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Business of the Year



In December, Athabasca Basin Development (ABD) was selected as Business of the Year by SaskBusiness Magazine. ABD joins an elite group of previous winners, including Cameco, Mosaic, Concorde Group of Companies, and Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority.

"We are proud, and very humbled, to have received this recognition," says Geoff Gay, CEO of ABD. "As an Aboriginal-owned investment company, we started from humble beginnings and have worked hard over the last twelve years, reinvesting earnings to grow our company. Back in the early days, we never would have imagined we would be where we are today, and we are incredibly honoured to have been chosen as this year's Business of the Year."

Saskatchewan Business Magazine is the province's premier source for positive business news regarding Saskatchewan's industry sectors and overall economy. It is home to the original and official Top 100 Companies Listing in Saskatchewan. "The Business of the Year is awarded to companies that have given back to the community and remained admirable corporate citizens," says Twila Reddekopp, Publisher at SaskBusiness Magazine. "It is a way to show our appreciation to innovative, well respected and benevolent businesses. This year we are happy to recognize ABD for

Left to Right: Tim Gitzel, CEO of Cameco, and Don Deranger, Board Member, Cameco congratulate Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development, at the announcement of Business of the Year on December 3, 2014. Cameco was Business of the Year in 2013.



ABD receives Business of the Year Award. Left to Right: Geoff Gay, CEO, ABD; Chief Earl Lidguerre, Board Member, ABD; Anne Robillard, Board Chair, ABD; Twila Reddekopp, Publisher, SaskBusiness Magazine; Joyce Powder, Board Member, ABD; Daniel Powder, Board Member, ABD.

their contribution to the Saskatchewan economy and more importantly, our communities."

"Our company was built on the foundation of seven communities uniting together, and without it, we would not be where we are today," says Gay. "There are so many people who have contributed to our success – industry, our shareholders, management and employees. Without all of you, we would not be where we are today. It is with this continued support and investment

from our partners that we will see more success into the future."

Business of the Year was featured in the December edition of the magazine. The full article is posted on the news page at www.athabascabasin.ca.

ABD acquires 50% ownership in Tru-North RV, Auto & Marine in Prince Albert



In January, Athabasca Basin Development announced ownership into Tru-North RV, Auto & Marine. ABD has ownership of 50% of the business, with management retaining the remaining 50%. There will be no changes to current operations as a result of this transaction, and existing management and employees will continue to operate the business as usual.

"We are pleased to be making this investment in Tru-North," says Geoff Gay, CEO of ABD. "This investment is a good fit with our overall portfolio of investments into successful, well-run companies that have a lot of growth potential. Tru-North is a significant supplier in the Prince Albert market, known for providing exceptional customer service and quality products for its customers. With its latest expansion into manufactured homes, there is a lot of potential for this company to continue the level of growth it has experienced, and we are excited to have ownership in this excellent company."

Tru-North has built a reputation for being the best place in Prince Albert to shop for boats, travel trailers, fifth wheels, and extended stay trailers. The company was recently recognized by Yamaha Motor Canada as a Five Star Dealer for their excellence in providing customer service – before, during and after the sale. With the business' recent expansion and the creation of Tru North Homes, it now also specializes in high quality manufactured home sales.

"Athabasca Basin Development has a history of supporting strong companies, and we are very excited about this deal," says Rick Bueckert, General Manager for Tru-North. "Through this partnership, we have created a strategic opportunity to strengthen and build on our offerings to deliver even greater value to our customers and continue growing our company. This partnership is an excellent fit and we look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship."

ABD looks for investments that are sustainable, well-managed and generate value for its shareholders. "We are actively seeking investment opportunities for the upcoming year, and this investment is the first of others to come," says Geoff Gay, "I would encourage business owners who are looking for an investment company to consider us as a potential fit and to contact us to discuss opportunities."



Message from the CEO and Board Chair



Geoff Gay, CEO and Anne Robillard, Board Chair

When we first started this company, back in the days when we were sitting on elementary school chairs for meetings, we could not have imagined being where we are today. Not only did we have record revenues of \$176M last year, just recently, our company was named as SaskBusiness Magazine's 2014 Business of the Year. It's been quite the year.

But it is individual stories that really make its impact on us and reminds us of who we are as a company and why we do what we do. We've featured some of these stories in this and other editions of the newsletter, and these are just a few of the success stories in the region. Our hats off to every one of the people who have worked hard and achieved success and were willing to share their story. We are proud to have played a role, however big or small, to individual success in the region.

We continue to work hard to grow this company. Last year, we made the decision to diversify our portfolio and begin investing in industries that are different than what we have currently done. Arctic Beverages was the first of these investments, and we are pleased to have recently added ownership into Tru-North RV, Auto and Marine to our portfolio. Tru-North is a successful company servicing the Prince Albert area, and has recently received national recognition for the high level of customer service. This investment fits well within our portfolio of strong, successful companies.

Despite the slowdown in the resource industry, we remain in a strong position to continue acquiring, growing, and investing into successful businesses. When looking for investment opportunities, we look for companies in various industries, with a high potential for growth, committed and experienced leadership, a strong competitive position, and financial results. We are actively seeking investment opportunities, and we hope to make several acquisitions over the coming year, further growing our company and ultimately wealth for the Athabasca region.

The Athabasca region continues to face many challenges, but remains a place of incredible opportunity and potential. Our company is just one that is working to make an impact. Steve

McLellan, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, recently referred to the region as, "the land of opportunity" and has played a key role in spearheading The Northern Business Task Force. As a participant on the task force, we would encourage you to review its recently released report, which contains a dozen recommendations to reduce the cost of living, increase the educational and economic opportunities and improve the quality of life in the province's northern region. This report isn't a full solution, but a good step towards providing some real, actionable recommendations to improving lives and the business climate in the north, and is something we hope will help get things moving into action.

This newsletter presents a snapshot of things that are happening within ABD and our investments, and it's impossible to capture everything – especially as we add new companies to our portfolio. Looking back on the last six months and in newsletters past, we are incredibly proud of both our accomplishments and of the individual accomplishments in the region. Our company was formed to help build wealth and make an impact on the people in the Athabasca region. And it is with the past and continued support of our shareholders, employees, industry and partners, that we will continue to see success and make an impact moving into the future.

Update: Denise Bougie Achieves Red Seal IP Journeyperson Electrician Status



Denise Bougie, Uranium City

There are some stories that strike a strong chord with readers – and writers too. I will never forget interviewing Denise Bougie, a Uranium City resident who had just achieved her fourth year electrical while working for Flyer Electric. Her inspiring story was featured in our Fall 2013 edition of the Explorer newsletter.

Denise hasn't been shy about sharing her story about her life as an addict and her subsequent recovery. In 2006, Denise was incarcerated for trafficking, and heavily addicted to drugs. The birth of her first grandchild, and only being able to see her baby granddaughter through prison glass, was the catalyst that inspired her to change her life. At 40 years old, she was starting over. But with a little bit of help, and a lot of hard work and determination, Denise turned her life around, and by 2013 had achieved her 4th year Electrical and was living back in her home community with her family.

“This has been one heck of a journey to say the least,” says Denise. “I’m so much happier than I was before. It’s a wonderful feeling to be proud of yourself, of who you are, and what you’ve accomplished.”

A year and a half after we first ran her story, Denise continues to have more good news. Recently, she achieved her goal of attaining her Journeyperson Electrician status. In December, Denise wrote the Interprovincial Red Seal exam and passed with flying colours. “I didn’t pass the IP my first time,” says Denise, “The exam was so tough...I started shaking so bad as I opened my letter. The other electricians had told me that when you pass the IP exam, Sask Apprenticeship sends you a big envelope. Well there it was – a big envelope. I am an Electrician!!! Woohoo!!”

This achievement was a few years in the making. Journeyperson Certification shows that you have met the standard set by industry for the trade. For Journeyperson Electricians, writing the certification exam requires 7200 hours (about four years) of direct work experience, as well as taking courses while you work. Journeyperson certification is recognized by employers across Canada.

“My options are absolutely endless,” says Denise. “I have what I need to live here in Uranium City and work as a tradeswoman – or a mill operator. This trade/career path opened so many doors for me and kept other doors closed that need to stay closed – I am truly grateful for this.”

Denise achieved many of the hours needed while working at Flyer Electric. “My time with Flyer Electric was invaluable,” says Denise. “I take much pride in the time I spent with the company, not just because I was working as an apprentice, more so because I was working for one of our companies while living here in Uranium City. I got to see McLean Lake and Cigar Lake through Flyer, got to work on some awesome projects, and got to know some amazing people.” Today, Denise has permanent, full-time work as a Mill Operator. “On the same day I received my electrician certificate in the mail, I also got a phone call and email confirming permanent full time position with Cameco at Rabbit Lake – talk about being on top of the world!” She is also putting her skills to work in her home community, and there seems to be many opportunities when it comes in handy. “I was able to

help renovate and wire a house for my niece and her three babies,” Denise says, “I have done a couple of Jforms in my community, I’ve done some wiring at my oldest daughter’s home, I’ve gone to fix some wiring at a few of my neighbours homes, one of which was an elderly lady up the street from me whose home is in dire need of electrical repair. I’ve done some electrical work at the school and I got to work with both of my sons and two of my nieces on some electrical as well as work with my youngest daughter who was engaged and interested in learning.”

Denise wanted to acknowledge the help she’s had along the way. “I have so many good role models at work and in the Women in Trades group, plus through all the other awesome apprentices I met during my school. I’ve had support from Construction Careers Regina, Trades North, Northern Career Quest, Flyer Electric, I had extra help from Cameco at the mine site with my schooling, and I’ve met many people who I know are pulling for me.” She is now giving back by sharing her story and role modeling for Women in Trades & Skills Canada, traveling to schools in northern schools to help inspire and encourage other young women to consider a career in the trades. She also volunteered this summer at the Beacon Bible Camp in Uranium City, working alongside an experienced journeyman on a residential project and using her skills to give back to her community.

Denise’s positive attitude, happiness and enthusiasm for life is hard to miss. It’s hard to imagine where she started and where she’s been when speaking to her today, and we are happy to be able to share her story of success and wish her all the best as she continues her journey.

“I am hoping that my story will inspire others to get into the trades and/or just go for their dreams – anything is possible!” says Denise. “I’m living life large in the north and loving it!! Does it get any better?”

Team Drilling Obtains Drilling Excellence Certification

Team Drilling was recently certified by the Canadian Diamond Drilling Association's (CDDA) Drilling Excellence Certification (DEC) program in recognition of their company's safety program. "We'd like to acknowledge the efforts of our staff

in obtaining DEC certification," says Bob Fleming, President of Team Drilling. "Our number one priority in all our operations is making sure everyone gets home safely to their families. Getting DEC certified is a testament to how everyone in our organization has really embraced achieving a culture of safety each and every day, in all our operations."

The DEC program was created to improve environmental and safety performance across the drilling industry, and sets standards that help companies demonstrate to clients and regulators that they have a health and safety, environmental and quality management system. Companies that are DEC certified have met or exceeded the program's requirements, and have demonstrated a high commitment to safety and professionalism in drilling.



Team Drilling provides industry-leading underground, surface and specialty drilling services.

About Athabasca Basin Development

Athabasca Basin Development is an investment company committed to building and investing in successful businesses. Investments include partial or complete ownership in construction, underground mining, industrial security, electrical, diamond drilling, logistics, road maintenance and aviation. The company is owned by the seven communities in Northern Saskatchewan's Athabasca region.

Watch for our next newsletter Fall 2015.

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Since the Beginning: Dora McKenzie

It was nearly ten years ago that West Wind Aviation's senior management recognized the need for additional scheduled air service into the north, and Pronto Airways was formed. Northern employee Dora McKenzie has contributed on many levels to the company's initial and continued success.

In December 2005, Dora McKenzie, a twenty year veteran in the northern Saskatchewan aviation industry, was asked to help start up the new company. The Stony Rapids resident had started her career in Norcanair, and when that company eventually closed its doors, she spent the next several years working for several different airlines – many of which, unfortunately, ended up closing shop. Starting with the newly formed Pronto, armed with a pen and piece of paper and making a list of what needed to be done to get things started, she recalls former West Wind CEO Dennis Goll telling her jokingly, "this better be your last airline job!" So far, so good. Nearly a decade later, Dora is still with the company, working as the Prince Albert Base Manager. Now a 30-year veteran in the industry, Dora enjoys her job and especially the customers. "I remember a nurse who worked in the north giving me a painting as a gift," she says. "The nurse told me she had a saying that she thought was fitting for someone who had been in aviation for as long as me: 'someday my ship will come in. With my luck, I'll be waiting at the airport.'" The way Dora sees it, her ship already came in...directly to a Northern Saskatchewan airport.



Dora McKenzie

Pronto Airways provides direct ownership benefits to the First Nations communities in the Athabasca region of northern Saskatchewan as a result of West Wind Aviation's significant ownership in Pronto Airways. Northern employees play a key role in Pronto's continued success.

"Today, Pronto Airways is one of the best scheduled air carriers in the region," says Gisele Gignac, Pronto's General Manager, "and as Pronto nears its tenth anniversary, we'd like to recognize Dora for her exemplary service to the company. She has been with us since the beginning, and is a representative of the absolutely crucial role residents play in our northern bases."

Arctic Beverages hosts Charity BBQs in Support of ONEXONE's First Nations Breakfast Program



Arctic Beverages staff at the Flin Flon location serve hot dogs, chips and Pepsi to raise money for ONEXONE.

In September, Arctic Beverages hosted BBQs across five locations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to support ONEXONE's First Nations breakfast program. Staff and community came out in droves to savour a hot dog, chips and drink for \$2. Arctic Beverages matched every donation.

"A big thank you to the staff at Arctic Beverages for their hard work on this, and to everyone in our communities who supported the event," says Sean Post, CEO of Arctic Beverages. "Our BBQ fundraiser was a huge success, raising enough money to fund 8,000 breakfasts for children in First Nations communities who otherwise might not have had anything to eat. We are thrilled to be able to support ONEXONE in continuing their work in feeding children."

ONEXONE is a non-profit organization that provides grants to community partners enabling the implementation of programs that offer a nutritious meal to children attending school every day that school is open. In 2007, ONEXONE and the Assembly of First Nations set a goal to address and increase the availability of healthy food to all First Nations children in the school setting. Partnering with PepsiCo Canada, the National First Nations School Breakfast

Program was formed. In 2013-2014, the organization provided grants that supported over 4,400 children from 23 communities across Canada, donating over 600,000 balanced breakfasts. The Pepsi Foundation has provided \$50,000 in funding each year since the program's inception.

"Your generosity of matching all donations for a grand total of \$8,009 is most sincerely appreciated," says Angie Camara, Director, Marketing & Strategic Partnerships ONEXONE Foundation. "Your contribution will assist to improve the health, wellness and vitality of the children and communities that participate in the First Nations School Breakfast Program and aid us towards our ultimate goal of alleviating food insecurity in Canada and enriching the lives of children."

Arctic Beverages is already making plans for next year's fundraiser. "We've been a proud supporter of ONEXONE since 2008," says Post. "Hunger is an increasing epidemic amongst children, with First Nations children suffering the greatest levels of poverty among all children in Canada. By giving impoverished kids food security, ONEXONE is doing great work in making a difference in the lives of these kids, and we are proud to give back to our communities by supporting this worthy initiative."

For more information about ONEXONE's First Nations School Breakfast program, visit www.onexone.org