover the extra costs involved, but we expect that to change soon,” said Commandant. “People are much more aware of food and its sources, and that can only be good for operations like ours.”



Cranberry bogs

continued from page 8

Home comforts...

"We research market trends and invest in inventory so we can offer our customers an attractive selection of products."

A staff of 30 works "just as hard helping someone choose a candleholder as they would assisting the customer

ordering a custom sofa," says Mitchell. Staff are valued and motivated by competitive salaries and benefits. They also earn awards of the Year and on specific sales and performances such as Employee of the Year, Employee Suggestion of the Year, and on specific sales performance awards, such as Best Sale of the Weekend.

Promotions and vigorous advertising have been key to the store's image. There's the Longest Day of the Year Sale every June, an open house at Christmas and participation in events organized by the local chamber of commerce and business improvement association (the Mitchells helped found the BIA nine years ago).

The shop is advertised on television and radio, in local and regional newspapers and decorating magazines, by direct mail and on an Internet Web page – not to mention by word of mouth.

The store is a visible legacy of Port Perry's heritage and a legacy among its customers: "Many children of our original customers have become regular customers today," says Mitchell.



Settlement House

continued from page 9

Giffels: Design, construction...

F. K. Peterson, an auto parts supplier, used Giffels to find the land, secure permits, and design and construct their Oakville facility. The advantage was a single-source supplier from design through delivery. Design-build is a growth area for Giffels. "We see potential projects throughout southwestern Ontario and the rest of Canada," says Hindle.

New skills in architecture were added with the acquisition of NORR Limited in 1998. Giffels' traditional market had been in industrial manufacturing, but NORR added commercial and institutional strength as well as an international reputation through its offices in the United Arab Emirates. Some of NORR's diverse projects include the 40-storey Simcoe Place tower, the Sheppard subway station and SkyDome, all done as a member of the RAN Consortium.

As one of three project managers piloting Toronto's Pearson International Airport expansion, Giffels' role includes making modifications to the airport's road network and a parking facility for 12,600 cars. The firm also designed a central de-icing pad that speeds up the movement of planes waiting to de-ice.

Hindle cites a design-build project for a 250,000-square-foot UPS facility as an example of Giffels' substantial capabilities: "We started design in July, and UPS moved in that December. That was an accomplishment that could only be achieved by an extremely focused group of multidisciplinary professionals with tremendous resources behind them. Giffels achieved it."

On April 3, 2003, Giffels was named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies for the second year in a row.

Igniting a Spark for Oakville's digital media growth

For many emerging businesses, taking a company out of the home basement and into the boardroom may seem like a gigantic leap. However, that hurdle just got a lot easier, thanks to Sheridan Spark, Oakville's Digital Media Incubator. The program is a joint venture between the Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning and the Town of Oakville. Spark is managed for the town by the Oakville Economic Development Alliance.

Sheridan Spark offers new-media entrepreneurs the opportunity to take their businesses to the next level," says Sharon Aitken, Sheridan Spark manager. "It offers business assistance, mentoring and professional services that an entrepreneur may not have access to. It's also an opportunity to share knowledge in a collaborative, supportive and nurturing working environment."

Support from the Town of Oakville, a recent \$100,000 grant from the Ministry's Prosperity Demonstration Fund, and corporate sponsors helped the Spark concept take shape. Located in the new H-wing complex at Sheridan's Trafalgar Road Campus, Spark's new facility will house 5,500 square feet of private offices and reception and meeting areas.

"Our goal is to welcome new technology-based businesses and entrepreneurs to the area and to see the growth of the digital media sector in Oakville," says Aitken. "Our real focus is to encourage new businesses from Oakville, Burlington and Halton."

And Spark couldn't be in a better setting. It builds on the existing strengths and reputation of Sheridan College's animation, film, television, design and interactive multimedia departments. The long-term vision sees entrepreneurs tapping into Sheridan's technological resources, faculty and students with co-op placements and work terms. "We also expect that some faculty and students will seize this opportunity and set up space as tenants." A 4,000-strong alumni base from related fields will be a key target market.

The college-level incubator model is unique. "Sheridan is one of only a few colleges in Canada exploring the incubator program, particularly in partnership with the community," says Aitken. "Certainly we believe we are the only digital media incubator."

Interviews are currently under way. Prospective tenants should have business idea, business and marketing plan, and financial prospectus with financial support. "We offer an environment that supports and encourages new business. We expect a majority of tenants will be in precommercial mode," says Aitken. "We're here to move businesses forward, so there has to be a strong entrepreneurial spirit."

"We hope to see anywhere from 10 to 18 companies become tenants. Some will be one person or up to four people. As a business incubator, we need to be flexible to respond to tenants' needs," says Aitken. Spark can accommodate physical tenants, virtual tenants and project-based tenants.

With the opening date set for September 2003, Aitken is confident that Spark will ignite in Oakville.



St. Marys

Established in 1841, St. Marys is known as “The Stone Town” as a tribute to its many structures built of local limestone. The centre of a rich agricultural area, St. Marys attained early prominence through the milling industry, which was its initial source of commerce. Today, this small but distinctive town (which has a population of 6,300 and a service area of 20,000) is home to manufacturers and merchants, and attracts many visitors to its quaint downtown core, picturesque setting and friendly atmosphere.



St. Marys's historic main street

“St. Marys has a lot to offer the business and industrial community. We are well situated in southwestern Ontario. We have not had a property tax increase in 10 years. We have low-cost serviced industrial land and are currently developing a plan to expand our industrial park,” says James Timlin, chief administrative officer for St. Marys. “We also have a very proactive council that is willing to go the extra mile to bring new business into our community.” St. Marys has a broad economic base. Its largest employer is auto parts manufacturer Dana Canada Inc., with more than 500 employees.

The town is located midway between Kitchener to the east and London to the west on transprovincial Highway 7. It is 30 minutes by road to Highway 401 and is well served by rail, nearby airports (London International and Stratford) and deepwater ports.

“Tourism is big in St. Marys, with great potential for future growth,” says Timlin. “We are only 12-minutes drive from Stratford and are actively developing our

local theatre community as an added attraction for festival visitors.” St. Marys is also home to Canada’s largest outdoor swimming pool. Named The Quarry, it is a former limestone quarry that filled with water in the 1930s and has been a popular swimming location for decades. Overlooking The Quarry is the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. St. Marys was selected as its permanent home in 1994. One contributing factor was the town’s close ties with the beginnings of baseball in Canada. One of St. Marys’ early settlers wrote a published article that described a game played in 1838 in the nearby community of Beachville that closely resembled baseball in its current form.

“St. Marys is a small but progressive community,” says Timlin. “Our population is growing by about 5.6 per cent a year. We have many fine amenities and work hard to increasingly offer more. For instance, we’ve just undertaken a downtown revitalization study and have some exciting plans for our unique downtown core. St. Marys will continue to offer its residents and business community an excellent environment in which to live and work.”

For more information, visit www.townofstmarys.com or call (519) 284-2340.

www.townofstmarys.com

If you build it, they will come

It has been 10 years since Joe Carter belted a three-run homer to win the World Series for the Toronto Blue Jays and the hearts of Canadians everywhere. In June, Joe Carter and his family will visit St. Marys, where he will be inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (CBHFM). If Tom Valcke has his way, Carter's visit will mark the start of a new era that will transform the CBHFM into a destination tourist attraction.



*Company: Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum
Sector: Tourism
Location: St. Marys
Web site: www.baseballhalloffame.ca*

“St. Marys beat 12 other locations across Canada to get the hall in 1994,” said Tom Valcke, the CBHFM's president and CEO. “We won for several good reasons. Baseball got its start in Canada in 1838 just down the road from here in Beachville. We're located in a thriving tourist area and adjacent to Highway 401 and 10 minutes from Stratford. And the St. Marys Cement Plant was generous enough to donate our 32-acre property and the stone house we are using for a temporary museum.”

Canada has a rich baseball history, as the museum demonstrates. It houses hundreds of artifacts, including a tribute to the Canadian women who played in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, an exclusive collection of Fergie Jenkins memorabilia and a variety of items from Canada's two major-league franchises.

The CBHFM site also features a major-league baseball diamond that hosts an annual Hall of Fame game, Major-League Baseball Tryout camps and World Championship exhibition games for Team Canada. A second state-of-the-art field is designed for use by children under 15. School groups are frequent visitors.

“Our attendance is growing each year, and our exit surveys show that visitors are very pleased with the experience,” said Valcke, who has 16 years of experience in the baseball industry, eight of them as a major-league scout. “But our goal is to turn this site into a destination that will attract a much greater number of visitors to the St. Marys area.”

Valcke has a full set of expansion plans to reach that goal, beginning with the construction of a stadium to surround the playing field. Seats rescued from Toronto's old Exhibition Stadium and a donation of cement from the St. Marys Cement Plant to build the stands are already in place.

“It has been designed and approved,” said Valcke, “and we'll build it in stages. We also plan to build a lodge to



Dave McKay (second from left) and Gary “Kid” Carter (third from left) with two RCMP officers after being inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in 2001



Aerial view of the museum site

continued on page 16

Entrepreneurs

form viable new business from the ashes of a former company

It might be considered a classic example of
“When life hands you a lemons, make lemonade.”

When Sanmina-SCI, a contract manufacturer for the high-tech industry, closed its Brockville facility in October 2002, 850 people lost their jobs, including Jag Chawla, John Pike and Terry Gwinnett. All three had 35-plus years of service with the company and could have retired comfortably.

But, convinced they still had something to offer the business world, they pooled their resources and formed Apex Facility Management Services out of the ashes of the former company.

Apex has three core businesses based on the talents of its principals. The first is facility management, which involves overseeing the 500,000-square-foot building vacated by SCI and now occupied, in part, by Ontario-based call centre giant NuComm International.

Then there's the business of installing and repairing component-placement equipment for high-tech manufacturers. Apex has a growing list of clients, including Toronto-based Tekmart, Peterborough-based Galitech Electronics and Cornwall-based SigmaPoint Technologies.

Finally, there's the skills and training arm.

“There's a void of tradesmen,” says Pike. “Electricians, tool-and-die makers, millwrights, electromechanical technicians and electronic technicians in particular are in short supply.” Apex is working with nearby St. Lawrence College to develop curricula to address this skills shortage. The plan is for St. Lawrence to supply the classroom training and Apex the hands-on side. Apex will also provide job-shadowing work experience.

With 15 full-time and six part-time employees, Apex is growing quickly and the founders are optimistic about the future.

“It was a blow when SGI announced it was closing shop in Brockville,” says Pike, “but we picked up the pieces and now we're running with them.”

continued from page 15

If you build it, they will come

house 200 people in dormitory and hotel-style rooms for baseball tournaments, training camps and special events. And, ultimately, we'll have a state-of-the-art museum here, with interactive displays.”

The CBHFM receives funding from a variety of sources, including the Toronto Blue Jays, Major-League Baseball, all three levels of government and several corporate sponsors. What it needs now is a major sponsor who believes in Valcke's vision: If you build it, the tourists will come.

“There's endless potential here,” said Valcke. “This dream will snowball once we get one of these sponsors up to the plate. You just wait and see what we'll have in a few years.”

OBR

THE
Ontario

BUSINESS REPORT

Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation
Communications and Public Affairs Branch
Eighth Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M7A 2E1

Telephone: (416) 325-6666 • Facsimile: (416) 325-6688

Minister: Hon. Jim Flaherty
Associate Minister: Hon. David Turnbull
Parliamentary Assistant: Al McDonald
Deputy Minister: Barbara Miller

Editor: Robert D. Mikel
E-mail: ontariobusiness.program@eoi.gov.on.ca

Electronic versions of *The Ontario Business Report* can be found on the ministry's Web site, www.ontariocanada.com.

The focus of this newsletter is on business – successes, 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 *The Ontario Business Report* est disponible sous le titre *Cahier des affaires de l'Ontario*.

We want to hear from you.

Comments and contributions are welcomed.
Please write to us by mail, fax or e-mail.

 Ontario

