

In This Issue:

- Alumarine - 3 years later
- Ice Road Safety
- John Scarfe retires from Points Athabasca Lyle Bouvier to serve as CEO
- Arctic Beverages named as finalist for 2020 Donald M. Kendall Bottler of the Year Award
- Rise Air and Seabee: A Golden Partnership
- Black Lake Cabin expansion
- Virtual Career Fair
- Athabasca Summer Student program runs for a second year
- Santa in the North
- New Location for Long Lake Insurance
- New IT Services Company launched
- Changes to Athabasca Basin Development Board of Directors
- Tru-North is moving to a new location!

Alumarine - 3 years later



The team at the Alumarine manufacturing facility. From left to right: Simone, Barry, Tesfalem, Brandon, Mengistieb, John, Elijah, Thoeun, Chad and Russ. Missing: Michael & Christian

January 2022 marks the 3-year anniversary that Alumarine Boats was purchased and its operations moved from the existing base in Manitoba to Prince Albert. "The move to Prince Albert was the key to our success," said Ron Bonneau, General Manager of Alumarine. "In three short years, we've created new jobs in the area and expanded our dealer network to 18 dealers across the country from BC to southern Ontario. We've started having inquiries from the northern US dealers as well."

Alumarine Boats have been around since 1967. Before the move to Prince Albert, Alumarine already had a solid reputation, especially in the north, for building the strongest utility/camp boat on the market; one that could handle any conditions that the lake could throw at them. It's been highly prized for being light, tough, dry and requiring lower horsepower. "Our goal in the last three years has been to continue with the design and specs that customers are used to," said Bonneau. "It's a really great boat with a long history. What we've done is focus on improving production, quality control and safety. We are always committed to hearing what our end users are saying. We have made significant strides in the interior layout of our boats."

Alumarine started in Prince Albert with four full time employees. Three years later, the company has grown to 13 local people full time, including 8 Indigenous employees from Black Lake, Lac La Ronge,

Sturgeon Lake, Frog Lake, Peepeekisis, and Buffalo Narrows. "Our ownership group is 50% northern communities, and Indigenous employment is important to us," said Bonneau. "We've made a consistent effort to employ more local people, more Indigenous people. We've worked with the Prince Albert Grand Council, who was very helpful. We now have a very strong and diverse team, and I am proud of the work every one of these guys do each day to build the best utility/camp boat in the world."

The pandemic has not slowed down the demand for boats, but it has brought challenges. "The demand for all recreational products has been high this last couple of years, and we've certainly felt the pressure to build enough boats to meet the demand," said Bonneau. "We have more orders for 2022 than we had the last couple of years. And some of the raw materials have become harder to get, and more expensive. But our team has so far been able to manage these challenges and we're able to continue building a high-quality product and growing our business."

Athabasca Basin Development, an investment company owned by seven primarily Dene communities, has 50% ownership in Alumarine. For more information, please visit www.alumarineboats.ca

Athabasca Basin Development is continuing to look for new opportunities for investments – both to strengthen its existing investments as well as outside of its existing industries. "There are lots of opportunities out there and we are continuing to seek solid investment opportunities. I would encourage business owners who are looking at succession planning to consider us as a potential fit and to contact us to discuss opportunities – there may be a fit either with Athabasca Basin Development or with one of our investments."

Ice Road Safety



In February, a class of 12 operators were enrolled in a 2-day course of Ice Rescue Training. Back Row: David Duff, Alwyn Gatereaux, Pat Rassmussen, Chris Potts, Tim Frook, Ian Schindler, Alfred Jr Toutsaint, Toby Donard, Raymond Mercredi, Dalyn Sayazie
Front Row: Jimmy MacDonald, Keith Gonda, Mitch Naldzil

By Glen Strong

January 15, 2022 marks the 22nd anniversary of the passing of the Late George Fern of Fond du Lac (July 1959 – January 2000). Back in 2000, if you wanted an ice road built in the Athabasca Basin, you went to George Fern. But in January of that year, George went through the ice at Pine Channel with his new loader and did not survive.

The Occupational Health and Safety Manual at the time stated that you needed to check the ice thickness; other than that, there wasn't a whole lot mentioned about one of the most dangerous occupations there is in the far North: ice road construction and maintenance.

Lonona Contracting, which is owned by Athabasca Basin Development and managed by Points Athabasca, implemented numerous safety practices in their safety manual after the tragedy in 2000. Ice thickness is now checked with an ice auger, then followed by a GPR, a sonar device that is sledged across the ice. The ice thickness

is recorded and documented, all operators of equipment on ice must wear flotation jackets. There is no working alone on the ice, constant communication is required, and taking a course in Ice Rescue is mandatory for ice road equipment operators.

In February, a class of 12 operators were enrolled in a 2-day course of Ice Rescue Training. "When we are out in the middle of Lake Athabasca in the dead of winter, we want to make sure everyone is safe and has the proper training," says Dwayne Butterfield, Manager of Lonona. "The communities and projects in the Athabasca need to be resupplied and they depend on us, usually in the worst of conditions."



Lonona uses local contractors to maintain 400 km of roads in the Athabasca Basin. Of the 400 km of roads, 140 km are ice roads. With years of experience, SAB Contracting, Hailey's Contracting, P&M Contracting and Curtis Contracting are the local contracted Entrepreneurs that maintain the Roads from Points North to Uranium City. The entire consortium is overseen by Points Athabasca.

"This year we were asked to assist with the clearing and opening of the ice road on Wollaston Lake," said Butterfield. "I have never been so proud of a group of workers. All local people. It was -50 degrees, and they

were out there on the ice, repairing fuel lines, heating the units, all to keep the equipment running. Their dedication to the job and pride in their work is nothing short of admirable. This year the ice roads are about 3 weeks ahead of schedule on Lake Athabasca."

"The roads are important to all of the communities in the Athabasca Region. They are

the gateway to the rest of the world for a lot of people," said Butterfield. "When Lonona met up with the clearing crew out on Wollaston Lake, who were working toward us, it was a celebration. It felt like we had just opened up a tunnel through a mountain and we were meeting in the middle."

Ice roads can be dangerous. When travelling on an ice road, pay attention to the posted signage, rules, and speed limits. Wear flotation suits and jackets, carry a screwdriver in your coat pocket in case you go through. You can use the screwdriver to pull yourself out of the water and back onto the ice surface. Check road conditions. Let people know when you are travelling and your expected time of arrival. Stay safe.

John Scarfe retires from Points Athabasca Lyle Bouvier to serve as CEO

John Scarfe, CEO of Points Athabasca, retired from Points Athabasca on March 1, 2022.

John had served in leadership roles with Points Athabasca since 2007 and President and CEO since 2014. John brought a wealth of knowledge that includes decades of experience and close ties to Northern Saskatchewan to his role in overseeing the company. John steered Points Athabasca through a long and difficult downturn in the uranium market, which significantly impacted the company's operations. Under his leadership, the company weathered the ups and downs and started new business lines and partnerships, including the highly successful QM Points partnership that employs many Athabasca residents in the 5-year Gunnar cleanup project today and the restart of the Wollaston Lake road project. John's passionate commitment to Points Athabasca's vision of "Building Capacity" is well



John Scarfe



Lyle Bouvier

known and has helped directly impact the lives of many people in the region.

Lyle Bouvier has accepted the CEO position. Lyle joined Points Athabasca in 2016. Through his years in the VP Corporate Services role, Lyle is strongly positioned to lead Points Athabasca through this phase.

"It has been an honour to serve as CEO of Points Athabasca and I want to offer my sincere thanks to our employees whose hard work and dedication to 'Building Capacity' has gotten us through a difficult period in the market, but also leaves us well poised for a strong performance in the coming years," says John. "I have worked with Lyle for a long time and I'm confident he will be a strong leader through this transition."

Please join us in thanking John for his leadership and his many contributions to Points Athabasca.

Arctic Beverages named as finalist for 2020 Donald M. Kendall Bottler of the Year Award



Arctic Beverages has been named as a finalist for the prestigious 2020 Donald M. Kendall Bottler of the Year Award. Named for PepsiCo's former Chairman and CEO, this is the highest honour bestowed on PepsiCo's bottling partners across North America.

"Being selected as a Donald M. Kendall Bottler of the Year finalist distinguishes your team as the very best of the best," said Michael Ruff, President, PBNA Canada Division in a letter to Arctic Beverages. "...by almost any measure - volume and share growth, per capita consumption, product quality, customer service and community involvement - your franchise has delivered outstanding results. These remarkable achievements epitomize the purpose and character of the Donald M. Kendall Bottler of the Year Award."

Four other finalists have been announced - G&J Athens, Ohio. in the North Division, Allen Beverages in the South Division, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. of McAlester, Oklahoma in the Central Division and Mt. Shasta Bottling & Distributing Co. in the West Division. Due to the pandemic, the award ceremony was rescheduled and is now expected to take place in March of this year, where all five finalists will be honoured and the winner will be announced.

"This Donald M. Kendall award is the equivalent of the Stanley Cup or Superbowl in the PepsiCo system," said Sean Post, CEO of Arctic Beverages. "To just be nominated is an outstanding achievement and is a testament to the team and organization. We are honoured to be named alongside the other nominees and we are very much looking forward to the award ceremony."

Rise Air and Seabee: A Golden Partnership

By Kathy Hay

Nothing illustrates the critical role aviation plays in Northern Saskatchewan like the story of the Seabee mine site, which would not exist without Athabasca Basin Development-owned Rise Air.

Today, hundreds of workers at the mine site are totally dependent on Rise Air Twin Otters for crew rotations, fresh food, medical evacuations, spare parts, and every other aspect of normal life. Rise Air is so critical to the mine's success that production stops whenever the weather falls below the minimums the airline needs to operate safely into the airstrip.

Located in Northern Saskatchewan 125 kilometres from the town of La Ronge, SSR Mining's Seabee high grade underground gold mine is the only mine site we know that is named after an aircraft (the Republic RC3 Seabee), in recognition of the critical role aviation played in opening the area to exploration, and then to the construction of the mine site itself.

Operations began at the Seabee mine site in 1991. All ore is processed on site at the Seabee mill facility, which produces gold doré bars that are then shipped to a third-party refinery. Today most access to the mine site is by fixed wing aircraft to a small 1,275-meter airstrip blasted out of the side of a hill. Heavy equipment and bulk supplies are transported to the site via a 60-kilometer winter ice road, which is typically only in



use from late January through March, but the ice road is unsafe for workers and other personnel.

Rise Air has decades of experience providing contract charter flights, including mine personnel shift changes and transportation of supplies. Rise Air is the only air operator in Saskatchewan with the capability of moving people and goods to and from virtually any location in the province and beyond. Drawing on its unique efficiencies and broad spectrum of expertise and experience, Rise Air continues to offer high-quality tailored aviation solutions which serve, support, and promote the growth and success of Saskatchewan.

Giving Back

“Building a future through investment” is accomplished by building wealth for the Athabasca communities, donations, community distributions, building a reputation, and building capacity. The key to making all benefits possible is in building wealth for the communities – without this foundation, the other benefits would not be possible. Here are a few recent examples of ways Athabasca Basin Development and its investments give back:

Black Lake Cabin expansion



Pictured left to right: Back row – Freddie Thorassie, Allan Adam, Louis Martin John, Napoleon Robillard, John Toutsaint. Front row: Ambrose Sandypoint, Ambrose Boneleye.

Black Lake recently expanded the existing community use cabin on the northeast side of Black Lake. For example, the community was able to use the cabin and shoot a moose and share the meat with community members; it has also been used for youth suicide prevention healing camp last year. The cabin is open to Black Lake community members to for traditional activities, but the cabin was not large enough to house groups with Elders. Black Lake leadership and Athabasca Health Authority submitted a request for support, and ABD was pleased to provide assistance for \$5000.

Virtual Career Fair

Don't miss the KCDA Career Services Northern Saskatchewan Online Career Fair on May 11. This is an online virtual career fair (VIA Zoom) open for all Northern Saskatchewan Job Seekers, Prov./Fed Schools Grades 9-12, post secondary, and ABE students. Watch our Facebook page or visit kcdc.ca/careerfairs.

Athabasca Summer Student program runs for a second year



Allison Strong, Stony Rapids, was last year's Marketing & communication summer student with Athabasca Basin Development. She wrote and coordinated the Fall 2021 newsletter as part of her duties. Allison is currently in her third year of ITEP.

ABD, in partnership with Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) and five of our investments, launched a summer student program last year. The program employed 12 students in six companies in a variety of positions and lead to two students obtaining ongoing employment.

This year, we have expanded the program to include up to 30 potential positions in eight different companies.

The goal of our summer student/mentorship program is to help develop tomorrow's leaders by providing a meaningful work experience for students from the Athabasca Basin region who are enrolled in a post-secondary program and returning in the fall. 12 potential positions have been identified in 6 companies: ABD, Athabasca Basin Security, Points Athabasca, Points North, Arctic Beverages, Team Drilling, Flyer Electric, and Rise Air. There are a wide variety of positions, including IT, labour, yard, mechanics, admin, HR, marketing and accounting. The competition closed on February 25. Students will be matched as best as possible to opportunities based on the needs of the organization and the student's past experience, area of interest and level of study. ABD will once again look after administration of the program. PAGC is providing 50% of the wage costs.

For more information, please visit www.athabascabasin.ca/summer-students

Santa in the North

With a little help from Rise Air, Santa visited the communities of Fond Du Lac, Stony Rapids, and Black Lake on December 13 & 14. Wollaston Lake was scheduled but the weather didn't cooperate, so Santa made other arrangements.

Santa visited the schools in person, but took special precautions once again this year due to COVID-19. While he's there, Santa and his elves made sure each child received a special gift bag containing a gift, book, oranges, and other treats.



Many partners came on board to help bring Santa to the Athabasca region. Rise Air provided freight and administration of the program. Cameco, Orano, the Northern Store, Northern Lights Community Development, Harold's Family Foods and SSR Seabee provided gift bags with toys and treats for children. “Nearly 1300 kids received a gift bag this year,” said Tracy Young-McLean, VP of Human Resources and Corporate



Services. “This is a huge initiative involving many people, and we cannot thank our partner companies enough for their contributions. I also want to recognize our team of organizers who really went above and beyond to make this program happen. We are excited to be able to bring Santa into the communities again this year, and we look forward to continuing this long-standing annual tradition for another year.”

Points Athabasca, Athabasca Basin Development, Team Drilling, Flyer Electric, Points North, and Athabasca Basin Security provided a book for each child from daycare to grade 12. “This is the fourth year we've worked together as a group to provide a book to each of the kids,” said Kristy Jackson, Director of Marketing & communications at Athabasca Basin Development. “This year” we're pleased that we were able to find over 100 different titles by Indigenous authors, and the majority of the 1300 books going to the kids are by Indigenous authors this year. We posted our list of authors on our website, and it's free to anyone who wants to support Indigenous authors.”

This is the 10th year Athabasca Basin Development has been a part of this program and the 21st year Santa has visited the region by plane.

New Location for Long Lake Insurance

We are pleased to announce that Long Lake Insurance purchased the shares of Buryniuk Insurance Ltd. located in Cudworth, Saskatchewan effective November 1, 2021.

Buryniuk Insurance Ltd has been in direct competition for our clients in the Wakaw, Bruno areas, and this acquisition strengthens our position in the geographic area and it expands Long Lake Insurance to twelve physical office locations in Saskatchewan. The Cudworth branch will be one of the 3 largest offices in the Long Lake Insurance operation with a good mix of both personal lines and commercial clients.



Sign change at the new Long Lake Cudworth location

New IT Services Company launched



Kevin Aebig, CEO of Optek Solutions

Athabasca Basin Development and Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies announced the launch of a new customer service-oriented Information Technology (IT) managed services, support and solutions company this fall. The new company is called Optek Solutions.

Optek provides proactive, friendly, knowledgeable and simple IT services to companies of all sizes. Optek provides standard and customized offerings to fit each customer's needs, including equipment, total managed support services and hybrid support, as well as anything in between.

Optek is led by Kevin Aebig, who has over 10 years of lead engineer experience in the financial services and health sectors, most recently as the Senior Software Engineer for Medavie Health Services West. "We are excited to be part of an investment in the technology sector, an investment that contributes towards our goal of having ownership in companies in a wide variety of industries," said Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development. "Kevin brings a wealth of experience in IT and some great ideas to the industry. We're confident that Optek will provide the kind of top-tier service that businesses and other organizations are looking for."

"This investment made perfect sense for us to participate in," said Gary Merasty, CEO of Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies. "We've all come to see how important technology is to business, especially in the past couple years where meetings have all gone virtual. We also feel there's a significant opportunity for Indigenous employment in this industry, and we look forward to introducing Optek to the market."

"I am very excited to have Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies and Athabasca Basin Development as investors in Optek," says Kevin Aebig, CEO of Optek. "These companies collectively have investments in over 30 businesses in a wide variety of industries. They are well positioned to provide solid support and I very much look forward to working together to grow this company."

Optek offers a wide range of IT services including:

- Full-Service Desk – this is the "we'll take care of everything" package
- Hybrid/Partial Support – for organizations that have an existing support team
- Gateway helpdesk – for those who just need someone to answer the phone, or simple, repetitive stuff like password resets
- Remote field service
- Advisory services
- Top tier security of information (compliant with HIPPA, PIPEDA, and industry standards)
- Best Business practices and policies in IT
- Solid communication processes
- Regular client check-ins and strategic planning

"Businesses need technology in order to operate, but I think most people want IT to be in the background, to work well, be secure, and they want it to provide value so that they can work efficiently," says Kevin. "We want our customers to understand what we are doing, what they are getting, and then ensure it works well so they can forget about it and concentrate on their business."

www.optek.ca

Changes to Athabasca Basin Development Board of Directors



Earl Lidguerre

We would like to thank departing board member, Earl Lidguerre, for his contributions to the Athabasca Basin Development board over the last decade. Earl is a member of Fond du Lac First Nation and was appointed to the Athabasca Basin Development board of directors in December 2011.

Welcome new board member, Chief Kevin Mercredi of Fond du Lac First Nation. Chief Mercredi was appointed to the Athabasca Basin Development board by Fond du Lac Development LP in January 2022.

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, industrial security, electrical, diamond drilling, logistics, road maintenance, aviation and more. The company is owned by the seven communities in Northern Saskatchewan's Athabasca region.

Watch for our next newsletter Fall 2022.

If you would like to be included in our newsletter distribution, or you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please send your name and contact information to newsletter@athabascabasin.ca

athabascabasin.ca

Tru-North is moving to a new location!

This spring, Tru North Yamaha, RV & Auto is moving to a new location, just down the highway from the existing location in the old Peavey Mart. The new facility will offer a shopping experience unlike any other, with an indoor showroom that's climate controlled with everything inside. Rain, snow, wind – avoid it all and shop in comfort. We'll also have a paved parking lot and expanded parts and service department. Watch the Tru-North website and Facebook page for updates on our grand opening.

www.trunorthprincealbert.com

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