

ACCESS

SASKATCHEWAN

October - December 2004

CSBSC Celebrates 10 Years of Change

by Heather Waldern Hinds

Remember when the most cutting-edge technology was a fax machine?

The **Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre's (CSBSC)** InfoFax service was its primary tool for distributing information to clients when the centre opened in 1994. InfoFax was turned off two years ago; the Internet has revolutionized how the centre helps its clients.

Part of a national network, the CSBSC provides information on government services, programs and regulations through its electronic Business Information System database (BIS). The seven Business Information staff can answer questions about starting a new business or improving an existing one, preparing a business plan, finding new markets or getting ready to export.

BIS is the core of the resources, but clients can now research and write business plans entirely online, as well as receive live, same-time assistance from an officer via the phone and Internet.



Paula Woodhouse (L) and Tammie McCumber (R), co-owners of The Giggle Factory in Saskatoon and Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC) clients, participated in an e-business video-conference with e-business specialist Trevor Poapst, from The Business Link in Edmonton during the CSBSC's 10th anniversary open house, September 8th.

The Internet hasn't reduced in-person client visits, but it has changed client requests. Most clients now conduct basic research on the Internet before visiting staff for more advanced information. The centre provided answers to over one million client inquiries in the last 10 years.

Evolutions in service since 1994 have extended the CSBSC's reach. Sixteen regional access sites bring the centre's resources to smaller communities, while a mobile library circulates information to Aboriginal Business Service Network clients. Business counselling

services have been added, and the CSBSC is now the front line for trade and export information in Saskatchewan through the national Team Canada Inc. service.

For more information on the CSBSC, call (306) 956-2323 in Saskatoon or 1-800-667-4374, or visit www.cbbsc.org/sask. ♣

And, A Soundstage has Star Role in S

by Cameron Zimmer



Corner Gas star Brent Butt opens the hit show's second season at the Canada-Saskatchewan Soundstage.

The storyline for the Saskatchewan film and television industry is looking less like a B-movie and more like the script of an action adventure.

Saskatchewan-grown productions have launched the film industry from a \$2.5 million supporting role in 1991 to a \$40 million rising star in the province's economy. The province now lays claim to Genie award-winning film *Falling Angels*, and *Corner Gas*, this year's top-rated original Canadian television series.

"I didn't anticipate doing a T.V. show in Saskatchewan when I was a kid," said *Corner Gas* star Brent Butt in a CTV interview. "There was no industry. You couldn't just go to Weyburn and shoot a movie like you can now. This is awesome."

So what's drawing marquee productions like *Corner Gas* to Saskatchewan? It could be the great tax incentives or the production crews that come recommended by Hollywood star Andy Garcia. Recently though, the newly constructed **Canada-Saskatchewan Production Studios**, known collectively as the **Soundstage**, are generating the buzz.

The \$10.7 million Soundstage was designed to bring more film productions to Saskatchewan. Western Economic Diversification Canada provided \$3 million and the Province of Saskatchewan contributed over \$7 million to construct an industry pacesetter.

The project consultants asked for design advice from Economic Research Associates in Los Angeles and other industry experts to ensure that the Soundstage was built to meet every film production need.

"Most studios in the country are retrofitted warehouses and old buildings because they need the space. The Soundstage is unique because it was purpose-built for production film and TV," says Valerie Creighton, CEO of SaskFilm.

When the state-of-the-art facility opened in the fall of 2002, it set a new standard for film production in the province. With 82,000 total sq. ft. and 35,000 sq. ft. of studio space, big ideas and large productions fit right in.

Saskato

Action! Saskatchewan's Film Industry

The spacious studio has people excited because it offers everything a production needs in one, fully loaded shooting location. In addition to studio space, it has a carpentry shop, an art department, a darkroom and other support facilities. It also offers first class, furnished production offices and dressing rooms. And, there are on-site vendors who will take care of lighting, 3-D animation and meals for film crews.

"The Soundstage in Regina was amazing. It's such a perfect facility. The fact that it was built as a soundstage makes all the difference," said Butt in a SaskFilm News interview. "Having the soundstage in Regina made this [Corner Gas] possible. Not sure how we would have done it otherwise."

"Saskatchewan has proven itself to be a location of choice," concludes Creighton. "Saskatchewan's state of-the-art soundstage facility, award-winning producers, low production costs and an exceptional crew base all contribute to making Saskatchewan an efficient, creative and cost-effective place to do business."

And that's a wrap!

If you want to find out more about the Soundstage or film production in Saskatchewan, contact SaskFilm at (306) 798-3456, e-mail general@saskfilm.com or visit www.saskfilm.com. ♦

Movies bring big rewards to Saskatchewan small businesses

An average \$5 million Saskatchewan film production creates:

- 161.5 person years of employment
- 880 hotel room night rentals
- 12,600 catered meals
- \$62,000 in vehicle rentals
- \$250,000 in equipment rentals
- \$4,125,000 direct and indirect expenditures in Saskatchewan

Businesses that benefit from the Saskatchewan film industry:

- Hotels
- Lumber yards
- Fabric stores
- Paint stores
- Restaurants
- Caterers
- Bars
- Bookstores
- Taxi companies
- Limousine services
- Photography companies
- Cleaning services

chewan

Growing Forward

by Bev Fast

It's been eight years since Rhoda O'Malley opened **Step Ahead Shoes**, a mall-based retail store located in Saskatoon. Her concept was to offer comfortable, well-made, stylish shoes to fashion and health conscious baby boomers. Sounds simple enough, but O'Malley had done her homework. She knew there was a void in the marketplace and she meant to fill it.

Her first major challenge, like so many other small businesspeople, was financing. "Getting access to funding is a real challenge for people starting a retail operation," O'Malley says. "Most banks will finance bricks and mortar but not inventory, and that's what most mall-based stores need the financing for."

O'Malley turned to **Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.)**, a member of the Women's Enterprise Initiative established by Western Economic Diversification Canada to provide business information, financing and services to women entrepreneurs across the four western provinces.

"I don't think I'd be here today if it wasn't for Women Entrepreneurs. I went to them for initial financing. Since then, I've used a *ton* of W.E. services. I've taken different workshops and used their business advisory services many times. It's been hugely beneficial."

The first store was the beginning of a much broader vision. In 1999, Step Ahead opened a second location. In 2003, it partnered with ECCO Shoes to open Western Canada's first ECCO store. In their latest move, O'Malley and her

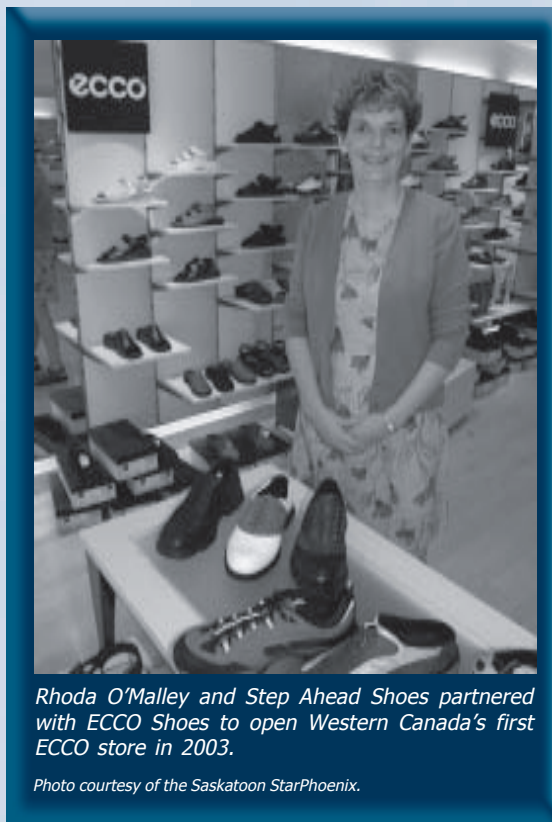
husband/business partner, Tom, opened Propulsion, a store that targets a younger, trendier demographic.

O'Malley's achievements have earned the recognition of her peers. This spring, Step Ahead Shoes won the pan-western 2004 Women's Enterprise Initiative Award of Excellence for an Existing Business and the Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Existing Business Award. She also received the Saskatoon YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the "Entrepreneur" category.

A passion for business keeps O'Malley moving through the everyday challenges of a retail operation – that and a good business plan. "A business plan gives you so much information. It can tell you if you're on track or

if you need to revise your goals. It's a living document. You have to revisit it annually, but you need it to grow forward."

For more information about Step Ahead Shoes, call (306) 978-7837 or visit www.stepaheadshoes.com. ♦



Rhoda O'Malley and Step Ahead Shoes partnered with ECCO Shoes to open Western Canada's first ECCO store in 2003.

Photo courtesy of the Saskatoon StarPhoenix.

Saskatoon

Location, Location, Location ... It's All in How You Look at It

by Jean Collins

"Location, location, location" is the mantra for many small businesses. But despite its lack of walk-in traffic, a St. Benedict business considers its rural setting to be an asset.

The lower cost of doing business, a loyal staff with a strong work ethic and the community support make St. Benedict (population 100) an ideal location for **Custom Advertising Products St. Benedict (C.A.P.S.)**. A quality product, on-time delivery, repeat business and referrals from existing customers have made C.A.P.S. a very successful enterprise — regardless of location.

C.A.P.S. applies screen-printed and/or embroidered logos to shirts, jackets, caps, backpacks and other promotional items. "We've printed logos on everything from steak knives to a curling rock," says Holly Muller, who owns C.A.P.S. with her husband, Willie. The size of each job varies from as few of one item, to as many as 60,000 pieces.

The Mullers started their business in their own home, expanded it to the garage and recently to a new workshop. Along with their physical expansion, the number of staff has grown from just Holly and Willie to include two full-time and three part-time employees. Willie values their

computer programs and array of screen-printing and embroidery equipment at \$200,000.

The **Sagehill Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)**, located in Bruno, provided the Mullers with two loans over the last eight years to purchase new equipment. C.A.P.S. used this equipment to expand their production line capacity.



Holly and Willie Muller in their workshop.

Photo courtesy of Bruce Dyck, *The Western Producer*.

"C.A.P.S.'s success demonstrates the diversity of entrepreneurial options open to rural businesspeople and permits them to maintain their rural lifestyle," says Dianne Olchowski, general manager of Sagehill CFDC. "The fact that C.A.P.S. customer base is broader than the local area and draws from across Western Canada adds to its viability."

Holly tells individuals interested in setting up a business in rural Saskatchewan, "Go for it."

For more information on C.A.P.S., call (306) 289-2107.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provides funding to Saskatchewan's 13 Community Futures Development Corporations. ♣

chewan

Small Business Profits From Can

by Bev Fast

When the **Canadian Light Source (CLS)** project at the University of Saskatchewan (UofS) was first announced in 1999, it generated tremendous excitement...and not just in scientific and research communities.

Saskatchewan's small business community has benefited from Canada's biggest science project. To date, more than \$138 million in contracts have been awarded for construction and services, and over 65 per cent of this total value has gone to Saskatchewan companies.

The building housing the synchrotron was designed by a team of engineers from the Saskatoon office of UMA Engineering Ltd., along with local architect AODBT as a sub-consultant and together with the Canadian Light Source Inc. UMA acted as overall project manager for the UofS, a role that is only now winding down.

"The CLS is a fantastic tool for Canada in general and it's been an excellent project for us. It has introduced us into the global synchrotron community," says Barry Hawkins, leader of UMA's Advanced Research Facilities Group. "We've been working in the high energy physics community since 1988 with clients such as TRIUMF [Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics located in Vancouver], but this was our first synchrotron project. Now we're doing work on the synchrotron being built in Australia and we're in talks to do work on other international synchrotron projects. The CLS has opened a number of avenues for us."

The CLS has also opened doors for smaller suppliers. Startco Engineering Ltd., a Saskatoon-based company that builds custom electrical products and protective relays for a wide variety of industries, was contracted to help resolve the issue of a "clean grounds" for the beamlines.

"Sensitive measurements will be taken and the UofS/CLS wanted to eliminate interference from systems such as heating, lighting and ventilation. Our product solved the problem," says Startco Applications Engineer Blair Baldwin.



Panoramic southwest view featuring beamline, March 2004.

Photo courtesy of Canadian Light Source Inc., University of Saskatchewan.

The company is hoping the experience leads to other work. In the meantime, Baldwin says they got a surprise during a recent tour of the facility. "There was equipment from a large, well-known manufacturer. It contained our ground fault protection equipment. Our product hadn't been specifically built for the CLS application; it was our standard product that we supply to other companies. It was exciting to see our gear come back to Saskatoon that way."

Saskato

Canada's "Biggest Science Project"

Scientific Instrumentation Ltd. is another Saskatoon-based company that has benefited from the project. The company designs and manufactures specialized electronic instruments and equipment for scientific research, industrial and military applications.



"We were involved as part of a technology transfer agreement with the CLS and UofS for a motor control system," says SIL President Larry Cooper. "We licensed the system from them. It had been developed to a reasonable point, but we took it to a higher level and then supplied it back."

That's the nature of technology transfer; it essentially moves technology out of the laboratory into the commercial arena. "Now it has become a product for us. We're currently in the early stages of marketing it to other synchrotron projects in Australia and Spain," Cooper says.

Now that the CLS is operational, businesses are discussing potential research partnerships. According to Rob Slinger, CLS chief business development officer, the key is linking synchrotron capabilities with competitive technology companies that have research and development challenges.

"Each beamline has different capabilities. Each workstation functions like an individual, highly specialized lab. It involves different individuals and different types of research. Some of the beamlines conduct highly esoteric, cutting-edge research. Others perform routine sample analysis."

The CLS is endorsed by 27 Canadian universities and supported by 14 capital funding partners and four operating partners. The Government of Canada, in addition to \$85 million in funding for capital construction, recently announced another \$19 million in operational funding over the next five years. This includes \$16 million from Science & Engineering Research Canada and \$3 million from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

WD provided another level of support through its **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program** and **International Trade Personnel Program**, which offer partial salary funding to enable small businesses such as Startco to hire post-secondary graduates.

For more information about the Canadian Light Source, visit www.cls.usask.ca. ♣

chewan

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Business Assistance is Just a Phone Call Away!

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) established the Western Canada Business Service Network to support western Canadians and help them achieve economic success. With over 100 points of service across the West, the network provides entrepreneurs with products and services they need to establish a business or make it grow — from business advisory services and financing, to counselling and support.

In addition to WD offices in Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan network partners include:

Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre

345 – 3 rd Avenue S	1925 Rose Street
Saskatoon SK S7K 2H6	Regina SK S4P 3P1
(306) 956-2323	(306) 780-8331
1-800-667-4374	
www.cbcs.org/sask	

Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan

#230, 3850 Hillsdale Street
Regina SK S4S 7J5
(306) 566-6000
1-800-670-0879
www.ccs-sk.ca

Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.

#112, 2100 - 8 th Street E	1925 Rose Street
Saskatoon SK S7H 0V1	Regina SK S4P 3P1
(306) 477-7173	(306) 359-9732
1-800-879-6331	
www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca	

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, LaRonge
(306) 425-2612

Provincial CFDC Association:
Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan Inc., Saskatoon
(306) 260-2390
www.cfps.sk.ca