

# ACCESS

## SASKATCHEWAN

October - December 2003

### Computer Science Grads Find Work in All the Right Places

by Cameron Zimmer

You've just graduated from university and your future is murkier than the career counsellor said it would be. The list of classified job ads on your desk is crossed out with emphatic red strokes and overly polite messages are pouring in from companies looking for experience you don't have.

Three University of Regina computer science graduates faced this daunting scenario until they were hired as computer programmers by **iQmetrix Software Development Corp.**, a subsidiary of **Jump.ca**, one of Saskatchewan's leading information technology (IT) companies, with help from Western Economic Diversification Canada's **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**.

"We weren't looking at this program to provide cheap labour, but to build our talent pool within the company and to build the company," says Debbie Mills, director of software development for iQmetrix.

iQmetrix hired Ryan Zens and Eduardo Trombetta to develop RetailiQ, its retail management software program. In three years, they've progressed from doing basic application maintenance to becoming senior programmers.




"I would recommend this program. Without it, it's hard for new grads to find work, especially in IT where it seems like everything is going downhill," Zens said.

Because of the reputation built by Zens and Trombetta, the company hired another new graduate, Darin Shaw, who is grateful for the opening the First Jobs program and iQmetrix have provided.

"The best part has been the opportunity to work in the field that I'm interested in and educated for," Shaw said. "I'm fortunate enough to be doing exactly what I wanted to."

iQmetrix was able to provide these work opportunities because WD's First Jobs program provides eligible businesses with funding up to 50 per cent of a science or technology graduate's salary for one year to a maximum of \$20,000. The program allows graduates to discover, develop and implement new technology, as well as train others to use it.

For more information about iQmetrix and its integrated business solutions, call (306) 790-4545 or visit their Web site at [www.iqmetrix.com](http://www.iqmetrix.com).

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Litzenberger Starts a

by Regan Brady

Yorkton skateboarder, Kelly Litzenberger, ollied out of the skatepark and onto the local business scene in 1998.

A passion for skateboarding and snowboarding and a lack of exposure of the sports in the area prompted Litzenberger to open **Revolution Snow and Skate**. The shop sells high-end skateboards and snowboards, as well as brand name shoes, casual athletic clothing and safety equipment.

“At the time I decided to open, there were very limited options. I just became fed up and decided it was time for a change and a chance to do it better,” Litzenberger said. “I had to convince people that the business could not only survive, but that skateboarding was something that could help improve the recreation services for the city.”

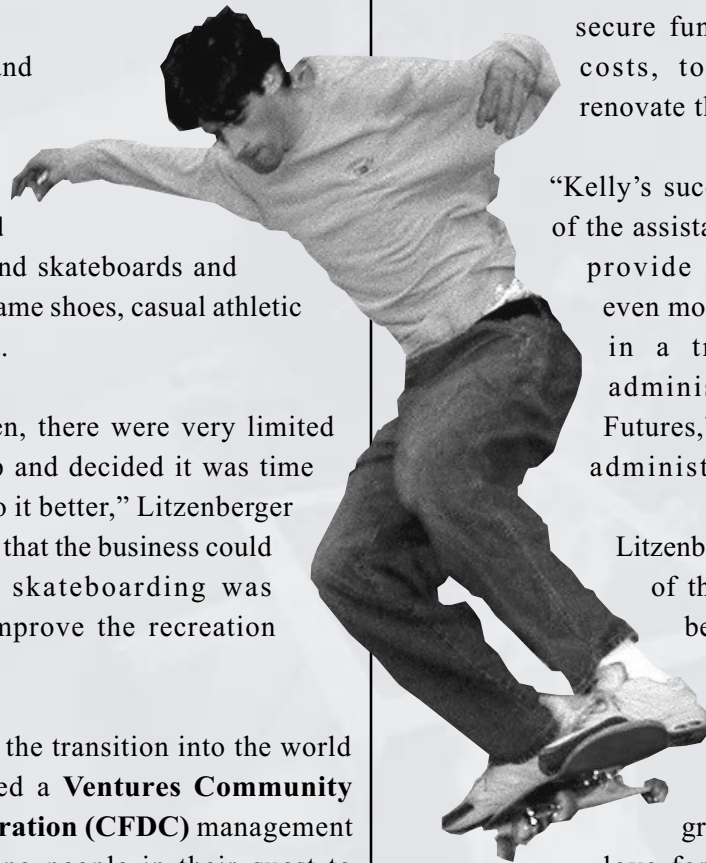
But before Litzenberger made the transition into the world of small business, he attended a **Ventures Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)** management training course that aids young people in their quest to become self-employed. The program assisted the

entrepreneur to develop a business plan and put his vision into action. From there, he worked with them to secure funding for his initial start-up costs, to purchase inventory and renovate the store.

“Kelly’s success is an excellent example of the assistance that Ventures CFDC can provide to young entrepreneurs, even more so because he was involved in a training project that was administered by the Community Futures,” says Kendall Hudye, office administrator at Ventures CFDC.

Litzenberger says that without the help of the CFDC, he would not have been able to start his business.

“I’ve done really well. I have been staying steady, but every year the numbers get bigger. Luckily, I have a great group of customers that have a love for skateboarding and will do anything to keep riding.”



# Saskato

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Revolution in Yorkton

The business community has also noticed Litzenberger's accomplishment. He was nominated for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce "Celebrate Success" Awards Gala in 1999 and 2000.

"It proves that our program can guide young people to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams," Hudye said. "Ventures CFDC's help and support has allowed Kelly to become a successful entrepreneur, and we are very proud of that."

Since 1997, Ventures CFDC has assisted eight successful young entrepreneurs, like Litzenberger, with loans totalling more than \$94,000.

For more information about the products and services available at Revolution Snow & Skate, call (306) 786-7669 or visit: [www.revolutionskateboarding.com](http://www.revolutionskateboarding.com). ♦



*Kelly Litzenberger, owner of Revolution Snow & Skate, ignited the skateboard community in Yorkton by bringing high-end gear out of the big city and into their backyard.*

*Photos courtesy of Kelly Litzenberger.*

# chewan

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Ring Those Phones!

by Regan Brady and Cameron Zimmer

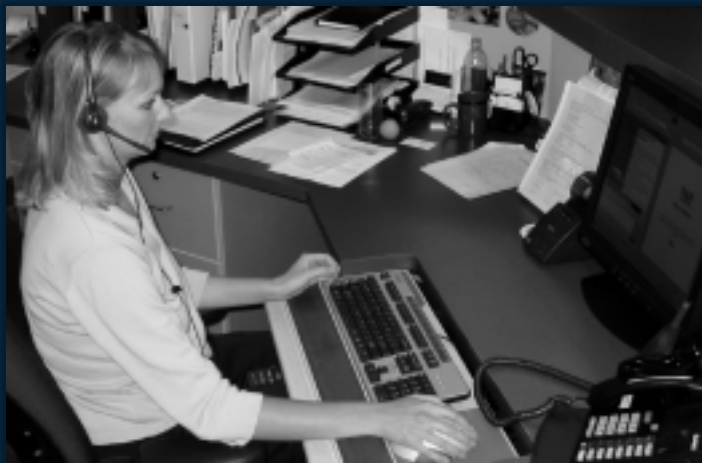
“The human voice carries entirely too far as it is...and now you fellows come along and seek to complicate matters,” Mark Twain said after the invention of the telephone.

With the advent of the Internet over one hundred years later, people still find it hard to adapt to changes in technology. The **Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC)** has encountered this reluctance with “*Talk to Us*” — an interactive Web site resource that brings business information to the Web-surfer’s fingertips.

“People are afraid to click on *Talk to Us*. They’re not sure where they’ll go and people wonder if someone’s going to knock at their door,” says Michelle Grella, a *Talk to Us* user. “But I think it’s a good tool and it’s not that complicated.”

This service allows clients to speak with a CSBSC information officer over the phone who will direct them to business information on the CSBSC Web site and sends the information directly to their computer screen.

Accessing *Talk to Us* is a simple process that only requires the ability to be online and use the phone at the same time. Just log onto the Web site at: **[www.cbssc.org/sask](http://www.cbssc.org/sask)**. A “Help” icon leads to a short video presentation that introduces *Talk to Us* to the client.



*CSBSC Business Information Officer Bryanna Bergerman guides clients to the information they need using the Talk To Us tool.*

After viewing the *Talk to Us* instructions, the client will provide their name and phone number, click “Connect,” and their phone will ring to connect them with an Information

# Saskato

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Officer. Once the session begins, the officer can send any information a client requests — whether it's a link to another Web site or a document on topics such as business planning or specific government programs — straight to their screen.

*Talk to Us* is especially useful in rural Saskatchewan where entrepreneurs can save a long drive into Saskatoon or Regina to find the information they need.

“It will give rural clients the same service as a walk-in client,” says Diana Matsuda, manager of the CSBSC in Saskatoon.

“It's as close as we're going to get to being able to collaborate with a client without actually sitting across a desk from them.”

As accessible as this resource is, last year very few CSBSC clients made use of *Talk to Us*. Although 3,000 clicked on the *Talk to Us* icon, less than a hundred followed through and completed sessions with business information officers. This low rate of users is similar across Canada.

Matsuda recognizes that *Talk to Us* is in a transition phase, but believes people will gradually become more familiar with the technology and less hesitant to use it.



*Michele Grella found the Talk To Us feature on the CSBSC Web site simple and easy to use.*

With increased exposure on other federal Web sites such as BusinessGateway.ca and Exportsource.ca, Matsuda is certain that more and more people will see *Talk to Us* as another point of access to the information they need to succeed in business.

The **Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre** is a joint initiative of Western Economic Diversification Canada and Saskatchewan Industry and Resources. It offers entrepreneurs information on starting a business, developing a business plan, marketing strategies, financing and regulatory matters. 🍁

# chewan

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Bookkeeping Program

*by Regan Brady*

Vicki Heppner, manager of **Visions North Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)** in La Ronge, was looking to fill a gap in bookkeeping programs for entrepreneurs, when an accounting student from the **Sagehill CFDC** was brought to her attention. The student had walked into an accounting class with receipts in a shoebox and an idea was born.

To develop the idea, Heppner and her staff at Visions North worked collaboratively with Diana Matsuda and Emily Cherneski of the **Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC)**, Ken Evett of the **Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN)** and consultant Cherylynn Walters.

The result, **Bookkeeping from a Shoebox** — a practical bookkeeping program for beginners.

“The program meets the needs of the target audience and it doesn’t make any assumptions about knowledge or cultural,” Heppner said. “Being from a remote community, the target audience doesn’t come in with the same skill set.” Heppner says the program’s target is typically a low literacy group with a more interactive style of learning.

Matsuda, manager of the CSBSC, says the Shoebox program is a constructive way to provide Aboriginal entrepreneurs with a set of skills they will need to be successful in business. She noted that although the program stemmed from a need expressed by the Centre’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee and was developed through the ABSN, all entrepreneurs will have access to the how-to sessions.

The sessions run three to four days and include intensive training in all aspects of financial business practices. Each participant receives a shoebox that contains all of the information and materials they need to set up their own basic bookkeeping system.

In addition to pilot testing, Heppner has delivered the program in two northern communities. “It was one of the most incredible experiences of my life. At the end of the week, the women were so empowered,” Heppner said.

Other provinces and territories may be interested in adapting this program for their own needs, Matsuda said after she took the idea to a Canada Business Service Network national manager’s meeting.

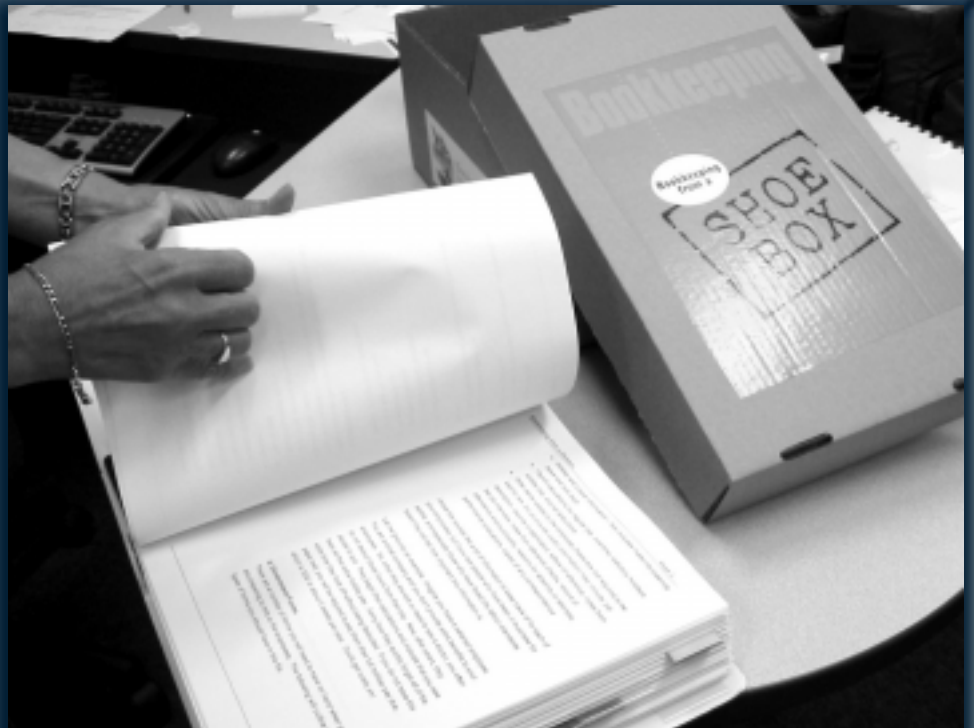
# Saskato

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Thinks Outside the Box

“We also think the program would lend itself extremely well to online delivery; however, that is a project for future consideration. Our immediate concern is to begin training potential trainers to deliver the Shoebox seminars so they can be offered to entrepreneurs throughout Saskatchewan,” Matsuda added.

For more information about Bookkeeping from a Shoebox, call the CSBSC at (306) 956-232 or Visions North CFDC at (306) 425-2612. ♣



*Participants in the Bookkeeping from a Shoebox program receive a shoebox prop that includes all the materials needed for a one-month simulation of bookkeeping for a small business.*

# chewan

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## A Network of Professionals Ready to Work for You

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) established the Western Canada Business Service Network to ensure that western Canadians have direct access to products and services that support their economic success. The network is a partnership of organizations with over 100 points of service across the West where entrepreneurs can find what they need to establish a business or make it grow, with services ranging from practical information and funding options, to counselling and support.

In addition to WD's office in Saskatoon and Regina, network partners in Saskatchewan include:

### **Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre**

122 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue N	1925 Rose Street
Saskatoon SK S7K 2H6	Regina SK S4P 3P1
(306) 956-2323	(306) 780-8331
1-800-667-4374	
<a href="http://www.cbsc.org/sask">www.cbsc.org/sask</a>	

### **Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan**

#230, 3850 Hillsdale Street  
Regina SK S4S 7J5  
(306) 566-6000  
<http://sk.gazel.ca>

### **Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.**

#112, 2100 - 8 <sup>th</sup> Street E	1925 Rose Street
Saskatoon SK S7H 0V1	Regina SK S4P 3P1
(306) 477-7173	(306) 359-9732
1-800-879-6331	
<a href="http://www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca">www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca</a>	

### **Community Futures Development Corporations**

Beaver River CFDC, Meadow Lake  
(306) 236-4422  
East Central Development Corporation, Broadview  
(306) 696-2443  
Meridian CFDC, Kindersley  
(306) 463-1850  
Mid-Sask CFDC, Outlook  
(306) 867-9566  
Newsask CFDC, Tisdale  
(306) 873-4449  
Northwest CFDC, North Battleford  
(306) 446-3200  
Prince Albert and District CFDC  
(306) 763-8125  
Sagehill Development Corporation, Bruno  
(306) 369-2610  
South Central CFDC, Assiniboia  
(306) 642-5558  
Southwest CFDC, Swift Current  
(306) 773-0900  
Sunrise CFDC, Weyburn  
(306) 842-8803  
Ventures CFDC, Yorkton  
(306) 782-0255  
Visions North CFDC, La Ronge  
(306) 425-2612  
  
Provincial CFDC Association:  
Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan Inc., Regina  
(306) 751-1922  
[www.cfps.sk.ca](http://www.cfps.sk.ca)