

SPRING 2025 ISSUE 1 VOLUME 4

MANITOBA



FRACTIONAL CFO

Mike McLenehan CPA, CGA
wants to give small- and medium-sized businesses
the financial tools to take the next step

ON THE INSIDE

Apparel Industry Feels The Chill:
Tough Duck showing stable demand

One-Way Ticket to Success:
Women in the aerospace industry

Gen Z's Benefit Wish List

Eat Canadian, eh?



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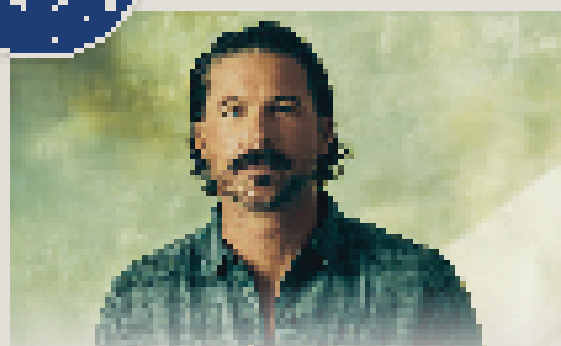
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CAN we take a break from all of the tariffs talk and chat about the Manitoba Miracle for a second? If there was ever any doubt about the impact that the Winnipeg Jets have in the province, it was most certainly laid to rest on the evening of May 4th at Canada Life Centre.

There were more than 15,200 people inside the rink and thousands more at the adjacent Whiteout party when the Jets took on the St. Louis Blues in Game 7 of Round 1 of the NHL playoffs. Thousands more watched it in bars, pubs and restaurants around town and I'm guessing hundreds of thousands watched it from home. Millions, maybe?

The Manitoba Miracle started with the Jets down 3-1 late in the third period, shortly after they had pulled Connor Hellebuyck. Vladislav Namestnikov got a lucky bounce to pull the home team within one goal with just less than two minutes remaining. The crowd suddenly had a pulse. And when Cole Perfetti tipped home a Kyle Connor shot with the Jets just 1.6 second away from hitting the golf course, the place went bonkers. People jumped up and down, high-fived, hugged and cried. Sometimes all at once.

This kind of thing doesn't happen in Winnipeg. We've been conditioned since first entering the NHL in 1979 to having our hearts ripped out.

We GIVE UP those moments. Like when the Jets had been up 3-1 in games on the Edmonton Oilers in the 1990 Smythe Division final, only to have Jari Kurri score the winner high on Bob Essensa's glove side in Game 6. The Jets had clawed back from a 3-0 deficit that game and appeared on the verge of knocking off the Oilers. That was arguably the closest Winnipeg ever came to equalling our success in the World



Hockey Association in the 1970s.

(Let's not talk about what happened in Game 7.)

The Manitoba Miracle was completed in double overtime when Adam Lowry tipped home a point shot from Neil Pionk. Cue the tears once again.

I was among the lucky fans there that night and I know I had plenty of company the next day in watching (and rewatching and rewatching) the highlights to prove to myself that it was real. And because of Braydon Schenn's headshot of Mark Scheifele earlier in the series, I took great pleasure in watching the videos of Blues' fans counting down the clock to a sure victory only to collapse in agony when Perfetti's scored. Karma's a bitch, Missouri.

Back to the miracle part. If you had read a movie script that said your home town team was going to break the record for the latest game-tying goal in a Game 7 with its SECOND six-on-five goal in less than two minutes and win it in double overtime, you'd have said it wasn't believable.

Because it's not. Or if you'd gone to a bookie that same night wanting to place a bet on the same scenario, they'd have brushed you off as a crazy person and not even taken your money. (Hey, I told you we're talking about a divine intervention!)

The Jets are battling the Dallas Stars in Round 2 as we go to print. Do you still believe in miracles? I do.



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MANITOBA INC.

BUSINESS PODCAST

Hosted by Eleanor Coopsammy & Geoff Kirbyson



The Manitoba Inc. Podcast is regularly among the top 20 business podcasts in Canada. Coming out every two weeks (or so), we have covered off the big stories of the day, including the impact of tariffs on everything from automobiles to ice cream, what the election of Prime Minister Mark Carney and his Liberal government will mean for business and what beers we can be drinking this summer.

Join hosts Eleanor Coopsammy and Geoff Kirbyson as we try to understand the potential repercussions of tariffs on Canada, and subscribe for regular updates.

Follow Manitoba Inc on LinkedIn and visit us at manitoba-inc.ca.

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ELEANOR COOPSAMMY

Eleanor Coopsammy has been telling Manitobans' stories for more than 25 years, primarily as a reporter, producer and anchor with CTV Winnipeg. She is currently the director of media relations and issues management at the University of Manitoba and she is also the co-host of the Manitoba Inc. Podcast.



RUTH BONNEVILLE

Local professional photographer Ruth Bonneville has been telling stories through her lens for many years. Her work has been recognized nationally, including illustrating breaking news, social issues, sports, entertainment and portraits, and has appeared in many Manitoba publications. She also loves giving back to her community and walking her nine-year-old dog, Ruffin.



JACQUES MARCOUX

Jacques Marcoux is a former data journalist with CBC News who has covered issues ranging from municipal politics to international events. He has also worked as a communications consultant in the Canadian agricultural industry. Currently, Jacques is a researcher and data analyst for a national child protection organization.



LEA CURRIE

Lea Currie has been writing for as long as she could hold a pencil. She has written for numerous publications across a range of industries, including business, travel and construction. She works in the communications and marketing industry, specializing in magazine publication, advertising and public and media relations.



SABRINA CARNEVALE

A familiar voice on Winnipeg radio for more than a decade, Sabrina Carnevale's extensive media experience includes CBC Manitoba reporter, Bell Media radio host and *Winnipeg Free Press* columnist. Born and raised in Winnipeg, she has become a trusted voice in writing and producing original content that highlights strong community connection and healthy living.



ANGELA LOVELL

Angela Lovell is an award-winning freelance writer based in Manitou, Manitoba. She has more than 30 years of experience writing about agriculture, environment, business and rural life.



MIKE SAWATZKY

Mike spent the last 22 years at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, first as a copy editor and night sports editor. He spent the final nine years of his tenure as a member of the sports department's writing staff.



SHEL ZOLKEWICH

A journalist by trade and an adventurer at heart, Shel writes regularly about travel and food in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Canadian Geographic*, *Explore Magazine*, *Travel Life Magazine*, Matador Network, Lonely Planet and *The Toronto Star*. She has a deep affinity for the snow and cold, but won't say no to a couple of days in a Mexican fishing village, photographing the morning's catch. She's an avid forager, gardener, hunter, angler, cook and foodstylist who makes her home on a farm in central Manitoba, Canada. Follow her adventures on Instagram: @shelzolkewich



MICHELLE BAILEY

Michelle Bailey is a writer, a lover of current events, sports and is not too bad at golf. Known by most of her friends as Bailey, Michelle was a reporter and anchor at CKND [Global TV] in both Winnipeg and Saskatoon in the early '90s. She spent more than three decades in media, public relations, government relations and corporate communications.

MEETING THE NEED

Winnipeg-based accounting firm
McLenahan and Associates
offers businesses a unique solution
to complex financial management

Mike McLenahan and his team
of CPAs offer more than just financial
management. They also provide
mentorship, coaching advice
and planning.
Photo by Ruth Bonneville



Lee Waltham, founder and managing partner of the advertising agency Brandish, says he turned to Mike McLenehan when the financial management of his company became more complex. Brandish Agency photo

AS Brandish was winning more contracts, growing its employee base and earning more revenue, Lee Waltham was concerned.

They were good problems for the founder and managing partner of the Winnipeg-based advertising agency, but he realized the lack of financial management had the potential to cause missed opportunities as well as lead to uncertain decision making and an unfocused strategy. The combination could make the company increasingly difficult to lead.

More receivables were coming in, more payables were heading out and the financial situation was becoming unwieldy. Originally, he managed the company's finances on his own but even after hiring a full-time accountant, it still wasn't enough.

"As our business grew, the financial management became more complex. Our needs financially also became more complex and sophisticated. It was daunting and it created a lot of anxiety. There was too much work for one individual. We needed a solution that would scale with our business," he says.

Enter McLenehan and Associates. The Winnipeg-based accounting firm offers a "Fractional CFO" service that provides valuable strategic financial coaching and advice, as well as the crucial day-to-day accounting support of an entire accounting department – all at a fraction of the cost of a full-time

employee. The target market for this unique service is small and medium-sized businesses with annual revenues between \$1 million and \$20 million.

Company founder Mike McLenehan says the challenge for many entrepreneurs is while they may be the brains and driving forces behind their businesses, they don't necessarily have the expertise to handle financial management, accounting and taxes while simultaneously trying to grow their companies to the next level. Many of them are constantly being pulled in all directions by departments such as operations, human resources, finances, sales or marketing, or even all five at the same time.

McLenehan and Associates takes over the daily operational accounting for all of its Fractional CFO clients, which can include managing accounts payables and receivables, bank and credit card reconciliations, payroll coordination, monthly financial reporting, cash flow forecasting, budgeting, and overseeing compliance with tax obligations and internal controls.

"Our service is about meeting the need. Sure, it's having a skilled and capable accounting team of professionals working on your business but it's more than that. It's also mentorship, coaching, advice, setting strategy and making a plan for the future. That's what most people aren't getting from their accountants. They're getting retroactive tax planning

THE ABC'S OF A FRACTIONAL CFO

Q: What is a Fractional CFO?

This unique service includes a team of Chartered Professional Accountants who act as Controllers for corporate clients and are responsible for clear and accurate financial reporting and forecasting. Overseeing the entire financial situation is a Fractional CFO, who meets with the client as little as once a month up to six times per month, depending on their needs.

Q: What is the cost of Fractional CFO services?

The cost is customized to the service offering and level of engagement for each client. McLenehan completes a needs assessment with prospective clients and provides a proposal, which is customized to their specific needs with a value calculated and consistent with their unique operations.

McLenehan and Associates can often fulfill these roles at a fraction of the cost of a full-time employee.

Q: Why do I need a Fractional CFO?

A: Many entrepreneurs are idea people and don't necessarily have the financial background – or the time – to understand complex financial management, accounting and taxes or use data to do financial forecasting. Without proper financial oversight, companies can struggle with profitability, cash flow, growth and compliance issues.

Q: What are the benefits of having a Fractional CFO?

A: Confidence in financial decision-making; predictable, stable cashflow; increased profitability and business growth; peace of mind knowing that experts are managing your finances; and more time to focus on strategy, innovation and growing your business.

and financial statements six months after year-end,” he says.

McLenehan's service includes a team of Chartered Professional Accountants who act as Controllers for Fractional CFO clients and are responsible for clear and accurate financial reporting and forecasting. Overseeing the entire financial situation is a Fractional CFO, who meets with the client as little as once a month up to six times per month. Such meetings are structured coaching and strategy sessions, complete with agendas, reports and financial dashboards built specifically for each meeting.

“We'll help you to drive profitable business growth. Your financial statements will go from being an obligation and a matter of compliance to a tool and a resource that you're using to run a better and more successful company,” he says.

McLenehan says most business owners recognize the need for financial forecasting but all too often it slips to the bottom of their to-do lists. He and his Chartered Professional Accountants will project a cash flow forecast for the short-, medium- and long-term, allowing them to run scenarios based on the entrepreneur's plan.

“A forecast is something you come back to over and over again, change, run multiple scenarios and use to make decisions for your business. We'll say, ‘based on what's happened in the past and your plans, here's what your next 12 months looks like.’ We help provide financial clarity and the confidence to make decisions based on accurate information,” he says.

The process for implementing Fractional CFO services is straightforward. McLenehan schedules a meeting with prospective clients to get an understanding of their financial challenges and where the services would help the business succeed. He then compiles a tailored financial plan that fits with the company's unique needs and goals. Within a month, his team will be integrated seamlessly with the client's operations, providing expert financial management and strategic advice.

The scalability of the Fractional CFO makes it particularly valuable for business owners. For example, if you had a full-time accountant but more work than they could handle, you'd likely hire another full-time employee. But if the excess work only took up 30 per cent of the new hire's time, you've taken on both excess capacity and waste.



McLenehan and his chartered professional accountants help companies drive profitable business growth.

The Fractional CFO service is structured and recurring. The team implements systems and a structure designed to provide maximum value and streamline processes.

“We can scale up and scale down to make sure we’re addressing their exact needs. We’ll standardize their technology, including their accounting software and their systems. Bill payments, management of employee spending and accounts receivable are example of features that can be added to the service,” he says.

“We connect to our clients’ accounting software and implement financial planning and analysis tools that make their financial data more understandable. Financial statements, such as balance sheets and income statements, shouldn’t be concepts that people don’t understand. We meet with our clients regularly to help them interpret this information and make better business decisions.”

Is there a downside to not having a firm grip on your finances? Most definitely. Some businesses can survive by bouncing from one crisis to the next but they won’t reach anywhere near their potential and the stress can take a significant toll on their owners.

“If you’re putting out fire after fire, you’ll have no clarity or certainty about the future. You don’t have a plan of what you’re going to accomplish or achieve over one, two and five years,” he says.

Good financial management is even more important for the survival and future prospects of a business when facing unpredictable events such as a global pandemic or international trade war.

“You don’t get to complain and not make decisions, solve problems or plan. You’ve got to pivot. But without financial coaching and guidance, you’re making adjustments without running scenarios and understanding them. You won’t know that you’re going to run out of cash in six months until it’s too late to make a decision or a change,” he says.

Perpetual financial confusion can lead to a string of poor financial decisions while an absence of clear financial data can result in moves leading to lost opportunities, inefficiencies and financial instability.

Profitability and cash flow struggles can also make it difficult to cover expenses, pay employees and reinvest in the business. The stress from worrying about paying overdue invoices can lead to burnout, health issues and the worst-case scenario – going out of business.

The ongoing trade war with the U.S. makes a Fractional CFO all the more valuable because good financial management will help companies survive volatile times, McLenehan says.

“Some companies will fail because of the trade war but strong companies with good systems and financial management will survive and thrive through difficult times. If you were just managing when things were good, a trade war will wipe you out. But if your business is built on strong fundamentals, you’ll pull through and succeed. It separates the winners from the losers and the strong from the weak,” he says.

McLenehan first started offering the Fractional CFO services in 2023 and the demand has grown ever since.



McLenehan, who started his own firm 11 years ago, says the advice he gives his clients is what he follows in his own business.
Photo by Ruth Bonneville

"We have a deep level of engagement and integration with our clients to fill the role of a full-time employee," he says.

McLenehan can also speak from personal experience. He started his own firm 11 years ago with a desk, a laptop and zero clients. Today, he has a seven-figure firm with about 20 employees at two locations in Winnipeg.

"A lot of the advice I give is what I follow in my own business. I know that it works," he says.

Back at Brandish, Waltham says the Fractional CFO services have "undoubtedly" transformed his company.

"Getting those daily reports, having weekly and monthly meetings and being able to text Mike and his team, all of that allows me and our team to focus on operating the business. We've evolved from being very reactive to being very proactive," he says.

"What we've gained from working with a partner is

a true force multiplier. It allows us to access better capabilities and competencies for a lot less. It has allowed us, ultimately, to do a better job and be a better company."

McLenehan says Brandish and other clients that experience strong growth do so intentionally because they formulate a plan and stick to it.

"Sometimes you can get to \$500,000 in revenues just on hustle and work ethic but getting bigger than that takes planning and intentionality. We've built that into the daily and monthly services that we're providing," he says.

"Every business owner wants to succeed and the single biggest factor in business success is financial success."

"To request a meeting to find out if Fractional CFO services can help your business email mike@mcclenehan.com or call 204-505-3113 and request a meeting".



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Apparel industry feels the chill

But opportunities abound for **fresh thinking**

BY ANGELA LOVELL



The majority of Tough Duck's sales are domestic with increasing sales to the U.S.

LIKE most industries in Canada, the apparel sector is facing strong headwinds from a volatile and chaotic trade environment generated by U.S. tariffs. Additionally, Canadian apparel sales have been decreasing over the past year, with women's apparel sales (representing more than half of the total of Canadian apparel sales) declining 3.8% in 2024 compared to a 1.6% decrease in men's and 10.1% decline in juvenile apparel sales.

While fashion clothing may be taking a hit, other sectors are holding relatively steady. Gavin Rich, president of Winnipeg workwear manufacturer, Tough Duck, says that although the company is not immune from the chilling effect of the economy and tariffs, it has stable demand for its

products and a strong brand.

"People cannot show up at worksites without wearing the proper PPE (personal protective equipment); they have to be CSA approved for safety, so when looking at the family budget, Mom and Dad have to prioritize their occupation and their jobs," Rich says. "That means ours is a reasonably steady business, but with rising prices for everyday commodities and needs, and the general worry about the economy, there is a chilling effect and we feel it."

The majority of Tough Duck's sales are domestic, but a key strategy for the company is increasing sales to the U.S. It's a strategy that Rich, who recently visited the company's American distributors and retailers, says is not going to change.



Workwear manufacturer Tough Duck continues to have a stable demand for its products.

"We have some strong footholds in the U.S. and have the right partners to work with and our brand is starting to make headway, so we are excited about our brand there and the growth," Rich says, adding that the tariffs are creating a level playing field because they affect everyone. "We are focusing on communication with our retailers, distributors and stakeholders and we are not stopping. We know things will settle down and are focusing on the strength of our brand and our products."

WHAT ABOUT THE SOURCING SIDE OF THE INDUSTRY?

Although there are some clothing companies that continue to manufacture in Canada, around 90 per cent of the apparel sold at retail is made in China and elsewhere, even though many Canadian companies design and test their products at home. If these companies are selling all their products domestically, little has changed.

Shelley Ediger, owner of GarmaTech Inc., says the tariff situation hasn't yet had too much effect on her business that offers a full product design and development

service, mainly for small and medium-sized businesses, as well as cut and sew manufacturing at its Winnipeg facility and overseas. Most of Ediger's clients are Canadian, selling only in Canada, and although the company and its clients purchase most of their textiles overseas, little comes from the U.S. and a tariff of 18 per cent is already levied on imports from China, so it's pretty much business as usual.

But if companies are selling to the U.S. and are importing their products from China, in particular, that's when the situation becomes more complicated.

"If a company manufactures its products in China and sells say, 40 per cent to the U.S. and 60 per cent in Canada, they won't want to have a product sold in Canada costing significantly less than the same product in the U.S." says Bob Kirke, executive director of the Canadian Apparel Federation. "So, companies are cost-averaging the tariff increases across their products to smooth out the difference in selling price. In this way, Canadian consumers are seeing price increases



WINNIPEG'S GARMENT INDUSTRY: A BRIEF HISTORY

The garment industry in Winnipeg dates to the 1890s, but it wasn't until the 1940s that it began to thrive thanks to wartime demand, mass production technology, good transportation links and reduced energy costs thanks to hydro-electric power. New marketing options also entered the scene, including the development of large department and chain stores and catalogue mail order companies.

Winnipeg manufacturers were largely producing work clothing but as mechanization (especially in agriculture) reduced the demand for labour, they began to diversify into consumer clothing lines, including more casual leisurewear.

Then came the post-war baby boom with its rise in consumerism that helped the industry expand. By 1962, there were 81 garment factories in Winnipeg and by the 1970s, the city was the third-largest garment manufacturing hub in Canada.

Today, it still holds that position and employs around 5,000 people at more than 100 companies that are known for flexibility and for producing high-quality, value-added products for niche markets that are exported around the world.

even though Canada has not increased its tariffs on China.”

But what are apparel companies doing to ensure they can weather the current climate and be successful in the long term? Are they changing their business strategies or seeking new suppliers or markets?

“The best companies are the ones who can separate the noise from the signal,” Kirke says. “They have been in this industry a long time and understand that you don’t just jump immediately based on every tariff announcement, but try to anticipate different scenarios and build redundancies into their plans. They are not changing their sourcing on a dime but building a roster of potential suppliers and figuring out a strategy if they do need to make changes in their sourcing based on new tariffs.”

IS BUY CANADIAN HELPING OR HURTING THE APPAREL INDUSTRY?

Meanwhile, the yo-yoing U.S. tariffs on Canadian products and President Donald Trump’s rhetoric about annexing Canada has promoted an unprecedented wave of ‘Buy Canadian’ sentiment that’s causing a backlash to products made in the U.S. But given that few clothing products are imported into Canada from the U.S. and a majority are made in China or elsewhere, is that trend hindering or helping Canadian apparel companies?

Although Tough Duck manufactures its products overseas, Rich says that’s less important to its customers than the fact that the company itself is proudly Canadian.

“Apparel production is challenging in Canada and for us it makes sense to manufacture overseas, but all the design and talent comes from Winnipeg,” he says. “We are a Canadian company, pay Canadian taxes and give back to the community. That’s a serious responsibility that we have and I think that’s a big part of why people support a Canadian company.”



Based in Manitoba, Tough Duck is a proud Canadian company.

OPPORTUNITY CAN COME FROM DISRUPTION

Disruption in the market isn’t always a bad thing because it can spur more creative thinking and that can lead to new opportunities.

An example is the new product line that Ediger launched last year, Sew With Sero, that recycles waste fabric destined for the landfill into a complete DIY sewing kit with everything a person needs to sew a fashion clothing item at home, including step-by-step instructions. It’s a creative, eco-friendly and empowering solution that Ediger developed to address the challenge of skyrocketing shipping costs for new, imported textiles and an ongoing battle with fast fashion. She believes we will be seeing a lot more creative ideas coming from companies involved in international trade.

“Every barrier is just an opportunity to look in a new direction and think differently,” Ediger says. “We are nimble in how we position ourselves and I am confident that eventually the current situation will be good for Canada and Canadian manufacturing.”

Rich agrees, and says being based in Manitoba is already a major advantage for Tough Duck on which it can continue to build.

“We have 360,000 square feet of distribution space in the middle of North America with good options to ship to the U.S., Canada and the world from Winnipeg,” he says. “That’s a real advantage for us.”

Real. RESULTS.

WINNIPEG

YES! Winnipeg is Economic Development Winnipeg's business development team, promoting our city as the ideal location for new business, expansion, investment and top talent. Our ability to make a strong economic impact on our city is contingent on our continued partnership with the business community and government. In February 2021, YES! Winnipeg launched its two-year Real Impact Campaign 2025 with the goal of creating 10,000 jobs, attracting \$560 million in capital investment and generating \$700 million in GDR.

We wish to thank our YES! Winnipeg investor community for making a Real Impact on Winnipeg's economy.

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MacDon Industries Ltd.
Magellan Aerospace
Manitoba Inc.
Maple Leaf Construction
M.D. Steele
MLT Atlas LLP
MMI Asset Management Ltd.
Naples Properties
Northwest Properties
Online Business Systems
People First HR Services
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Rockport Group
Scotiabank Miller-Murray Inc.
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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Highlights from Manitoba business



The St. James Civic Centre on Ness Avenue is undergoing an expansion.

ST. JAMES CIVIC CENTRE EXPANSION COMING

Construction is set to start this month at the St. James Civic Centre with an expansion that will better meet community recreational needs. On the blueprints are a new multi-purpose room and meeting rooms, new kitchen, improved viewing area for the swimming pool as well as new administrative space and shared program space for the St. James Assiniboia 55+ Centre. Improvements to the auditorium and associated washrooms, the main building entry and the parking lot are also in the plans.

The St. James Civic Centre will be closed this spring until the fall of 2026. The Ab McDonald Arena

portion of the facility will be open during its regular ice seasons. The community recycling depot at 2055 Ness Ave. is now closed to make way for the expansion work. Residential customers are encouraged to bring their recyclables to their nearest 4R Winnipeg Depot or community recycling depot.

In July 2021, the Government of Canada, Province of Manitoba, and City of Winnipeg announced \$14 million in funding to expand the St. James Civic Centre. City Council approved an additional \$3 million in October 2023. The total approved budget is \$17 million.

WINNIPEG PROMOTIONAL COMPANY BEHIND WINNIPEG JETS MERCHANDISE

All those towels waving in the air during the Winnipeg Jets' playoff run are thanks to a local company and a woman who set her sights on success. Michelle Cameron, a proud Indigenous entrepreneur and community leader, founded Dreamcatcher Promotions 13 years ago with nothing more than a used embroidery machine and a dream. Today, it's the largest Indigenous-owned promotional company in Canada, employing 43 staff and serving clients across the country including 76 Northwest Stores.

The towels are part of the collection that includes Whiteout t-shirts, hat and hoodies. The recent partnership with the Jets represents a major milestone for the company.

"It's not just about a contract," Cameron says. "It's about relationships. It's about representation. When fans wear that hoodie, they're supporting Indigenous success. It's our staff, it's their families, it's community impact," she said.

Mark Chipman, executive chairman and governor of the Winnipeg Jets Hockey Club said the Whiteout contract is an extension of ongoing business with the company.

"I met Michelle at a conference a couple of years ago. which led to coffee together and then that led to a tour of her plant with some of our merchandise group to check out their capacity. We came away from that very impressed and that led to us purchasing our orange shirt day inventory."

Cameron is thrilled with the partnership and knows firsthand that hard work that came first.

"That success didn't happen overnight," Cameron says. "It came from years of working 18-hour days, building relationships, and gaining trust, especially important as an Indigenous businesswoman."



Michelle Cameron, seen here with Whiteout merchandise she made, is the founder of Dreamcatcher Promotions.



Women in Aerospace

The sky can be the limit

Women who work in the aerospace field represent less than 20 per cent of the total workforce. Photo courtesy of MITT

BY MICHELLE BAILEY

THE documentary *Only Up*, produced and directed by NAV Canada air traffic controller Kendra Kincaid, was released in early 2024 begging the question: why are there so few women in aviation?

Despite a massive talent shortage that exceeds the wingspan of a 747, there continues to be a deficit in the number of women in the aerospace industry.

Stats provided by Women in Aerospace Canada show that women who work in the field represented less than 20 per cent of the total workforce as of April 2025,

According to Manitoba Aerospace, more than 5,000 people work in the industry here at home, earning an average annual wage of \$60,000. The state-of-the-art aerospace and defence industry is considered the largest in western Canada and third-largest aerospace hub in Canada, valued at more than \$2.1 billion.

Yet, similar to what is happening nationally, woman in the keystone province make up less than 20 per cent of skilled workers in aerospace and aviation. These include jobs traditionally held by men, from welders to gas turbine engineers.

The good news is that the disparity is not being ignored. There are employers who are taking positive steps to make changes.

Case in point is Manitoba's StandardAero. With the goal of hiring more women into technical positions and fill immediate recruitment needs, the company with 1,300 employees joined forces with Manitoba Aerospace, the Manitoba Government and the Manitoba Institute for Trades & Technology (MITT) to deliver the Women Transitioning to Careers in Aerospace program.

The actions of StandardAero in supporting this initiative were recently recognized by The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Manitoba (CPHR) at the 2025 HR Excellence Awards event. The company received The Unity Award for advancing diversity, inclusivity and accessibility at work.

During the 21-week course, students develop their skills through a mix of classroom instruction, work-integrated learning and mentorship, gaining foundational knowledge in gas turbine repair and overhaul. They also earn a Gas Turbine Disassembly and Assembly micro-certificate from MITT.

"It creates a direct pathway to employment with StandardAero and an important part of the process for selecting the 15 women who will receive an offer to join the program is having them interviewed by StandardAero," Jennifer Davidson, coordinator of industry training at MITT explains.

"We've found that the women who have come through this program have a strong attention to detail, which serves them well in this industry."

Jennifer Davidson, coordinator of industry training at MITT

"Once participants successfully complete the 21-week Women Transition to Careers in Aerospace program, they become paid trainees at StandardAero, and upon completion of that 12-week training program, they become employees at the company."

The program, says Davidson, has really taken off.

"This is the second intake offered through MITT," she says. "There were far more applicants in this year's intake than there was room for in the program, indicating a continued strong interest from women to join the aerospace industry."

"We've found that the women who have come through this program have a strong attention to detail, which serves them well in this industry. A lot of trades are working hard to recruit new talent and including women in those efforts creates a much larger talent pool to draw from," she says.

Davidson says recruitment for the program is through Manitoba Aerospace in conjunction with StandardAero.

"MITT supports promotion of the program by sharing information about the program on its social media channels and setting up a program page on the website with all the details applicants need to apply."



The Manitoba Institute for Trades & Technology (MITT) implemented the "Women Transitioning to Careers in Aerospace" program. Photo courtesy of MITT



Students develop skills through a mix of classroom instruction that will give them foundational knowledge in gas turbine repair and overhaul. Photo courtesy of MITT

EVERYTHING OLD WILL BE NEW AGAIN

The upgraded Pointe du Bois generating station is scheduled for completion in 2027. Manitoba Hydro photo

Manitoba Hydro mega-project set to maximize the value of Pointe du Bois generating station

WHEN Manitoba Hydro is done upgrading the Pointe du Bois generating station, everything old will be new again.

Blueprints for the mega-project, which started in three years ago and is scheduled for completion in 2027, call for the installation of eight new higher-efficiency turbine and generating units, which are expected to increase its generating capacity by 54 megawatts. That would increase the amount of clean, low-cost and renewable energy at the station by an average of 380 Gigawatt hours per year until 2055.

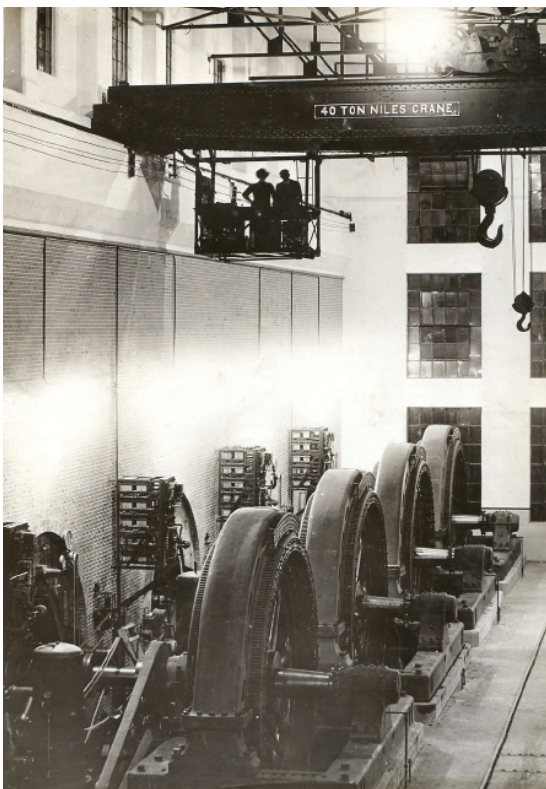
That's equal to the amount of power required for 35,000 homes.

"This project is maximizing the value of Pointe du Bois as an asset," says Hal Turner, Hydro's Chief Operating Officer.

"Because the structure is already there, it's relatively inexpensive compared to starting from a new site. This will produce power at a relatively low cost, so it's good value for our customers."

Pointe du Bois is Hydro's oldest operating station, having first produced power for Winnipeg in 1911. It's located about 90 minutes northeast of Winnipeg.

Turner compared the project to renovating an old home.



The Pointe du Bois operating station has been producing power for Winnipeg since 1911. Manitoba Hydro photo

"When you're doing significant work like this in a station that's more than 100 years old, you can find some surprises," he says.

"You can also have surprises when you build a new home or a new station as well. The important thing is that we are doing this project at the right time, as those 54 megawatts is energy that we need relatively soon."

The project's funding of \$314 million was announced by Ottawa and the Province in the fall of 2023.

"Manitoba Hydro is one of the most important assets our province has when it comes to being a leader in the low-carbon economy," says Premier Wab Kinew. "Continued investment (in Hydro) will mean more low-carbon jobs, more progress towards our net-zero targets and more opportunities to lower costs for working families."



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A birds eye view into a turbine pit.
Manitoba Hydro photo

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GEN Z'S BENEFIT WISH LIST

FOR MODERN WORK

From dental to digital

BY LEA CURRIE

REMEMBER when a foosball table and casual Fridays were enough to lure bright young minds? Those perks are practically relics in the eyes of Gen Z, the digitally-native workforce now reshaping Manitoba's economic landscape. Forget fleeting fads and even traditional health benefit plans; this generation—born between 1997 and 2012—is operating with a different set of priorities and Manitoba businesses need to understand, and embrace this fresh set of expectations.

"Although health and dental coverage may still be important for Gen Z employees, we are seeing a shift towards valuing more non-traditional workplace benefits—flexible work

arrangements, social responsibility, diversity, development opportunities and wellness are increasingly important," explains Diane Sparrow DeGrave, the vice-president of people and corporate services for Manitoba Blue Cross, a Manitoba health benefits provider that has been recognized as a top employer in the province for eight years running.

To ensure your company can attract and retain this crucial talent pool, it's time to broaden the offerings to meet the evolving expectations of Gen Z employees. By understanding their priorities and adapting your benefits packages accordingly, Manitoba businesses will be able to not only attract this dynamic generation but also foster a more engaged and productive workforce.



**“WORK IS ONLY ONE PART
OF THEIR LIVES.**

THEY WANT THEIR EMPLOYERS
TO OFFER ADDITIONAL
PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS
THAT SUPPORT TIME OFF FOR
PERSONAL EVENTS AND
TO GIVE BACK TO THE
COMMUNITY.”

*Diane Sparrow DeGrave, vice-president
of people and corporate services for
Manitoba Blue Cross*



HEALTH BENEFITS WITH A TWIST

ALTHOUGH Gen Zs are wanting a new suite of benefits, a health and dental plan is still essential for all generations. What's becoming more and more important is to offer individualized options that allow employees to tailor coverage to their specific needs. Rather than focusing on a health benefits plan that has just the traditional offerings (prescription medication, dental and vision), it's about providing a flexible package. Also, for the digital-savvy Gen Zs, ensure your plan's benefits information is available in an easily accessible, user-friendly environment.

1: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

While the pandemic undoubtedly amplified the desire for work-life balance and flexibility across all generations, Sparrow DeGrave confirms its particularly strong resonance with Gen Z. This isn't just about the option to work from home a couple of days a week (though that's certainly appreciated). Gen Z views work as a single element of a full and multi-faceted life.

"Work is only one part of their lives," says Sparrow DeGrave. "They want their employers to offer additional programs and benefits that support time-off for personal events and to give back to the community."

Takeaways: Prioritize flexibility through work hours and benefits that support employees' personal commitments, while enhancing work-life balance with hybrid or remote work programs. To go a step further, offer paid volunteer days throughout the year to demonstrate the importance of giving back.

2: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

As digital natives, Gen Zs are wired for continual learning and growth. In a world where information is readily available but not always reliable, this generation craves structured and dependable development opportunities within their workplaces.

"The Gen Z generation is active on TikTok and will use social media to find the answers, which may not always be the correct answers. Access to consistent, accurate information is crucial for this generation," says Sparrow DeGrave.

Furthermore, Gen Z is a generation that wants to map out its professional trajectory.

"Gen Z employees want to understand their career paths and opportunities for growth and development. They generally are not content waiting for these opportunities and want to drive their own development and career success," says Sparrow DeGrave.

"GEN Z EMPLOYEES WANT TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CAREER PATHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

THEY GENERALLY ARE NOT CONTENT WAITING FOR THESE OPPORTUNITIES AND
WANT TO DRIVE THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER SUCCESS."

Diane Sparrow DeGrave

Takeaways: To attract and retain these ambitious individuals, it's important to offer mentorship programs and opportunities for skill development. For long-term development, provide clear communication about advancement opportunities and create proactive succession plans and training programs. It may sound cliché, but an investment in your employees' development and growth is truly an investment in your company.

3: MENTAL HEALTH

Perhaps one of the most significant shifts in benefit expectations lies in the realm of mental health. Sparrow DeGrave notes that Gen Zs are more likely to seek help for anxiety and depression compared with older generations and mental health benefits are one of the top factors for Gen Z employees. But it's not just about a workplace having mental health benefits; it's about how they are delivered and accessed. Gen Z expects seamless, digital access to mental health resources, including online counselling, wellness apps and even AI-powered support.

"Gen Z employees tend to want more support with specific mental health benefits, including one-on-one counselling, healthy lifestyles and relationships," says Sparrow DeGrave, who also points to peer support, online chats and blogs as go-to resources for younger workers.

Takeaways: Modernize your approach to mental wellness and embrace digital platforms that support well-being. Help destigmatize mental health support with a comprehensive employee assistance program that includes both traditional in-person and virtual counselling.

4: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Gen Z places significant importance in how their employer's principles align with their own. This generation, deeply aware of social and environmental issues, actively seeks out workplaces that mirror their commitment to a better world.

"Gen Z employees want to work for companies that actively support diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB), and are committed to providing a corporate culture that truly supports a diverse workforce," says Sparrow DeGrave.

Takeaways: Champion DEIB and social responsibility as a leader and a company. Demonstrate a genuine commitment to these principles. For this generation, these aren't just trends; they're core values they look for in an employer.

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Manitoba fishing lodges **OPTIMISTIC** about year ahead

Tariff ripples remain small



BY SABRINA CARNEVALE

AS Manitoba's \$600-million sport fishing industry gears up for the 2025 season, optimism is being tempered by concern over the ripple effects of newly-imposed U.S. tariffs. For the province's remote fishing lodges—many of which rely heavily on American clientele and cross-border supply chains—the economic impact remains uncertain.

“At this stage, we haven’t seen significant evidence that economic factors or tariff discussions have impacted American bookings directly. However, we’re continuing to monitor the situation closely,” says Colin Ferguson, president and CEO of Travel Manitoba. “While concerns over tariffs may create some uncertainty, the strong demand for outdoor experiences, including fishing, continues to be a major driver of U.S. visitation.”



The economic impact of U.S. tariffs remains uncertain for the province's remote fishing lodges. Travel Manitoba photo

In March, the Canadian government introduced 25 per cent tariffs on a range of U.S.-made goods, including fishing rods, reels, tackle, line and nets. For Canadian anglers, that means higher prices on gear from the U.S.

The move was in direct response to U.S. President Trump's decision to impose a 25 per cent tariff on imported aluminum and steel, which came into effect on March 12.

"The angling sector relies heavily on a U.S. audience as their customer base, particularly the fly-in fishing lodges and resorts," says Ferguson. "The sector was one of the hardest hit areas of tourism over the COVID-19 pandemic. We only recently saw the recovery of non-resident fishing licenses to pre-pandemic levels. Angling remains a major draw for U.S. travellers."

Manitoba is home to more than 30 species of game fish, including some of the most sought-after in North America. The province is world-renowned for producing trophy-sized northern pike, says Ferguson, and its deep, cold northern lakes offer trophy lake trout, too. The Red River has also earned a reputation for its massive channel catfish—some of the largest on the continent.



Fly-in fishing lodges are popular with U.S. anglers. Travel Manitoba photo



Anglers hook walleye at the float plane fly-in Shining Falls Lodge on Jackson Island. Hunt Fish Manitoba photo

While economic factors such as tariffs and the shifting political dynamics are always considerations, Manitoba's core message remains focused on the value and world-class quality of the province's tourism experiences, says Ferguson.

"We're mindful of the economic landscape and are working to ensure that our messaging aligns with the current needs and interests of U.S. travellers. We continue to highlight the ease of travel from key U.S. markets, offering direct flights and drive-in access."

TO strengthen its position as a premier angling destination, Travel Manitoba is doubling down on efforts to attract U.S. visitors through a multi-channel marketing strategy. The agency is also leaning into strategic partnerships, collaborating with popular influencers to generate third-party content. Among them is Jay Siemens, whose videos showcasing Manitoba fishing, reach a large North American audience.

"For now, it's still largely business as usual," says Don Lamont, executive director of the Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association (MLOA), which represents roughly 65 lodges and outfitters across the province. "What we tell our operators is to talk directly with their U.S. guests and reinforce that Manitoba remains open for business and is eager to welcome them."

So far, cancellations have been minimal, affecting fewer than 10 per cent of bookings, according to Lamont. He adds that many lodges have been planning ahead, anticipating the tariff rollout. Several operators ordered equipment and supplies in advance to beat the new fees.

"It's still too early to say how the tariffs will impact their overhead costs, but if they remain in place into next year, we could start to see some price increases across the board," he says.

This isn't the first challenge tied to cross-border volatility. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major turning point. Lodges that depended primarily on U.S. anglers were forced to shut down for two seasons. That experience prompted a strategic shift, with more operators diversifying their clientele.

"You can't rely solely on American clientele. It's essential to expand your focus," Lamont says. "Canadian travellers want to explore and Manitoba offers bucket-list destinations right in our own backyard."

Pit Turenne has been at the helm of Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge since 2005, when he took over operations from his parents. The lodge has been in the family since 1988, when Pit was just 10 years old.

Located on a peninsula between Lost Lake and Aikens Lake in eastern Manitoba, the fly-in fishing lodge is reachable by floatplane from Silver Falls, about 90 minutes from Winnipeg.

The lodge typically welcomes 55 to 60 per cent of its guests from the U.S. and saw record-breaking bookings earlier this year in both January and March.

"We're tucked away in a remote part of the Canadian Shield. There's simply no Aikens Lake experience in the U.S., so if they want it, they have to come here," he says.

But momentum has slowed recently.

"Since the tariffs came into effect and everybody's retirements went up in smoke, things have gone pretty quiet," Turenne says. "We've only added one new group in the past three weeks, which isn't ideal, especially considering this is usually the period when bookings pick up."

Turenne adds that April sales tracked at just 30 per cent of what the lodge typically sees this time of year.

Before the tariffs came into play, American guests were still keen to visit, regardless of the "51st state" chatter and political buzz, says Turenne.

"We've had a number of guests reach out saying things like, 'We're sorry about everything that's going on. We still love coming up—are we still welcome?' That kind of sentiment."

He doesn't believe political tensions are driving travel decisions. It's more about the financial landscape.

"What we're seeing now is more a reflection of the stock market crash and people's savings taking a hit," he says. "When that happens, people tend to tighten their wallets and luxury spending is often the first thing to get cut."



“What we’re seeing now is more a reflection of the stock market crash and people’s savings taking a hit. When that happens, people tend to tighten their wallets and luxury spending is often the first thing to get cut.”

Pit Turenne, who has been running the Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge for two decades.

He adds that if the tariff situation or market volatility doesn’t level out, the lodge could see sales stagnate.

Fortunately, Aikens benefits from a well-balanced guest base. When American bookings decline, Canadian interest tends to pick up. This year has brought strong Canadian sales overall, Turenne says, even if April numbers were softer than usual.

The lodge regularly hosts visitors from Alberta, the east coast and the U.S. Midwest, but it also attracts guests from farther away, including Texas, Georgia, Arkansas and even Europe. Turenne says Manitobans often underestimate the natural beauty of their own province, taking for granted what others travel thousands of miles to experience.

“We’re self-deprecating by nature and sometimes wonder why anyone would want to travel here,” he says. “But when you’re at Aikens and see guests from around the world in awe of the place, it reminds you just how special it really is.”

For Turenne, it’s the broader political and economic tensions that are raising concerns as they have the potential to impact cross-border travel decisions over the long term.

“The only thing that really worries me is if the retaliatory tariffs start to create more animosity,” Turenne says. “Right now, it’s still early—no one’s too upset yet. But I’d hate to see it reach a point where Canadians don’t want to see Americans and Americans don’t want to see Canadians. That would be really tough for our industry.”

He adds that beyond the economic implications, it’s the human side of the equation that concerns him. If people in the U.S. start feeling resentment toward Canada, it could influence their decision to travel here, no matter how affordable the trip is.

“You could sell it for a dollar and they still wouldn’t come,” he adds. “I don’t think we’ll see that kind of shift this summer, but looking ahead, I hope the relationship between our two countries stays strong.”



The impacts of tariffs remain a manageable concern for Manitoba’s fishing lodges.

REUSE WASTE HEAT

AND REDUCE YOUR ENERGY COSTS WITH HEAT RECOVERY TECHNOLOGY

IN industrial manufacturing, heat recovery is a key strategy that can be implemented to improve energy efficiency, reduce costs, and minimize your environmental impact. By capturing and reusing waste heat, you can reduce your industrial facility's energy consumption, lower your operating costs and improve the sustainability of your operations.

The successful implementation of heat recovery techniques and systems requires careful planning, both financial and time investment, and an ongoing commitment to maintenance to ensure that the systems deliver long-term benefits. Luckily, Efficiency Manitoba can help make your heat recovery project easier and more affordable with their technical expertise and financial incentives through their Custom Energy Solutions Program.

Read on to learn more about what heat recovery is, how it can benefit your facility, and Efficiency Manitoba's program to assist with the cost of implementation.



WHAT IS HEAT RECOVERY?

Many industrial facilities generate a substantial amount of heat as a waste byproduct of its equipment and systems operations. This heat is typically discharged into the environment through exhaust gases, heat loss from equipment surfaces, or cooling water. Instead of letting the heat escape, it can be recovered and reused, ensuring as much energy as possible is used for productive purposes (like generating electricity or heating your building) instead of dissipating into the atmosphere.

Heat recovery refers to the manner of capturing and reusing waste heat produced during industrial processes to use energy more efficiently. This process has the potential to save a significant amount of energy while minimizing negative impacts on the environment. Looking into heat recovery options for your facility is an essential step in reducing its overall energy consumption.

THE BENEFITS OF HEAT RECOVERY

Incorporating heat recovery processes into your operations requires a sizable investment of both time and money. However, its multitude of benefits make it worthwhile. The following are just a few of the advantages of implementing heat recovery technology:

Energy savings: When you recover waste heat and use it to generate usable heat or electricity for your facility, you're offsetting the need to use energy from the grid. That means relying less on external energy and saving electricity and/or natural gas.

Cost savings: Heat recovery reduces the amount of energy you need from external sources, leading to lower monthly energy bills. Though initial investments in heat recovery systems can be significant, the long-term savings in energy costs, reduced fuel consumption, and operational efficiency can lead to substantial cost reductions.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions: If your facility uses natural gas, heat recovery can offset a portion of that consumption. Using less natural gas means reducing greenhouse gas emissions, so your decision to capture waste heat has environmental benefits.

Improved operations: Reusing energy you've already generated in your operations means your facility can run more efficiently, increasing the productivity of your processes.

SAVE ON PROJECT COSTS WITH EFFICIENCY MANITOBA'S CUSTOM ENERGY SOLUTIONS PROGRAM

If you're interested in benefitting from the savings heat recovery can offer your industrial facility, Efficiency Manitoba is here to help. Their signature industrial offer, the Custom Energy Solutions Program, provides a performance-based incentive to industrial, large commercial, and agricultural customers who take on energy-saving projects. You can receive an incentive of up to \$0.25/kWh of annual electricity saved and \$0.30/m³ of annual natural gas saved. So the more energy your project saves, the higher the incentive.

Industrial heat recovery systems are just one type of project supported by Efficiency Manitoba's Custom Energy Solutions Program. You can also receive incentives for compressed air, industrial refrigeration, pumps, fans, variable speed drives, steam, ventilation, and many other technologies and upgrades. By taking on several energy efficiency upgrades, you can maximize your facility's energy savings and eligible incentives. Efficiency Manitoba's team of experts will help you find the best option to save you the most energy and money.

HEAT RECOVERY IN ACTION

Efficiency Manitoba has already supported several industrial companies in implementing heat recovery into their operations. Here is a real-life example to illustrate just how much our customers are saving because of their upgrades.

J.R. Simplot Company participated in Efficiency Manitoba's Custom Energy Solutions Program to make their potato processing operations more energy efficient. As part of their large plant expansion at its Portage la Prairie facility, they implemented a blow-down heat recovery system in their steam boiler plant. This project is saving J.R. Simplot Company an estimated 108,800 m³ of natural gas every year, and they received nearly \$75,000 in incentives through the program.

START SAVING ENERGY TODAY

From significant energy savings to decreased costs to reduced environmental impacts, the benefits of heat recovery in industrial manufacturing are hard to ignore. Efficiency Manitoba is ready to work with you to implement heat recovery (and other energy-efficient solutions) in your facility. The technical assistance and financial incentives available through their Custom Energy Solutions Program will make your project less complicated and more affordable.

TYPES OF HEAT RECOVERY TECHNIQUES

There are many different types of heat recovery techniques and technologies that can be implemented in industrial facilities. Optimal techniques differ between buildings and industry types. You can work with Efficiency Manitoba and your contractor to determine the best one for your facility.

- **Blow-down heat recovery:** As boilers create steam, impurities collect at the bottom of the boiler, which need to be drained to ensure the system runs as efficiently as possible. A valve at the bottom of the boiler is opened to drain water that's at the operating temperature and pressure of the boiler; the energy in this water can be recovered for other uses.
- **Exhaust flue gas heat recovery:** Exhaust gases are captured and passed through a heat exchanger to pre-heat combustion air or feedstock materials.
- **Waste heat to power:** Recovered waste heat is used to power a generation system, such as a steam turbine, which converts the heat into usable electricity.
- **Cogeneration:** Electricity and usable heat are generated at the same time from the same energy source. The recovered heat can be used for space heating or other purposes.
- **Heat pumps:** These systems recover waste heat from air or water at low temperatures and convert it to a higher temperature that can be used for space heating or operational processes.
- **Thermal energy storage:** Heat is captured and stored for later use, such as when the manufacturing process requires additional heat input.

Don't hesitate — get in touch with Efficiency Manitoba in the early stage of your project. Their team can help you identify optimal energy-saving opportunities for your facility and find ways to maximize your overall long-term savings.

To learn more about their offers for energy-efficient industrial technologies and systems, visit efficiencyMB.ca/industrial.





Prioritizing Mental Health:

Peer Connections Manitoba leads with lived experience

AS Mental Health Awareness Month shines a spotlight on emotional well-being, Peer Connections Manitoba (PCM) continues to lead the way in providing innovative, peer-led mental health support to Manitobans. Founded on the principle that lived experience can be a powerful tool for recovery, PCM offers a range of free programs that support individuals and families navigating mental health and substance use challenges.

PCM's offerings include one-on-one peer support, family peer support, workshops, and the popular Drop-In Peer Support program, which welcomes individuals every Monday afternoon—no appointment required. All services are delivered by trained peer supporters who have first-hand experience with mental health challenges and recovery, creating a safe and understanding environment for all participants.

With one in five Canadians experiencing a mental health challenge each year, and more than half reporting that they don't receive the help they need, peer support has become a critical part of the mental health landscape. PCM's work has been described as "life-changing" by those who rely on it, offering not just guidance but the deeply human experience of being truly heard and understood.

To sustain and grow its programming, PCM relies on community support and fundraising initiatives, such as

Bridging the Community with Peer Support. This annual \$200,000 campaign is aimed at increasing community peer support to reduce wait times for individual peer support.

Partnerships such as the one between PCM and Johnston Group Inc. demonstrate the incredible impact businesses can have on mental health support in our communities. The Winnipeg-based leader in employee benefits and community engagement has amplified PCM's efforts by matching donations during key fundraising events, such as Giving Tuesday. The example set by Johnston Group shows the potential of what can happen when companies step up with compassion and commitment. We invite others to join us — together, we can build stronger, more resilient support systems across the province.

As mental health becomes a greater priority in both the workplace and community, organizations such as Peer Connections Manitoba offer a proven model for meaningful, peer-driven support. Its collaborative approach and strong community partnerships are making a lasting difference—one conversation at a time.

Learn more or donate at peerconnectionsmb.ca

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group

A NEW NORMAL

CANADA has had free trade with the U.S. since 1988 so if you're not sure what to expect from a Donald Trump-initiated trade war, you've got plenty of company.

Tariff talk started to heat up prior to Trump moving back into the White House in late January. Ever since, we've enjoyed on-again, off-again, paused and/or delayed implementation, depending on the day or even hour tariff headlines. The one thing we can reasonably predict is that uncertainty will be the new normal for the foreseeable future.

Newly-elected Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, has met with Trump and while further trade negotiations are on the docket, many Manitoban and Canadian investors are justifiably feeling pessimistic about global growth and uneasy with the stock market and their stock portfolios. Volatility will likely remain high until a new agreement is reached on tariffs and trade with the U.S., which would bring back some much-needed certainty.

It's virtually impossible to tariff-proof a portfolio but staying invested in high quality, industry-leading companies that have a history of successfully navigating economic downturns can be hard to beat during any period of uncertainty.

Cardinal's investment team has researched the potential impact of tariffs on all of the companies we own. This level of in-depth scrutiny gives us reassurance that our portfolios are well positioned for this threat. There will be varying degrees of impacts, but some companies in fact have no direct exposure to tariffs. A pair of Toronto-based firms are great examples – label maker CCL Industries and Element Fleet Management, a provider of automotive fleet management services.

Others, such as Suncor, which exports oil to the U.S., may have tariffs applied to its shipments, and retail giant Canadian Tire, which imports a small percentage of the goods on its shelves from the U.S., could end up paying a little more to stock up.

While the direct impact of the tariffs will vary from company to company, it's likely that indirect effects could be more meaningful to investors, especially if the trade war continues for an extended period. For example, it's likely that inflation will rise as the cost of many imported goods increases, impacting businesses and consumers alike. A slowing economy or even a recession are also possibilities, which would hurt the overall stock market.

ABOUT CARDINAL

Cardinal Capital Management is an independent, employee-owned firm, founded in Winnipeg more than 30 years ago by Timothy Burt. It has since grown to become one of Canada's leading wealth management companies. It is the largest independent firm of its kind in Manitoba with more than \$5 billion AUM.



If you feel uneasy about the current investing climate, Cardinal's team would love to help. Our investment counsellors and financial planners develop robust portfolios and plans that build wealth and confidence. Contact Cielo Orellana, client relationship representative, at Cardinal. With 10 years of financial planning experience, Cielo works with clients to help them navigate uncertainties while keeping them on track with their long term goals. A former financial planner at RBC for a decade, she can help you create a plan to help you reach your retirement and recommend changes to accommodate life changes.

Cielo can be reached at 204-783-0716 or corellana@cardinal.ca.



Cardinal
CAPITAL MANAGEMENT



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CROSSING a new chapter



After four decades, Winnipeggers will finally be able to step off the curbs at Portage and Main.

PORTAGE AND MAIN REOPENING HAPPENS JULY 1

BY JACQUES MARCOUX



Winnipeg's most famous intersection is set to reopen to pedestrian traffic on July 1.

WINNIPEGGERS will soon make history by stepping off the curb and crossing a street—an action that has been forbidden for more than four decades. On July 1, the iconic intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street will reopen to pedestrian traffic, a move that is guaranteed to reshape the city's downtown.



MMF president David Chartrand (centre) expects revitalization when 335 Main St. reopens as the Red River Métis National Heritage Centre.

For Brent Bellamy, architect and creative director at Winnipeg-based Number TEN Architectural Group, this moment is more than an infrastructure update.

"I think it's going to be a national story that's going to capture the imagination of Winnipeggers and Canadians," he says.

Bellamy, who has long been a prominent advocate for the reopening of the intersection, says outsiders looking in just don't quite understand how we got to this place.

"To the rest of the world, it's really abnormal that you can't walk across the central intersection of a major city, and yet it has such an important place in Canada's history," he says. "Now there is a real interest to bring that back and tell that story again."

Winnipeg's most famous intersection has been only crossable via an underground concourse since 1979.

FROM DREAMING TO DIRECTION

The move to restore pedestrian access is part of a broader vision for Winnipeg's downtown—a future that is vibrant, walkable and filled with opportunity. Crucially, it's a vision backed by political will and bold development plans.

Winnipeg mayor Scott Gillingham, who pushed the long-debated decision across the finish line in 2024, sees this moment as a meaningful pivot for the city.

"Reopening Portage and Main won't solve every challenge downtown but it's an important step," he said. "Better pedestrian connections and more activity at street level will support the significant housing, cultural and economic investments already happening in the area."

For those who may not buy into the broader vision, Gillingham also points to the pragmatism behind the move.

"We're saving tens of millions of dollars in repair costs and years of traffic construction delays at the intersection that would have been needed to keep the underground concourse sealed off from the surface. This is the practical and forward-looking choice," he says.

DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY

Among those most invested in the vision put forward by the Gillingham is the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), the national government of the Red River Métis. The MMF has already committed more than \$100 million toward acquisitions and development in the downtown core.



"I think it's going to be a national story that's going to capture the imagination of Winnipeggers and Canadians. To the rest of the world, it's really abnormal that you can't walk across the central intersection of a major city, and yet it has such an important place in Canada's history.

Now there is a real interest to bring that back and tell that story again."

Brent Bellamy, architect and creative director at Winnipeg-based Number TEN Architectural Group



Jim Ludlow, president of True North Real Estate Development, sees the reopening as a signal of a new chapter for making history.

Their flagship project is the transformation of 335 Main Street—the former Bank of Montréal building—into what will eventually become the Red River Métis National Heritage Centre.

“The reopening will contribute to downtown revitalization, activate the area as an inviting gathering space and enhance the main entrance of the Heritage Centre when it opens in 2027,” says MMF president David Chartrand.

“We fully anticipate our Heritage Centre to contribute to this revitalization as it becomes a provincial, national and international tourist destination,” he says.

Once the significant renovation work is complete, the MMF says the Heritage Centre will feature one of Manitoba’s largest outdoor art exhibits at its entrance, directly on the reopened

intersection. The organization also owns properties in the surrounding area and says it’s working actively with partners to attract tenants and activities that will add economic activity to the area.

A PLACE TO CELEBRATE

Few organizations are as connected to the spirit of Portage and Main as True North Sports + Entertainment, the company behind the Winnipeg Jets and several major developments downtown.

Jim Ludlow, president of True North Real Estate Development—a branch of the parent company—sees the reopening as part of a larger narrative.

“Portage and Main is a place where our community has celebrated some major milestones. Perhaps reopening those corners to pedestrian traffic is a signal of a new chapter for making history,” he says.

True North has long advocated for a dynamic downtown and Ludlow says that means people—living, working, playing and walking in the neighborhood. While he acknowledges that it’s still too early to quantify the impact of reopening the intersection he’s optimistic.

“Winnipeg needs a downtown everyone can be proud of and use frequently. Anything that makes it attractive for residents to come from every neighbourhood to enjoy is a step in the right direction,” he says.

TRANSPORTATION HUB AS PEOPLE MAGNET

Beyond the expected intangible benefits, the future of Portage and Main includes critical infrastructure upgrades. A major rapid transit station is planned at the intersection that city leaders say will draw tens of thousands of people downtown daily.

"It will improve access, increase foot traffic and make it easier for people to live, work and spend time downtown," says Gillingham.

"Reopening the intersection now helps make sure we're ready for what's coming next," he says.

Bellamy, who's hoping to be among the first to cross the intersection on July 1, agrees the planned transit station would be transformative and help supercharge the revitalization of the surrounding area.

"Right now, areas like The Forks, the Exchange District and the SHED (Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District) are like islands and reopening the intersection is a way to connect them—to let them support each other," he says.

LOOKING AHEAD

Although this once-contested move is now being embraced as an inflection point by most Winnipeggers, expect some short-term growing pains.

Drivers and pedestrians will need some time to adjust to the new traffic flows but they'll eventually find their rhythm, says Bellamy.

"A month after opening, we will have totally forgotten about all the controversy and a year from then, we'll look back and go, 'why did we talk about it for so long?'" he says.



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Outfielder Max Murphy, who led the Goldeyes last year in home runs and runs batted in, is returning from last year's squad.

Photo by Dave Mahussier

SWEET SKYSUITES

THE Winnipeg Goldeyes are hoping a renovated Skysuite level will convince local businesses to take even more clients, prospects and employees out to the ball game.

The American Association of Professional Baseball team spent more than \$250,000 this off-season adding new furniture, flooring, countertops and paint to the 26 Skysuites overlooking the field at Blue Cross Park.

Ed Doiron, the team's manager of group sales and game presentation, says the renovation plans have been in the works for several years.

"For some time, we've wanted to increase the value of our Skysuites without increasing the cost for our clients. When the pandemic hit, that fell to the wayside. Now we're catching up to bring the luxury of the suites to a new level," he says.

There are 23 single suites, which hold up to 21 guests, and a trio of double suites, which have room for 50 guests.

Ownership of Skysuites can be full-season (50 games), half-season (25 games) and quarter-season (12 games). Full ownership costs are \$25,000 for the season — or about \$24 per ticket — while half and quarter-ownership costs are \$12,500 and \$6,250, respectively.

Over the course of a 50-game regular season, there are 1,300 Skysuites to be rented out and the team sold just under 75 per cent of them last year. This spring, about half of them were sold for the 2025 season and Doiron is confident last year's totals will be surpassed.

"The biggest benefit of ownership is we take care of everything for you. You get 21 tickets (for single suites) and we provide parking passes plus we offer various food and beverage packages," he says.



During summertime games, the Skysuites are “the best place in the ballpark where you can cool off.”

Families and friends can celebrate special occasions at the ballpark as the Goldeyes have set aside several Skysuites for single-game rentals that go for \$1,100 per game. There is also a special Skysuite four-pack that provides four games for the price of three.

And can you put a price on air conditioning on hot summer days?

“The best place in the ballpark where you can cool off is in the Skysuites. You can close the patio doors and it’s especially luxurious for Sunday afternoon games. Everybody in the suite is basically inside,” he says with a laugh.

As usual, the Goldeyes will be fielding a very competitive team this year. Returning from last year’s squad is outfielder Max Murphy, who led the Goldeyes last year in home runs and runs batted in. An exciting newcomer to the squad is Windsor, Ont. native Jacob Robson, who has a ton of affiliated experience, including time in the big leagues with the Detroit Tigers. The Goldeyes have won the league championship four times, in 1994, 2012, 2016 and 2017.

Blue Cross Park and the Goldeyes provide unique and cost-effective sponsorship opportunities for Manitoba companies because they don’t have to write seven-figure cheques to have significant exposure to more than 200,000 people per season. (Last year, the Goldeyes averaged more than 3,800 fans per regular season game and just over 4,100 per game in the playoffs – an overall increase of nearly 12 per cent from the previous season).

You can learn more about Goldeyes Skysuites at Goldeyes.com/Skysuites or by using the QR Code.

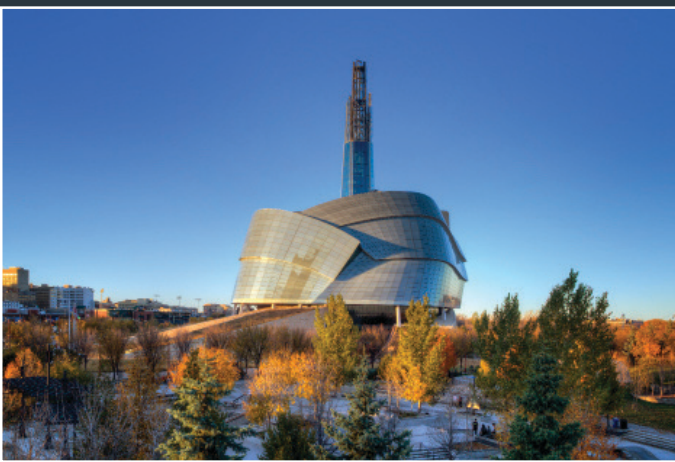


More than 20 suites at the Winnipeg Goldeyes Blue Cross Park have been renovated.



One Portage Ave., East
Winnipeg, Mb.
204-982-2273





PCL was the builder behind the Canada Life Centre, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the towers at True North Square.

BUILDING SIDE BY SIDE

If you look at an aerial view of downtown Winnipeg, it would be quicker to point out the buildings that PCL did not build than the ones it did.

Perhaps you've noticed some of them? Canada Life Centre (formerly the MTS Centre when it was built in 2004), the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, all of the towers at True North Square, the Richardson Building, 360 Main and the headquarters for both Canada Life and IG Financial, to name but a few.

"The list is endless," says Kelly Wallace, Winnipeg-based vice-president and district manager at PCL. "It's quite literally millions and millions of square feet that we've built here. But it's not all big stuff. When most people think of PCL, they think about big work. But we built and renovated the Ducks Unlimited Discovery Centre at Oak Hammock Marsh. The number of small jobs we do far exceeds the big ones. You might do 400 renovations during the same time that you build a hospital."

PCL undertakes between 25 and 30 projects of various sizes every year. The biggest one on the go currently is the Portage Regional Health Centre, a \$355-million project slated to open late this year or early in 2026.

Not bad for a mom-and-pop shop that was founded more than a century ago in Stoughton, Saskatchewan by Ernest "Ernie" Poole and began its operations in Winnipeg 60 years ago.

PCL employees have long prided themselves in their work but they also eat their own cooking, too.

In 1977, CEO Bob Stollery and 24 other senior managers, believing that employee ownership was not only good business but would result in greater loyalty and stability, purchased the company from the Poole family.

"Everybody has a stake," Wallace says. "It started small but it has evolved to more than 5,000 owners."

"That's what builds the fabric of our culture. All of these people have a hand in putting healthcare and schools in places. They're community members, too," he says.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What does PCL stand for?

A: The company went by Poole Construction Ltd. for nearly three quarters of a century before changing to PCL Construction Ltd. in 1979.

Q: What kind of projects does PCL build?

A: While it's well known for its skyscrapers and mega-projects, PCL also works in commercial and retail, manufacturing, parking structures, convention centres, schools, healthcare, renewable energy, civic infrastructure, entertainment, hospitality and gaming venues, multi-family residential, transit ways and sports facilities.

In fact, the level of engagement that he sees from PCL's team on projects of all sizes is a significant differentiator from the competition.

"I think it's unparalleled. We typically have to pull on the reins, not push them to work harder. You have to have a balance," he says.

PCL has more than 160 people in Winnipeg and others in communities throughout the province, including Stonewall, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, St. Agathe, Grand Point and Niverville. Beyond Manitoba's borders, it also has offices across Canada and the U.S. as well as a foothold in Australia and the Bahamas.



Kelly Wallace,
vice-president and
Winnipeg district
manager at PCL.

Chris Gower, PCL's president and CEO, says six decades in Manitoba marks a significant milestone, not just for the PCL team in Winnipeg, but for the entire company.

"For 60 years, we've taken great pride in helping our clients shape Winnipeg's landscape. This legacy is a testament to the dedication of our people, the strength of our partnerships and the trust of our clients. We look forward to continuing to build a better future, together," he says.

One of the companies at the forefront of downtown revitalization for more than two decades is True North Sports + Entertainment.

Jim Ludlow, president of its real estate development division, says PCL allows his team to do what they do



The Winnipeg District's first project, the Mall Centre on Portage Avenue (now Rice Financial), was completed in 1963.

best. He believes the partnership has enabled True North to advance its business thinking, expand its footprint in Winnipeg and make Winnipeg a better place to live.

"Not only do we feel at home working side by side with the PCL teams, we feel safe, protected, assured and confident. We're confident that the risks we take – and there are many – are mitigated substantially by having the PCL team on our front line," he says.

"Knowing that our perimeter is patrolled by Canada's construction leader, consistently and regularly by a team with the depth and experience of PCL is not only comforting, it provides us with huge amounts of confidence knowing that we can reach further and probe deeper. So, when we come up with crazy ideas like developing Canada Life Centre, True North Square, Wawanesa or Portage Place, we know that the construction will be completed to the highest of standards and that we can deliver the project on time and on budget."

Wallace believes his team is going to be busy for the foreseeable future, too, particularly after the release of the recent provincial budget which allocated \$3.7 billion to capital projects, including new schools, emergency rooms, personal care homes and critical infrastructure. It's the biggest capital investment in Manitoba's history.

"When we hear that the government wants to continue to invest in the province, that's exciting for us. We say, 'we're going to play a key role in that.'"



60 YEARS
WINNIPEG
1965 – 2025

THE LADDER OF SUCCESS

PAUL Mahon is truly one of the few business leaders who can empathize with virtually everybody at his company.

That's because after graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) degree from the University of Manitoba in 1986, he got his foot in the door at Great-West Life with an entry-level position.

He started out working in marketing and with advisors and then climbed every step of the ladder until he got to the top in May 2013, when he was named president and CEO of Lifeco and Great-West Life.

If he had to address a challenge at any level in the company, he was able to draw upon his own personal experience.

In 2019, Mahon oversaw the historic rebranding and amalgamation of Great-West Life, London Life, and Canada Life under the new Canada Life brand, which has been ranked among the top brands in Canada by Brand Finance.

After nearly four decades with the company, Mahon will retire as President and CEO on July 1.

"Paul's contributions to our organization have been extraordinary," says Jeffrey Orr, chair of Lifeco and Canada Life's board of directors.

"Under his leadership, the company has been repositioned and strengthened, achieving record performance and delivering lasting value for our shareholders."

Last summer, Mahon was listed at No. 5 on Manitoba Inc. magazine's Power 30 of business leaders in the province. He and his wife, Anne Mahon, were also listed as one of Manitoba's top five "power couples."

He says he is honoured to have led the company and work alongside such a dedicated and values-driven team.



Paul Mahon and his wife, Anne Mahon were listed as one of Manitoba's top five "power couples."

"We've built a strong foundation for the future. Lifeco's management team represents an exceptional combination of strengths, including an achievement-oriented and people-centered culture that is driving strong performance across the business. The company is on a path of sustained growth and I couldn't be more confident in the future."

He will be succeeded by David Harney, who has been with the company since the late 1980s, the last five years as president and chief operating officer of Great-West Lifeco's European and Capital & Risk Solutions segments.



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QUEBEC

Exotic, beautiful and delicious

BY SHEL ZOLKEWICH

You're travelling for business. You have one free day. How do you spend it?

We have suggestions.

If it's old-world charm you want, Quebec City has it in no short supply. Five centuries of stories are laid across the cobblestone streets here, from revolutions to renaissances, lived out loud. It's truly one of Canada's most exotic, beautiful and delicious cities and even a short stay will have you plotting your next visit.



STAY

Check in to Hôtel Le Germain Québec on Saint-Pierre Street in the heart of Québec City's historic Old Port district. A boutique hotel in every sense of the word, the lobby screams elegance and refinement with cozy corners, plenty of art and a lounge for small bites. Opt for the breakfast package that's served in the lobby or delivered to your posh room.

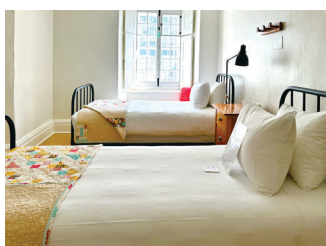
Le Germain Hotel Quebec, 126, St-Pierre Street.



EAT

It will be a long, long time before you forget about the tempura shrimp on Hotel Maurice Restaurant Lounge's antipasti misto platter. It's a standout among the burrata, marinated vegetable salad, mortadella, carpaccio, hummus and foie gras collection. This historic building has had many lives, including the headquarters of former Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis and as an icon of Quebec City nightlife. Today it's modern, luxurious and downright delicious. **Hotel Maurice, 575 Grande Allée E.**

QUEBEC CITY



SEE

Exhibits at Le Musée du Monastère des Augustines are tucked inside a 400-year-old wing that was the first hospital in North America north of Mexico. There are artifacts from the dining room where the sisters shared meals and plenty of medical devices that seemed well ahead of their time. The quiet and architecturally beautiful museum preserves the heritage of the Augustinian Sisters of Quebec. The destination is also a wellness centre and you can lay your head down in an authentic room where the nuns slept. **Le Monastère des Augustines, 77 des Remparts Street.**



SOUVENIR

Take home two pieces of history in one. A blue tartan made by Quebec's Lambert & Co. is the signature colour combination of Fairmont Le Château Frontenac and sold exclusively at the boutique inside the historic hotel. Wrap yourself in plush merino wool and history all at once. **Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, 1 Rue des Carrieres.**



DO

Strom Nordic Spa's Old Quebec City location sits on the banks of the St. Lawrence River where you can soak in the infinity pool and think of nothing. Or go for the Scandinavian-inspired thermal experience with multiple outdoor whirlpools, cold baths, North America's largest flotation bath with Epsom salt, Finnish saunas, eucalyptus and essential oil steam rooms, waterfalls and fireplaces. A full range of massage options are offered too. **Strom Nordic Spa, 515 Bd Champlain.**



SNACK

It wouldn't be a visit to Quebec without a rich and salty platter of poutine. As mentioning top spots could cause a nationwide clash, we'll leave you with three of the most popular choices. **Chez Ashton**, a chain with more than two dozen locations, **Frites Alors**, the fave of Quebec food writer Allison Van Rassel and **Poutineville**, which serves a China/Quebec version with home fries, simmered Philly steak, cheese curds, poutine sauce, fondue broth, green onions and spicy maple sauce.

DOOR-TO-DOOR Service

WINNIPEG DOOR MANUFACTURER'S
PRODUCTS ARE FAR FROM 'SEXY'
**BUT THEY'RE DEFINITELY
RECESSION-PROOF**

Doortech manufactures a variety of doors including basic wood doors, commercial aluminum doors, automatic sliding doors and some with built-in security measures.

If you don't notice Doortech's contribution to the many buildings you walk in and out of day after day, Neil Perrier is fine with that.

The long-time manager and new owner of the Winnipeg-based door manufacturer and distributor says if a door does grab your attention, you can bet that something is wrong.

"You only appreciate a door when it's not working," he says.

Perrier recently purchased Doortech from its co-founders, who also happen to be his parents, Fred and Jocelyn Perrier. Nearly a quarter-century after it was founded, he has no aspirations to reinvent the, um, door, but he does want to breathe new life into the company.

"Doortech has a lot of potential. There's a lot of good will in the business but it needs to be taken that extra mile," he says, noting long-time customers will continue to receive the same level of service to which they've become accustomed.



Doortech's customer base ranges from construction companies to retail users.

Doortech provides practically every kind of door you can imagine, from a basic wood or commercial aluminum door to the back entrance of a shipping warehouse to the automatic sliding doors at a hospital emergency entrance. Some have built-in security measures while others are able to withstand particular kinds of weather. They can cost as little as \$1,000 all the way up to \$100,000. Doortech's customer base ranges from construction companies and property managers to retail users.

Perrier relocated from Winnipeg to Kelowna seven years ago to oversee its second location. Since his arrival, that shop's revenue has grown exponentially while the Winnipeg outlet continues to churn out double-digit growth. Expanding to a third city is a definite possibility and Perrier is currently evaluating potential opportunities.

Perhaps the best thing about Doortech is that even though its product line is far from "sexy," it's virtually recession-proof.

"Every building needs a door. Whatever the economy is doing, doors are doing," he says, noting between the two branches, Doortech employs nearly 50 people.

The Perrier family has a lengthy history of reinvesting in the business. Whenever his parents had any excess cash, Perrier says they invested in a new machine, upgraded something such as the shears and brakes or did some more basic upkeep such as painting a room.

"They built the business on value-add for the customer. Winnipeggers can appreciate value," he says.

Perrier is well aware of his family's legacy with the company. In addition to his parents, his older brother, Cory, has been with the company for two decades, starting out in the fabrication shop before moving up to purchasing manager. His younger brother, JP, started in the shipping department in 2011 and has since moved into the purchasing department.

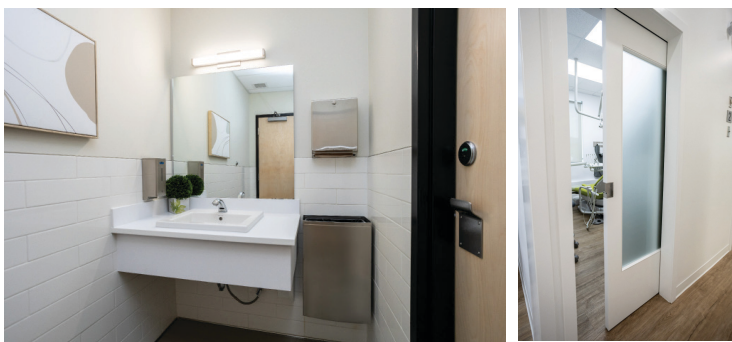
Perrier is quick to note that his purchase of the company couldn't have been done without his brothers and a number of important partners, including Tim Kurbis, managing partner of Taylor McCaffrey law firm, Tim Friesen of CIBC and Jeff Martin of Deloitte Canada.

"Without them, the deal to buy the company doesn't happen. They know the process and the ins and outs of the business. They've streamlined the process, mitigated the risk for me and helped my parents realize their retirement goals," he says.

His parents still live in the Winnipeg-area house they bought 25 years ago and while they're not planning an extravagant retirement, they have recently splurged on a couple of vehicles. Fred bought a 1964 Ford Galaxie while Jocelyn picked up a Ford Mustang of the same vintage.

Perrier says because his parents kept reinvesting in the business, its retained earnings have long been very strong.

"It's a solid business on solid footing," he says.



Doortech's revenue has grown exponentially and the Winnipeg shop on Sheppard Street continues to churn out double-digit growth.



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THE OFFICE ISN'T DEAD – IT'S WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS



BY MARTY FISHER

LET'S get a few things out of the way: I love my getting my laundry done as much as the next person. And yes, I love dogs (even though I don't have one). Moreover, I love the idea that I could, in theory, lead The Show and Tell Agency from my kitchen table, fully-caffeinated, with stretchy pants on.

But here's the inconvenient truth: if you want to build something

extraordinary – a team, a culture, a business that delivers – you need more than a Wi-Fi signal and a Teams channel.

You need an office.

There, I said it. The remote work evangelists are already rolling their eyes. “But productivity is up! Commutes are down! My sourdough starter is thriving!” Yes, yes, and congratulations on your yeast. But let's not confuse comfort with greatness. The office is not an anachronism. It's a crucible. And for those of us who want to do audacious things, it's still the best place to bring ideas to a boil.

THE ALCHEMY OF PROXIMITY

Here's the thing about offices – they're messy, noisy and gloriously unpredictable. You can't mute the guy who's always pitching wild ideas. You can't "leave the meeting" when someone challenges your thinking. You can't turn your web camera off when it's your turn to show and tell.

And that's exactly the point.

Chemistry happens when smart, ambitious people collide in real life. Like atoms splitting, ideas ricochet between desks. Strategies are debated over Sheepdog's Cold Brew coffee. Bonds are forged over soup and a sandwich. You don't get that kind of alchemy in a grid of LCD rectangles. You get it when you're breathing the same air, finishing each other's sentences, and yes, sometimes having contentious conversations, face to face, in person.

DIVERSITY TAKES MANY FORMS

Every business should be comprised of people that are representative of the communities in which we live. This is how Show and Tell has been built. In-person work catalyses the most important diversity – diversity of opinion. We encourage curiosity, critical thinking, courage and candour. All of which manifests more easily in person. All of which makes our work better.

CULTURE ISN'T A TEAMS CHANNEL

Most businesses aspire to have a great culture. Ping-pong tables! Happy hours! Inspirational quotes in the bathrooms! Pfft.

Real culture isn't built on perks. It's built on shared experiences, inside jokes, talking about the Jets and the unspoken trust that comes from seeing how your colleagues handle pressure, success and the occasional disaster.

You can't manufacture that over Zoom or Teams. Culture is a living, evolving thing and it needs a habitat. The office is that habitat. It's where values become actions, where mentorship happens organically and where the next generation of leaders learns not just what we do, but how-and why-we do it.

SERENDIPITY IS A STRATEGY

Some of our agency's best ideas didn't come from scheduled brainstorming or carefully crafted emails.

They came from chance encounters in the hallway, off-hand comments in the kitchen or the collective panic of knowing a client meeting is in five minutes and we're still struggling to find the big idea.

Serendipity isn't just luck, it's a strategy. Our office is designed for it. Every unscripted conversation is a potential breakthrough. Every overheard problem is an opportunity for someone to jump in with a solution. When you're all in the same place, creativity isn't a scheduled event. It's a constant possibility.

The office gives everyone a stage and a spotlight.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

We are humans, not avatars or AI. We crave connection, belonging and the sense that we're part of something bigger. The office is where we celebrate wins and commiserate over losses.

Yes, remote work is here to stay.

Our industry is incredibly competitive. Show and Tell competes for talent against other agencies featuring 100 per cent remote, four-day work weeks and hybrid work.

In fact, we have embraced the hybrid workplace model. Our team has mandatory in-office attendance three days a week. We also have some fully remote staff because we couldn't hire specialist talent locally.

When you're all in the same place, creativity isn't a scheduled event. It's a constant possibility.

Yes, flexibility matters. Show and Tell's rallying cry is "sharing changes everything."

That's a lot easier to do when the nuances of emotion, body language and tension are standing right in front of you.

So, if you feel like your back is against the wall, stand fast. Relationships matter. Creativity matters. Mentorship matters. Yes is easier and no is harder when you're face to face.

Work at work and watch the sparks fly, the ideas flow and the laughter echo down the halls. Your team might just remember what it feels like to be part of something extraordinary.



SHOW AND TELL

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AMERICAN-NAMED
RESTAURANTS REBRANDING
WITH MAPLE LEAVES

EATING CANADIAN, EH?



Jeff Swystun, a marketing and branding consultant in Winnipeg, says the "buy Canadian" phenomenon is moving to restaurants.

BY ELEANOR COOPSAMMY
AND GEOFF KIRBYSON

WHEN is an eatery with an American name not American? When it's Canadian, of course.

Restaurants such as Boston Pizza, St. Louis Bar & Grill, Lone Star Texas Grill and New Orleans Pizza are doing their best to fly the Maple Leaf in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war.

But they're not like those American travellers you see in Europe with the Maple Leaf sewn on their backpacks. Even though their names look and sound distinctly American, these brands are actually owned by Recipe Unlimited Corp., a wholly Canadian-owned and operated company.

(The parent of RUC, which was known as Cara Operations Ltd. for nearly 60 years until 2018, is Toronto-based Fairfax Financial Holdings.)



Montana's is one of many Canadian-owned restaurants that has upped its game recently. It has a new tag line "Canada's home for barbecue."

Jeff Swystun, a Winnipeg-based marketing and branding consultant, says the "Buy Canadian" movement that began in grocery stores shortly after Trump returned to the White House in January is moving into the hospitality sector. Canadians' elbows are once again up (but off the tables).

"There's confusion," he says. "When you have a name like Lone Star Texas Grill or Montana's, obviously the association is with America itself. Many Canadians believe those are American brands when they're not."

Boston Pizza, for example, was started in Edmonton in 1964 by Greek immigrant Gus Agioritis.

"It's as Canadian as Canadian can be," Swystun says.

So is A&W, the home of the burger family, which opened its first Canadian location in Winnipeg in 1956 as part of the American chain's growth. But in 1972, the Canadian operations were sold to Unilever, leading to the subsidiary's separation from the U.S.-based company, and A&W Canada has been based in North Vancouver ever since.

Canadian graphic designers have been busy removing red, white and blue across branding materials and replacing it with maple leaves.

ST. Louis Bar & Grill has taken things one step further from its Toronto head office, renaming a number of items on its menu with unmistakable Canadian themes.

Mississippi wings are now Mississauga wings and you can no longer order a Long Island iced tea. Instead, ask for a Prince Edward Island iced tea.

"We've definitely had a lot of fun with it," says Royal Nasager, vice-president of marketing and strategic partnerships with Aegis Brands, which owns SLB&G. "This cultural moment has been a gift for us. Our Canadian roots have always been integrated into communications strategy and messaging."

Interestingly, the restaurant isn't even named after the city in Missouri, it's a tribute to one of its co-founders, whose name is Louis.

He says SLB&G has received a “ton” of positive feedback from embracing the Great White North, including people asking if it could adopt the metric system.

He notes that many American chains have satellite locations in Canada but its campaign is about promoting its “bonafides.”

“IF YOU CHOOSE CANADIAN, WHY NOT CHOOSE A BRAND OR RESTAURANT THAT WAS BUILT HERE BY CANADIANS FOR CANADIANS?”

*Royal Nasager, spokesperson for
St. Louis Bar & Grill*

“If you choose Canadian, why not choose a brand or restaurant that was built here by Canadians for Canadians? Everything we do supports Canadian owners and operators, that’s important to us,” he says.

Just as in grocery stores, Swystun says Canadian eateries banding together for an “Eat Canadian Eh” campaign would be valuable.

“It could be cool and done with an entertaining bit of irreverence. This is not about being anti-American, it’s being pro-Canadian. After all, civility is one of our greatest strengths,” he says.

Two prominent brands changed their names years ago, which could be paying dividends in Canadian dollars today.

Years ago, Canadian-owned New York Fries abbreviated its brand to NYF, following in the long-ago footsteps of Kentucky Fried Chicken’s move to KFC, which is still U.S.-based.

It’s too early to say with any degree of certainty how much these eateries are being impacted by Trump’s actions but Swystun says they’re most definitely feeling the pinch.

How far will the pro-Canadian branding go? Swystun says it’s possible that President’s Choice, the Superstore grocery brand, may have to rebrand if the backlash is too strong. Prime Minister’s choice, perhaps?

On the flip side, there are a number of companies that have no branding confusion to worry about.

“I’d love to be the head of marketing at Clearly

WOULD YOU LIKE POUTINE WITH THAT?

Here’s a list of Canadian-owned restaurants with American-sounding names and how they’ve responded to growing pressure to “Eat Canadian.”

- **Montana’s:** After initially revising the content on its history web page, this Vaughan, Ontario-based chain has upped its game significantly recently, spending money on television commercials that play on cable mostly during hockey games and on YouTube and Amazon Prime before movies. It has a new tagline, too, “Canada’s Home for Barbecue.”
- **Lone Star Texas Grill:** This Ottawa-based chain, which was founded by two transplanted Americans, has taken to social media with posts stating, “You bet your boots we’re Canadian!” and that it serves the most authentic Tex-Mex food north of the border.
- **St. Louis Bar & Grill:** Named after one of its founders, this Toronto-based chain has revamped its menu with a Maple Leaf theme. Mississippi wings are now Mississauga wings and bartenders will happily serve you a Prince Edward Island iced tea instead of a Long Island iced tea.

Source: Jeff Swystun

Marketing consultant Jeff Swystun and Royal Nasager, vice-president of marketing and strategic partnerships with Aegis Brands, which owns St. Louis Bar & Grill, were guests on a recent edition of the Manitoba Inc. Podcast. **Listen to it here:**



PUTTING MONEY WHERE KIDS' MOUTHS ARE



Access Credit Union will help 10 Manitoba schools enhance their nutrition and wellness programming.

ACCCESS Credit Union believes well-fed kids are well-read kids.

The Manitoba-based credit union recently announced its “Focused Funding” grant for 2025, which will provide \$25,000 each to 10 elementary, junior high or high schools throughout the province to enhance their kitchens and enhance nutrition and wellness programming.

Adam Monteith, chief marketing officer at Access, says the credit union wants to put its money where students’ mouths are, while continuing to foster healthy communities and ensure that students have the resources they need to succeed.

All K-12 public schools in Manitoba are eligible. This year’s grant will prioritize projects that improve kitchen facilities to allow for adequate

space and equipment for storage, preparation and serving needs.

The goal is to improve access to nutritious meals and snacks, which are crucial for students’ academic and personal development, Monteith says.

The funding dovetails with the Province of Manitoba’s recent school nutrition program initiative, which will give students enrolled in public schools access to free and nutritious food when they need it, free from barriers and stigma.

“We want to make sure the schools have the capacity to serve those that have the greatest need,” he says.

“We believe it’s well-timed to make this kind of investment to make the government’s program all the more successful.”

By rotating the grant focus annually, Access can address a variety of community needs.

“Next year, it could be anything from sports equipment for children to seniors’ health programming. There is so much need in all of our communities for investment of this nature,” he says.

Access is the largest credit union in Manitoba with more than 205,000 members, more than 900 employees and assets of \$13.5 billion.

It does about \$2.2 million in community investment every year, covering a wide variety of projects, including infrastructure, events and programming.





YES, B'Y!

If you're one of the Manitobans who has been to every province in Canada except Newfoundland & Labrador, now's your chance to complete your bingo card.

Starting this summer, WestJet will offer twice-weekly flights to one of the oldest and easterly cities in North America, St. John's.

But there's more travel news to Atlantic Canada. The Calgary-based airline will also expand flights to Halifax, Nova Scotia from its current level of twice weekly to 10 times per week.

These additional flights are about more than just getting from Point A to Point B. They're about strengthening connections between Canadians — supporting tourism, trade and reunions with loved ones.

"We're focused on connecting our community to more of the places that matter most," said Nick Hays, president and CEO of Winnipeg Airports Authority. "WestJet's expanded service to Halifax and new route to St. John's are powerful additions that will help bring families together, open doors for business and tourism and strengthen the ties that connect Canadians from coast to coast."



Calgary-based WestJet airline will offer twice-weekly flights to St. John's beginning this summer.

As Manitoba's international gateway, the WAA is proud to work with WestJet and other airline partners to expand connectivity and create meaningful travel opportunities for the community.

WestJet recently finished its busiest-ever winter out of Winnipeg, with 1.2 million seats in and out of the Manitoba capital from October to April.

WESTJET 



Carry more CASH

Experts say Canada is on the forefront of becoming a cashless country.

BY MIKE SAWATZKY

IT'S an image most baby boomers can appreciate: a wallet bulging with crisp banknotes ready to be spent.

Alas, for some, cash is a concept that could soon be a quaint, historical footnote.

The technology for cashless transactions has improved so dramatically over the past two decades it could be only a matter of time before some countries go completely digital. Canada is on the forefront of that trend.

"I think the need for it is dissipating over time," admits Paul Edmond, president and CEO of Winnipeg's Edmond Financial Group. "I honestly believe there will be a point in time where cash may not even be required. But for privacy, it can be an important factor and for convenience.

"You think back to the old days – people used to barter for things. That's not a very convenient method of exchanging products and services but it exists. So someday, maybe, there will be no cash and everything will be on plastic but we're not there yet."



Paul Edmond, president and CEO of Edmond Financial Group, says the need for cash is declining over time.

The cashless revolution has been a long time in coming.

Access Credit Union president and CEO Larry Davey points to the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 as the trigger for the proliferation of smartphone technology in banking.

“(The iPhone) moved people towards convenience in every area of their lives and utilizing the home,” says Davey. “We saw a lot of requests from our credit union members to make things more convenient. One of the first steps was when deposit anywhere was launched, which allowed people to deposit their

cheques with their phone. Now they weren’t coming to the ATM to get cash, they were simply depositing their cheque.

“The next thing that happened, two or three years later, e-transfers came out. And now the requirement for small amounts of cash was going away because you went out for lunch with your friends, one of them could pay, you could e-transfer the money. It made it a lot easier.”

That convenience has dramatically altered the number of people visiting banks and credit unions.

"We've seen transactions in the branches drop a significant amount – they're only about five per cent of our transactions now – and the rest are electronic," adds Davey. "But what's dropped even faster is ATM (traffic). ATM has dropped from about 20 per cent to three per cent of our transactions. People just don't require cash. And then when COVID hit people didn't want to carry cash or deal with cash."

In Canada, the introduction of smartphones was preceded by the 2000 arrival of the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), a federal government initiative to detect, prevent and deter money-laundering and financing of terrorist activities.

Six years later FINTRAC's mandate was expanded to ramp up client identification, record-keeping and reporting measures.



Larry Davey, Access Credit Union president and CEO

It currently analyzes millions of transactions in Canada each year. Banks, credit unions and staff are subject to heavy fines if they flout the regulations.

"As we've seen with TD Bank (last year in the U.S.), there are large penalties if institutions don't follow their rules," says Davey. "FINTRAC is looking to monitor people who are only utilizing cash or trying to use cash under the table and/or money laundering. So that's all come together to move people to less cash."

Adds Edmond: "Problems in our economy with crime and money-laundering, these are real issues. Often for money-laundering reasons, cash is king, so there could be an argument made that with less cash might come more safety."

The preference for the anonymity of cash transactions persists. Some like the ease of old school budgeting, avoiding interest that accrues on credit cards and the additional fees attached to debit and credit cards.

While those fees could be raised in the absence of cash, banks could also choose in the future to attach fees to cash withdrawals.

"I'd love to say everything isn't tracked," says Davey.

"...(But) if you came into our institution today and opened up a savings account, we have to ask you what the money is for. And if you go, 'That's just for savings' and we say, 'That's fine but what is it for?' If you don't tell us we have to send in a report saying this person didn't want to tell us what the money was for."

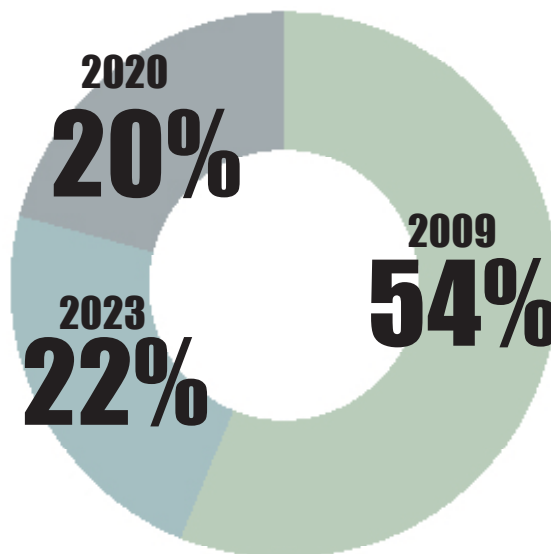
Edmond still likes the flexibility cash provides in a bar or restaurant.

"I'm a cash-carrying person," he says.. "I like having cash. I find it fast and convenient but people say to me, 'Why are tips so high, the range?' You put in your credit card and the options are 15, 25 and 35 per cent. It's a little nutty. But the reality is they're having to report everything that they're making these days and inflation has been pretty hard for most people."

Davey believes a cashless economy – Canada has some of the highest credit card usage and contactless payment limits in the world – isn't far away.

"I think we will get there," he says. "I work for an institution and I barely go to a branch to take out cash. I barely ever carry cash and I'm not in the young demographic. Young people coming along – they're just not using cash. They don't understand the requirement for it, in most instances."

THE DECLINE OF CASH IN CANADA



LET'S FIX SOME STUFF



BY MARY AGNES WELCH
PARTNER AT PROBE RESEARCH

If you're like me, you're breathing a small, wary sigh of relief.

We've just come through one of the most turbulent times for business in recent memory — tariffs real and threatened, talk of annexation and deep uncertainty (that still lingers) about the stability of the global economy.

We also had one of the most dramatic and engaging federal elections I can recall, where voters thought less about household issues and more about the economic crisis facing their country.

At Probe Research, we've been gathering acres of data on how Manitobans are coping with all this drama.

Have tariffs already affected consumer confidence? Yes. Almost one-half of Manitobans say they've already seen prices rise.

Are business leaders planning to hire in the next year? No. Only 17% are planning for a larger staff.

Will we spend our tourism dollars in the States? Nope, and we're pretty judgy about those who do. About 51 per cent of Manitobans say they would think less of someone vacationing in the U.S. right now.

With all this data, though, one of the best and most hopeful insights I had into the mood of Manitobans wasn't from our polling or focus groups. In fact, it was the kind of anecdote I normally warn clients about. It came from a round-table discussion hosted by Economic Development Winnipeg, where business owners from different sectors just vented, one-by-one, about their tariff-related worries.



Prime Minister Mark Carney meets with U.S. President Donald Trump. The Canadian Press photo

The venting sounded a lot like what we'd heard. But after that came talk of opportunities and possibilities — a feeling of, "Well, ok, jeez, maybe we haven't been taking care of business in a few areas and this is the kick in the butt we need."

That kick in the butt could help us finally fix some things we've been talking about for decades: East-West power grids and pipelines; improving the Port of Churchill, the northern rail line and transport routes in general; boosting productivity; investing in tourism so more Canadians and international visitors can explore our vast and beautiful country; and reducing interprovincial trade barriers. The list is long.

FINGERS CROSSED, THE INITIAL DRAMA OF 2025 IS BEHIND US

Fingers crossed, the initial drama of 2025 is behind us. Newly-elected Prime Minister Mark Carney's first meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, which went about as well as it could have, allowed many in the business community to breathe a small sigh of relief. It feels as though, maybe, we can start thinking about solutions now.

I hope, as we cope with the next four years, we don't lose the local and national resolve to roll up our sleeves and fix some things on our own.

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