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RANDY BUTCHER,  
STUNT GUY

# EXCHANGE

MAGAZINE FOR ENTREPRENEURS / ENTERPRISES / ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS / EDUCATORS

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## GAINING VELOCITY

### INSIDE

- New direction in economic development
- Capacity Waterloo now Capacity Canada
- Rogue board members
- Auto dealership goes solar
- MEDA members scale Kilimanjaro

**Municipal Election: It's a vote, but will there be voters?**





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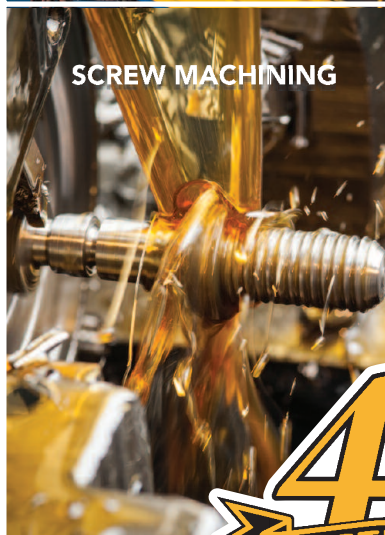
POWDER COATING



PLASTIC INJECTION MOLDING



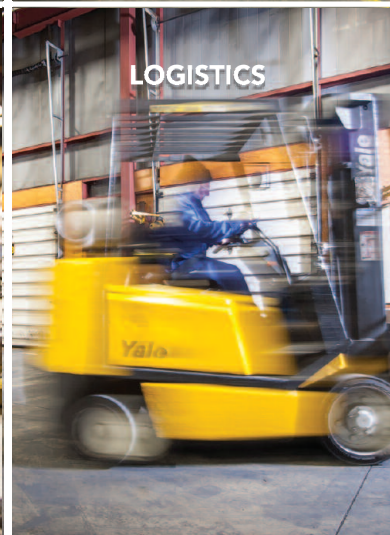
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# Over 140 Years A Lot Has Happened

## 1876

Watson, who got bored easily, frequently held the phone while Bell ran off to the other end. One time he started humming "Meet me in St. Louie". When Bell returned he commented to Watson how nice it was to hear music while being "on hold". Thus the first cause for music on hold.

## 1879

The Canadian Bell Telephone System was named for Alexander Graham Bells father, Alexander Melville Bell, until the time he sold it in 1879 to the National Bell Telephone Company, out of Boston, Massachusetts.

## 1929

Herbert Hoover (1929-1933), the 31st President of the United States, was the first U.S. President to have a telephone on his desk at the White House

## 1963

Jane Barbe, (pronounced Barbie) was the Pop-culture figure who was the first to record telephone messages for the Audichron Company. By the year 2000, she was heard by 300 million people each week.

## 1978

Smiston Communications officially opens its operations

## 1986

Smiston Communications Kitchener becomes Head Office

## 1998

Smiston Communications expands business throughout Ontario

## 2004

Bell buys Smiston Communications

## 2008

Smiston Management takes Smiston back to private owned operation

## 2010

Avaya buys Nortel's IP / PBX business for \$900 million

## 2009

Smiston changes name to Network Telecom

## 2014

Network Telecom moves from Victoria St. to a new state of the art office and training facility at 969 Guelph St. in Kitchener

## What song was Watson humming while Bell had him "on hold"?

The Smiston logo is written in a stylized, cursive script. The letters are dark grey with a lighter grey shadow effect, giving it a three-dimensional appearance. A horizontal line underlines the word.The Network Telecom logo features the word "NETWORK" in a bold, sans-serif font, with the "N" being significantly larger and stylized. Below it, the word "TELECOM" is written in a similar font. A large, stylized "T" is positioned to the left of "TELECOM", and a curved line arches over the word "NETWORK".

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On the cover: Mike Kirkup of Velocity



ION GROUNDBREAKING LAUNCHES BIGGEST INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT  
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## EXCHANGE

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# THE END OF NEIGHBORS?

*Not in our region, not by a long shot*

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

Maclean's magazine recently carried a feature article called "The end of neighbours: how our increasingly closed-off lives are poisoning our politics and endangering our health." Now, I do not wish to discount the views of another print publication, but I have to say that, here in Waterloo Region, it simply ain't so. Our neighbourhoods are thriving (check out the amazing number of neighbourhood festivals); more to the point, our business community is constantly revitalized by connection with neighbours.

The other word for that, in the business context, is "collaboration".

This issue is all about collaboration. We feature UW's Velocity program, where mentors work with start-ups – and start-ups help other start-ups. We talked to Gerry Remers, John Jung and Mike Murray about the new, collaborative, region-wide development of a soon-to-be Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation.

We also take a look at Capacity Canada (the newly re-christened Capacity Waterloo, headed by Cathy Brothers), which was launched through an unprecedented collaboration between corporate philanthropists and now creates partnerships between the corporate world and the non-profit sector.

But let's be honest – although the theme of this issue could be "collaboration", that's more of an accident than a plan, because it's tough to write about business, R&D, or the region's non-profit sector without encountering superb examples of collaboration.

That's what we are about. That is our ecosystem. And that's why, in this Region at any rate, there is no danger at all that we're facing "the end of neighbours." X



CYNTHIA SUNDBERG IS ROCKING "SCHOOL OF ROCK" PAGE 33

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# THE DILEMMA OF THE ROGUE BOARD MEMBER

by JOHN T. DINNER



John Dinner is President of John T. Dinner Board Governance Services, a consulting firm based in Waterloo Region that helps boards across Canada and across sectors. John can be reached at: [john@boardgovernance.ca](mailto:john@boardgovernance.ca)

An issue I have been encountering with clients relates to the dilemma boards face when the behaviour of a single director comes close to crippling the rest of the board. What to do?

In one scenario, a director believes that, by voting against every resolution, the meeting minutes show proof that appropriate due diligence has occurred (to which I can only respond: Really?). The assumption, presumably, is that board consensus smacks of acquiescence and is at odds with effective board oversight. It may also suggest superficial deliberations and a lack of director independence. To me, it's irrational thinking, at best.

In another scenario, a new director made it clear their mandate was to address a litany of stakeholder concerns. The board's real duties and priorities were deemed irrelevant. Boards with a representa-

tive membership model often encounter situations where individual directors insist on being ambassadors of the group they represent, instead of stewards of the organization they oversee. In doing so, the longer-term best interests of the organizations to which every director is obligated to protect and support, is ignored or given short shrift.

There appeared to be a breakthrough moment in a third scenario when an offending director publicly apologized for his role in an ongoing conflict. However, the situation quickly deteriorated when this same individual turned the table on a board colleague, demanding they take responsibility for their role and insisting on a similar confession. So much for the apparent triumph of humility and sincerity.

These scenarios are indicative of several chal-

Many directors lack understanding of what constitutes genuine conflict of interest and their obligation to withdraw from the consideration of an issue where a conflict exists.

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lenges with which boards can easily find themselves contending. They reflect all too common dynamics based on some basic root causes, including:

1. The individualistic nature of western society means some directors simply do not work well in a group setting.

2. Many directors lack a real understanding of what constitutes genuine conflict of interest and their obligation to withdraw from the consideration of an issue where a conflict exists.

3. There is often little consideration given as to how well a director nominee will fit with the larger group of board members.

4. There is often difficulty holding individuals to account for their behaviour, despite what might be clearly stated in a code of conduct or some other document.

Despite their often strong and clear wording, codes of conduct can be ineffectual if there isn't personal commitment and accountability by each board member to uphold their tenets. It's easy to agree with them in theory, but sometimes difficult to abide by when faced with differences that seem irreconcilable.

Another issue often relates to individual director accountability. An offending director will often place the interests of those who elected them ahead of the board or the organiza-

tion. In some circumstances, stakeholders are quite pleased to have a rebel on the board to hold other directors' feet to the fire. So much for trying to create a constructive boardroom culture that engenders candid consideration of all issues in a thorough, yet respectful manner.

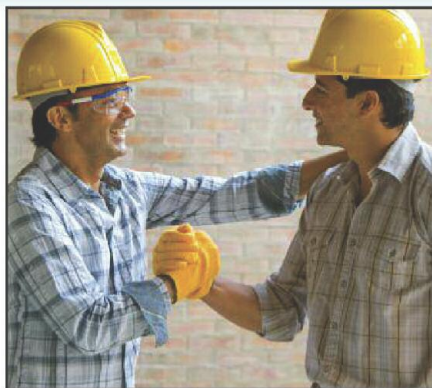
There is no easy remedy without a commitment by directors to respect the will of the board. A director evaluation process that ensures candid and constructive feedback can be helpful when the rogue board member hears reverberating concerns from multiple sources. However, just as

often, there can be a lack of receptivity to these interventions if it's perceived the effort is designed solely to quash differing or opposing views.

Ultimately, responsibility for how the board functions and how individual directors conduct themselves rests with the board chair, even though this accountability relies heavily on the goodwill of each director. Managing a rogue director's behaviour requires a skilled individual who can temper inappropriate conduct without exacerbating a potentially explosive situation. Ultimately, there needs to be agreement on how a board will conduct its work and how individual directors will relate to each other, particularly when strong personalities and emotion accompany conflicting views. **X**

Ultimately, responsibility for how the board functions and how individual directors conduct themselves rests with the board chair.

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Chris Eliasmith

## NEUROMORPHIC COMPUTER: JUST LIKE THE BRAIN

Chris Eliasmith is a big fan of “another way of thinking”. He embraces situations that require him and his colleagues to re-imagine complex challenges, and create new realities.

Eliasmith is an associate professor at the University of Waterloo, where he is jointly appointed in the Department of System Design Engineering and the Department of Philosophy; he is also cross-appointed to computer science and supervises students in both Biology and Psychology.

During the summer of 2014, this multi-disciplinary prof put together a summer school for post doctoral and pre-doctoral scholars. The purpose was to introduce people to a software package he designed – the Nengo brain simulator, which is specifically targeted to build large scale brain models.

“One of the first things we did at the summer school was ask what are people’s backgrounds, and essentially everybody here has more than one background, and they tend to span psychology, biology, neural science, computer science, engineering, mathematics, physics – those kinds of things.”

When the students came, Eliasmith says, they “had some interests, but they weren’t that well formed in a lot of cases”, but then they really started working well in these groups on these projects. “It’s been kind amazing,” he says. Over the course of just one week, the group went from not knowing the software at all, to learning it and then organizing the project. Eliasmith says he has experienced workshops that after three weeks, are not that well developed. “We’re super impressed with the people here.”

The group Eliasmith brought together came from all over the world: South Africa, the UK, Germany, United States, Canada. And they’re working on projects that they wouldn’t be doing otherwise.

One example is a project involving three people who have never worked together before. One had done some work on arm modelling, one had done some work on understanding how to do “action selection”, and the other did some work on memory. They came here and build a model from scratch that does all these things together, using Eliasmith’s new software.

Eliasmith’s lab at UW had developed the software over the last several years. The version these students are using is a brand new release. For Eliasmith, it’s a little bit of software testing, and he’s been really happy with what the students are able to do.

Eliasmith has been at the University for the past 15 years. His research has focused on a general method for doing research in brain modelling. In 2013 he published a book, “How to Build a Brain”, centred around the methods taught at the summer school he put together. “A lot of people had seen that book and wanted to come ... the book became the manual.”

“We built this big brain model called ‘Spaun’; it’s the world largest, most functioning brain model.”

He sees his work as a combination of “both artificial intelligence and under-

standing the biological mechanisms behind intelligence,” stressing that “the biological parts matter, because the applications are medically oriented”.

A functioning model will help Eliasmith and other researchers “understand what different interventions actually do to the brain”. Currently people do deep brain stimulation without a whole lot of understanding what they are changing.

“You can test the effects of drugs if you know what kind of bio-channels they are affecting. If we can target the drug in a certain kind of way, this is the functional consequence, as in computer prototyping.”

There are a lot of “beginnings here”, says Eliasmith, “collaborations, a lot of technological applications.” In particular he cites one he finds “most exciting”.

“We’ve been working on one project with a group at Stanford that is building a silicon chip which is basically functioning a lot more like the brain than computer chips typically do.” It’s a kind of neuromorphic computing. It basically uses physics in a different way to do computation. But it also mandates a different way of programming because “its user net is made in a different kind of way.”

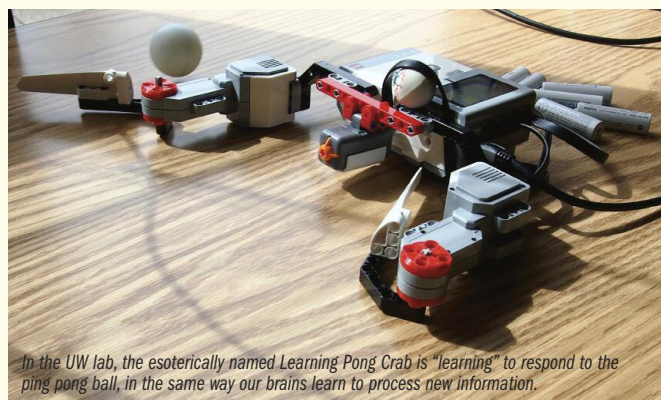
He has a neuromorphic computer at UW. It is built out of ARM processors that have “a thousand core processors on one board, and we’ve interfaced our software so we can... run these huge models in real time. Which you could never do on these super computers. Because it’s a different kind of architecture.”

There are several large companies that are building chips that work more like the brain, and there are research groups that are also doing that, such as the SpiNNaker Group and the group at Stanford – and “we’re collaborating with them”.

What Eliasmith provides “is a way of programming, which really doesn’t exist. There isn’t a systematic way to organize your code in such a way that it goes on these chips in a natural kind of way. What we’re teaching these people is another way of thinking about how to use the software tool in a way to take advantage this next generation hardware.”

The difference between a Neuromorphic computer and a digital computer is that a neuromorphic computer is just like in the brain, with thousand of billions of individual processors, and they’re very small and simple, “so they’re not like a CPU” that you would find in a digital computer.

“The way that you get them to do interesting things is by having them communicate a lot with all of the other processors,” says Eliasmith. The way computers are set up right now, they don’t have the communication infrastructure you need, in order to send out the amount of information you need to send out. To have it traverse the network and go to the place it needs to go, and so on.”



In the UW lab, the esoterically named Learning Pong Crab is “learning” to respond to the ping pong ball, in the same way our brains learn to process new information.

When you do that you use a lot less energy, so there is a significant power savings in comparison to the same number of computations on a standard computer. The way a digital computer works is that you have transistors, and you either have those “transistors in a low state, or you put a lot of energy into it and move it into a high state, so you get a zero or one”. Eliasmith says “this is great because you don’t have noise, and all kinds of things. But you are paying a lot of energy cost to move it that huge gap.” The Stanford group is doing computation over that entire range of the transistor, and for that reason you can do with milliwatts what it takes to do with kilowatts of computing power.

“When dealing with voltages and currency and so on, you get a lot of noise, a lot of reliability, a lot of problems ... from an engineering perspective,” adds Eliasmith. But he states that these are problems that our brain has dealt with. “Our brain works on 20 watts and has 100 billion neurons working. Right now if you tried to simulate that on a standard computer you would need gigawatts of power; on something like SpiNNaker you need mega watts of power and on something like ARM chips, you need in the watt range.”

It’s breakthrough stuff Eliasmith is working on. If these neuro-chips are commercialized, they can provide huge energy savings and increase the portability of very complex systems, systems for remote sensing or really powerful hand held devices. Quite remarkable indeed. – Jon Rohr



## SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHANGES PROPOSED FOR REGION

After an extensive process of consultation and debate, a new “strategic direction” for economic development in Waterloo Region has been released. A set of “Draft Action Items”, part of the Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy, has been presented. The document is also now in the hands of Regional and area Municipal Councils for their comments and review.

One key recommendation involves the creation of a new Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation, an arms-length body that would be largely responsible for economic development on behalf of the region and the seven area municipalities. This would mark a significant change from business as usual in the region.

Several groups have been involved in carrying out this project, so far. The Steering Committee includes the CAOs of all eight municipalities, as well as John Jung, CEO of Canada’s Technology Triangle. Jung is involved because there is a real possibility that the CTT will be incorporated into a larger Economic Development Corporation. The region and seven area municipalities have hired the firm Malone Given Parsons Ltd. (MGP) to carry out the project. Key to the process was the appointment of an Advisory Committee comprising business and community leaders from the region. Gerry Remers, President and COO of Christie Digital Systems Canada Inc., is chairing the Advisory Committee. Committee members are a “who’s who” of regional business – Bruce Gordon of Manulife, Carol Leamon of Axonify, Carol Simpson, Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington, Craig Beattie, Perimeter Development, Ed Roberts, Conestoga-Rovers & Associates, Greg Durocher, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Ian McLean, Greater KW Chamber, Iain Klugman, Communitech, Kevin Martin, Martin’s Family Fruit Farm, Malcolm Matheson, Steed and Evans, Mark Derro, Conestoga College, Mary D’Alton, Waterloo Inn, Michael Duschene, Perimeter Institute, Michael Pley, Com Dev, and Tim Jackson, now with the MaRS Centre. Remers calls his group “A good cross section in terms of community leaders.”

In an exclusive interview, Remers told Exchange that the Region is lagging behind other municipalities. “All the municipalities in Canada that have more than 50,000 people tend to have a region-wide economic development strategy, and the fact is, Waterloo Region, including the seven municipalities, hasn’t ever had a coordinated, cohesive, comprehensive economic development strategy.” We’re paying a price for that, he says. “When you look at Waterloo Region versus other regions nearby, there was a question as to whether or not we were getting our fair share of investment. We think of foreign-direct investment, but we shouldn’t just be thinking of foreign-direct investment from Europe or Asia or the States, we should be thinking about investment in the region from other parts of Canada as well. That was another reason for looking at setting up a Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation.”

The new corporation is not yet a reality. The concept is supported by the CAOs, and the Advisory Committee, but before it comes into being, it must be approved by political leaders of the Region and its seven member municipalities. Remers says no decision will be made until after the municipal election, which will be held October 27. At least four new mayors will be elected, and that alone changes the face of more than half the municipalities, and of Regional council itself.

Region of Waterloo CAO Mike Murray says that the new concepts have been approved in principle by all eight municipalities, but that “a lot of things need to happen” before it’s a done deal. However, it’s well on the way – he says, “all municipal councils have endorsed in principle the strategy and endorsed in principle the establishment of the Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation.” The recommendation is that the Economic Development Corporation would operate at arm’s-length from the Region, with its own CEO and board of directors. And while that board could be formed in a manner similar to the current board of the CTT – which has membership from all municipalities – the recommendation is for what Remers calls “a skills-based board, one where you have different people with different skills – marketing, sales, finance, etc.”

However, the make-up – indeed the method of appointment – of the board is not yet settled. However they are appointed, Corporation directors will play a major role in setting the stage for economic growth in the Region.

As well, the CEO would have a very significant role; Remers says one key decision will concern the process of hiring that key individual, whose job would then be “to actually execute this vision, mission, goals and objectives.”

CAO Murray told Exchange that an initial, key step will be the appointment of the board of the new entity; that should happen early in 2015, if all things unfold as expected. He anticipates that there will be a general, public call “for people to express interest in being members of the board.” That board will then make the second crucial decision – the hiring of “the new CEO.”

Other possible changes? Remers told Exchange, “It’s likely to be the case that CTT would be absorbed into this corporation. But all of that still has to be approved by the regional council and by the various municipal councils as well.”

CTT CEO John Jung is very supportive of the proposed changes in the region’s approach to economic development. However, in an interview with Exchange, he stressed the need for maintaining “continuity” and “momentum”. Murray was emphatically in support of this idea, stressing that “we don’t want a gap” during the development of the new corporation.

Jung says the CTT will continue to do its job during the period in which the Economic Development Corporation comes into being, and Jung uses words like “transition” and “merger” to describe the change. He suggests that one possibility is that the new entity would use the existing legal status of the CTT, and carry on from there, although he also says something entirely new may be created.

Jung is also insistent that the current nine staff members of the CTT should continue with the new entity, adding that they would have to go through “a process”.

Like Remers, Jung points out that although the concept has approval in principle from the area municipalities, “the devil is in the details.” Key decisions – governance, funding, make-up of the board – all have to be decided. And, of course, final approval must come from the eight municipal councils – although Jung says there has been nothing but support for the concept from elected officials.

Remers says, “There is a fairly significant shift here in terms of making this arms-length corporation more independent of local politics. The great thing about the work to date is that it’s clear to us at the advisory board level that the municipal CAOs are buying into this. They agree that this is the right thing to do. There is obviously going to be some shift of power, if you will, to the regional economic development corporation. It’s going to have a mandate to carry out the strategy.”

He adds, “One of the questions the advisory board has for the region and the municipalities is, whether they are actually going to transfer a certain set of powers, but also, are they going to fund it? It needs to get its funding. That’s another fairly significant question that remains open, in terms of how well funded this entity will be. If it’s going to be doing the external marketing, data collection, liaison, if it’s going to be doing foreign direct investment as well as investment from other areas outside of the region into the region, and if it’s going to have a chance of accomplishing its goals, in terms of creating economic strategy, it obviously needs a budget.” This is all very heady stuff, but Remers says that the end is barely in site. His Advisory Committee has met five times so far, but “the actual establishment of the corporation isn’t foreseen until the end of 2015, because it’s going to take time to plan the details of morphing CTT into this larger corporation.”

The advisory committee has also considered other economic and community sectors that might eventually come under the mandate of the new corporation. Remers notes, “Tourism, for example... Arts. Theoretically, both of those could be folded under the Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation’s mandate... It makes a lot of sense to include these. You’d have a minimum of administrative burden or overhead, and a maximum of ability to take funding and provide it effectively to the organizations that need it.”

Those discussions, however, are only preliminary, and Remers notes that he speaks only for himself, not his committee or the CAO group. Commenting on the potential for including tourism and the arts, Murray acknowledged that this might be a possibility down the road, but “in the short term, this organization is to have a laser focus on economic development.”

Right now, the process is moving ahead cautiously. Says the chair, “We’re taking one step at a time, taking things methodically. Because of the complex nature of local politics with the region and seven municipalities, you have to do that. You have to get buy-in from each of the seven municipalities, they have to understand the strategy, they have to recognize this is going to benefit the region as a whole, and they have to start identifying more with the re-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



John Jung



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

gion, on certain levels, certainly in terms of economic development, than at a municipal level.”

He wants to calm fears that local governments will be shifted out of the picture. “There still will be roles for municipalities in terms of land use planning and supporting some small-medium enterprises. I don’t think that the Regional Economic Development Corporation is going to become this monolithic entity that ends up controlling all aspects of economic development. There will still be roles to play for local economic development officers, but the idea is to have it all integrated and coordinated, and everyone recognizing that one municipality shouldn’t be fighting another one for direct foreign investment, for example – there should be a coordinated approach.” Remers knows there are challenges ahead. The composition of the municipal councils is unknown, until October 27. “At the end of the day it has to be decided by a political group.” He adds that details about funding, about transitioning from the present structure to a new structure, about leadership of the new organization, are all potential hurdles.

But he adds that the Advisory Committee shared a virtue common in Waterloo Region – a spirit of collaboration. He says the committee “recognizes that we’re all better off if we work together to benefit the region.”

In an interview for another Monitor article in this edition of Exchange, University of Waterloo economics professor Larry Smith echoed Remers’ comments about collaboration. He said, “Largely speaking, we know what we need to do to support entrepreneurship. We know what we need to do to support a broader range and more aggressive enterprises.... We have the will to do it, we have the range of expertise, and we have the institutions working towards it... I want the local governments first off to speak with one voice, and with an aggressive statement of why this is a place to stay.”

Remers commented that his committee members also recognize “that we have to change, we have grow, we have to give up something. We have to cede some powers to some extent to be able to benefit the community, to benefit the region.”

Members of the public are invited to join the discussion about the new Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy at the project website, [www.wreds.ca](http://www.wreds.ca). The Steering Committee of CAOs says that public feedback “will help to inform the implementation of this WREDS over the next several years.”

## FAMILY BUSINESS: RAE LIPSKIE - A PARTNERSHIP IN EVERY SENSE



Rae & Lipskie Investment Counsel, the Waterloo-based private wealth management service, is a partnership in every sense of the word. The business was launched in 1988 by Ken Rae; a year later, Brian Lipskie joined, and the partnership was born; both men continue as leaders of the company.

But they point out that the term “partnership” has come to mean so much more. They see their entire team of 18 people as key partners; they also believe they are in partnership with their clients.

They take this commitment so seriously that they now market their business as The Raelipskie Partnership.

Rae & Lipskie was originally a two-person, one-room operation – with a vision. Brian explains, “We decided we would create a niche market where we were managing portfolios for high net worth individuals and families, as well as institutions and non profit organizations. Each client has a team, including two portfolio managers and an administrative assistant.

People responded, and the business grew, “one client at a time.”

Today, 25 years later, The Raelipskie Partnership includes 10 portfolio managers, eight administrative support staff, and manages \$750 million on behalf of about 600 clients – high net worth individuals and families, as well as institutions and non profit organizations. Each client has a team, including two portfolio managers and an administrative assistant.

In an industry dominated by big-name players, Raelipskie is a notable, independent success story. Says Brian, “We’re one of the largest independent firms in Ontario.”

Ken stresses the fact that, from the beginning, they have been a “fee only investment management firm”. They use a tapered fee system: “the larger the portfolio, the lower the fee percentage.”

In 2016, a requirement is coming into effect that will force all financial investment firms to be more transparent with their clients – revealing all fees, commissions, money received from product sales. Also included is a provision that

financial firms provide clients with a clear view of what they are earning on their investments.

Some major players in the industry face significant changes, and some surprised clients.

Not Raelipskie – no changes are required. Says Rae, “We’ve always done it here. We’ve always been very transparent with our clients. They know exactly what they pay us. They know exactly what their return on investment is after all fees and expenses. We’ve always been ahead of the curve.”

Sheila Yendt has been with Raelipskie almost from the beginning; she leads the administrative team. She says that clients have long appreciated the transparent nature of the Firm’s reports. “We supply our clients with an expense statement at the end of the year. Our fees are tax deductible. They have a clean picture of what they hold, how much in each account, what the returns are in each account, how it compares with the rest of the market, what their asset mix is, and what their goals are.”

Brian says, “We manage diversified portfolios including globally diversified portfolios, but we do have a small element of local company stocks. We’ve had a number of some very successful local stock investments for our clients.”

He stresses, though, that the reasoning behind this is not an attempt to boost local business, but on the basis of merit.

The partnership’s experts believe the economic future is bright. Says Ken, “The global economy, led by the North American economy, seems to be expanding. The US economy seems to be doing really well, pulling the Canadian economy along.”

Brian adds that Europe seems to be in a slow recovery mode, and that emerging markets such as China and India “seem to be going in the right direction, too.”

He adds, “We only invest in blue chip stocks; we don’t go into any speculative thing. That’s another thing that clients are pretty keen on.”

Adds Brian, “We do a lot of our own research on financial markets and on individual stocks and bonds.”

Says Ken, “We pride ourselves in being independent, in making choices for our clients, and deciding what we’re going to invest in purely on their investment merits. We don’t have any conflicts here that some of the other financial institutions might have when we’re selecting investments for clients, and we think that is one of the keys to our success. We think being arm’s-length from products is a major advantage. It allows us to invest for what’s best for the client instead of just what’s suitable for them.”

Raelipskie does use one of the big banks “for custody of our client assets.” Adds Ken, “We use one of the big banks to hold our clients’ stocks and bonds; each client has a separate account in their name. But then we independently manage the investments in the accounts.”

Charitable foundations receive a discount on their services; Raelipskie also runs a charity fundraising event annually.

One of the newer members of the Raelipskie team is Jim Harper, who recently retired after a 40-year career as a partner in a well-known public accounting firm. He joined Raelipskie because, “On the other side of the ledger, I did a lot of work with these guys, and I never regretted sending clients here because they always got that personalized service here. It always made me look good.”

What’s next? Ken says, “On our team, we have quite a balance of ages and gender among our portfolio managers. We’re planning for succession; we’re looking forward to the future.” - Exchange



## MECHATRONICS: BIG NEW THING

Mechatronics is current, it's hot, it is the big new thing.

Or maybe not entirely. This is not to discount the impact this applied science is having on both the academic world and on a vast array of industries, but it's simply not brand new.

Mechatronics originated in Japan; it's a word derived from both Japanese and English, and has been around for close to 30 years. It has been called "modern mechanical engineering", because, where traditional mechanical engineering relied on mechanical means to make things move in original and creative ways, mechatronics applies the latest in electronic engineering to make of the same challenges.

Take the automobile carburetor. It prevailed for decades as the mechanical device that regulated the gas-oil-air mixture and fed the fuel to power the engine. "It was a clever way to make something do what it needs to do," says Jan Huissoon, Chair of the Faculty of Engineering, Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering. "Now it's replaced by electronic fuel injection. It serves the same purpose, feeds gas into the engine, in a vaporized form, but this time you can do clever things with it."

The classic example of a true mechatronics system is a robot. The actual structure is designed as a mechanical mechanism, with the addition of motors which are monitored by sensors. "Even with the electric motors and sensors, and the mechanical bit, it's still of no use," says Huissoon. "You still need a controller that tells the motors what to do, based on where it is." By "controller", Huissoon is referring to the computer algorithm, a "really complicated computer program that makes the machine work." To Huissoon, mechatronics is the means to produce a computer controlled electro-mechanical machine.

Relatively new to the University of Waterloo, a mechatronics option was introduced in the mid-nineties. "That was a set of courses mechanical engineering students would take; when enrolled in the mechanical engineering program, they would take a couple of courses from electrical and system design," and vice versa.

Huissoon says, "that was fairly popular at the time, but it didn't address the de-



sign of the system as a whole".

Now students think of the design as a complete system, "right from the word go". Some of the considerations are the types of computer hardware, how complicated is the algorithm, how big is the motor, size of the device – in other words, "What does the application define".

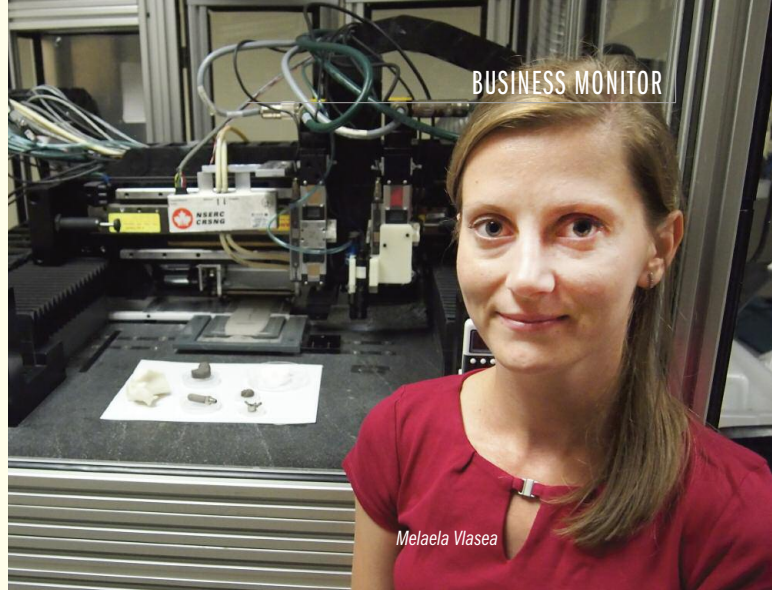
It's physical stuff, "what the machine is meant to do, how fast and how big it has to be."

"If it makes one motion in one hour, you obviously don't need computing power to handle that. But if it's moving at 5mm per second, and you're trying to control it within a couple millimetres, then your computer algorithm has to run 1000 times a second. That would be like a high speed robot, that's the sort of speed they run at, 1000 executions of the program per second, just to make it work."

The formal mechatronics program was launched in 2003. Students in the program get into electrical, mechanical and programming right from the word go, and they do it for four years.

It's based on the mechanical engineering program and it's one of the most difficult programs in engineering to get into. The program started with 120 students; in 2013 there were 145 and this year, 2014/15 there should be 210 students.

Huissoon likens the final year to "a competition. It's that year we can see just how many spin-offs we can launch. "We need to outdo the previous year," he says. Pre-



vious years saw spinoffs like: Clearpath Robotics (Exchange, May 2014), one of the first companies to be launched Thalmic Labs in 2012, and Avenir Medical, which recently changed its name to Sentry Scientific.

Mehaela Vlasea is a Post Doctoral fellow at UW, in the faculty of engineering. She is a graduate of the first Mechatronics cohort, in 2007.

Vlasea is involved with the complete electromechanical design and programming of a new mechatronics system used to make bio-compatible implants, this in the relatively new area of 3D additive material manufacturing.

In a collaborative model with Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, the program looks at different ways to move away from metallic implants. Their goal is to create bio-compatible ceramics that are more bio-active with the living body. The team had identified the material necessary to achieve this bio-compatibility, but they did not have the manufacturing platform.

Initially, Vlasea used an off-the-shelf 3D printer, but she determined that this off-the-shelf platform doesn't meet the needs of the internal structure of bone, for example. Bone has a dense outer layer and a porous inner layer. "So we decided to come up with a new system."

The complete system was developed at UW with Vlasea as the lead designer. The end result: a medical printer. In its fifth year of development, Vlasea is finishing up the software protocols.

The medical printer will print body parts that include dental bridges, which the researchers say is the lowest hanging fruit, because titanium is already FDA approved; "it's well known and well accepted".

The collaborative team is testing other materials. Recently Vlasea was very pleased with a very successful sheep implant. Primarily, they were looking at how the bone integrates with the implant. They have seen that "it works very well, meaning that there are no adverse reactions, in terms of immune responses". The next step is to build bigger implants, and to look at whether or not they fail, and to determine the integration process at a larger scale.

The process is intense. Mount Sinai has a team made up of a material specialist, a pathologist and orthopaedic surgeons. A team at Guelph University includes orthopaedic surgeons and nurses that handle the surgery, doing the CT scans of the area of interest. That scan then is sent to University of Toronto and University of Waterloo to determine the size of the implant. University of Waterloo prints the implant, which is then sent for thermal annealing. Cells are then cultured on the implant. It takes about 50 to 60 days for the cells to mature to the point where the implant can be implanted in the sheep. The sheep lives with the implant for a few months and then gets sacrificed, and the tissues are harvested with Mount Sinai hospital looking at the histology – and then they have a big meeting.

Vlasea has designed the machine "well beyond the needs of the collaboration". For instance, the machine can print cavities within a part, which cannot be done currently on commercial 3D platforms.

The improvements relate to a new file format call a AMF file (Additive Manufacturing File Format), which has in it information on the internal properties of a part, as well as the external shape characteristics. The file is specifically made for 3D printers.

Currently many 3D printers do not have the hardware capabilities to interpret complex data and build parts that for example, have very low density in the inside, with a very hard surface on the outside. "Our goal is to try to meet that need and have the hardware that can interpret the data and make the part as true to the original structure". The machine in the photo (top, right) will be mostly a research platform. Future platforms will include commercial applications that will be spun off of the research machine. One such application is a stand-alone compact dental printer. – Jon Rohr





Representatives of Waterloo Regional Council, the federal government, the provincial government, and project partners participated in the ceremonial groundbreaking for the region's ION – Light Rapid Transit – service.

## THE FIVE AND TEN MINUTE TOWN

August 21, 2014: the day that “everyone” – including Jim Wideman – “has been waiting for”. For the last 12 years, Waterloo Regional Council had anticipated this day. The day, as Wideman puts it, “that we break ground on the first stage of light rail transit in our community and begin the largest infrastructure project in our Region’s history.”

The project has its advantages, said Wideman, as he spoke to the crowd of stakeholders and supporters, and they’re not limited to moving people, curbing urban sprawl, and protecting the environment. “What ION really is,” said Wideman, “at the end of the day, is a game changer. A game changer in the way that ION will allow people to move in and around our community; a game changer in the way ION will help develop and shape our region, where our residents live and work, where they go to school and where they go to play, a game changer in how ION will help attract new residents and businesses, from local startups to long standing local and global companies. ION is a game changer in how we will tell our story of how our region is moving forward, helping us build on an already outstanding reputation, by giving our world class community, a world class transit system.”

General Manager of Grandlinq, Michael O’Neil, gave a projected time-line of the ION project, saying that over the next three years Waterloo Region and Grandlinq will work together to create a fast, reliable, and accessible light rail transit service. “This is an ambitious plan,” O’Neil stated, “that will only be realized by leveraging the knowledge, skills and experience of the entire project team, with the commitment of this community.” Grandlinq is a consortium whose partners include Plenary Group Canada; Meridian Infrastructure Waterloo; Aecon; Kiewit; Mass Electric Construction Canada; Keolis; STV Canada Construction; AECOM; and CIBC World Markets. O’Neil stated that, “Their work expands the globe. They are made up of people who work right here in Waterloo and they understand the concerns the community has about the construction. The light rail system will be built in stages to limit the impact in anyone area.” The goal is to have ION up and running by 2017.

Grandlinq is already working with the local utility companies to complete the necessary preparations for track construction. The design is being developed to a higher level of detail and readiness for awarding contracts, with the next steps being to relocate the above and below ground utilities, along certain sections of the route. This will result in certain portions of the road being closed, and some lane restrictions.

Work at the operations and storage facility station, where the ground-breaking ceremony was held, has started. The facility will be home to the 14 light rail vehicles, the site where they will be stored, cleaned and maintained.

### History in the making

The light rail transit system was approved in 2011 by Regional Council, primarily as a way to avoid the urban sprawl that so many communities, including the GTA, have experienced. In a historical review of the progression of the light rail system, Regional Chair Ken Seiling emphasized the forward-thinking nature of the Region of Waterloo.

Seiling offered a historical account of the evolution of the Waterloo Region light rail transit - ION. He said, “This project goes back a long way and speaks to the nature of this community. Back in 1973, the Region of Waterloo was created because at the time the government of the day decided that, with the growth taking place in Ontario, they needed a new government structure that could manage growth. So the regions were created, and one of the first tasks they were given was to create a regional plan. Of all the regions that were created at that time, the Region of Waterloo was the only one that took it seriously and created the first regional plan in Ontario, and was the only Regional plan for many years.”

Seiling said this took place because council saw a need to look after this community; it saw a need to look after its farming community, to plan for good growth in the cities and therefore, it created its first regional plan that was adopted in 1976.

The 1976 plan was largely the handiwork of two people, Bill Thomson and Gerry Thompson. There was a transit corridor right up the spine of the region. Although the



Steven Del Duca, Ontario's Minister of Transportation, listens to Regional Chair Ken Seiling tell the story of Light Rapid Transit in Waterloo Region.

region didn’t have control of transit at that time they thought it was important to include that bit of information. And that remains throughout all of the plans. “So when we were reaching the year 2000, it was pretty obvious that we were approaching what was then termed ‘urban envelopes.’ Urban envelopes determined what the size of the city would be at that time to preserve the rural lands outside. “By the time we hit 2000, we started to bump up to those urban envelopes. And we took a look at it and asked, ‘What do we want to do when we reach the urban envelopes?’ We’ve taken a look at what 25 years of no planning and no transit in the GTA had done down there – created grid lock, massive absorption of farmland – do we want our community to look like the GTA? And we said ‘no we don’t.’”

“We need to manage that growth, we need to preserve what’s important to us, and create a plan that would do that. By the year 2003 the Regional Council had developed a growth management strategy, which the province adapted, creating the Places to Grow Strategy, based on our growth management strategy in 2003. In that strategy we recognized there would be some limited growth outside that envelope; but we want to draw hard edges around it and force our development to stay internally, so we can preserve our farmland, preserve our environmentally sensitive areas, preserve our water supplies, and do all those things and make sure we have the kind of community people said they want to have here in the Region of Waterloo.”

Seiling added, “We are the five or ten minute town. No matter where you are, you can be in the countryside in five or ten minutes. And that’s what we want to preserve – preserve our farming community. So we created hard edges. But what is the tool in part to do that? To create that kind of community? Transit.”

He said, “Transit is the major tool for doing that. And we took a look at the plan and we took a look at the transit corridor and said, ‘What tool do we have that would create intensification within the urban areas?’ And the rapid transit system came into being at that particular time. It became part of the growth management strategy, and I can’t help but to give credit to Gerry Thompson, who by that time was our CAO. When he laid the plan out on the table for the first time I said, ‘Do you expect me to sell that?’ We’ve come a long way. Council has been firm in its resolve, that they want a livable community, that they want to preserve farmland, they want to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, and that what this plan does ... the final contract, the P3 contract, it will guarantee pricing, guarantee stability and operations into the future.”

Seiling concluded, “We’ve had a history of strong stewardship, good planning, and trying to make us a community that stands above all other communities. This community has always looked ahead, they’ve done planning. Waterloo Region is a community that looks forward, that moves ahead, that does what’s best for the community and wants to make sure it’s an economically successful, but livable community, in which we are all proud.” - Jon Rohr



## STILL IN THE BUSINESS



Randy Butcher reviews his article in Exchange Magazine from October, 1989.

Randy Butcher has been a full time stunt guy for the last 25 years. First profiled by Exchange in 1989, Butcher has expanded his physical skill to include more cerebral pursuits. He wrote and directed his first feature film, called Safety Zone in 1996, and produced his first feature film called More to Love in 1998, which won best romantic comedy at the New York Film Festival.

Butcher, who calls Cambridge home, collaborates with his wife Rhonda on screen plays, and more recently and notably was stunt coordinator for the past five years on Flash Point. As a Canadian actor, he spent three years on The Border as stunt

co-ordinator, and claims to do more car commercials in the country than any other stunt man.

He still does a lot of stunt driving, he stills fights – and falls down – saying he has “no issue whatsoever” with his work. He jokes that he’ll probably end up being “the 80 year old guy crossing the busy street, with the walker, when some other young stunt guy zips by in a car.”

“Today, I get to choose who that is – in fact, it might be my son”. Butcher has a quirky sense of humour; he jokes that he has “three sons, except for the two girls”. All three of his kids have been stunt performers, they’re actors, singer-song writers and musicians.

Wife and mother Rhonda opened up a talent agency, Reel to Reel Talent, almost two decades ago. She’s been the agent for her children for the past 18 years. She also acts as agent for her husband. She now wants to prune her talent agency back and focus on producing – “Rightly so” says Butcher who is in full support and thinks it’s a “great transition”.

Running a Hollywood type-family takes a lot of patience and trust. “All the kids were just kind of born into it. When you’re born into a stunt family, you’re kind of raised differently,” Butcher says. They’ve been hanging around movie sets since they were small.

It’s not at all like Leave it To Beaver, or the Brady Bunch – Butcher’s kids have been jumping off the roof into the air bag since they were children, and Butcher smiles about lighting them all on fire, “when they were teenagers.” – Jon Rohr



Rhonda and Randy – partners in a unique family business.

## MUNICIPAL ELECTION: SAME OLD, SAME OLD - BUT IT'S A SHAME



Peter Woolstencroft.

Peter Woolstencroft believes this year’s municipal election in Waterloo Region will produce about the same turn-out as in previous years – between 25% and 35% of eligible voters. “More of the same, and probably worse,” is his prediction. And he also thinks that is a crying shame. Because municipal government is probably the level of government that makes the most impact on our daily lives; and because municipal government is the one level of government where individual voters can

make the most impact on the decision-makers, according to Woolstencroft.

Woolstencroft is a professor of political science at the University of Waterloo, where one of his specialties is municipal politics; he also had a unique vantage point on municipal politics – his wife, Lynne, was Mayor of Waterloo from 2000 to 2003; she passed away in May of 2013.

In the 2010 municipal election, only 32.23% of eligible voters bothered to cast ballots in Waterloo Region. That was a better showing than in 2006, when only 26.58% voted. Most of the increase came in the city of Waterloo, where there were ballots on fluoridation and on union with the city of Kitchener; two townships where there were hard-fought mayoral elections also saw significant increases in voters.

Are there issues in 2014 that will attract more voters? There will be elections for mayor in at least five of the seven municipalities that make up the region, so that may attract attention. As well, Cambridge is initiating on-line voting, but Woolstencroft says that does not guarantee higher participation; in some constituencies, on-line voting has surprisingly resulted in fewer ballots being cast.

Woolstencroft finds it frustrating that while mayoral races may increase interest, voters pay almost no attention to elections for regional council – even though the Region spends about half of our municipal tax dollars. Regional council – including the office of regional chair – deserves a lot more taxpayer attention, he be-

lieves.

He finds it puzzling that the senior levels of government – provincial and federal – attract higher turn-out, “and yet, your municipal government is the closest to you, and the government that cares the most about how you vote... you can call your councilor and your mayor, and you can get them to do something.”

But, “people don’t vote.”

Woolstencroft says there is a misconception that municipal government is essentially a non-political, administrative function. “I see it as very political. Municipalities make so many decisions that affect business, the economy, economic development, how people live.”

Woolstencroft believes voters need to recognize the importance of all elected offices – there is an exaggerated sense of the power of a mayor, for example, so people miss the contribution of elected councilors. Conversely, the role of regional chair – a position equivalent to being premier of a four-federal-riding jurisdiction – often is under the radar, he suggests. “There should be more attention paid to the office of regional chair. It is a primary leadership role.” But it’s almost impossible to make a legitimate run for the job, because of the size of the Region, and the fact that donations to municipal election campaigns are limited and are not tax deductible. Mounting a serious campaign for regional chair is an almost impossible task for anyone but an incumbent.

That’s to be regretted, according to Woolstencroft. “It would be better for our region if we had a healthy debate between plausible contenders.”

As well, in general, people are unaware of the role of regional council – “It’s almost like it’s in Yemen,” he jokes. – Paul Knowles

### XQuote

“The number one barrier to tech company growth is attracting and retaining talent. More GO train trips in the short term, and faster travel times and all-day, two-way service over the longer term, will make a significant impact on companies’ ability to access and retain the talent they need.” – Iain Klugman, CEO, Communitech

# GROWING OUTSIDE THE BOX

BY JON ROHR

PHOTOS TOMASZ ADAMSKI

## WALTERFEDY MANAGES MARKET SHIFTS AND EXPANDED SERVICES



At WalterFedy the question 60 years in the making was, “What’s next?” How does a company with such a rich contribution to the industry it serves, and the community it supports “step it up”? The question was proposed in 2012, by WalterFedy’s newly appointed Chair of the Board Jim Harper, just shortly after the Kitchener based architecture, engineering and construction firm celebrated their 60th anniversary. (Exchange October 2011).

WalterFedy had just re-branded and undergone a consolidation of its two offices. They introduced the “Triple Bottom Line,” a company-wide initiative that guides management decisions in three key areas: financial stability, community building and environmental responsibility.

With markets changing, this Kitchener-Waterloo “best kept secret” stepped up their strategy planning and, like the buildings they design, continued to leverage their solid foundation.

“Change is constant in our industry and we don’t want to be playing catch up, we want to thrive; we are always anticipating where the market is going so we can keep pace and exceed the rate of change,” remarked Al Hayes, who recently transitioned out of his five year term as CEO stating “the timing is right”.

Hayes, who has been a partner since 1997, handed over the reins to WalterFedy’s new CEO Brad Marks in August of this year. Marks, a young, bright, and aggressive leader is the first person from outside the company to be named CEO. “That’s a significant step for us,” remarks Hayes.

WalterFedy is growth focused. They had reached a point where the size of the company and the complexity of the world they work in was changing quickly. They realized that although the talent in-house has served them well, they needed additional experience at the top to take the firm to the next level. They decided to look more broadly at the business world to find someone who would bring new ideas and skills to the table.

Harper, who was also part of the recruitment team, adds, “we had to look at how we were going to grow and prosper in the market. We needed someone with expertise in growing a company, in change management and strategic planning.” That led the recruitment team to Marks, who is looking forward to the challenge.

Marks is a mechanical engineer who began his career as a design engineer working in the construction industry for a company similar to WalterFedy. At General Electric Digital Energy Canada Division and Schneider Electric, he worked with contractors and the consulting engineering community, and has



had a successful career building collaborative teams while accomplishing strategic goals.

Marks believes the firm has a good, strong base and sees areas for development and growth. "I think there comes a time in a company's evolution where being a 'best kept secret' can be detrimental to the growth," he says. "Most of my career has been working for American companies like GE and Schneider Electric. When it comes to marketing, these two companies are very aggressive. I want to bring some of that to WalterFedy."

Marks has found that WalterFedy has a very strong sense of community. One reason he cites is the "passionate people", praising the interactions and communications between WalterFedy teams and throughout the organizational structure as a whole. "What truly differentiates WalterFedy in the market is the people," he says. "The people here are passionate and motivated. They want to see this business grow; they want to be a part of that. They are excited about changes and willing to embrace them."

Over the last five years, Canadian markets have been adapting to global economies of scale, and all Ontario companies have had to do the same; they've made adjustments, opened new markets and focused on internal efficiencies. "We're coming out of a recession, which is when new opportunities present themselves ... we want to position WalterFedy as well as possible to take full advantage of this market change."

Since 2011, WalterFedy has added two new revenue streams; the first is a design build company named AEC Developments, and the second is a new energy management division that works in tandem with all aspects of the business.

Hayes cites the two new additions as examples of WalterFedy adapting in the face of change. "Business is always changing. We did very well providing construction management under the umbrella of WalterFedy, but we also found the area was becoming more competitive and that there were other models out there we needed to explore. That's the change that led us to create the AEC Developments model to provide flexibility and deliver better construction solutions... something we couldn't do within the corporate structure of WalterFedy."

Evolving in energy management is the future. It not only addresses the environmental component of their Triple Bottom Line, but it's their first step in developing a recurring service division. Energy management is a growing after-market service. "We're no longer just designing the building, shaking hands and walking away," says Hayes. "We're now saying we can continue to work with you, make your building



WalterFedy Board Chair Jim Harper, Partner and former CEO Al Hayes and recently appointed CEO Brad Marks

more efficient, upgrade it from an energy management perspective and create longer lasting relationships." This is a significant step for WalterFedy, and reflective of what is happening out in the industry.

As for the future, the firm continues to think ahead. Part of Marks' overall vision and strategy is to ensure the WalterFedy brand continues its strength in the local region, but he also plans to extend into other major cities, inside and outside Ontario. "It's going to be very critical that we reach out beyond our borders and really drive the awareness of who WalterFedy is, while keeping the reputation and legacy intact." By being proactive, and focused on driving the WalterFedy brand beyond Kitchener-Waterloo, Marks has "no doubt that we'll be successful."

Currently, WalterFedy sees immediate opportunity in Southern Ontario and Toronto and will continue to build their sphere of influence in those communities. "Our first step is to look at the markets we currently serve and how we can serve them better, and then expand from there."

History is always an indicator of the future. When you examine WalterFedy's past growth, you see they are excellent at identifying new trends and developing new markets, not just in business, but in the communities they work and play.

"We can develop new services that are adjacent to our core," says Marks. "We will find a way to offer the customer more value and greater service. Whether it's with AEC Developments, or energy management services, we will continue to aim to be at the front of the pack."





Velocity's Mike Kirkup





# Gaining Velocity

***Mike Kirkup heads UW's innovative and unique start-up venture***

BY JON ROHR

**I**n 2011, Mike Kirkup left Research in Motion, now Blackberry, to become an entrepreneur and focus on a developing a business with co-founder Alex McCallum. They created a technology start-up called NextUp Labs.

A graduate of University of Waterloo, Kirkup ran Global Developer Relations for the Waterloo technology giant. He managed a 40-person developer and support team, travelled among nine different times zones and in six different languages. Travelling constantly, Kirkup worked with global entrepreneurs who were focused on applications they wanted to commercialize as mobile products on the Blackberry platform.

Kirkup had experienced a meteoric rise at RIM. He joined the iconic company in 2001 as a wireless security software developer, and over the next decade, advanced through the positions of team lead, Technical Partnerships; manager, Developer Relations; director, Developer Relations; and senior director, Global Developer Relations.

Then he quit to start a company that failed. And he's extremely forthright about that experience. Kirkup states that his start-up was a "really bad idea".

Their model involved tapping into a domain's hidden potential, which to the two entrepreneurs, translated into capitalizing on the equally "hidden needs that were incumbent to them".

Kirkup says that NextUp Labs failed for a whole litany of reasons; the biggest issue was a lack of “domain expertise” on the part of the partners. To succeed, they had to learn so much about a domain’s reason for being, and learn it very quickly.

The partners found themselves spending an excessive amount of time learning about domain content – for example, how autistic children learn, or how concrete is ordered from a supplier, or how divorced parents report their finances to meet financial law requirements. Those three examples happened to occur “in one day,” says

Kirkup. Kirkup and McCallum admitted that they were overwhelmed, and NextUp Labs shut down in the fall of 2012.

However, Kirkup saw the whole experience as a lesson to be learned; he says he was anything but discouraged.

During the wind-down of NextUp Lab, a new opportunity arose. Kirkup was hired as acting director at the University of Waterloo’s startup program, Velocity. Velocity was the brainchild of former UW Warrior, Sean Van Koughnett. Van Koughnett recently moved to McMaster University as Associate Vice-President of Students and Learning and the Dean

of Students. He is the first non-faculty member in 20 years, and the first external candidate in the university’s history, to be named to the post.

#### UW innovation

Van Koughnett’s concept involved combining life, work and study, locating an entrepreneurial program right in one of the U of W student residences. This innovation literally gave life to an idea.

In 2011, Van Koughnett solicited Kirkup to run the Velocity program. Kirkup recognized what he still refers to as an “awesome program”. He

had found a role, an opportunity that linked extremely well to his job at Blackberry. In the midst of his own struggles as an entrepreneur, Kirkup found he could relate to all the intricate pieces of the start-up process.

He started at Velocity in January 2012, while still running NextUp Labs. He says maintaining the two roles was “extremely manageable”, compared to the 70 hours-plus work week he was used to at Blackberry.

Velocity was in its infancy. At the time, it was “way smaller, primarily run from the residence with a small footprint at

Kirkup saw the whole experience as a lesson to be learned; he says he was anything but discouraged.

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- Immigrated to Canada, raised in Kitchener – attended Smithson, St. Daniel's, St. Jerome's and Wilfrid Laurier University, lives in Stanley Park

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the newly created Communitech space at the Tannery in Kitchener."

Eight startups were involved in the program. The now renowned Velocity Garage, which is a substantial space at the Tannery, was scheduled to open that February 2012. Van Koughnett's hands-on, early stage entrepreneurial concept was expanding rapidly, with great success.

Kirkup was in his element. The Velocity program is one where students indoctrinate best practices into the development of an actual business. Very little is theoretical, and guidance is provided by successful entrepreneurs who themselves have gone through the many stages of starting a business.

"A coach or mentor who gives advice can be the most amazing

"Never let anyone make you believe that by not taking their advice, that you are wrong. This is your path, this is your company, you control the decisions that you are making."

resource you will ever have", says Kirkup who is quick to add that "they can be the most dangerous resource," as well.

#### "Mentor whiplash"

Kirkup is referring to one of the most commonly used terms coined in the startup space: "mentor whiplash". Mentor whiplash is a mentoring phenomenon that occurs when well-respected and successful mentors offer contradictory pieces of advice, leaving the entrepreneur who is receiving the advice confused and unsure: "What am I supposed to do?" Kirkup believes a good coach and mentor is a person who has the confidence to say what they're thinking, but also the "humility to go 'I don't

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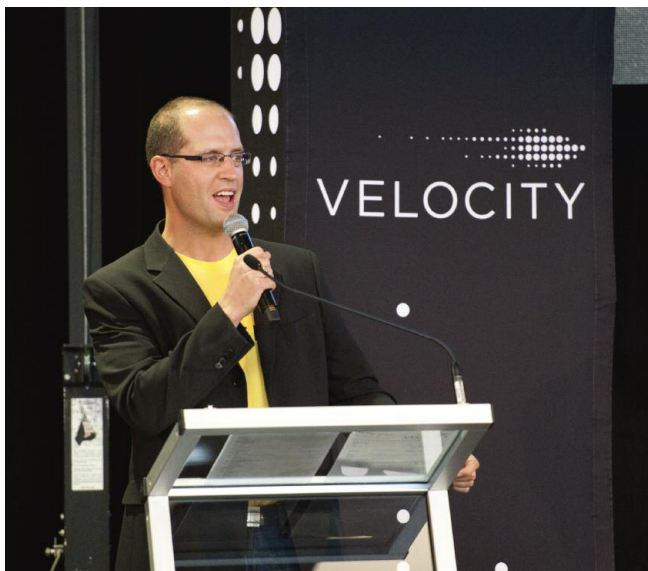
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Mike Kirkup: "Sitting at the crossroads is not the right path."

know, that's not my area of expertise,' and refer to another mentor."

As a counsellor, Kirkup tells entrepreneurs in the program that mentors are "one voice among many" – one of his favourite adages. Kirkup refers to mentors as "guides" and insists, "it's up to the founder and CEO to make the right call". But we're all human, and entrepreneurs "may or

may not make the right call. They may change their minds, and they may shift and learn."

Kirkup is quick to make the point that entrepreneurs, especially the young, should always realize that the buck stops with them. He advises, "never let anyone make you believe that by not taking their advice, that you are wrong.

Velocity has four programs, each one unique: Velocity Foundry, Velocity Garage, Velocity Science, and Velocity Residence. All are focused on turning ideas into viable businesses.

This is your path, this is your company, you control the decisions that you are making."

He tells his young colleagues to "sit down, think about it, make a decision. And then move on, or then go back and fix it or change it, if you've determined you made the wrong one." But don't dither. "Sitting at the crossroads is not the right path."

Velocity structures its program in such a way to avoid mentor whiplash. "It's one of those things that we worry about a lot." And it is not a simple problem because advice

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on the same topic could be given by another mentor two weeks or two months from when the first advice was given. "This has the potential to leave the entrepreneur wondering 'Now what do I do?'" So they step back, stop, change, shift – "it very, very quickly becomes a process where months can get lost...In a crazy sense of irony, so many times you will come back full circle."

### Turning ideas into businesses

Velocity has four programs, each one unique: Velocity Foundry, Velocity Garage, Velocity Science, and Velocity Residence. All are focused on turning ideas into viable businesses.

Recently the Velocity Foundry moved into its own workspace just down the street, at Charles and Water. Its focus is solely on hardware materials. Velocity Garage, located at the Tannery, is focused on software and life sciences. A simple analogy is that the Foundry makes physical products, whereas the Garage products take up less space – bytes and cells compared to eight wheeled



*MAJik Systems is a web app where factory managers and machine operators can view their machines' status, efficiency and errors in real time.*

Photo credit: Shubhagata Sen Gupta

smart rovers, with sensors that not only analyze but can also collect samples. Velocity Residence is the original and unique environment that is located on UW campus. It has access to the latest technologies and opportunities of both the Foundry and Garage. However it's a 24x7 environment, where the residents, sleep, eat and breath ideas they feel will change the world. As an entry point, all students enter

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the Alpha program, designed to direct students with a business idea to either the foundry, the garage or life science program.

Alpha Residence is a four month cycle, and runs parallel to the term system. This entry level program is accessible to all university students who are successful in the interview process. Students learn the basics of a startup. Students in this program are mostly co-op, and always moving in and out to their next work term. The Velocity program is free – students only pay for the residence, and the cost is exactly the same as any residence on campus.

“The local community has the range of economic activity that would, in effect, support many new ventures. In the ecosystem, it is critically important to have that support.”

– Professor Larry Smith

Today, a very small proportion of Velocity startups are actually in residence, less than 10 per cent.

Three key coaches run the Velocity program. Wes Worsfold, who joined the team in July 2014, runs the Garage, while Peter Heuss runs the new Foundry that opened its own doors in August of this year. Kirkup, Worsfold, and Heuss quarterback the startup program. They, along with the full suite of volunteer and paid mentors, encourage and build relationships amongst their students. Only meetings with Kirkup, Worsfold and Heuss are compulsory, the rest is up to the entrepreneur.

Kirkup points out that, “Mentors get in touch with Velocity because they want to give back. They’ve had an amazing career, they’ve had a tonne of success and they want to figure out a way to give back, to get

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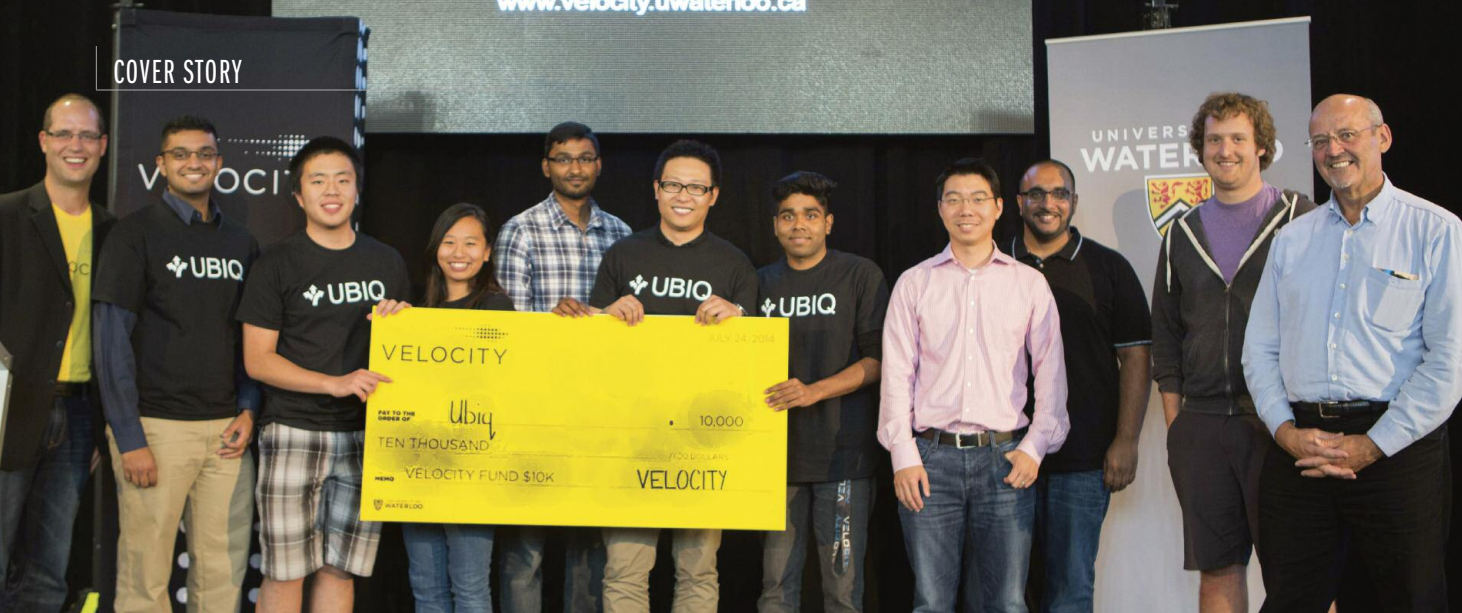


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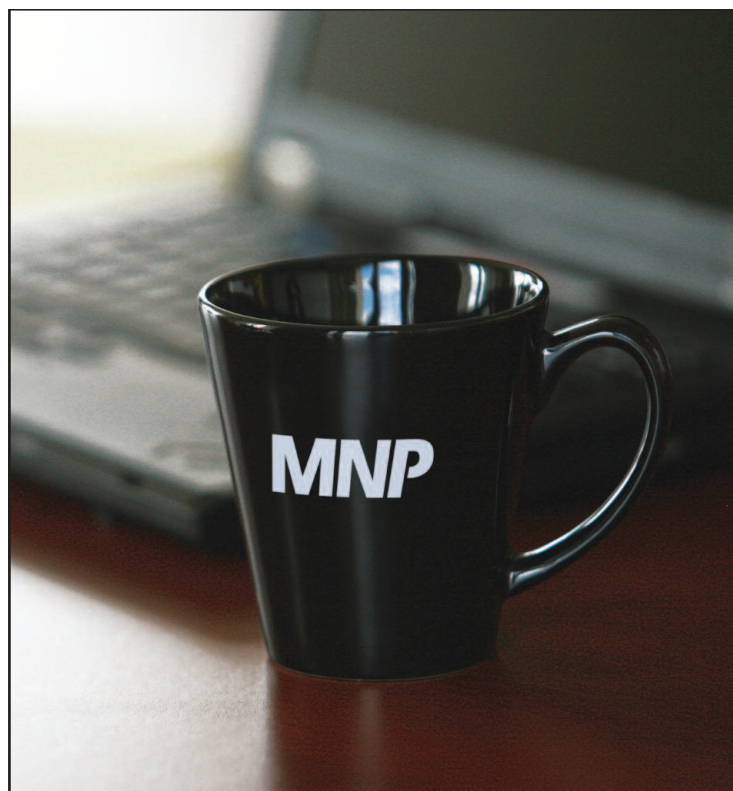
Ubiq took home two prizes from the Velocity Venture Fund, held in mid-summer. Also pictured are Mike Kirkup (far left), director of Velocity, as well as competition judges, fourth from right, Tim Lee, Karamdeep Nijjar, Ted Livingston and Mike Stork. Ubiq allows users to present wirelessly from their tablets or laptops to existing projectors and TVs in their meeting rooms. The company won one of four prizes of \$25,000 as well as the additional prize of \$10,000 to help offset the additional costs for hardware and science companies. They will work out of the new Velocity Foundry space.

to know some of the up and coming startups and students, and in some cases, they want to invest money." In some situations, Kirkup recognizes the program is missing "a specific set of skills" and he goes out and looks for those people. "We usually start them off by asking them for favours, because that essentially is how an ecosystem works."

One of the most interesting things about the Velocity ecosystem is that it learns and advances alongside the

companies. "As they evolve and change and shift the program to make it better, so do we".

As an example of this mutualistic environment, Kirkup reflects on the speakers they used to invite to talk to the entrepreneurs. When they brought in experts who could speak to one business issue, he found that more than half the participants "wouldn't care". Then they adapted that program and started to bringing in founders of companies. "Founders can talk about anything – everyone listened."


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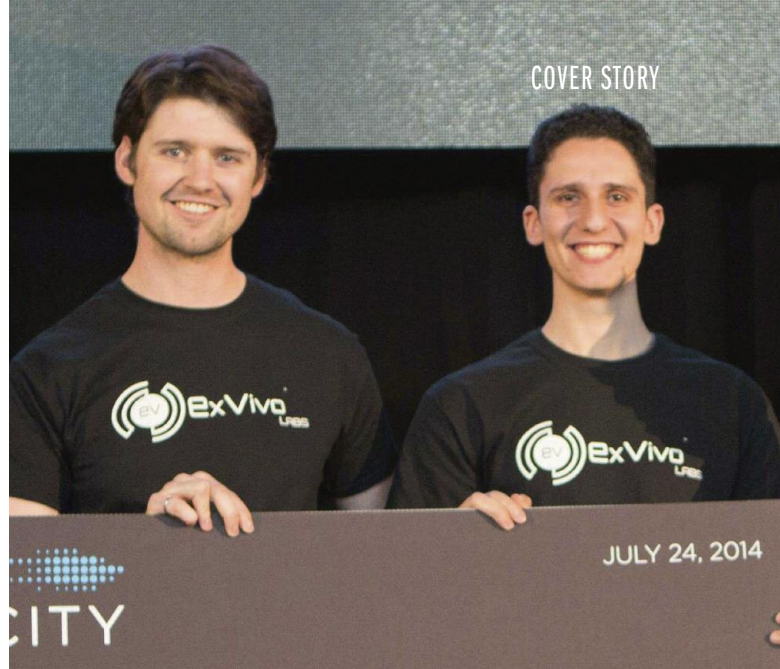




Company founders talk about “the whole landscape of their startup”, from how the company began, through their present journey. Kirkup says, “when you listen to the questions asked after the speaker is finished, you can pinpoint what problems the start-up asking the question, is having right now.”

Kirkup praises the tremendous support provided by not only the University of Waterloo community but by also the other post secondary schools and the community at large. “Nothing in Waterloo Region is separate, that’s one of the wonderful things about this community. We have a role to play; we are complementary to all the programs at the University. We’re unique and different in that everything we do is free of charge. There are no credit elements to anything we do at Velocity, and we sit outside of the faculty. It is extremely uncommon to find those characteristics at any other university. Most of the time, these programs will sit inside a faculty, most of the time they will have a charge or a fee associated with them, and sometimes they will have a for-credit element to them.”

The location is like no other, in close proximity to Com-munitech, the nationally recognized technology organization that was founded in 1997 in Waterloo by significant area technology companies, all of whom are around today. “They are a good partner,” Kirkup states. Velocity’s biggest



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goal, he says is to achieve “what’s best for the individual company. Whatever makes them successful. If we can concentrate the talent and the knowledge, and the networks and all the pieces here in Waterloo Region, then we can create companies that are that much stronger.”

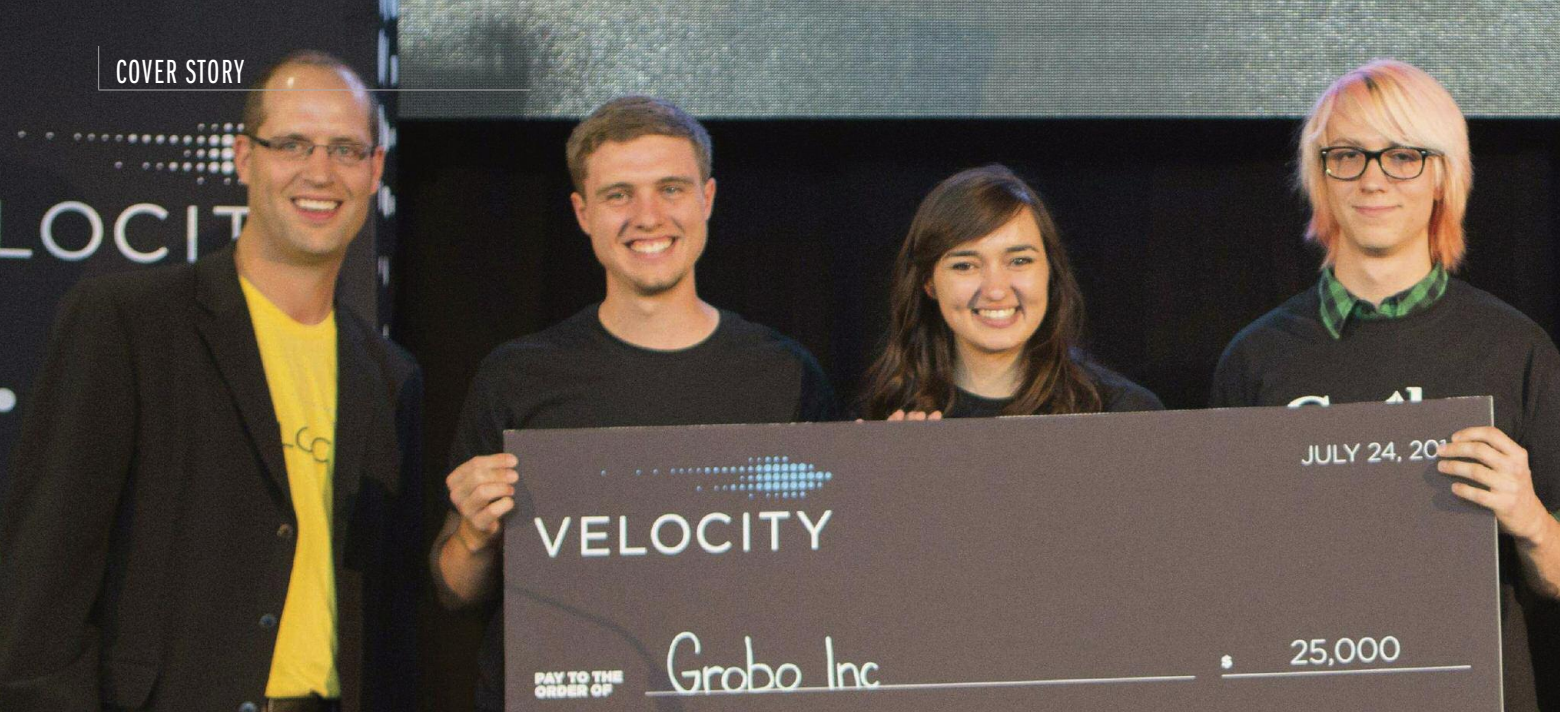
Community support is but one advantage entrepreneurs

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have when they locate in Waterloo Region. Kirkup is quick to point out that if you are to look at the most tangible benefit that entrepreneurs receive in Velocity, "It is not the help of any of the paid mentors, or coaches. It is the people you sit beside." Kirkup is referring to the student entrepreneurs who are working in the program alongside each other. "They know what problems you have, because they just

had them. And they know the nitty-gritty reasons and can give you factual, current feedback on how you could solve those problems. And that's the collaborative model that functions within a community element, and that's what students get in this program."

As a measure of success, Velocity celebrates its five companies that are working in the Y-combinator, the

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world's premier accelerator program, located in Palo Alto, California. In total, Velocity has seen seven companies go to the California program, five from this cohort alone. Notably, they all plan on coming back, largely due to the supportive resources.

Kirkup's determination is fierce. And the program he runs is fiercely attractive to first stage entrepreneurs. "We don't want to give anybody a choice. We want the very, very best companies to be in here". As a free program, Velocity is as attractive as they get. "If you say it cost X-amount-of-dollars to be in this space, the really, really good teams will say, 'I'll go elsewhere'. So we make it as though there is no choice. Of course you're going to come in here. You would be crazy not to."

Larry Smith, an economist and professor at UW, notes, "There has been a huge scale of activity with respect to student startups at the University of Waterloo for a considerable time. And it's growing in scale." He credits Velocity "in making a critical contribution to sparking even more of it. It's engaging the students broadly, students are being inspired by the pitches that they're hearing, the number of ventures, the quality of ventures, and the range of the ventures has never been greater. It's amazing to watch it. "

Smith believes the kinds of products coming out of Velocity and other entrepreneurial programs "are the kinds of products that will keep Canadian manufacturers competitive," in comparison to low-wage nations elsewhere. "We are not stuck in a narrow domain, the domain is

broadening dramatically, and the University is helping. Communication applications to biomedical engineering and everything in-between, including automotive processes and control circuitry for manufacturing." He admits, "it's a remarkable development that I did not see 10 years ago".

A benefit to Velocity and other area programs at Laurier and Conestoga College is the range of ventures sup-

ported in Waterloo Region. "The local community has the range of economic activity that would, in effect, support many new ventures. In the ecosystem, it is critically important to have that support."

That includes support as in the expertise of mentors and advisors, but as Smith points out, it's also important to have the support in trials and experimentation. "The success of the incubation is clear," Smith states. "Turning students' ideas into sustainable businesses is hot business in Waterloo." X

"The success of the incubation is clear. Turning students' ideas into sustainable businesses is hot business in Waterloo." –

Professor Larry Smith

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is soon to be celebrating its 25th year serving Waterloo Region and surrounding area.

**PAUL SALVINI WAS WELCOMED** as chief executive of the **Accelerator Centre**. Salvini takes over from **Tim Ellis** who recently was named president at the **Canadian Association of Business Incubation** in Toronto. The 45 year old **Christie Digital** expat is a tech guru who has taught entrepreneurship in Toronto and will use his multi-disciplinary skills to help advise the board of directors on opportunities within the accelerator model.

**FERIDUN HAMDULLAHPUR**, University of Waterloo’s president and vice-chan-

cellor was named chair of **Canada’s U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities**. Hamdullahpur said he was honoured “to assume The U15 chair”. He “assumes” it from once Vice-President of University of Water-



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loo **Amit Chakma**, the now president and vice-chancellor of **Western University**. Commenting further Hamdullahpur praises Chakma for his building of momentum over the past two years. Chakma served alongside now **Governor General David Johnston** and sat on the board of the CTT in Johnston's stead. Chakma contributed to the establishment of the "Canada First Research Excellence Fund" earlier this year. The Fund is one of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2014 items. The fund has 1.5 billion committed over the next 10 years and is designed to help Canadian post-secondary institutions excel globally in research areas that create long-term economic advantages.

**THE SCHOOL OF ROCK HAS ESTABLISHED** itself in Kitchener. The performance-based rock franchise is leveraging the extreme brand-building opportunity created by the movie of that name, by writer **Mike White**. The movie was based on a music teaching vet who emphasized that music is not just about playing an instrument, it's working in harmony, with a strong back beat. **Cynthia Sundberg** and husband **Rick Endrulat**, are both experienced entrepreneurs. Endrulat founded communication service firm **Virtu-**



Cynthia Sundberg and Rick Endrulat of The School of Rock

**al Causeway**, where Sundberg is vice-president. Sundberg says, regarding working as husband and wife, "A lot of people would say you're crazy to work with your spouse. You have to have fundamental respect for each other but you also have to have similar philosophies in how to run a business. And for us, our talent is really important and our belief in the value and what we invest in our people is really critical. As well as how we treat our clients, how we're seen in the community, giving back, being sustainable and certainly what we're

doing to make the community to be better." Endrulat is a founding member of local environmental non-profit **Sustainable Waterloo Region** and an active leader with the **Laurier Centre for Entrepreneurship**. Sundberg has mentored local business professionals and students at her alma mater, supports many community organizations and serves on the **Board of the Laurier Alumni Association**. Community is a "big part of it", comments Endrulat. "For us, it has always been the opportunity to make an impact where we are, and

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Congratulations to John Beynon who has achieved membership in the Career Sales Force Hall of Fame.



Sun Life Financial is pleased to announce that Sun Life Financial advisor John Beynon, CFP, CLU, CH.F.C., associated with the Kitchener Financial Centre has been inducted into the company's Career Sales Force Hall of Fame. The Career Sales Force Hall of Fame honours individuals who, throughout their career as a Sun Life Financial advisor or manager, have achieved outstanding success in sales or financial centre management. Not only has John achieved the highest levels of personal success, he has also been a leader within the Career Sales Force and the life insurance, health insurance and wealth industry. In addition, John has been an active participant in community organizations, generously offering his time and experience. In recognition of John's achievements, a donation of \$15,000 in John's name will be made to the Kitchener & Waterloo Community Foundation.



**John D Beynon\*, CLU, CFP, CH.F.C.**  
Sun Life Financial advisor  
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we feel like the kind of community we're in and the size of the community – with Virtual Causeway and School of Rock, it does help make that positive impact on the community, with the employer base, and the different kind of philanthropy we get involved in."

**ATS AUTOMATION TOOLING SYSTEMS INC.** has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire all shares of **M+W Process Automation GmbH** and **ProFocus LLC**, collectively **M+W PA**, a leading global provider of engineering-based automation services and solutions located in Germany. The "28 year old, M+W PA addresses the needs of a wide spectrum of manufacturing and process-based industries including automotive, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, chemicals, oil and gas and food with services that include consulting, system engineering, integration, lifecycle management, process control and manufacturing execution systems, as well as enterprise programs," says a release, indicating that M+W PA acts as the main automation contractor.

The acquisition is aligned with ATS's stated strategy of scaling its position in the global automation market by adding to its services and life-cycle management capabilities across several core elements of the customer value chain.

The addition of M+W PA is expected to enhance growth opportunities in

both new markets and with existing customers.

**CIGARETTES WITH VERY LOW LEVELS OF NICOTINE** may reduce addiction without increasing exposure to toxic chemicals, according to a new study from the **University of Waterloo**. The study published in the journal **Cancer Epidemiology** monitored the smoking behaviours of 72 adults as they switched to three types of cigarettes with markedly reduced nicotine levels. **Professor David Hammond** found that smokers did not increase their consumption of cigarettes when using a reduced nicotine brand. "One of the



primary barriers to reducing nicotine levels is the belief that individuals who continue to smoke will smoke more cigarettes in an effort to extract the same nicotine levels, thereby exposing themselves to greater amounts of toxic chemicals. Our findings suggest this is not the case," said Hammond, of the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Waterloo, and lead author on the paper. "The smokers were unable or unwilling to compensate when there was markedly less nicotine in the cigarette and when the experience of smoking is far less rewarding."

**THE LACK OF COMPETITION** in Ontario's system for alcoholic beverage retailing causes higher prices for consumers and foregone government revenue, according to a report from the **C.D. Howe Institute**. In "Uncorking a Strange Brew: The Need for More Competition in Ontario's Alcoholic Beverage Retailing System," authors **Paul R. Masson** and **Anindya Sen** call for a more competitive system in

alcoholic beverage retailing in Ontario, which would result in increased government revenue, lower prices, and more convenience for consumers.

**CANADIAN HOUSEHOLD NET WORTH PER CAPITA** reached 77% of the United States' level in 2012, according to a new study, "Net Worth in the Household Sector, 1970 to 2012: A Canada-United States Comparison", released in August in the Economic Analysis Research Paper Series. Canadian household net worth per capita averaged 60% of US net worth between 1974 and 2006. The sharp drop in US home prices after 2007 reduced net worth per capita significantly in the United States. At the same time, Canadian net worth per capita declined modestly. As a result, Canadian net worth per capita rose to 77% of US net worth per capita by 2009, and it stayed relatively stable until 2012. Relatively stronger Canadian housing values contributed to this increase.

**A GROUP OF 16 INSPIRED MEDA** – Mennonite Economic Development Associates – supporters has successfully completed their climb up **Mount Kilimanjaro** in Tanzania. The "Kilimanjaro Climb was a great fundraising campaign for our supporters to rally behind, sharing in our successes of the climb and the work MEDA does," says MEDA president **Allan Sauder**. Each climber paid

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their own expenses to climb Kilimanjaro and then raised a minimum of \$5,000 for MEDA projects that alleviate poverty by unleashing entrepreneurship. Many, however, set their own personal goals, reaching out to their networks and hosting events to encourage support of their challenging endeavour.

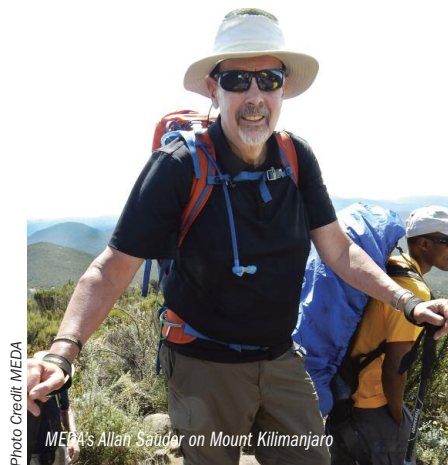


Photo Credit: MEDA

MEDA's Allan Sauder on Mount Kilimanjaro

The group of eleven Canadians and five Americans, ranging in age from their 20s to their 70s, was guided by expedition company **Tusker Trail** along the Lemosho Route. Sauder, having lived in Tanzania 27 years ago when he began working for MEDA, was eager to return to see some of the latest projects and introduce them to his fellow climbers.

**ECONOMICAL INSURANCE CONTINUES** in its business transformation program with the opening of its new national processing centre at the company's Riverbend facility in Kitchener. The company started hiring for the new centre in March to fill more than 140 new jobs.

"This national processing centre is a key pillar of our new operating model, which is making our underwriting operations more automated, consistent and agile," said **Tom Reikman**, Economical's senior vice-president and chief operating officer. "We have implemented new technologies to automate processes and established a new organization structure to bring consistency to our processes. These



Joanne Atkins, Canaccord Capital (l) and Shirley Lichti are the force behind the "Women Empowering Women - Tools for Success" event; proceeds were donated to two local charities: the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region and Passion for Progress.

changes are enhancing our productivity, efficiency and effectiveness."

**SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTRE** of Waterloo Region is celebrating its 25th anniversary this fall in a Gala Fundraising event, **"25 years and All That Jazz"** on Thursday, October 2, at the Tannery from 7-10. The Gala will feature The Jazz Room favourite **Rebecca Binnendyk** and her Jazz Trio, incredible and abundant tapas, a guided wine tasting by sommelier **Brian Heard**, a silent and live charity auction presented by **Karen Dymond**. The evening will close with a lot of dancing and promises a night full of entertainment. Partial proceeds from the Women Empowering Women event held by the **Kitchener Waterloo-Business Women's Association** went to support the centre. The idea came from **Joanne Atkins** of Canaccord Capital supported by the talents of **Shirley Lichti**, partner in Marketing Magic. Money raised from the event will support the Assault Centre and guest speaker **Kelly Lovell's** not-for-profit, **Passion for Progress**. That event was held September 11.

**SEARCHLIGHT CAPITAL PARTNERS, L.P.** and its partners have acquired **M&M Meat**

**Shops Limited**, the largest independent retailer of specialty frozen food in Canada, with approximately 400 locations nationwide. **Mac Voisin** founded M&M Meat Shops in 1980, and will remain an advisor to the company. "Canadians love and trust M&M Meat Shops because they can count on the quality and convenience of its products. I am confident that the new team will continue to ensure that the brand remains a Canadian favourite," said Voisin. The investment company intends to pitch M&M's flash-frozen steaks and key-lime pies as being fresher than many of their fresh-food retail alternatives while trying to capitalize on mainstream supermarkets that have shrunk their frozen-food aisles, **Erol Uzumeri**, a founding partner of Searchlight, said in an interview with the **Globe and Mail**.

**THALMIC LABS, A STARTUP** based in Kitchener, is shipping pre-orders of its highly anticipated **Myo** armband, the latest innovation in the burgeoning field of wearable tech. The device allows users to control and manipulate computers, video games, smartphones, robotic devices, drones and other technology with arm gestures and movements. The company says Myo uses a new



Photo Credit: University of Waterloo

type of biosensor, which can pick up electrical impulses in a person's arm muscles. Co-founders are **Stephen Lake, Matthew Bailey and Aaron Grant**. Grant says over 40,000 pre-orders for the armbands have been placed. Each armband costs \$149. That's close to six million retail dollars in orders. The company did not disclose how much they will be receiving from the pre-orders.

**KITCHENER-BASED ROBOTIC VEHICLE** manufacturer, **Clearpath Robotics**, is the first robotics company to sign on with the **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots**, an international coalition of non-governmental organizations working to ban fully autonomous weapons. "To the people against killer robots: we support you," said **Ryan Gariepy**, Clearpath Robotics Co-Founder and CTO.

**BRICK BREWING CO. LIMITED** has entered into a definitive agreement for the sale of its King Street property in Waterloo with a selling price of four million dollars. The transaction should close during the fiscal third quarter. The move is part of a strategy to consolidate its operating facilities to improve manufacturing competitiveness. The buyer, **HIP Developments**, is expected to pursue re-development of the site, located in the thriving King Street corridor in Uptown Waterloo. Once closed, Brick will lease the property back while completing an expansion project at its Binghamans Centre Drive location in Kitchener.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

mentoring. And there's where I came in." Brothers had been heading Mosaic Counselling Centre; from her extensive experience in non-profits, she was also keenly aware of the problem areas.

From the beginning, Capacity Waterloo Region has helped non-profits to break out of their conservative molds,

mon to non-profits across the country. "We had a mandate for the Region of Waterloo, although our mission to strengthen non-profits is a universal one. It could be in any community."

Capacity was well received by the local non-profits. But within less than a year, requests for help starting coming

Capacity was well received by the local non-profits.  
But within less than a year, requests for help starting  
coming from beyond the region, too.

"to make decisions quicker and to take more risks and not be so afraid of failure."

Brothers brought that kind of radical thinking to the new organization, and it sparked growth. Although, there were some hurdles. Initially – since this was seen as a limited-term, five year project – Capacity Waterloo Region was sponsored by a national charity, so there was no need for a local, charitable status. Brothers laughs about the realization that "there's a feistiness here in Waterloo Region, and we're not very good at being someone else's child. We really wanted to have the local autonomy. All along we had had a local steering committee. But two years ago, we incorporated separately, applied for our own charitable status, and set up our own board of directors."

From the outset, Brothers and her team recognized that while their mandate was to serve Waterloo Region, the problems they were solving were com-

from beyond the region, too. Capacity has assisted organizations in Woodstock, Guelph, Mississauga, Brampton, Brantford and – in a project where they were subcontracted by the University of Waterloo – in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Most recently, they are working in Renfrew Valley, brought in by Algonquin College.

Their primary work involves providing training for non-profits in the areas of board development, coaching and strategic planning. In Renfrew, they are helping to design an incubator for social and/or business entrepreneurs.

Even their cross- and multi-province work was not the final inspiration for their name change, though. That has come about because of Capacity's very strong relationship with Manulife. Says Brothers, "A huge stimulus for the timing in terms of changing our name now, is our largest sponsor in this community has turned out to be Manulife, and Manulife really tries to dedicate, not just



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money, but lots of time and talent, to growing and supporting the volunteer sector."

She explains, "Our signature program is the board governance boot camp. We do it in partnership with Laurier Business School. We call it the Manulife Board Governance Boot Camp, and we limit it to no more than 25 organizations at a time so we can do some proper sharing and learning. It's always sold out... You have really large, long-standing, sophisticated organizations, and you have these little start-ups, or ones that have been around for a while, but are really all volunteers, with no paid staff."

The boot camp costs \$2400 per agency (two must attend), but Brothers admits that no one is turned away because the organization can't pay. "We are very generous in providing bursaries." But she adds, "On the other hand, I like to say to all the agencies that a really legitimate cost is professional

development, and especially for your board. Agencies will sometimes have professional development for their staff, but there's nothing for the board's development."

Brothers returns to her story about the name change. "One thing that comes out all the time when we work with any board or organization, no matter how small or how sophisticated, is board succession – how do you continue to get the right people at the table... All organizations have some challenges around getting good people to the board and not just filling seats. So we proposed to Manulife that, as part of our next step of board support, we would set up a program where we would match Manulife employees to local boards. It has been incredibly successful... Manulife invites their employees to the program, we give them some governance training in advance, so they understand what board work is, and if it's what they want to get into."

The concept worked beyond expectations. "We've been so successful in Waterloo, Manulife wanted us to do it with their global headquarters in Toronto, so we have now launched a similar program in Toronto with Manulife. The name, 'Capacity Waterloo Region' doesn't make any sense in those communities."

And so, Capacity Canada has been born, still based in Waterloo, but now serving an increasing number of communities across Canada. Manulife has agreed to help mentor other companies that could sponsor the local board program in communities where Manulife is not immediately present.

These kind of public-private partnerships are the future for Capacity Canada, in Brothers' opinion. "Our vision for Capacity is that we'll be able to generate enough revenue through some of these private partnerships as well as selling our educational services, that we'll be around for a long time." **X**

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## REGIONAL ORGANIZATION GOES NATIONAL

*Capacity Canada takes home-grown program Canada-wide*

BY EXCHANGE MAGAZINE

*Capacity Canada's Cathy Brothers*

There's a certain delightful irony in the name change. An organization called "Capacity" has had to expand, because its name was simply not big enough to represent its mandate.

"Capacity Waterloo Region" is now officially "Capacity Canada." The change took place in mid-summer, and CEO Cathy Brothers describes the transition as "fabulous".

Brothers adds, "It's all come together beautifully. I can't believe the responses I have had, all across the country. They're all positive."

Brothers admits she wondered if people would be critical of a local agency adopting a national persona. "I wondered if we'd have any kind of critical feedback, saying, 'Who the hell do you guys think you are?' But I haven't had a single one. Even from other national organizations, we're just getting, 'This is terrific, the country's going to benefit tremendously!'"

The name change did not come about because of some attack of corporate ego. Capacity Waterloo Region only came into existence five years ago, but the ensuing years have seen an increasing call for the services the organization provides, and a clearly demonstrated demand for these services far beyond the boundaries of the Region.

Brothers says; "In 2009, we were started by local philan-

thropists who all provided funding to non-profit organizations." She says that when these local business people came together, they realized non-profits may need more than financial donations. "They inquired," states Brothers, "We can continue to give them grants, but at the end of our grant period, are they any further ahead? Are there ways we can help the non-profit sector be strong in Waterloo Region?"

So these "local, generous individuals" – in Brothers' words – "commissioned a study, spoke to a hundred non-profit CEOs and board chairs, and said, 'What would make you stronger?' Unanimously, incredibly, the number one thing that came back was board development. A need for continuous

training of the board of directors. Every non-profit has a board, and there is continual turn-over, and they all run into the same sorts of issues around people understanding their responsibilities – governance. Your board really is responsible for the strategic growth and direction of the agency. So many of them get caught up in the weeds and just don't get that big picture responsibility."

That was the call to action. The philanthropists decided, "Let's find somebody that can pull together the training of the boards, but also would have credibility with the non-profits to set up different kinds of peer to peer groups and coaching and

When these local business people came together, they realized non-profits may need more than financial donations.





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