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ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

CAROL ANN WHELAN AND  
ROB CURRIE



CONESTOGA'S  
BARBARA FENNESSY

# EXCHANGE

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FENNESSY, STORK AND TIBBITTS CELEBRATE CONESTOGA'S CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
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# EXCHANGE

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# FOCUSED ON SUCCESS

*Lessons to be learned on the driving range*

by PAUL KNOWLES



PAUL KNOWLES is editor of Exchange Magazine. He is an author, public speaker and executive director of New Hamburg Live! email: paul.knowles@exchangemagazine.com

I stood a few meters from Rory McIlroy on the driving range at the Honda Classic. He was about to start his round – at that point, he led the tournament – and he was focused.

Not far from me were hundreds of fans. Rory is a friendly guy, given the restrictions of fame. But he was on the job, working through the clubs in his bag. He knew his goal, and he was 100% focused on it.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the driving range, almost unnoticed, was Henrick Stenson, the guy who won both of the biggest trophies in golf last year – the \$10 million FedEx Cup, and the \$1.4 million Race to Dubai.

But Stenson had missed the cut at the Honda Classic. His tournament had been over the day before, but he wasn't going home. Lesson two: stay focused even in failure.

Stenson hit drive after drive, striving for perfection. Friday had been a humiliating day for Stenson. Did he give up, or sulk for a day or two? Clearly, not.

This is a man who knows something about losing as well as winning. He's suffered two gigantic slumps, as well as a financial disaster. So how does he deal with failure? By working even harder to win.

McIlroy knows that lesson, too. In 2013, he walked off the PGA National Champions course, his game in disarray. In 2014, was back, taking home \$448,000 for his second-place tie.

McIlroy and Stenson know something about success; they learned it from failing, because they learned to focus on the goal.



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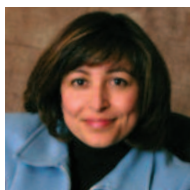


MPP JOHN MILLOY STEPS DOWN PAGE 24

Photo by Jon Rohr

# IS B2B MISSING THE BOAT?

by HARP ARORA



Harp Arora, MBA, is Principal, Sedona Communications and Adjunct Faculty, University of Waterloo & WLU; email [harp@sedonacommunications.com](mailto:harp@sedonacommunications.com); twitter [www.twitter.com/harparora](http://www.twitter.com/harparora)

## Five keys to success

Just because you sell to businesses instead of consumers, don't assume that social media is an ineffective tool for your organization. Sure, a \$6 coffee is a lot easier to sell on Twitter than \$50 million in computer hardware. The difference for B2B though, is that you're not trying to close a sale with a solitary social media post. Just as the phone and email continue to play a role in your sales process, so does social media. All three are communication tools that can play an important role in deepening your client and prospect relationships, and increasing your odds of success.

So how are B2B companies using social media? Research shows the most common objectives are to (1) create brand awareness, (2) encourage people to share company content, and (3) gain trust and followers. And while many would like to use it for lead generation, not very many companies are actually doing it yet.

## Social media can help you put valued content into the hands of your audience

With B2B, the buying decision is usually a complex one, involving a lot of dollars, multiple decision-makers, and plenty of time. It's critical to understand the buyer and their stage in the buying decision – and provide them with resources they need as they navigate the process. It's called content marketing – and social media can help you put valued content into the waiting hands of your audience. Here are five uses for social media to help you generate more success in your B2B marketing efforts.

**1. Thought leadership** – demonstrate to your prospects and clients that you have industry-leading knowledge about trends and their implications, along with creative ideas to help solve the challenges facing your audience. Your organization has likely already created great content for one use – but you could likely re-purpose the same content for a number of other purposes. Do an audit of all your



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content – articles, videos, podcasts, FAQs, case studies, white papers, blogs, research, presentations, media releases, marketing materials etc. Then determine where else that info might be valuable to prospects or clients. Do you have materials that look dated or need to be refreshed? Instead of trashing the entire lot, locate the timeless nuggets of wisdom you could carve out and repackage – for example, in a blog post, on social media, or in a podcast.

**2. Get feedback** – if you're thinking about launching a new product or service why not ask your audience what they think? Of course, this one is more likely to succeed when you post regularly and engage in dialogue with your audience (otherwise, you'll probably just hear crickets). You can ask for informal feedback or comments, or try for more quantitative research by creating a poll or formal survey and sending the link via LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook G+ etc.

**3. Education** – Think about the types of questions and concerns you commonly get from buyers at each stage of the buying process. Could existing or new materials be used to help other prospects as well? If you're constantly getting the same questions or objections, you could save a lot of time and energy by creating or adapting content to address those issues. You can draw from some of your thought leadership pieces, technical content that shows how your product or service works, marketing material such as FAQs on your web-

site, etc. Use social media to provide that content to those at each stage of the buying cycle who are hungry to learn more. Don't forget to think beyond written prepared content – for example, you might share information with your audience by having live experts hosting a Twitter chat, webinar etc.

**4. Talk to the buyer** – Not the company, but the individual. Bear in mind that even though you're selling to a business, it's still a human that you're interacting with. The person who's reading your social media posts is an individual first, and then the representative of their company second. Address their personal concerns and issues – post content that helps them feel less vulnerable, gives them greater confidence (testimonials, case studies etc), and makes them look like a hero to their bosses and peers.

**5. Get visual** – Photos and videos command attention on social media. You may need to get creative in finding interesting content to share but it can be done. How can you showcase your customers, employees, or partners in the visual medium? There are always interesting or entertaining stories to share that strengthen your brand. Remember, you don't need to tell the whole story in your social media post. Grab their attention and link to the full story, which you can post on your website, blog, or elsewhere.

Have you had success with social media as a B2B marketer? Love to hear your story.



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## CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPENS AT CONESTOGA COLLEGE

Academics, corporate executives, entrepreneurs and angel investors mingled at the official grand opening of the Centre for Entrepreneurship at Conestoga College in mid-March. The event was a celebration of the new centre, and a thank-you to the major investors who have made the new facility possible.

The involvement of key supporters is evident in the names of the four “service areas” comprised in the Centre: the BMO Small Business Centre; the Great-West Life Enterprise Hotel; the RBC Ventures Lab; and the Scotiabank International Business Office.

Keynote speaker at the event was local entrepreneur and philanthropist Mike Stork, who spearheaded the private sector fundraising for the Centre for Entrepreneurship, and is also a major contributor.

Stork told his audience that, “Conestoga has a lot to offer with respect to entrepreneurship.” He said the school will play a role in what he called “the re-invention of the economic engine of Waterloo Region over the next 10 year,” sparked by the success of businesses currently in the start-up phase. “New enterprises are just coming into fruition.”

And pointing specifically to the Conestoga program, Stork predicted, “A whole new crop of companies is going to emerge from this.”



Executive Dean Barbara Fennessy, Mike Stork, and Conestoga President John Tibbits at the Grand Opening of the Conestoga College Centre for Entrepreneurship

Photo: Paul Knowles



Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Michael Harris, left, in conversation with Conestoga student entrepreneur John Izeor.

Conestoga President John Tibbits lauded Stork for his leadership. “Mike has put a tremendous amount of time and resources into this,” he said.

Tibbits told the audience that the college has “put a greater emphasis on the whole area of entrepreneurship,” especially focusing on small and medium sized businesses. “Seventy-five to eighty per cent of employers in this area are SME’s,” he said.

Tibbits noted that 3,000 Conestoga College graduates have started their own businesses.

Conestoga student John Izeor said the program is allowing him to “live my dreams.” He called the new Centre “a very special place,” adding, “My experience at Conestoga College has energized me to take ownership of my future, to become a successful entrepreneur.”

According to Barbara Fennessy, Executive Dean of Entrepreneurship and Applied Research at Conestoga, the new Centre is focused on becoming a primary source for an entrepreneurial workforce, and to facilitate new venture creation, with a vision for SME expansion into global markets.

The Centre’s program includes classes, seminars, workshops, mentorship, and a full menu of “expert resources.” - Paul Knowles

## VENTURE CAPITAL INVESTMENTS HIGHEST SINCE 2007

Investment activity in Canada’s venture capital market increased significantly in 2013, especially in terms of dollars invested in innovative companies. Investments made by VC funds totalled \$2.0 billion as of December 31st, 31% more than the \$1.5 billion invested in 2012. In fact, investments in 2013 were at their highest level since the peak of the previous cycle in 2007, according to Canada’s Venture Capital & Private Equity Association and research partner Thomson Reuters.

During 2013, 452 deals were completed, up 2% over the prior year, and in contrast to prior years investment was slightly more skewed to early-stage and expansion financings of Canadian innovative companies.

Canadian VC market activity was given a substantial boost in the final quarter of 2013, when a total of \$547 million was invested in 113 financing rounds. Dollars invested between October and December was 40% more than the amount reported during the same fourth-quarter period in 2012.

Year-over-year growth in Canadian disbursements in 2013 was driven by a number of major financings, including those completed for Vancouver’s HootSuite, one of the largest rounds of venture capital funding in Canadian history, Ottawa-based Shopify, Burlington-based Anaergia and Markham-based Real Matters. These and other transactions helped ratchet up Canadian company financing sizes to an average of \$4.3 million for 2013 as a whole, which improves on the \$3.3 million averaged the year before.

Commenting on the results, Peter van der Velden, President of the CVCA and Managing General Partner of Lumira Capital Corp. noted “The investment results for

2013 are really encouraging and pushed Ontario, Quebec and BC into the top 10 regions for VC ranking in North America. Investment activity this year highlights Canada’s phenomenal potential as an innovation leader in the global economy and these investments illustrate the both the importance and rationale for a strong domestic Canadian venture capital ecosystem.”

Larger domestic VC financings in 2013 had the effect of narrowing the competitive gap in deal capitalization between Canada and the United States. At the end of December, Canadian innovative companies garnered 54% of the dollars going to counterpart companies based in the United States, compared to the 46% that was averaged in 2012. It is however worth noting that the median investment size from Canadian investors just under a third of the median investment from non-Canadian firms suggesting that the foreign investors continue to focus their capital on the bigger deals.

Canada’s VC market activity continued to be driven primarily in information technology (IT) sectors in 2013. As of December 31st, IT companies secured \$1.1 billion invested in total, or 54% of all disbursements, and showed year-over-year growth of 19%. A major story in trends last year was the role played by internet-related deals, as these captured \$497 million, compared to \$217 million accounted for in 2012, helped by HootSuite and Shopify. Software took second spot in 2013, with \$378 million invested.

The fundraising activity of Canadian VC firms which decreased in 2013 relative to the especially strong fundraising year that was recorded in 2012. New capital com-



## GRAND RIVER BROKE THE MOLD FOR HERITAGE RIVER SYSTEM

Canadian Heritage River designation of the Grand River 20 years ago was a major coup in many ways. The Grand River was the first non-wilderness river to be designated. It was also the first to have its tributaries integrated within its designation, taking a more integrated approach to heritage designation.

"The real coup was to convince the 'powers that be' to designate the Grand River, because it was a departure from all the other designated rivers to that point," explains Bryan Howard, who worked for the Ministry of Natural Resources and was co-chair of the Grand Strategy in 1994 and is now retired. "There was a broadening of the scope that paved the way for other non-wilderness rivers in southern Ontario, such as the Thames, Humber and the Detroit rivers to be designated."

Nomination was a lengthy process that began in 1987 when watershed municipalities approached the GRCA and asked it to spearhead heritage river designation. The Grand was nominated Feb. 20, 1990, when Lyn McLeod, then Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources, signed the carefully prepared nomination document. There was a great deal of input from committees and hundreds of members of the public all along the way.

The Grand was designated on Jan. 18, 1994 and the first Grand River plaque was unveiled Sept. 26 of that year with great fanfare. The Grand was the 15th river to be designated by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, which has representatives appointed for each province and territory.

The decision was made when the board met at the historic Langdon Hall in Cambridge, where they were presented with a management plan called The Grand Strategy. The strategy provided a plan for the future and a look forward 25 years, to 2019. It was developed through a collaborative process involving more than 200 representatives of community groups, businesses, educational institutions, municipalities, federal and provincial agencies, First Nations and the GRCA.

"It was regarded as a pivotal change for the Canadian Heritage River System to embrace the Grand River into the system, because it was a working river," Howard says.

The GRCA's lead in this process was Grand Strategy co-chair Barbara Veale, who dedicated many years to bringing about the river designation. During the two decades since, she has helped to keep the river designation on the front burner locally, nationally and internationally. She recently left the GRCA and now works for Conservation Halton, but she continues her interest in heritage designation of the Grand.

The stumbling block for designation of the Grand River was that it did not meet the criteria to be considered for its natural features, because it is not a free-flowing river. As a result, it didn't conform with the CHRS guidelines for natural heritage. For this reason Veale, Howard and a legion of other people worked extra hard to bring about the nomination and designation based on the two other areas of nomination: cultural features and recreational opportunities.

The Grand nomination document included the major tributaries in the designation — the Nith, Conestogo, Speed and Eramosa rivers. Howard believes that including these rivers strengthened the case to designate the Grand River. It also brought the concept of integrated watershed management into the Heritage River nomination process.

By 1999, Heritage River plaques had been unveiled on all the rivers to denote



Photo Courtesy GRCA

their designation and acknowledge that a river is part of a system.

The only river in the CHRS that has more kilometres of designated waterways than the Grand is the Fraser River, as the entire 1,375-km river has been designated.

In contrast, many Canadian Heritage Rivers have sections that have been designated, such as 48 km of the Yukon River known as "The Thirty Mile," which was part of the Klondike Gold Rush. The Yukon itself is nearly 3,200 km long.

"One of the biggest values of the Heritage River designation was to raise the profile of the river in the communities up and down the rivers," says Veale. "Many neat things have come out of it, including books about the river, poetry and art festivals, to name a few. All of those increase awareness of the rivers again. It has really helped to have people notice the river, because before the designation, we turned our back on the river."

For a few decades, parents warned their children to stay away from the river as it was dirty and communities dumped their garbage along the riverbanks. Great effort was put into cleaning these areas up and making waterways a place that people wanted to visit and to improve even more.

Dozens of businesses and organizations are named after the Grand River and its tributaries. Some have changed their name to incorporate "grand," such as Grand River Hospital (in 1995), Grand River Transit (in 2000) and the Grand Philharmonic Choir (2006). Companies in all lines of business from beer to insulation to dance are named for the Grand River, so the river is much more than a source of water to the communities that it flows through, especially since the designation.

The Grand Strategy was created to direct change within the Grand River watershed and it worked in partnership with other programs. These include the Grand River Fish Management Plan (completed in 1998), the Grand River Forest Plan (completed in 2004) and the Grand River Water Management Plan that is being finalized this year. In fact, a goal for the CHRS is that all designated rivers have management plans. In addition, annual monitoring takes place after designation, and the GRCA will be preparing a 20-year monitoring report to outline the changes that have taken place since designation.

There are now 38 Canadian Heritage Rivers and three more that have been nominated for designation. The CHRS now places less focus on designating new rivers and more on supporting the rivers that have already been designated. - Janet Baine

commitments to partnerships and other funds totaled nearly \$1.3 billion last year, which is 24% less than the \$1.8 billion that was committed the year before. The \$1.3 was also skewed upward by certain evergreen funds re-allocating capital to dedicated pools which really do not reflect net new capital.

The number of domestic funds closing on new capital was also slightly fewer, with these totaling 27 this time around as compared to the 33 funds of 2012.

Much of the overall drop in Canadian VC fundraising activity was accounted for by private-independent funds, which brought \$629 million into the market in 2013, down 51% year over year. In contrast, commitments to labour-sponsored and other retail VC funds, which totalled \$488 million last year, actually reflected an 18% increase compared to their activity in 2012.

Commenting on 2013 fundraising, van der Velden said "Long term sustainable capital still remains a big concern. If one nets out re-allocations and retail VC funds it is evident that that private sector venture capital funding is still materially below the level required for a sustainable ecosystem. Continued performance by independent partnerships and the implementation of programs such as the federal Venture Capital Action Plan should help the sector to continue to build on the positive momentum and hopefully encourage more corporate and institutional investor commitments to top-tier Canadian venture capital partnerships."

### XQuote

"Locally, our communities need the federal government to invest in two-way GO train service to enable our economic growth, talent attraction and innovation throughout the Toronto-Waterloo region corridor. In addition, we need the federal government as a partner to ensure our affordable housing stock is maintained... While we are making great progress in other areas, the national housing crunch and traffic gridlock are holding our region back. We need to fix this because our future depends on keeping cities and regions strong." - Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr



Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr, shown next to some of his favourite mementos from his years of service.

Photo by Jon Rohr

## LRT AN ELECTION ISSUE - “UNFORTUNATELY”, SAYS ZEHR

Waterloo Region voters will go to the polls on October 27, 2014, to elect municipal leaders at Regional, city, and township levels, as well as to both regional school boards. A significant number of politicians and would-be politicians have already declared their candidacy. Exchange Magazine is covering the municipal election from a perspective that will not give advantage to any specific candidates. We are interviewing leading politicians who are not running again, asking their views about the state of their municipalities, and possible election issues. This is the second in the series, as we talk to Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr.

After serving as Mayor of the City of Kitchener for 17 years, Carl Zehr is leaving. But not quite yet.

Zehr has announced that he will not be a candidate in the October 27, 2014 municipal election. He also says that he won't be seeking any other political office. And typical of his detail-oriented approach to city governance, he can tick off the reasons for his departure in a concise and orderly fashion.

“First,” he says, “I’ve been the Mayor for 17 years, and a councillor for nine more.” The former figure, by the way, is a record that may never be challenged – Zehr is the city’s longest-serving mayor, by about five years. “I believe in churn, in turning over.”

As well, he notes, “I’m going to be 69 in a couple of months” – although he could easily pass for a much younger man.

Third, “I want to have a less demanding and hectic schedule.”

And, “We want to do some personal travelling while we can.”

That all being said, in an exclusive interview with Exchange Magazine, the mayor quickly leapt into the issues of the day – including those that may be front and centre during the municipal election campaign.

The acronym “LRT” – Light Rail Transit, now branded in Waterloo Region as ION – is never far from municipal minds. Regional council has approved it, plans and purchases are proceeding, and yet some candidates for election and currently-serving politicians are continuing to challenge the project at every opportunity.

Zehr believes that “it will certainly be an issue,” but adds, “it’s a done deal.” The LRT – of which he is a strong supporter – will be built, he believes, and although “some people will vote based on that issue alone,” he thinks that stance is “sad and unfortunate.”

“The decision,” he says, “will already have been made. Irrevocably.”

Overturning the LRT would inevitable cost “a large sum of money, which would be paid out, with nothing to show in return.” He also notes that any costs arising

from killing the LRT would fall directly on the municipalities of the Region of Waterloo, because federal and provincial money is designated for construction of the project, not its abandonment. Such a plan would be “very short-sighted” in the eyes of the Kitchener mayor.

He compares the situation with the opposition that arose to the construction of the Conestoga Expressway, a project that has proven its value to the community, many times over.

And he calls for the people of Kitchener, and the larger Region, to look to the future. “This is a project, not about 2017,” he says. “It’s about 30, 50 years from now.”

And Zehr, a man with intimate knowledge of the geography and development of the city of Kitchener, warns that this may be the last opportunity “to place rails where we’re intending to do it today.”

Zehr has been at the helm during a significant revitalization of the downtown core of Kitchener. It’s not completed yet, but he points to the improvement with pride – while giving credit to council and to the administration staff who have made the decisions and done the legwork.

He says the re-emerging health of Kitchener, and the recent developments in the Waterloo city core, as evidence that the overall plan, including the LRT, is viable. “What has happened so far with development in the core of the two cities, is enough to say the planning concept, the intensification, has legs.”

He says “we have found a way to re-invent the economy within these same buildings” that once were abandoned relics of a former time. “It’s exciting,” says the Mayor.

He argues that council, staff, and the people of Kitchener, “saw a vision.”

And in spite of his image as a pragmatic, careful leader, Zehr believes that vision is essential if cities are to thrive. He compares Light Rail Transit to the building of Kitchener City Hall, and, earlier, to the Expressway. “In all my experiences locally, not one person has lost an election because of taking a long-term vision,” he says.

Zehr also hopes to pass on his vision concerning rail service outside the boundaries of Waterloo Region. He has become a strong proponent of more frequent regular train service between KW and Toronto. He reaches into a pile of documents and pulls out a two-sided sheet on “commuter rail service”, that highlights the argument that the Waterloo Region/Guelph to Toronto connection is very similar to the San Francisco to San Jose area in California. The KW-Toronto population is actually about 50% higher; the number of tech works somewhat lower (200,000 here, 387,000 there); the distance between the two centres is identical. “The key difference between these globally-significant



## UNITED WAY CAMBRIDGE AND NORTH DUMFRIES HOSTS COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT

United Way Cambridge and North Dumfries met their goal for the 2013 campaign with \$2,302,951. This surpassed the \$2.3 million goal set in September 2013. At a event in February they celebrated the past year's accomplishments as they hosted the annual Community Achievement Night to recognize the efforts of local citizens who work with United Way to accomplish community change. Guests were treated to some delicious food and an awards program. The evening was capped off by a presentation from inspirational speaker Joe Roberts and the big reveal of the United Way 2013 fundraising total.

Joe Roberts is a celebrated Canadian entrepreneur and became a successful businessman before he was 35 years old. But, prior to this success, he was homeless, addicted to drugs, and living in downtown Vancouver's notorious east side. His story focused on the importance of community support and the many people who made the drastic changes in his life possible.

### Campaign Honourees

Art Wilson Award: Presented in its inaugural year to Art Wilson.

Workplace Campaign of the Year (over 100 employees)

Award Winner: Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada



Photo by Stan Switalski

Joe Roberts - From Skid Row to CEO

Workplace Campaign of the Year (under 100 employees)

Award Winner: Steel Technologies Canada

Agency Campaign of the Year

Award Winner: Cambridge Self Help Food Bank

Small Business Support

Award Winner: Ridgehill Ford Sales Limited

Employee Campaign Coordinator of the Year

Winner: Bill Conway & Lourdes Resendes of Rockwell Automation Canada

Rising Star of the Year

Award Winner: Cowan Insurance Group

Community Builder Award

Award Winner: Holiday Inn Cambridge

Joint Union-Management Award

Award Winner: Tenneco Automotive and USW Local 2894

Awards were also giving out for 8 Volunteerism Honourees and

6 Agency Honourees.

For a full list search [exchangemagazine.com](http://exchangemagazine.com) using "Celebrate Our Community".

## LRT ELECTION ISSUE CON'T

startup clusters is that Silicon Valley is supported by two-way commuter rail service; the Toronto to Waterloo Region corridor is not."

It should be, argues Zehr. And, with considerable hope, he predicts it will be. He says that such a plan is likely to be part of the 10-year financial projections of the provincial budget.

Zehr believes in a bright future. But he also underlines one of the most significant factors that threaten that future – the infrastructure deficit. As mayor of Kitchener, and also as past chair of the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, Zehr has long been outspoken about the threats to the health of cities that lie unseen beneath the streets – aging and decaying water and sewage systems – as well as the streets themselves.

Those issues will continue to demand solutions, and the result will hit the bottom line. "The deficit is going to continue to grow.... There will continue to be pressures on municipal budgets. I don't see any way of that improving in the near future," he says. But he believes municipalities are doing their best: "We have done more with less than any other order of government," he says, "while the province and the feds have done less and less." Nonetheless, Zehr predicts that even if municipalities focus on improving infrastructure, "it will take 40 years" to get caught up.

He believes that a strong local economy is essential if the city is to rebuild infrastructure, strengthen its core, and develop visionary projects such as the LRT. And there is a role for the city in the health of the economy, according to Zehr. "In order to have that economy, you have to keep investing in the economy."

He cautions that the next generation of municipal leaders "cannot duplicate what we did – it would be impossible under today's economic restrictions... but the economy has turned the corner. There will have to be more modest investments to create the environment in which the private sector can grow."

Zehr argues that the city has found a way to nurture growth and repair infrastructure while still keeping costs down. "In spite of all the investments we have done, we're the third lowest in property taxes in Ontario."

He is fed up with criticism from those other levels of government. "When my federal and provincial counterparts are wont to say that expenditures are going sky high in municipalities, I take umbrage with that. Because many of the situations include transfer payments for projects, from the feds and the province, that have been delivered by municipalities."

The mayor makes a political point, arguing that even though they are faced with the need to fund major projects and day to day operations, municipalities are forced to raise money with a less than ideal system of income collection. "Property taxes," says Zehr, "are a regressive form of taxation. They bear no relationship to the ability to pay."

As he leaves office, Zehr offers some advice to his successor, whomever that may be, and to other elected officials as well. "On a personal level," he says, "be true to yourself. Know where your beliefs are. Then your decisions will come a lot easier." – Paul Knowles

## UNITED WAY KW PRESENTS 12 COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARDS

Twelve awards honouring Kitchener-Waterloo and area businesses and individuals for their community spirit – specifically related to their support of the United Way – were presented in late February. With nearly 200 people in attendance at the event at the Waterloo Inn, 42 individuals and organizations were honoured as nominees, all of whom have made significant and valuable contributions to United Way KW and the surrounding community.

KW United Way CEO Jan Varner thanked each person who contributed to the community impact work of United Way KW over the past year, and 2013 Campaign Champion Tim Jackson noted that none of the work that United Way KW does in the community could happen without the support of volunteers.

The winners of the 2014 United Way KW Community Spirit Awards are:

- Leadership Award: Economical Insurance
- New Business Award: Deer Ridge Dental
- Sponsorship Award: Libro Credit Union
- Campaign Award: Custom Leather Canada Limited
- Organization Support Award: Stryve Group
- Campaign Team Award: Sun Life Financial
- Benefactor Award: Marsland Centre
- Volunteer Award: Dennie Gerner (Manulife Financial)
- Day of Caring Award: Sun Life Financial; City of Waterloo; University of Waterloo; and 91.5 The Beat Breakfast Team
- Agency Impact Award: ROOF (Reaching Our Outdoor Friends)
- Individual Impact Award: Christine Rier
- Organization Support Award: McCarter Grespan Beynon; and Weir Professional Corporation.

## SAFETY IMPROVED, DIRECTOR RETIRES

The past months have seen significant changes at the Regional of Waterloo International Airport. It's the end of an era, as John Hammer retires from his position as Director of Transportation for the Region of Waterloo; Hammer has played a key role in the development of the airport for 35 years.

At the same time, the Canadian government has announced an investment of \$27,215 from the Airports Capital Assistance Program to fund a runway condition reporting system. This will provide timely, accurate and precise wireless reporting and recording of runway conditions.

This is just the latest project at the



From left, John Hammer, Airport General Manager Chris Wood, Woolwich Councillor Bonnie Bryant, MP Harold Albrecht, Woolwich Mayor Todd Cowan, Regional Chair Ken Seiling

Photo by Jon Rohr

airport to receive funding from the ACAP program – to date, the Region of Waterloo International Airport has received more than \$6.9 million in funding for five safety projects. Projects included the installation of runway guard lights, the partial rehabilitation of runway 08-26, the replacement of a front end loader, and the reconfiguration of the runway apron.

Harold Albrecht, MP for Kitchener—Conestoga, commented on the project: “The Region of Waterloo International Airport is a vital gateway for local residents, businesses, trade and

tourism. This funding will enhance the safety of all those who use this airport, especially the communities and businesses in this region that rely on it.”

At the same occasion, Regional Chair Ken Seiling said, “Regional Council appreciates this support from the Government of Canada for the purchase of a runway condition reporting system. This new equipment will further enhance safety for customers of the Region of Waterloo International Airport by providing real-time, precise wireless reporting and recording of runway conditions.”

## CREATIVITY IS A MUSCLE; USE IT OR LOSE IT.

Pressure creates diamonds, so why shouldn't it also create great ideas?

Creativity as ‘the ability to develop great ideas while under pressure. But sometimes, pressure paralyzes creativity. Here are some no-fail tips for generating ideas under pressure:

1. *Ask yourself, What's the most dangerous, expensive and illegal way to solve this problem?* We usually take the same approach to solving problems every time with the resources we have at hand. This doesn't exactly translate into breathtaking creativity. So imagine that you have no limits – legal, moral, financial, whatever. You can do literally anything to solve the problem. The way-out ideas you develop may not be practical, but they'll lead you to new ways of thinking about your problem. And then you can find a non-life-threatening, legal way to solve it!

2. *Hide.* We live in a world of constant, thin-sliced demands. Unanswered texts and emails. People waiting for you to say something, do something, read something, decide something. Run and hide. Lock yourself in your car or hunker down in a bathroom stall. Slow down and get your brain back.

It's all but impossible for your creative brain to operate when you're responding to endless external stimuli. The best ideas often come when you run from your responsibilities.

3. *Count to 20.* Go somewhere where you can be undisturbed, bring a yellow pad and a pen, turn off your phone, and sit there until you come up with 20 ideas for solving your problem. This requires discipline, because most of us are so happy when we have one answer to a problem that we want to move to the next agenda item. Not every idea you invent will be a great one, but that's okay. It may be idea number 17 that's truly brilliant, but you'd never get there if you ran back to your desk after you came up with one, two or even five ideas. If you do this daily, you'll develop 100 new ideas a week. Imagine how strong your idea muscle will be!

4. *Give up.* Cardiologists recommend to heart patients that they visit nature, go to a museum, or attend a classical concert. Why? It slows them down and allows them to appreciate beauty instead of seeing life as a constant battle. Surrender your own siege mentality. Life isn't war, thank goodness. Take a major step away, even for a couple of hours, from whatever battles you're facing, contemplate the greatness of the human spirit or the wonder of nature, and reawaken the creative energy that our fight-minded world suppresses.

- Michael Levin, New York Times best-selling author.

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## CHAMBER BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce and the Waterloo Region business community came together to honour the extraordinary contributions of the organizations and volunteers who were nominated for the:

2014 Business Excellence Awards at its annual Gala

- Business of the Year (Over 20 Employees) - M&T Printing Group
- Business of the Year (20 Employees and Under) - Snapd Kitchener Waterloo
- Environment and Sustainability - Great Canadian Holidays & Coaches Inc.
- Health & Wellness in the Workplace - Heffner Motors Limited
- Hospitality/Tourism - Little Mushroom Catering
- Innovation - Accelerator Centre
- Integration - Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre
- Michael R. Follett Community Leader Award - Roger Farwell, WalterFedy
- Non-Profit/Charitable Award - Kitchener-Waterloo Humane Society
- Professional Development & Workplace Training - Ernst & Young LLP
- Volunteer of the Year - Don Wales, Erb & Erb Insurance Brokers Ltd.
- Young Entrepreneur of the Year - Mike McCauley, Buffer Box

Karen Mason presents Roger Farwell of WalterFedy the Michael R. Follett Community Leader Award



Business of the Year  
(Over 20 Employees)  
Award:  
Dean Froome, M&T  
Printing Group



Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award:  
Mike McCauley, Buffer Box



Chair of the CTT Hellen Jowett and Ian  
McLean, Greater  
Chamber President



Gala attendees Laura Richards, Dana Walton and Victoria Locke



Health & Wellness in the Workplace  
Award - Heffner Motors Limited -  
Willy Heffner is shown with Tracy  
Elop from Grand River Hospital

Don Wales from Erb and Erb Insurance Brokers accepts the Volunteer of the Year Award while Emcee Meghan Furman looks on.



Photo by Adamski Photography




# DIALED IN

**CLEARPATH IS EXPANDING,  
ADDING STAFF ... AND STAYING PROFITABLE**

BY EXCHANGE MAGAZINE

*Clearpath CEO Matt Rendall*





**M**echatronics" – it seems to be the hot topic wherever you turn. The Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering Department at the University of Waterloo is now home to about 1600 students and faculty; UW is boasting that it was the first Canadian university to have a full undergrad mechatronics program; and UW grads are making a very large mechatronics mark in industry, wherever you turn.

There's no better example of this than the shining success story called Clearpath Robotics. This company now based in Kitchener, has already accomplished the unusual – it's both on a steep growth curve, and profitable. That's not the standard combination.

But Clearpath CEO Matt Rendall says, "We've been profitable since 2011. We have been sustaining profitable growth since then. Which is really challenging, especially when you are on such an aggressive growth curve. We've been managing a balance."

Rendall, who is 29, and two friends from the UW mechatronics program founded Clearpath in 2008, incorporating in 2009. Bryan Webb is officially CFO of the company; Ryan Gariepy is CTO. But in 2008, they were still students.

Students with a clear entrepreneurial bent, and an eye for the financials. That was evident from the out-set when, unlike many start-ups, they deliberatingly refrained from incorporating until they had their first order for their product.

Rendall, who was named Ernst & Young EY Entrepreneur of the Year for Ontario in 2013, sums up the bottom-line approach: "We were born in a recession... When you're born in a recession, you need to be scrappy and you need to get by with a bare minimum of resources available. We know what it's like to be scrappy and to fight for every dollar we received.

"Combine starting in a recession with this really core philosophy of customers first, revenue first, and we've been operating in a market where we have been bootstrapping almost all the way through. We did a round of financing in 2010 with the local Angel community; it really helped us fill our first orders. But when we went to them, we said, 'Look, we've got five or six purchase orders. We can't fulfill this business unless we get some capital injection to hire some people to actually complete the designs to build the robots to ship them out the door.' It's a very different proposition from saying, 'I need to invest two years in developing some technology in hopes that someone will buy it'."

#### A growth proposition

Exchange interviewed Rendall at the company's facility on Manitou Drive in Kitchener. But that was to be a temporary address – plans were in the works for a move to larger facilities with more manufacturing capacity.

The growth of Clearpath can be charted in several, consistent ways. One measure is the space they occupy: they began in a basement, moved to the Accelerator Centre, and then to 3,000 square feet in the Tannery, before it became home to "The Hub". Says Rendall, "We were actually the first tech company to move into the Tannery. We

really loved the site. Really had the start-up feel that you see in New York or Boston or California... loft office space, cool space." However, he adds, "We didn't really appreciate what work on a third floor would do for a manufacturing business. Really cool space but not practical for manufacturing. We needed something practical."

So the company moved to Manitou Drive, sub-letting space from Miovision, a company they knew from the Accelerator Centre.

Rendall, keenly aware of the value of networking and incubation, talks about the benefits of start-up friends: "When we first started in the Hub, before all the tech companies moved in, we went directly from the Accelerator Centre which is just buzzing, with all these entrepreneurs in the hallways and all these serendipitous conversations that happened. It's very energizing in that environment, and then you go from that, complete cold turkey, to the normal world where you're by yourself on the grind and it's a lot less exciting. Things started picking up when the Hub went on line, and then, here, being close to Miovision has really given us some of that buzz back."

However, Clearpath has now outgrown the 5,000 square feet on Manitou, and are moving to 12,000 square feet of office, R&D and manufacturing space at Bleams and Strasburg Road.

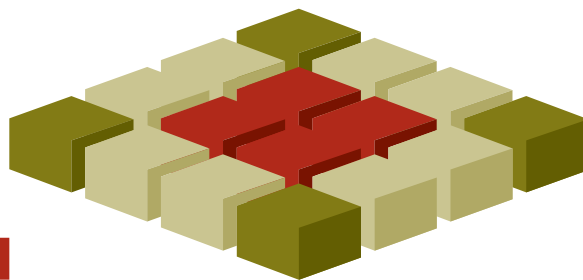
With that growth has come profitability, and significant increase in staff size. The team has tripled in two years, now totaling 35. Rendall says, "The next move is a three-year plan. We have the ability to expand into the space. We're adding a lot more manufacturing capacity. It will last us to 60 or 70 people. Over the next three years we want to more than double our revenues, but double our head count. We want to grow into our revenue capacity without having to add proportionately the same

*"When you're born in a recession, you need to be scrappy and you need to get by with bare minimum of resources available. We know what it's like to be scrappy and to fight for every dollar we received."*

number of people."

### **Building the future**

This all sounds eminently practical for a company that spends a lot of its time in the future – or at least, designing what our future will be like. Clearpath builds robots, robots for research and development, for the academic environment, for industry, agriculture, forestry, aerospace and envi-



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Rendall with Clearpath robots ready for work on land and water.

ronmental programs, and for military applications.

And these are not robots that work primarily in an indoor environment,

“Over the next three years we want to more than double our revenues, but double our head count.”

under controlled conditions – they are built for use outdoors, in an environment Rendall describes as “chaos.”

Asked to define what Clearpath does, the CEO first provides some background: “Driverless cars and the underlying technology are applicable in automotive, but are also applicable in mining and construction and agriculture and forestry and aerospace and defence and environment. Any industry that has transportation in it, where there is a vehicle moving from

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a to b, where there's a human driving that vehicle from a to b – there's a potential vehicle that we can automate. "In short, we deliver products and services and technology that enable vehicles to move from a to b."

Now, that may sound deceptively simple, but there is nothing simple about the Clearpath products – unmanned robotic vehicles (The Grizzly and The Husky), unmanned aerial vehicles (Hummingbird and Pelican), unmanned surface water vehicles (Kingfisher), and three laboratory robots, including an arm, a haptic controller, and the mobile robot platform known as Turtlebot 2.

Rendall says that the potential is so large that they have to stay focused on sticking to a practical plan for R&D, product development and growth. He explains, "That is a really daunting marketing opportunity, so one of our biggest challenges is actually focusing on the low-hanging fruit and rolling it out sequentially in a way that won't flame out the business by spreading it too thin and trying to take on too many things."

The potential is unlimited, in a number of areas. Rendall

notes that, "Our first market was in the research and development market," and R&D applications continue to be a strong area for the company.

He adds, "Military is researching new generation unmanned vehicles – new generation drones and new generation squad support vehicles and new generation surveil-

lance water craft, and we're selling to those people and with all the investment that is going on in R&D right now, a peripheral market opens up in academic. Any time you're literally pushing the edge of capability in a certain domain based on technology, companies and governments will partner with academics to

answer the unknown, and we sell to those people. We literally have our finger on the pulse of the future of the industry, because we sell to all the people who are shaping the industry."

Those connections are invaluable, he says. "It's an incredible vantage point for a corporation to have. There isn't another company that has that vantage point. It's very unique in our ability to anticipate where our business is

"Waterloo is known for entrepreneurship and innovation, and I give them a lot of credit for anticipating where the market was going and what the engineer of the future needed to be like."

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going to be growing, because we can use this vantage point to really develop a compelling growth strategy, because we can see where the puck is going."

### "Wouldn't it be great?"

Rendall, Webb and Gariepy are living their dream. Robotics has been their passion and their hobby, all their lives. Rendall says he was the kind of kid who took everything in the house apart – and then put it back together out of fear of getting into trouble.

He says that robotics was what all three of the founders did for fun: "We were still in university and we were on the robotics team, building robots for fun in our spare time." They came to the realization, "Wouldn't it be great if we figured out a way to get paid to do this?"

He says, "We started a business around our passion – that's the most important thing."

And Clearpath continues that tradition of building robots for fun – the entire engineering team participates in "hacking" days where the engineers spend a day designing and building something unrelated to their normal work, and then

sharing their creation over dinner.

### "Know a little about everything"

Rendall has nothing but praise for the University of Waterloo, and for what he calls the Waterloo environment. About the school, he says, "In 2003, Waterloo introduced the mechatronics engineering program. We were the first students to come through that program. Mechatronics is multi-disciplinary engineering – mechanical, electrical, software, systems. It's the next generation of engineering – you need to know a little about everything, in order to build these really complex systems like a camera or a recorder or an intelligent car. Within

mechatronics is this concept of robotics. Mechatronics sounded really cool... it was new, and no one had done it before."

He adds, "Waterloo is known for entrepreneurship and innovation, and I give them a lot of credit for anticipating where the market was going and what the engineer of the future needed to be like... They were way ahead of the curve. Now, mechatronics programs are popping up all

"Outdoors, it's absolute chaos for machines. And so, what's really interesting about what we do is how to apply order to that chaos, how to allow mobile robots to operate intelligently."

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*The Kingfisher at work*

across the country, all across the continent, but we were the first."

Rendall and his Clearpath colleagues had found their academic home – and the challenges that attracted them the most. "I found mobile robots, which is robotics, but with wheels... how do you get a robot to move from a to b in complete environmental chaos, from a technology perspective? Industrial robots are in a controlled environment. The lights go on the temperature's fixed, there's no vibra-

tion that's unpredictable, there's no change in power that's unpredictable. It's order.

"But outdoors, it's absolute chaos for machines. And so, what's really interesting about what we do is how to apply order to that chaos, how to allow mobile robots to operate intelligently."

He believes that what is now becoming known as the Waterloo eco-system is a huge asset. "We're a very high tech company, so incredibly high quality technical talent is key to our success and our growth strategy. Being so close to UW, the pioneers in mechatronics, that's a key resource for talent that we're able to pull from, and we're grateful to be a part of the Waterloo community and have access not only to the technical talent coming out of the university, but the entrepreneurial ecosystems and resources here, and the financial resources, and the investor community and mentorship. Mentorship is a big part of our business. And a really important part of our success is where we are located."

#### The business of robotics

Rendall didn't focus solely on the engineering or mechatronics side of the robotic business. He says, "I worked for a lot of small businesses during my co-op. We were R&D



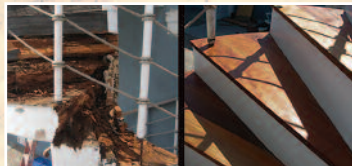
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heavy in my co-op experience, but I also looked at business development in my co-op.” He continued to earn his Masters from UW’s Conrad Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology Centre.

He’s a bit self-deprecating when he says, “I was always the guy who understood the technology, was never very good at it... but I could sell it.” Not a bad recipe for an effective CEO. He brings a practical approach to building his business. “It’s important to consider that, cool technology is great, but will people actually pay money for it? That’s independent of the capitalization. You can tell a really great story about technology and find people who buy into that vision, but if you have a solution looking for a problem, it’s more of a game of chance whether you will find a winning problem to match that solution.”

He says at Clearpath, “We started with the problem, and the solution emerged as a result. And that was a very different way of thinking. And what that allowed us to do was really concentrate on revenue and developing relationships with customers, as opposed to developing technology.”



*Loft space did not work for Clearpath, which needs manufacturing capacity.*

### Life long learning

Clearpath is committed to life-long learning, from a corporate perspective. From their earliest days, they have been committed to making whatever changes in their products customer needs dictated. Rendall talks about quick “iterations”, as lessons learned were immediately applied to the product. He also notes that they are quick to abandon assumptions if they are proven wrong. For example, when the company first considered industrial and military applications for their products, they were assuming what Rendall calls “financial-centric motivators” – that cost was a key factor.

However, he says, “What we’ve found as we’ve developed relationships, it’s actually the safety factor that is the most important thing. It’s priority number one for organizations that operate in safety-sensitive environments. They’re looking for ways to make the workplace safer for their work force. There are direct financial implications that trickle out of that, but from my experience it doesn’t seem like it’s financially motivated. It’s more that the cost of safety incidents in terms of morale and recruitment and press, is far outweighed compared to the financial benefits that can be linked to reduction in insurance and litigation.”

Rendall says that one key to the company’s growth is the team. “We’re really meticulous with how we hire people,

we take our sweet time making sure we have found the right person. No one has a flawless hiring record, but I would say we have an abnormally good one, very good retention levels... every person we bring on adds tremendous impact to our business. We punch way above our weight, and it’s all because of our people.”

### “Starting to see pull”

Clearpath has been a significant success, by any measurement, even through tough, post-recession times. Now, believes Rendall, the future is very bright: “Now, when things are coming around and the spending taps are starting to be turned back on, we’re really starting to see pull, which is great from a growth perspective. The future of robotics is going to be incalculable, huge, so we’re really well timed in the market because we’ve been operating for four years. There are a lot of other companies coming around, but we’ve established a position in the market, a track record, a team operational sophistication, all the pillars that are necessary for establishing rapid growth.

“We’ve established expertise in this domain as a commercial entity that no other company or very few companies have amassed. We’ve been expanding our portfolio to cater to the growing needs of our market.”

And “the market,” he says, “is just getting started.” ✕



**TIM JACKSON HAS LEFT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO** to take a position with the **Centre for Impact Investing** in Toronto's MaRS Discovery District. MaRS is a nonprofit organization created to connect the worlds of science, business and government and nurture a culture of innovation. CII bills itself as "a hub to increase the awareness and effectiveness of social finance to catalyze new capital, talent and initiatives dedicated to tackling social and environmental problems in Canada."

"It is with a mix of pride and regret that I inform you that our Vice-President, University Relations, Tim Jackson, is leaving the university to pursue an opportunity in social finance and entrepreneurship, two fields close to his heart," wrote President **Feridun Hamdullahpur**. "As Vice-President, University Relations, Tim has enabled his team to make major advances to

the university's role and profile in the community, to strengthen our 'brand', and to support major institution-wide initiatives like the development of our Strategic Plan and our Economic Impact Study."

Jackson was appointed VP, University Relations in May 2012 after serving in the role for a nearly a year in an interim capacity. Prior to that, he was Associate VP, Commercialization, and CEO, Waterloo Accelerator Centre.

**KITCHENER M.P. JOHN MILLOY**, Ontario's Minister of Government Services, and Government House Leader, will not run in the next provincial election. He announced his retirement from politics in March, citing his desire to spend time with his family. He said that he will not seek elected office in the foreseeable future, and added that he does not know what his next job

will be, as yet. Milloy, 48, and his wife, **Dr. Sara Pendergast**, have two children aged 8 and 3.

**CITY OF WATERLOO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** has launched their new website, [www.wearewaterloo.ca](http://www.wearewaterloo.ca) that includes interactive tools such as a property tax estimator, a list of available lands, development information, an interactive map with expanded amenities, a company spotlight and an active Twitter account (@wearewaterloo) for current news.

**KAREN GALLANT IS THE NEW PRESIDENT & CEO Junior Achievement of Waterloo.** Gallant joins Junior Achievement from **Communitech** where she was the Senior Director of Talent Networks. "Working at Communitech has been an inspiring experience – witnessing companies grow from start-up to successful enterprise. I view Junior Achievement as the initial step before the start-up phase – inspiring the entrepreneurial spirit in youth at an early age. The young people in Junior Achievement will become the business leaders of tomorrow creating jobs and opportunities for the betterment of our local economy," said Gallant.

**WATERLOO ACCELERATOR CENTRE** has celebrated the launch of 30 technology start-ups from its **JumpStart** program, a unique six-month mentorship and business acceleration program aimed at assisting engineers and scientists commercialize new products and develop new businesses. Attendees at the launch ceremony heard the pitches from seven of the JumpStart companies, including **Milao Language**, an educational technology start-up radically changing the way people learn a new language; **Kite**, a productivity tool that accelerates building web applications; **Deep Trekker**, a creator of fully portable, highly manoeuvrable, affordable video submarines; **iNot4Profit**, a provider of mobile application solutions for the non-profit sector; **Wriber**,



a blogger's best friend; **TrendyMED**, a medical device company developing a groundbreaking line of intravenous (IV) infusion products, and **Plasticity**, a start-up combining neuroscience and technology to make people happier at work. A full list of JumpStart companies participating across three cohorts can be found at [accelerator-centre.com/about/jumpstart-powered-by-the-accelerator-centre](http://accelerator-centre.com/about/jumpstart-powered-by-the-accelerator-centre). Since the JumpStart program kicked off in January 2013, 30 technology start-ups each received \$5K in mentorship from the Accelerator Centre's team of in-house advisors along with \$25K in matching seed financing. As a direct result of the JumpStart program, participating start-ups have created 180+ new jobs in the Waterloo Region, generated \$3.2 million in combined revenue, and are expected to raise approximately \$5 million in private investment.

AN UNIQUE COLLABORATION IS PROVIDING **University of Waterloo** students and entrepreneurs the opportunity to work together as **Stratford's Accelerator Centre** relocates to the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus this spring. "This initiative of the Stratford Accelerator Centre and the University of Waterloo creates a unique opportunity—a community based on the networking and collaboration so critical to entrepreneurial success, with the added benefit of being housed within the highly innovative culture that exists on our campus," said **Ginny Dybenko**, executive director of the Stratford Campus. "We're creating and supporting an environment that will help startups reach their goals through interaction with our students, and our students will benefit through direct access to these entrepreneurs."

**CONESTOGA-ROVERS & ASSOCIATES (CRA) AND GHD** have merged the two companies. A key feature of the merger is that all ongoing employee shareholders in CRA will become shareholders of



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GHD. The transaction is subject to shareholder and regulatory approval, as well as other customary closing conditions. The transaction is expected to close in July 2014. Once complete, this will be one of the largest true mergers to have occurred in the engineering and environmental industry, with the two firms combining resources, pooling their equity interests, and each company's shareholders becoming mutually dependent on each other for the creation of value over time. CRA is a 3,000-person multi-disciplinary engineering, environmental, construction, and information technology services firm. CRA has over 100 offices in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom and has delivered successful outcomes for our clients in over 60 countries. Established in 1928, GHD employs more than 5,500 people across five continents. GHD serves clients in the global markets of water, energy and resources, environment, property and buildings, and transportation.

**THE CANADIAN FARM BUILDERS ASSOCIATION** has honoured contractor HFH Inc. for its role in the \$2.1 million renovation and re-purposing of the ECO (Every Child Outdoors) Centre at rare Charitable Research Reserve near Blair. Construction work on the project was completed last year and involved extensive renovations of a historic limestone slit barn and farmhouse. The barn, built in the 1840s, is one of few like it still standing in the province. The set of repurposed buildings form the rare ECO Centre and is home base for the charity's Chain of Learning research and environmental education programs, serving thousands of school children and the public alike. The house includes classrooms which double as meeting rooms and event space, a kitchen and accommodations for visiting researchers, enticing scientists from further afield to consider Waterloo Region as a source of environmental excellence.

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**REID'S HERITAGE HOMES HAS BEEN NAMED 2013** Builder of the Year by the **Guelph and District Home Builders' Association**. The award was presented to Reid's Heritage Homes for reasons including constantly keeping on the forefront of the home building industry, and the company's recognition as 2013 Ontario Home Builder of the Year by the Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA). Reid's Heritage Homes also received the GBHBA Award for the Most Outstanding Single Detached Design over 2,500 sq. ft.

**SCHOOL OF ROCK, AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION** with more than 100 locations across the U.S. and two in Canada has opened its first Southwestern Ontario outpost in Kitchener-Waterloo. The school runs programs and lessons at their location at 78 Francis Street North in downtown Kitchener. School of Rock Kitchener-Waterloo is owned and operated by local entrepreneurs **Cynthia Sundberg** and her husband **Rick Endrulat**. Endrulat is the founder of high-tech services firm Virtual Causeway, and Sundberg serves as the Vice President.

**GUELPH WOMEN IN NETWORKING OFFERS** one \$1,000 scholarship to one female college or university student each year. Recipients are women who strive for academic excellence, show responsibility and leadership, are involved in

their local, and scholastic community, and are working towards a career that will advocate, promote, or enhance the success of women. For information on this year's scholarships, visit <http://gwin.ca/scholarship/>. All submissions must be received by, or post-marked for, May 31, 2014.

**THE WATERLOO REGIONAL LABOUR COUNCIL** raised more than \$4,600 for local women's shelters in the Waterloo Region at its first annual International Women's Day fundraiser brunch. **Fran Parry** and **Lois Iles**, Co-Chairs of the Council's Women's Committee, were deeply gratified by the outpouring of support from the almost 160 women and men who attended. The Women's Day committee have presented cheques to the three women's shelters – **Anselma House**, **Haven House** and **Mary's Place**.

**UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO PROFESSOR ROB DE LOË** is the new Canadian Co-Chair of the **Great Lakes Water Quality Board, The International Joint Commission** announced. The IJC is a bi-national organization established by Canada and the US to prevent and resolve disputes about use and quality of boundary waters, and to advise governments on water resources issues.

De Loë, a professor in the Department of Environment and Resource Studies and member of Waterloo's Water Institute, is one of Canada's leading academics in water governance and policy.

The Water Quality Board is the principal advisor to the IJC in reviewing and assessing progress in implementation of the **Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement**, and in identifying emerging issues and approaches for preventing and resolving the complex challenges facing the Great Lakes. "The Great Lakes represent an enormous opportunity and challenge for governments, researchers, businesses and communities to sustainably manage one of the world's greatest freshwater resources," said de Loë.





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**THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS IS DROPPING** for the Grand River Conservation Authority in 2014. The GRCA board approved a budget calling for total expenditures of \$29.4 million this year, a drop from the \$30.7 million budgeted last year. About \$10.3 million, or 34%, comes from municipalities of the watershed which collect the money from residents through property taxes or water bills. The municipal share of the budget is about \$10.45 per person this year. Even though the overall budget is smaller this year, the cost to municipalities is up about 2.5 per cent. That's because other sources of revenue, such as provincial grants and some types of self-generated revenues do not grow as much as basic operating costs. Government grants in 2014 total \$3.6 million, about 12 per cent of the budget. About 46% of the GRCA's revenues – about \$14 million — come from self-generated revenues such as camping fees, park admissions, hydro generation, donations, property rental and other sources. The GRCA budget covers the costs of program that protect water quality, reduce flood damages, preserve and improve natural areas, support environmentally responsible development and provide outdoor recreation and environmental education. The budget includes money for major projects this year to improve the environment, reduce flood

damages and protect water supplies. For projects involving work on dams and dikes, the provincial government covers half of the cost.

**THE WATERLOO REGION HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION** has carried out a community cooperative construction project in support of **Ray of Hope**. Since 1967, Ray of Hope has provided care, hope and support to people who are disadvantaged, marginalized, or troubled. With the combined efforts of WRHBA member companies, including **Conestoga College**, a four week renovation was carried out in March. Sixty students from the college's Centre for Construction Trades Outreach Program (CCTOP) and Women in Skilled Trades (WIST) took part in the renovation alongside a multitude of WRHBA trades people, contractors and industry stakeholders who lent their expertise, time, talent and donations to offset construction cost.

**REACHING OUR OUTDOOR FRIENDS (ROOF)** has received a grant of \$20,000 from **The Co-operators**. The funding will support the administration of two social enterprise programs that provide job skills and employment opportunities to homeless and at-risk youth. ROOF is a multi-service agency for young people aged 12 to 25 experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Waterloo Region.

**ECONOMICAL INSURANCE HAS ANNOUNCED** plans for its new operating model, intended to make its underwriting operations more centralized, automated, consistent and agile. Economical will implement new technologies to automate processes, establish a new organization structure and aim to bring consistency to its processes. Economical believes that these changes will enhance the company's productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. A new national processing centre will be launched at Economical's Riverbend facility in Kitchener, in 2014 where Economical will process a large portion of its business. Hiring for this centre has started and



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**HARDY BROMBERG HAS BEEN NAMED** Commissioner of Planning and Development for Cambridge. A graduate of the Bachelors of Applied Science in Civil Engineering from the **University of Waterloo** and a Bachelors of Commerce from **McMaster University**, Bromberg is a licensed professional engineer, a licensed facilitator with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and a certified building code official. On a national level, Bromberg serves as the Chair of the Standing Committee for Housing and Small Buildings under the National Research Council and contributes to the revisions of the National Building and Fire Code.

**COBER EVOLVING SOLUTIONS HAS ANNOUNCED** further growth with an expansion into Barrie, Ontario, through the acquisition of print, wide format, and interactive service provider **Kempenfelt Group** and **Kempenfelt Wideformat**. "We are thrilled to welcome the skills and services of the Kempenfelt Group to our team" said **Peter Cober**, President of Cober Evolving Solutions. "They have very similar team cultures and pride when it comes to innovation, just like us. Over the past 40 years the Kempenfelt team has built a great company and a great reputation." 

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

members – is much broader.

## Working with students

Whelan and Currie's commitment to their craft extends well beyond their customer base, and beyond their work with mpGO. As graduates of Conestoga College, they maintain connections with students, young videographers and film students.

A web search for their names will reveal a significant number of occasions when they have, as volunteers, participated in panels, seminars and other teaching sessions for young people seeking to follow in their footsteps; they have also worked with many interns, welcoming the students into their home-based studio, and giving them experience right across the skill sets necessary to making videos – and running a business.

"What we always talk to the kids about is how we deal with clients. They are here when the phone rings. There's no secret about how we make money. If you mess around here, you're going to affect the bottom line."

Adds Whelan, "We have a great relationship with Conestoga College and with the local high schools. We do a lot of support for the kids coming out of school."



Carol Ann Whelan with life and business partner Rob Currie

Whelan says that one key lesson interns need to learn is, it's all about the customer. Professional video producers have to keep the customer front and centre in their work, and young video makers sometimes lose sight of that when they are caught up in the creative process. That's "one thing we always talk to the kids about," she says.

Whelan smiles about the frequent occasions when an intern is "putting

their heart and soul into it... and Rob will come in and change it all around. It's got nothing to do with their work – he knows the client. If he did a change, it's for a reason... We teach them right from the beginning, 'you don't take it personally'."

Whelan and Currie are very involved in the Skills Canada video competition. "Rob does the provincial and national for Skills Canada video. Teams come in from across Canada.

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They open their envelope and get their project, and they shoot and edit and deliver in about six hours. Then I have a panel of four to six professional judges, and we do a live presentation at 4 p.m."

She's proud that several of their one-time interns are now succeeding in the video production business. Whelan believes that this is key to the ongoing vibrancy of their business. "What our biggest challenge is, we're trying to shake the old boys' club, because we do love the youth in it. It's healthy for our business to have a youth contingent."

### "An art and a skill"

Whelan says that the ease with which almost anyone can now make a video on their smart phone or other digital devices has misled potential clients into making bad decisions about creating promotional materials and other video products.

She told Exchange there is a problem "because of how easy it is to get into the business."

That creates a situation for newbies, she says, where "now you got the toys, but can you produce?"

The fall-out is unhappy clients – or clients who never see the video product they have contracted for. She notes, "I've had three phone calls in the last few weeks from someone else's unhappy clients, because they went down this road and the product's not deliverable."

She cautions prospective clients that they need to understand that this business requires more than the tools – "It's an art and a skill."

She adds, with a laugh, "I always like the analogy – I own a hammer, and I know how to use a hammer, but do you really think I should install your roof?"

It's somewhat comparable to the time, a few years ago, when everyone believed they could produce a professional website. Graphic artists and copywriters will now tell you that era

is passing, because companies have realized that their website needs to reflect the company's own desired levels of expertise and professionalism.

The same thing, says Whelan, has to

**"It should be dynamic. It's so powerful – you can change people's minds, you can trigger into emotion."**

apply to video production. The product has to be top-notch, or the client's image will suffer.

That means being able to use all available methods; it means tapping into a wider skill-set through colleagues from mpGO; it means being talented.

She says, "Shooting the pictures is not all it is all about. You've got white board animation, you've got graphics, you've got really strong video... a camera's just not cutting it. You need to be able to communicate in all these different ways. How you get aggressive on screen... it takes skill.

"It should be dynamic. It's so powerful – you can change people's minds, you can trigger into emotion."

She worries that poor quality, amateurish production degrades her field. "Video is so prolific that there's no mystique any more, there's no 'Hollywood', so everybody thinks they can do it, and so you see all this bad video, and it becomes the norm or the accepted."

Not good enough for her clients – or the clients of her professional colleagues, she says. "When you need a professional video, that is not acceptable any more."

### "Love this business"

In good times and bad – feast or famine – Whelan and Currie's passion for their craft never wanes. They work for a wide variety of clients – retail, not for profits, corporations, training videos.

"Our favourite stuff is educational, educational for a young audience. It's exciting, we can spread our creative wings, put a whole bunch of stuff in a short period of time and the kids will take it all in."

She adds, though, like a true small business owner, "We're not really big on saying 'no' to anybody. You can come to us with a minor budget and we can probably come up with something that will work for you."

Adds Whelan, "We love this business. We love it... sometimes it doesn't love us back. We get invited into places, and we get to tell these people's stories. That's pretty cool."

She recalls an occasion when C to C had produced a science video featuring a little girl, and Canadian astronaut Roberta Bondar was shown the video. "We had Roberta Bondar watch our science video; she said, 'I was that girl!'"

"We said, 'Yes!!'"

And that said it all.





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## ART & SKILL

*Video producers collaborate and communicate through mpGO*

BY EXCHANGE MAGAZINE

Carol Ann Whalen says that, in her line of work, “It’s feast and famine. It can be a rough business.” The co-founder of C to C Productions is remarkably candid: “Right now, we’re in probably the worst famine I have seen, since 1994-95.” The key, she says, is survival.

But in the midst of such challenges, Whelan has clearly not lost the optimistic edge that has driven her creativity for more than 25 years. She says, “We have enough foundation over 25 years that we can survive the famine, and we can enjoy the feast.”

And another feast, she hopes, is right around the corner.

C to C Productions, which Whelan co-founded with Rob Currie – her partner in business, and in life – is a professional video production company that creates productions “to instruct,

promote, demonstrate, document, advertise and communicate”.

Whelan has also been part of an organization called mpGO for almost all of those 25 years, and has chaired it for the past six. mpGO is the “Media Producers Group of Ontario”, which Whelan says was created for the mutual benefit of people in her business.

“Our vision with mpGO is definitely that together we are better, because there are so many changes in the industry. There always have been.”

The stated mission of mpGO includes encouraging interdependence among local film, video and interactive media producers.

Whelan knows what it means to be interdependent. She remembers a

time when, having lost a big client, she had to let one of her first employees go – Peter Shannon, who then founded Memory Tree. Some years later, they showed up to compete for a contract – and almost immediately decided to work together on a collaborative bid.

The video production business is highly volatile, influenced by economic changes and emerging technology. Her company has varied in employee size from three to nine and back again. And again.

Apparent competition comes from unexpected places, she says, from

“What our biggest challenge is, we’re trying to shake the old boys’ club, because we do love the youth in it. It’s healthy for our business to have a youth contingent.”

“Uncle Harry with his camcorder to the big ad agency in Toronto.”

But neither of those should really impact on the market for the members of mpGO. “We’re filling that huge market in the middle, as professionals. And we know we can’t be everything to everyone to every project. So to tap into each other’s skill set makes sense.”

mpGO came into being, under a different name, around 1988. Whelan says, “It’s membership based, and it’s fluid. Active members show up for the meetings; others get all the information from the website (mpGO.org).

“We meet about every two months or so, so we can share info, and we love showing off our projects to each other. We don’t show off our projects to say, ‘Look at this!’; we say, ‘These were our challenges, and this is how we met them’.”

Most of the members are from the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph area. She says, “This is where we have evolved over the years,” although their reach – like the market for most of the



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