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Profile: North South General Contracting



On many days this summer, Peter Piochion has been busy operating and maintaining his company's equipment at the Stony Rapids airport project, hauling gravel and placing it on the runway, as well as hauling gravel to the bypass road. "Peter has been great to work with," says Glen Strong, Community Relations Coordinator for Points Athabasca.

"Not only is it great to be working with a local subcontractor on this project, but Peter has been here running and maintaining his equipment over the course of the project. I'd like to commend him for the great work he's been doing for us."

The Stony Rapids resident owns North South General Contracting Ltd, a general contracting company that offers a variety of services, including road hauling and road building, ice roads for drilling companies, freight hauling, seasonal road work and hauling gravel, cleaning and demolition work. He has also recently started house moving. "The work comes in spurts," says Peter, "But I like the challenge of running my own business. I try to get myself into good jobs and hard jobs – even the jobs nobody wants."

Like many of us, Peter got his start in a different field before owning his own company. Beginning as an automotive mechanic in Uranium City, he apprenticed as a Heavy Duty Mechanic, before realizing that line of work wasn't for him. "I liked the work, but I didn't really like working indoors," he says. "So I got into Heavy Equipment Operating, and that was much better."

Working outdoors suited Peter well. In 1999, Peter started North South General Contracting in Uranium City, and moved to Stony Rapids eight years ago. His company continues to be strong, with March being the busiest time of year for him as he opens winter ice roads. "Mostly it's just me, but sometimes I get busy enough that I hire a few people to help out," says Peter. "It really depends on the amount of work. My girlfriend, Connie helps do paperwork, and I really appreciate her doing that – paperwork is a big headache!"

Peter does manage to find time to enjoy the best that Northern life has to offer. "Owning a business keeps me busy but not too busy," Peter says. "When I have spare time, I like to go fishing in the summer, and snowmobiling and hauling firewood in the winter. Really, I just like being outside."

"We've been very pleased with how the project has gone," says John Scarfe, CEO of Points Athabasca. "And work from local subcontractors like Peter plays a big part in the successful execution of this project."

Over 70% of the employees and subcontractors for the Stony Rapids project have been local residents. "We like to work with local contractors and employees, because not only does it help us fulfill our vision of 'building capacity,' but it also just makes good business sense," says Scarfe. "While we do have to bring in specialized equipment for some things, it's much cheaper and easier to work with local people and local equipment than it is to bring equipment in from down south."

The Stony Rapids airport project is expected to be completed on time and on budget in October this year.

For more information on North South General Contracting, please contact Peter at northsouth@sasktel.net



Peter Piochion, North South General Contracting Ltd.

Flyer Electric's Founder, Bob Cockwill, Retires After 33 Years



Retired Saskatchewan Roughrider Neil Hughes and Bob Cockwill

It was 1982 when Bob Cockwill started his flagship company, and after 33 years of providing powerful solutions for the commercial, industrial and mining industries, Bob has officially retired from the electrical business.

A few years ago, Bob had begun thinking about retirement and how he would transition from his role as Flyer Electric's CEO. After meeting with Athabasca Basin Development's CEO, Geoff Gay, Bob decided to sell his company to Athabasca Basin Development and

Sakitawak Development Corp in 2011. "As the founder of the company, I really wanted to ensure the company continued to succeed after I retired," says Cockwill. "I felt that Athabasca Basin Development and Sakitawak were a good fit to assume ownership and continue the growth path that our team started for Flyer Electric. It has turned out to be a very good move for Flyer Electric and I'm very happy with how everything took place."

Bob stayed on board for the next four years to transition the new CEO, Terry Tessier. "Turning over the helm to Terry was an easy transition," says Cockwill. "Terry has excellent leadership qualities and I am very comfortable leaving things in his capable hands. I know Flyer Electric has a great future under his leadership."

Terry Tessier has assumed the CEO role for Flyer Electric for the past 3 Years. "It's been great having Bob there for the transition," says Tessier. "He started this company in the eighties, and has a wealth of knowledge about the industry and the company. It's been great working with him, and I hope he thoroughly enjoys a well-deserved and happy retirement."

"Bob has done an excellent job of developing a good electrical business with a strong management team and core group of employees, and this transition has been very smooth," says Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development. "His role has been instrumental

in ensuring a great future for Flyer Electric. We've thoroughly enjoyed working with him, and I'd like to wish him all the best in his retirement."

While retired from Flyer Electric, Bob remains busy – he owns two other companies, travels to Mexico in the winter, and of course, there's always golf. In addition to being a fan of the sport, Bob is also actively involved in organizing and running an annual golf tournament that has, to date, raised over \$60,000 towards a new club house at the Birch Hills golf course. For this year's tournament, Flyer Electric matched the money raised in the tournament, making a \$15,000 donation to the Prince Albert Salvation Army for assisting the Northern Forest Fire Evacuees. "The annual golf tournament is one of the ways Flyer Electric gives back to the local community," Bob says. "And I'm proud to be a part of it. I'd like to thank my wife, Heather, who has been amazing helping me with this huge event each year – her efforts in getting the house and food ready for over 60 golfers really make the tournament possible."

As far as his plans for the future, Bob plans to keep busy. "I'm not the kind of guy who will ever stop working completely," Bob says with a laugh. "But, of course, I do plan to do a lot more golfing!"

Message from the CEO and Board Chair



Geoff Gay, CEO and Anne Robillard, Board Chair

The recent slowdown in the resource industry has impacted much of the economy in Saskatchewan. While we certainly have noticed the effects of this and predict we will see these effects over the 2015-2016 year, our company remains in a strong position to continue acquiring, growing and investing in successful businesses.

While revenues for 2014-2015 did not top the previous record year of \$176M, considering the economic conditions, we are pleased that we attained share of revenues from investments of \$127.8M. We do expect the upcoming year to be a weaker year in terms of financial performance, but we have identified opportunities and there is growing optimism that ABD

and its investments will gain momentum from here. Some of these opportunities include new markets, such as the two new divisions Double Diamond has opened that are highlighted in this newsletter.

Continuing to reinvest profits and diversification will be the key to ensure the company grows and remains strong in any economic condition, and ultimately, grows reliable wealth for the Athabasca region. In this last quarter, we increased our ownership in West Wind Aviation, a strong aviation company that has excellent opportunities for growth. We continue to be actively seeking investment opportunities, and we are open to considering companies both in and outside of the resources sector.

"Building a Future Through Investment" is accomplished through the pillars of building wealth for the communities, donations, community distributions, building a reputation, and building capacity. We are making great strides in these areas. Through reinvestment, share values continue to grow. ABD and its investments donate towards initiatives in the Athabasca region annually, and we continue to look for opportunities that benefit the Athabasca region. ABD and its investments have been recognized in safety and business excellence. And despite the recent slowdown, this year we made the decision to increase the annual

distributions to the Athabasca communities by 25%, as we are confident this amount is sustainable into the future.

By working with local subcontractors, Athabasca Basin Development and its investments are contributing to local economic development. For example, Lonona Contracting employs local subcontractors to maintain 200km of seasonal roads and a 100km ice road in the Athabasca area. Points Athabasca is also employing local contractors in the Stony Rapids airport project. In this newsletter, we have highlighted one of the subcontractors from the region, North South Contracting, and their important role in the Stony Rapids project.

The key to making all benefits possible is in building wealth for the communities; without this foundation, the other pillars would not be possible. Continuing the original vision of the community leaders from when our company was formed has been the key to our success; without this unity from our shareholder communities, we would not be where we are today. With the past and continued support of our shareholder, employees, industry and partners, we will continue to see success and make an impact moving into the future.



ABD Increases Ownership in West Wind Aviation



In April, Athabasca Basin Development announced increased ownership into West Wind Aviation from 29% to 54.85%. ABD purchased additional shares in the company from former owner Meadow Lake Tribal Council Resource Development.

"We initially purchased ownership in West Wind in 2012, and when the opportunity to increase our investment came up, it made good sense for us," says Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development.

"West Wind Aviation is a solid company with a strong track record of success of providing flights in the North and in Saskatchewan. Looking ahead, there is a lot of potential for growth and expansion for the company, making it a good investment for our shareholders in the Athabasca."

Former owner Meadow Lake Tribal Council Resource Development (MLTC RDI) is the for-profit arm of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. "West Wind Aviation has been a good investment for us for many years. After reviewing our portfolio of investments, we made the

strategic decision to sell our shares in the company in order to pursue opportunities that are a better fit with our core business," says Ben Voss, CEO of MLTC RDI. "As long time owners in the company, we are pleased to see our shares go to a solid investment company, and we think this deal is a win for our company, our shareholders, and for West Wind Aviation."

Established in 1983, West Wind Aviation offers a diverse range of aviation solutions to safely meet corporate or leisure travel needs. Over the years, West Wind Aviation has built a reputation of providing excellent service, and the company has been recognized with multiple awards, including being a platinum member of Canada's Best Managed Companies and Saskatchewan Top Employers.

"We've had an excellent partnership with Athabasca Basin Development for the past two years, and we are pleased they have increased their ownership in our company," says Gord Gillespie, CEO of West Wind Aviation. "Athabasca Basin Development has a history of supporting solid companies, and having strong ownership puts us in a good position to explore potential opportunities for growth and expansion. This partnership is an excellent fit and we look forward to continuing a long and mutually beneficial relationship."

Prince Albert Development LP and the West Wind employee group are the other owners of West Wind Aviation.

Fly-In Career Symposium



Glen Strong, Community Relations and Training Coordinator for Points Athabasca, shows students at Black Lake the importance of math and how to use it in carpentry during a hands-on activity at the Fly-in Career Symposium.

The Fly-in Career Symposium, organized by Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC), flew companies to Athabasca communities to talk to students

about careers. The event included hands on activities from each company. ABD and Points Athabasca were proud to sponsor and support the event.

"I am a teacher from Father Megret High School in Wollaston Lake...I am so appreciative of this career fair. It engaged our students and motivated them to think about their future. Many students left the career fair inspired with the hope of one day building a career in the North and continuing their education. Thank you so much for this incredible opportunity to inform and inspire our students!"

– Elizabeth Harrison, English Teacher,
Father Megret School

Achievements



Congratulations to Team Drilling and West Wind Aviation for making SaskBusiness Magazine's Top 100 companies list! Check out the September edition of SaskBusiness Magazine for more details.

On June 10, 2015, Team Drilling achieved an impressive safety milestone: 500 days without a lost time injury or medical treatment at Diavik Diamond Mine. Congratulations to Team Drilling for this achievement!

In April 2015, MERIT Contractors Association selected Flyer Electric as a finalist in two of its MERIT Employee Award Categories: Sean Hubbard was nominated for an Outstanding Site Supervisor award, and Flyer Electric was a finalist for the MERIT Employer of the Year award. Congratulations to Flyer Electric for being a finalist for these two awards!

Points Athabasca, in partnership with Solar Logix, was awarded the contract for the turn-key design, supply and install of two solar power generator systems at Father Megret Elementary School in Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation and Father Gamache Memorial School in Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation in March this year.

In March 2015, Athabasca Basin Development was selected as a winner of one of the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association's (CWTA) Connected to the Community Awards. The awards recognize the work of organizations in their innovative use of wireless technology whether for health, public safety, education etc., and more generally in ways that improve the lives of Canadians.

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 Spring 2016.

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New Opportunities – Double Diamond Opens Two New Divisions



Double Diamond's first portable classroom was installed in Black Lake, SK earlier this year.

Double Diamond has a unique building approach, and their industrial structures are known for being built to last. Using the knowledge and expertise from years serving the resources industry, Double Diamond has started two new product lines: modular houses and portable classrooms.

Double Diamond has been building modular structures for major corporate clients in Western Canada for over eight years. As a former educator, Double Diamond CEO Barrie Bergsma has experienced first-hand the challenges surrounding changing school populations and the need for flexible, affordable space solutions.

“We decided to open our Portable Classroom Division this spring,” says Bergsma. “We make a high quality product for our corporate clients – why not offer these to the education system?”

The first portable classrooms went to Black Lake school earlier this year. The classrooms are designed to accommodate up to 36 students and are bright, comfortable and durable. “We are very proud to have our first portable classrooms go back to one of our shareholder communities,” Bergsma says.

Because this is a new division, Double Diamond is offering special introductory pricing of \$97,500 per classroom. “We can also get a classroom built and ready in a very quick turnaround – as little as six weeks in some cases,” says Bergsma.

In addition to a new portable classroom division, Double Diamond has also started offering modular houses. “The first four modular houses will be going into Southend this fall,” says Bergsma. “The houses were designed in collaboration with INAC, as well as having discussions with the members of Southend and discussions with other northerners to determine the specific needs of northerners for housing so that a Double Diamond house has the features that address those needs.”

The houses are 1248 square feet, and feature three bedrooms, kitchen, living room and dining room, laundry room and bathroom. All houses feature 2 x 6 exterior wall construction with R20 insulation, LED lighting, air exchangers, and matching storage sheds are available.

The houses are being built in Double Diamond's Saskatoon plant and are shipped to site in two 13' feet wide modules which will be joined together on site to form a 26' x 48' house. “The houses are originally built with flat roofs so that they can be transported over the bridge at Otter Rapids which has very low clearance,” says Bergsma. “Once they are on site, a typical peaked roof will be installed. The roof will use tin instead of normal shingles to increase durability.”

All Double Diamond houses and portable classrooms are built to the usual quality and care that the company has become known for in the construction of its mining camps and site offices. Contact Barrie at (306) 664-4466 for more information.

10 Year ABD Employee, Kristine McWilliam



Kristine McWilliam

Kristine McWilliam has seen a lot of change happen in the last ten years. Back in 2005, Kristine was working for investment firm Raymond James. She had completed her Bachelor of Commerce with a Finance major at the University of Saskatchewan four years prior, graduating with Distinction. In October that year, Kristine left her position with Raymond James and started bookkeeping for Athabasca Basin Development. “Back then, all the investments were basically divisions within Athabasca Basin Development,” says Kristine, “I was the sole bookkeeper for security, ABD, and the road division for three years. We've changed and grown so much that I could never do all that now – I'd be drowning in numbers!”

Her role – and the company – grew swiftly. Today, Kristine is the Controller for Athabasca Basin Development. Managing the finances of the company,

Kristine works with senior management to prepare budgets, financial statements for management and the board, and does all the day to day bookkeeping. Kristine also works with the management and accountants of new ABD investments to ensure a smooth transition under new ownership – which can be a very simple or a very involved process depending on the structure of the investment. “It's been a great opportunity to grow along with the company,” says Kristine. “In my time here, I've watched ABD go from a smaller company operating divisions in security, road and labour services to evolving into an investment company with a portfolio of investments. Because there's been so much change, I've learned so much, and every day, I continue learning.”

The one thing Kristine has enjoyed above all else in her time with ABD has been the people. “It's been wonderful to have the opportunity to work with our board, management and staff at both ABD and our investments,” she says. “One thing that's really nice to see is there are so many people that were working with ABD back when I started and are still here. ABD Board members Anne Robillard and Dean Klassen have been here since the beginning. Our CEO, Geoff Gay, Glen Strong with Points Athabasca, and Terri Daniels, who is now on ABD's Board, have also been here since the beginning. To have so many people here for this long, I think this says a lot about our company.”

As for the future, Kristine plans to stick with ABD for the next ten years and beyond. “The flexibility that I have has provided me with the ability to school my kids from home while continuing my career,” she says, “I thoroughly enjoy working for ABD and look forward to the future.”

Since the Beginning: Rose Toutsaint



Rose Toutsaint

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. And Northern employees

like Rose Toutsaint have contributed on many levels to the company's initial and continued success.

Rose Toutsaint started with Pronto in March of 2006 adding her aviation experience from her years at Athabasca Airways to the team. Rose was born in Uranium City, and settled and raised her family in Stony Rapids with her husband, who is a supervisor for the department of highways in the community. Rose now splits her time between her duties as a Customer Service Agent at Pronto and spoiling her 6 grandchildren. Why does she do it? Rose says she “loves working with the people, and serving her community.”

Pronto Airways became West Wind Scheduled Services in July 2015. The company provides direct ownership benefits to the First Nations communities in the Athabasca region of northern Saskatchewan.