

A Lakefront Entrepreneur

By Darrell Noakes

Lorraine Forster didn't expect to win Young Entrepreneur of the Year at the 27th Annual ABEX Awards last October.

"I was absolutely surprised," she says. "There was incredible competition in that category. Just to be part of those nominees was exciting."

It really shouldn't have come as a surprise. Forster grew up immersed in business, long before graduating from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine,

settling in Humboldt, establishing the Humboldt Veterinary Services P.C., and launching Prairie's Edge Development Corporation.

"These days, my focus is recreational land development," she says.

"I've always been very interested in real estate and land and development. I grew up with a very entrepreneurial background in southeastern Manitoba, on a farming operation. We had a sawmill business."

While operating his hunting, guiding and outfitting businesses, her father acquired new land parcels to expand his operations, Forster says. Her grandparents ran a fly-out fishing lodge in Ontario, just across the border from the family home. "So, I grew up with a lot of different businesses," she says.

"Real estate took hold of me when I started university. I bought my first house

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Photo by Darrell Noakes

Lorraine Forster of Prairie's Edge Development Corporation

Eagle Vision Mulching Created with Clarity of Purpose

By Dave Yanko

Eagle Vision Mulching lives up to its name. The Big River business grew out of a strong view progressive companies can be agents of change for a cleaner environment.

Eagle Vision, launched in 2007 by Bev Dziurzynski and her husband Dana, employs machinery that mulches trees to create trails and roads through forest. It's an environmentally friendlier way to create pathways for interests as varied as min-

eral exploration companies, oil and gas concerns, power companies, cross-country and downhill ski operations, pipeline enterprises, snowmobilers and landscapers.

Bev Dziurzynski says the alternative method is the "pile and burn" process in which trails are bulldozed and the felled trees piled up and set aflame. Mulching has the additional benefits of leaving a smaller environmental footprint and a



comparatively undisturbed forest floor.

"Eagle Vision is the only First Nation mulching company in Saskatchewan operating machines capable of mulching trees with trunks up to two feet in diameter," says Dziurzynski, vice president of the business.

Eagle Vision employs up to 30 people



Photo courtesy of Eagle Vision Mulching

Lamtrac 8275 equipped with an FAE mulching head, part of Eagle Vision's fleet.

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in the peak winter season, with four or five staff employed year around – she says the company’s mandate is to hire First Nations and Métis people from the Big River district and areas where the company is working. Although challenged during the height of the recession, when exploration companies cut back on their activities, Eagle Vision persevered and remained buoyant through the difficult times, says Dziurzynski. A major factor in the company’s financial durability is its comparatively lighter machinery, which gives it a competitive advantage in difficult terrain.

“Our real niche is muskeg – that’s where we shine,” says Dziurzynski. “Heavy machinery and muskeg don’t mix.”

However, Eagle Vision’s nimble equipment also allows the company to go head-to-head against the competition in rugged Canadian Shield terrain like that found around La Ronge.

“That area can be pretty hard on machinery, what with the rocks and all.”

Company success has spurred diversification into core drilling and research on wind energy and energy storage, something Dziurzynski’s company views as a strong candidate for future development. Meantime, she’s hopeful and optimistic about Saskatchewan’s economy, but especially the green energy projects she believes offer a tremendous opportunity for First Nation communities.

“The bio-energy and wind resource in Saskatchewan is world class,” says Dziurzynski. “We just have to get more people with expertise and optimism to step forward, tap these resources and bring them to fruition.

“The sky’s the limit in Saskatchewan.” 

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in my early 20s, renovated it and resold it. Then, when I moved to Saskatchewan to take my DVM, I purchased a house, renovated it and had rental accommodations. I paid for all my university that way. I like to be able to see something, an opportunity that somebody else perhaps doesn’t see, and take advantage of that.”

The idea for Prairie’s Edge came to her after a trip to Portugal.

“It was a great trip, but we realized we have all these resources right in our backyard,” she says.

It was ridiculous to return home jet-lagged and exhausted after flight delays, when there was so much opportunity to expand and look for lakefront property here at home, she says.

“We acquired 10 acres of lakefront property and it just seemed like a natural fit to look into subdivision. That started Prairie’s Edge in 2007. We created 15 lake lots on St. Brieux Lake. It was phenomenally successful. We sold out in two weeks. That inspired me to look for other opportunities and now our latest focus is on Lucien Lake, which is even closer to our home town of Humboldt. It’s manageable. It’s literally in my back yard. It’s just been a fantastic experience.”

The St. Brieux development established a track record for Prairie’s Edge, Forster says. The company established committed working relationships with surrounding rural municipalities, built a solid customer base and secured the support of its clientele. As a result, Forster recently partnered with another couple to start Prairie View Properties, an acreage subdivision just east of Humboldt. “The business continues evolving and expanding. It’s been very positive so far,” she says.

“We’ve had phenomenal feedback and that’s probably the most gratifying to date—seeing the lake community develop. Couples, families that come from a large area—Saskatoon, Warman, all areas—coming together and becoming friends and their kids playing together, and they’re becoming our family and friends.”


The developments foster a real sense of community. Forster describes how the residents embrace the local towns, hanging out in the coffee shops, using the services in the area. “It’s fun to be part of,” she says. “I come from a small centre, so it gives me that flexibility of being part of the community festivals, such as the Pilger Pumpkin Festival. We’re big sponsors of the annual ice fishing derby on Lucien. To become part of that, it’s been a lot of fun.”

Forster sees endless opportunity in Saskatchewan.

“Every time I turn around, it seems like there’s another project. For every project we move forward, we’ve evaluated probably a dozen other opportunities, and every time I think there’s only so many lakes, there’s only so many opportunities, something else is brought forward. That’s really fun.”

Forster finds a special appeal in the area around Humboldt and Middle Lake.

“At this time, given my family dynamics, that’s a good fit for us,” she says.

“In and around Humboldt is so phenomenal. We’re working on attracting some large residential developers to the city. It’s been very positive. The city itself has been transformed over the past three years. It’s not unlikely that the population’s going to double or be at least an additional 50 per cent over the next seven years. That’s pretty incredible.” 

From Dugouts and Sloughs to Tomorrow's Drinking Water

By Shirley Collingridge

What would small community residents, whose main source of water is a dugout or slough, have to pay for sediment-free, fresh-tasting water delivered straight to their kitchens?

Surprisingly less than you might expect, thanks to one company's resourcefulness and some timely government grants.

Taxes and escalating water bills cover city drinking water costs, but smaller communities are often left high and dry when it comes to a fresh glass of H₂O. One Regina company is working overtime to ensure everyone enjoys great water—without sacrificing the environment or their retirement funds.

"We provide affordable solutions to small and medium-sized communities with a proven system for treating raw water from surface water and ground water sources. These communities tend to struggle with the right solutions, particularly those who draw from surface water—dugouts, lakes, rivers, and creeks," says Doug Price, CEO of Mainstream Water Solutions Inc.

"Our system provides an effective treatment of drinking water, regardless of its source. It's easy to operate so individual treatment plant operators can be trained very quickly. Wastewater volume from the treatment process averages between four and six per cent of total water processed through the treatment plant, which is very low."

Most surface water has a fairly high

level of organic material that is dissolved in the water, which makes it difficult for communities to meet the minimum regulations on maximum accepted concentration of various contaminants. Raw ground water contaminants tend to be

"Our system provides an effective treatment of drinking water, regardless of its source. It's easy to operate so individual treatment plant operators can be trained very quickly."

consistent throughout the year but because of things like spring runoff, birds landing in the water, decaying leaves, cattle around the dugout and other factors, surface water is subject to variable contamination. Particularly in the summertime, surface water can be very challenging due to algae formation.

Mainstream Water Solutions Inc. provides a chemical-free, comparatively low-cost water treatment system customized

to clients' needs. The company's standard system removes most contaminants. However, if a water source also contains algae or relatively harmless but nasty-tasting salts (sulfates, calcium and sodium), the company can customize the system to remove those contaminants as well.

The system runs raw water through an ozonation process, a powerful disinfectant and oxidizing agent that breaks down the contaminants. A roughing filter comprised of coarse, medium-sized gravel then removes larger particles. Biological sand and biological carbon filters largely remove any remaining organic or inorganic contaminants.

Finally, the treated water goes to aerated storage tanks from which it is pumped through the user's delivery system. Once the process is complete, the water is continually aerated and pumped through the Biological Carbon filter to ensure its quality does not deteriorate.

While the company's system is chemical-free, government regulations require the municipality to add chlorine prior to delivery to residents. "Chlorine is required for residential disinfection," says Price. However, he added, "usually up to 75 per cent less chlorine is needed."

The company focuses on municipalities but has also installed systems on poultry and dairy farms, at golf courses, and for northern outfitters. While Price says the system is not a "silver bullet," it is clearly versatile. They have developed and had approved an arsenic filter and a

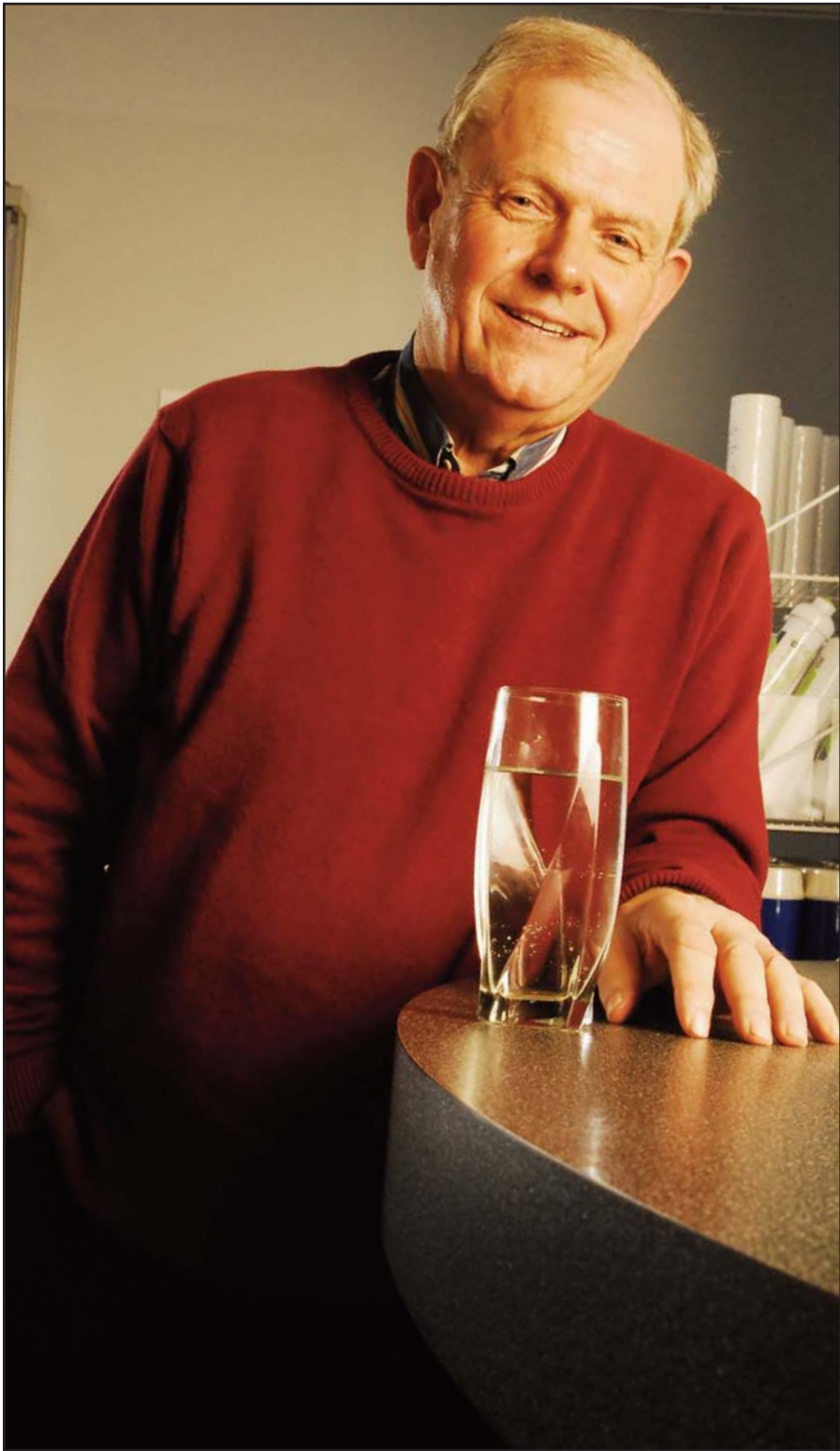
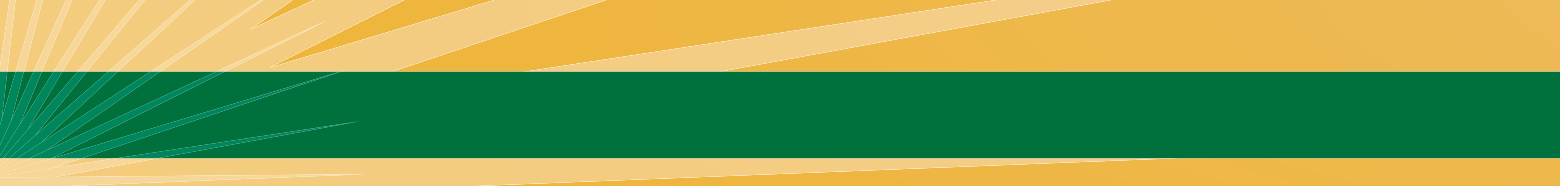


Photo by Cal Fehr

Doug Price, CEO of Mainstream Water Solutions.

uranium filter.

“These projects have been supported by Communities of Tomorrow, a Regina-

based organization focused on development of technology in the water and wastewater business,” he says.

Two remote mining operations have already installed the Mainstream system to ensure their drinking water is safe. Another mine is currently having parts trucked over the ice road, for assembly this summer.

The need for good quality drinking water is so great that the company finds it challenging to keep up with demand. From consultation to construction, a system can take from 12 to 18 months due to design and regulatory processes. Fortunately, once in place, the system will last a quarter-century or more. The first community to benefit still has plenty of time on its system: Peebles, Saskatchewan has enjoyed the system for just seven years.

Grants have made the system even more cost-effective for small communities. Over the past two years, infrastructure programs of the federal and provincial governments sometimes covered up to two thirds of the cost. Individual rural customers have to invest eight to nine thousand dollars themselves, which, says Price, “is a very reasonable cost for getting high quality drinking water into your home.”

Many would agree, as they bide their time. First Nations communities in particular could benefit. The company participated in a pilot project on the Pepeekisis Reserve and had the system approved for use on First Nations communities.

And Price receives frequent international requests.

“There is no doubt that there is a huge need,” he said. “We are in the process of completing four municipal plants right now. We have seven more waiting.” <http://www.mainstreamwater.com/>

Canada's Superfruit— Rediscovered

By Shirley Collingridge



Sandra Purdy of Prairie Berries with some examples of "Canada's super-fruit."

Thanks to a downturn in Canada's agricultural economy, timely government incentives, and one determined Saskatchewan couple, an age-old berry is gaining renown as a superfruit.

Married to third-generation farmer

Ken Purdy, Sandra Purdy enjoyed her job with SaskTel despite the long commute between Keeler and Regina. The company had been good to her, providing valuable experience in several operational areas. It assisted with the university

expenses of her two sons and also allowed her to earn post-secondary education. Purdy had dreamed of one day being able to work from the farm in a meaningful career. As the agricultural industry underwent a downturn during the late '80s and

“Locally-grown products support locally-grown companies and that helps build jobs that contribute to our economy.”

'90s, the Purdys had to make a pivotal decision.

Like so many, they did not want to leave the farm. When the provincial government introduced a diversification program to make farms more viable, the Purdys seized the opportunity.

Their product choice may seem surprising since Sandra Purdy had never experienced one tradition that makes up a part of so many prairie childhoods: Saskatoon berries.

Called *Mi-sask-quah-too-mina* by the Cree, it was a staple for early settlers and native people. Its antioxidant component promotes anti-cancer, anti-aging, and anti-heart problems. According to a recent Japanese study, its anthocyanin component also fights the battle of the bulge.

Saskatoons trump their blueberry cousins nutritionally. Their content is higher in protein, fibre, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, zinc, manganese, Vitamin C, riboflavin, and Vitamin B6.

Not only is the berry wholesome, but being native to the prairie provinces, the

hardy plant requires much less TLC than many other crops. This mighty berry, Purdy decided, would be her family's future.

Before Purdy left her job in 1998, the couple faced a steep learning curve. To learn more about the industry, they joined the Saskatchewan Fruit Growers Association, traveled Canada and the US to look at different models of fruit orchards, and studied horticulture through university.

By 1996, Prairie Berries had a fully-planted 10-acre orchard. Because Saskatoons do not come into full production until year seven, the company would need interim income. That year, to test market opportunities and supplement revenue, it began processing Saskatoons from other growers.

Today, Prairie Berries Inc. targets the fresh-frozen market and the ingredient industry. The company has developed several Saskatoon berry products including sweetened dried fruit, purees, spray-dried powder, juice, and a concentrate. Since 2003, Dairyland has produced a low-fat Saskatoon berry yogurt. Co-op retail outlets now carry 600-gram bags of frozen Saskatoon berries. Both sources are supplied by Prairie Berries Inc.

The company also wants a slice of the health food and sports markets. Its research project through National Research Council Canada's (NRC) Industrial Research Assistance Program succeeded into processing the berries into a spray-dried powder which can be used in yogurts, supplements, and sports aids.

The couple are grateful to the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Saskatchewan and the Industrial National Research Program managed by NRC. Those organizations

supplied grants which helped fund the company's research and provided technical assistance. "We certainly would not be as far ahead as we are now if it weren't for those programs," says Purdy.

The company's success has been recognized through two awards from the Canadian Fine Food Show in Toronto and an MJBEX award. To further promote the superfruit, the company teamed up with Dragon's Den's Arlene Dickinson in the fall of 2010. The show's exposure "was like a volcanic eruption—opening awareness about a prairie fruit that has great nutritional value," says Purdy.


She is optimistic that Dickinson's involvement will help the company get product into more grocery stores.

"Locally grown products support locally-grown companies and that helps build jobs that contribute to our economy," says Purdy. "We need to be processing what we grow right here."

Purdy's belief in a potential Saskatoon berry industry led her to develop the Saskatoon Berry Council of Canada. The council focuses on market development through collective action of industry. In 2007, their conviction also led the couple to plant another 120 acres of Saskatoon berry bushes.

Purdy has two final messages for readers.

Firstly: "We are fortunate to have a province that is so productive in its ability to produce food. So if we want to diversify the food we grow, it requires support and collaboration from growers, processors, researchers, industry and government to build new agri-food based industries," she says.

And second: "Eat Saskatoons—they are good for you." 

Behind the Scenes



Here are a few things you might not be aware Enterprise Saskatchewan (ES) has been working on...

Establishment of the Saskatchewan Aviation Learning Centre. Enterprise Saskatchewan (ES) brought in investment from Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Rockwell Collins to develop an aircraft maintenance engineer (AME) training program with Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) and also worked with Advanced Education Employment & Immigration and Western Economic Diversification to secure government funding for the program. This is the first AME training program in Saskatchewan and a project more than 15 years in the making.

High clearance corridor. At the request of a manufacturer needing a cost-effective way to transport large industrial equipment being manufactured for the oilsands, ES worked with MHI and SaskPower to develop a high clearance corridor from Melville to the Alberta border. The corridor will also extend on Highway 7 from Saskatoon to Rosetown, benefiting the manufacturers in north central Saskatchewan and opening up more opportunities for Saskatchewan manufacturers in the oilsands market.

Lean practices. ES continues to work with the consortiums of Saskatchewan manufacturers practicing lean manufacturing. This includes presentations and training for companies like Crestline Coach and DynaIndustrial—providing valuable tools and resources to help Saskatchewan companies become more competitive in today's global marketplace. ES also helped GMR Electric Motors set up its new facility in Saskatoon utilizing lean manufacturing tools to create an efficient plant layout.

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