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Big vision



Recently, we had the privilege of hosting *Progress* publisher Neville Gilfoy and editor Tom Mason for a "familiarization tour" of Fredericton. It started on the morning of winter's first snowstorm, when half of the downtown was without power and the city came to a halt due to all of the closures.

I think it's safe to assume that we left Neville and Tom with a first impression that not even a blizzard could quell the enthusiasm we had to tell them our story. It goes something like this: Once upon a time, there was a small city with a big vision—to be recognized globally as a Smart City.

In order to achieve this goal, city council made a strategic investment in its intellectual infrastructure, treating it like traditional infrastructure (roads and streets). The objective was to ensure that residents and businesses were equipped with the best tools to succeed.

We created Canada's first free wireless network, Fred-eZone, on the backbone of the city's fibre-optic network. In 2013 our telecommunications company launched its GoFredNet product, offering commercial Internet to start-ups and existing businesses at the lowest rates in Canada.

With its recent expanded offering of lowest-cost gigabit connectivity in Atlantic Canada, Fredericton is in a unique position to attract foreign direct investment as international companies shop locations to outsource their product development. Companies typically pay \$2,000 to \$3,000 for this type of connectivity; a business can access it for just \$200 in Fredericton.

Companies want to be here because of the available infrastructure and because they have access to R&D expertise and the talent pipeline at local universities and colleges. As the knowledge-based capital of New Brunswick, Fredericton has witnessed some of the biggest tech deals in the country, such as the acquisitions of Radian6 by Saleforce.com and Q1 Labs by IBM.

In 2013 we set a new goal: to be the Start-up Capital of Canada, as set out in the Vision 2020 Economic Development Strategy. The strategic cornerstone is to fuel entrepreneurial growth, which we're doing by nurturing start-ups, helping businesses grow, and strengthening the local ecosystem. We want to create the right environment to support the Q1 Labs of tomorrow.

The building blocks have included the creation of an entrepreneurial hub with the co-location of Ignite Fredericton, Planet Hatch, Knowledge Park, Opportunities NB, and the Hive and Business Immigrant Mentorship Program. We have re-engineered Ignite Fredericton, the economic development organization, to drive Vision 2020 and partner with stakeholders to cultivate economic growth.

So what's next? With \$8.6-billion projected investment in provincial natural resource projects, Ignite has formed a task force to leverage opportunities in near-term projects to help foster our "knowledge industry of tomorrow."

If you're interested in growing your business or relocating here, contact us.

Laurie Guthrie Economic development specialist Ignite Fredericton







Working together to transform data connectivity in our region





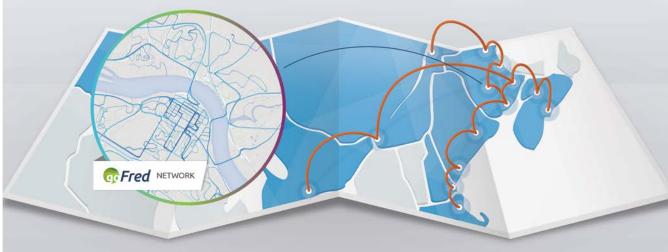
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A city on the edge of something

IF PETER GOGGIN HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT, the sight of drones hovering over farmers' fields may someday be as common as tractors or irrigation systems. The CEO and co-founder of Resson Aerospace is marketing a proprietary technology that uses the tiny unmanned aircraft to gather and monitor data about pests, weeds, crop diseases, and other information that's critical to farmers. His fledgling company has already received a major contract from agri-food giant McCain Foods and over \$3 million in venture capital funding from a bevy of investors, including Rho Canada Ventures and Build Ventures.

Resson's success is due to a number of factors, including killer app technology, but it was the start-up's location in Fredericton that was perhaps its greatest initial competitive advantage—an ecosystem that allowed the young entrepreneurs to tap into a support network that included the University of New Brunswick research system, Ignite Fredericton, the Pond–Deshpande Centre, and Planet Hatch. "There are so many assets here to help a company like ours grow and develop," says Goggin.

The journey to start-up city wasn't a quick one for Fredericton. In fact, it started more than 50 years ago at the University of New Brunswick, according to UNB president Eddy Campbell. "UNB is one of the pioneering start-up universities in Canada," he says. "When we started the publishing company Goose Lane Editions in 1954, that was an initiative that was really unheard of coming from a Canadian university." Today the university is still uniquely focused on entrepreneurship.

In fact, UNB has acted as a major catalyst in Fredericton's current start-up ecosystem, spawning dozens of companies that are making an impact across Atlantic Canada and beyond. University initiatives such as the Pond–Deshpande Centre are having a major impact on social-enterprise-type businesses in the region, while UNB's R&D system has



produced a number of fresh innovative startups, such as Resson Aerospace and HotSpot Parking.

The presence of other institutions, such as Bio NB, a powerful Fredericton-based incubator and industry association that is driving the province's biotechnology sector, is also key. And the start-up business accelerator Planet Hatch can claim credit for some of Atlantic Canada's most successful new businesses in recent years.

Larry Shaw is the CEO of Ignite Fredericton, Planet Hatch, and Knowledge Park, three of Fredericton's economic development

linchpins; these independent brands operate as a single organization. Ignite Fredericton was created to serve as the community's economic development organization, while Knowledge Park offers a full suite of business-development services located in five state-of-the-art buildings on a 25-acre campus. It's a powerful combination. "Our strategy is to have a group of like-minded people located in close proximity to each other to create a clustering environment," says Shaw.

The combination of Ignite Fredericton, Planet Hatch, and Knowledge Park eliminates the red-tape mazes that are often a

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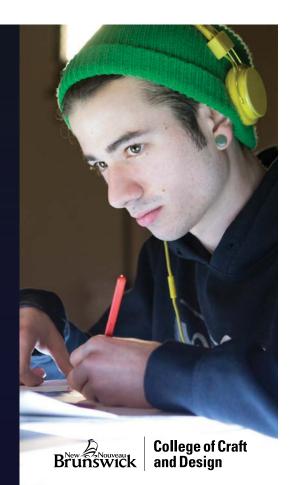
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The Wallace McCain Institute

UNB is helping entrepreneurs build better business judgment

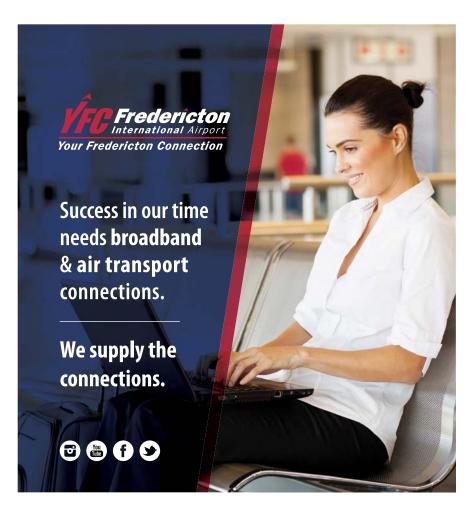
At some point during the growth of a company, entrepreneurs may find themselves at a crossroads both personally and professionally. For business owners in Atlantic Canada, the Wallace McCain Institute at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) is available to help. Rather than teaching textbook skills, its programs surround entrepreneurs with experiences to help build better business judgement.

The major focus of the Wallace McCain Institute is entrepreneurs with growth businesses, but peer groups are also offered for next-generation leaders in a family business, the second in command in a company, teachers who run their classroom experientially, and students who are entering the workforce in the coming year. "Participants in all of our programs will say that we provided an unparalleled opportunity to connect with a higher

quality and quantity of people than anything they have experienced in other programs," says Nancy Mathis, who has been the executive director since 2007

Approximately 200 members pay fees ranging anywhere from \$1,000 to \$20,000 a year in order to take part. The Wallace McCain Institute doesn't have a fixed location, although its affiliation with UNB provides a close entrepreneurial tie to Fredericton. Instead of one bricks-and-mortar site, programs are offered in a retreat-like setting in multiple cities. "We describe our footprint as the Greater Atlantic Area and have members from the entire region," says Mathis. "The entrepreneurial behaviour should be fostered in everyone and is a way of life that goes beyond just having a business." — AMANDA LESLIE







normal part of doing business. "By creating single-door access, we've made it easier for people to do business with us," he says. "We never took the approach that you have to be located in Knowledge Park to participate in our programs. Everything we do, we share. In fact, our revenues are reinvested back into economic development."

In 2012, the City of Fredericton spearheaded Vision 2020, an economic development strategy focused on turning the Fredericton region into the Atlantic Canadian capital for entrepreneurship, innovation, and commercialization. More than 250 stakeholders were consulted during the process. Vision 2020 took an appraisal of Fredericton's competitive advantages. "We have a significant natural resources cluster," says Shaw. "We want to turn that into a

"The most important and distinct role for local stakeholders is to foster a world-class environment for start-ups, particularly those in knowledge-based industries"

— Larry Shaw

global asset we can export."

As a result of Vision 2020, Ignite Fredericton was given the mandate of implementing the strategy. "The most important role for local stakeholders is to foster a world-class environment for start-ups, particularly those in knowledge-based industries, translating to high-yield jobs supporting other sectors," says Shaw. "We want the Fredericton region to be known across Canada and beyond as an excellent place to start a new business venture."

Ignite Fredericton is helping start-up companies, growing companies poised for export, attracting new companies to locate in the region, and fuelling immigration. "We asked ourselves, why don't we start with the brightest people, focus on our strengths, and look to exporting those strengths to a global market?" says Shaw. That strategy is starting to pay off. "There are lots of great things happening here, and there's so much more potential for the future."

— TOM MASON

ENTREPRENEURIAL HUB



Planet Hatch

Fredericton is creating a one-stop shop for promising business owners and innovative new companies

When Planet Hatch was first launched in September of 2013, the Fredericton organization had a clear vision in mind. "We wanted to create a hub where entrepreneurs could collide," says executive director Sally Ng. "Our goal is to accelerate, collide, and fuse different resources for the start-up world." The location of Planet Hatch, conveniently situated within the Knowledge Park, has started to create a one-stop shop for start-ups and innovative new companies.

A key component of the organization, offered in partnership with Propel ICT, is a 12-week core accelerator program for entrepreneurs. "It's designed to push them as far as possible," says Ng. "Mentors work with start-up companies and the curriculum explores tools such as the lean canvas, analytics, and various methodologies."

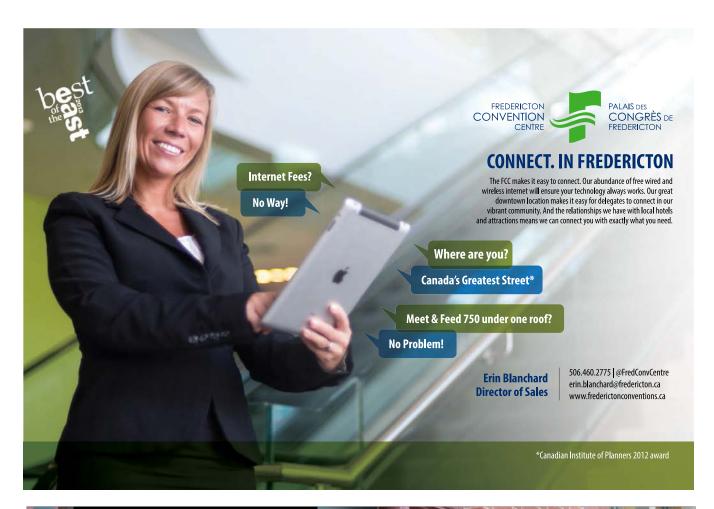
In a single year, the program can accommodate two cohorts, each with five to nine companies. The companies that have already gone through the program have raised \$4.4 million and leveraged another \$1.9 million from government funding and loans. A few of the breakout stars include HotSpot Parking Inc. and Resson Aerospace Corp.

In addition to the core program, Planet Hatch has offered more than 80 events and workshops in the past year and a half,



with over 1,500 attendees. "We want to create an environment that offers something for everyone," says Ng. "One half of the centre functions as office space, while the other side is a community zone." Planet Hatch also hosts many different organizations, which allows young start-ups to tap more experienced business owners on the shoulder and ask questions.

Ng believes the city as a whole will benefit from the growth of start-ups. "If companies are attracting employees here and creating high-paying jobs, it has a ripple effect," she says. "We need to see this type of development happening in Fredericton so we can prepare the next generation to want to be entrepreneurs." — AMANDA LESLIE





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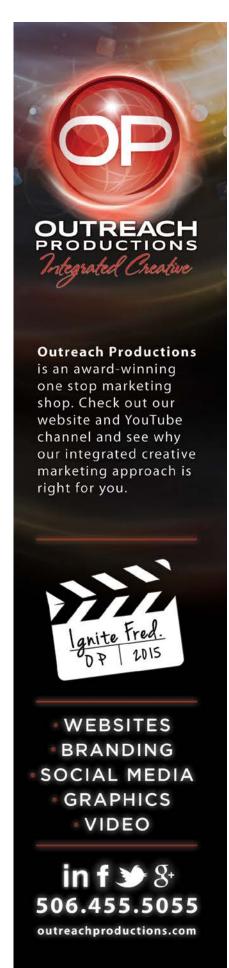
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A bias toward

HOTSPOT PARKING IS ONE OF THOSE innovations that feels like a paradigm shift. The Fredericton-made solution to everyone's biggest downtown headache uses an app to allow drivers to feed their parking meter via their smartphone. The system also lets merchants, professionals, and businesses offer free parking to customers. It's a bit of disruptive technology that is adding a new layer of business of parking in cities such as Saint John, Charlottetown, and the city where the technology was developed.

Phil Curley is the young entrepreneur behind HotSpot, but he had some help with his brainchild. In fact, the whole city of Fredericton participated on the beta test of the technology. "We became part of the HotSpot experiment," says Maurice Gallant, the president of e-Novations, a not-for-profit municipal corporation operated by the City of Fredericton. "Fredericton became the laboratory that allowed the company to develop the technology."



New Brunswick's capital city has been stepping up for a lot of small companies recently. There have been a few international success stories, including Radian6, Blue Spurs, and LuminUltra, and many smaller companies such as Resson Aerospace, Eigen Innovations, Tibre Cases, Real Food Connections, and Red Rover Brewing Company that are just starting to make their mark. They've been helped along the way by Fredericton's powerful start-up incubation-and-acceleration system, which includes Ignite Fredericton, Knowledge Park, and Planet Hatch, along with Gallant's corporation e-Novations at its core.

The premium brand of e-Novations, GoFred, was born a decade and a half ago, when the CRTC deregulated Internet providers, paving the way for innovation in the industry. The municipal telecommunications company became a CRTC-registered Internet carrier in 2000. GoFred's first product was a broadband Internet service

that could be customized to user needs.

"We started buying from a service provider upstream," says Gallant. "We recently formed a partnership with F6 Networks. The arrangement means that we get more attractive price points and we can control the speed of those pipes." Now Fredericton can offer gigabits per second at extremely attractive rates that are the best value in Atlantic Canada. Rates for dedicated gigabit commercial Internet in Fredericton are less than one-tenth the cost of many other jurisdictions.

"We can offer the lowest-rate, best-value Internet in Canada, and you don't need a long-term Internet contract," says Mike Richard, GoFred's vice-president of operations. "Internet contracts can be a real hardship for start-ups. A lot of them don't know where they're going to be in 10 months."

GoFred even began giving away the unused portion it bought and paid for to customers—for free. "That became our

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Come together

Ignite Fredericton, Planet Hatch, and Knowledge Park operate as a single organization yet are three independent brands. Here's the lowdown on each:

Ignite Fredericton Supports entrepreneurs by helping them start, grow, or locate their business; attracts/retains talent; and strengthens the ecosystem through strategic initiatives.

Planet Hatch Connects early stage start-ups with resources, including an acceleration program, coaching, mentoring, funding, and collaborative space/ tools to take ideas to commercial reality.

Knowledge Park New Brunswick's only research and technology park is a clustering environment for the knowledge industry. It's currently home to 30 resident companies, employing 800 people, and generating over \$100 million in annual GDP.

value proposition," says Richard. "Other cities can't do that."

With low rates in place, e-Novations did something that was unheard of at the time: it set up a free WiFI zone that could be easily accessed by anyone in the downtown core and throughout Fredericton's public spaces.

Gallant says e-Novations started by asking this deceptively simple question: "What would happen if a city had a bias toward yes?" The answer seemed to be that

"What would happen if a city had a bias toward yes?" The answer seemed to be that GoFred and the city itself would become a living laboratory—a place to try new things

GoFred and the city would become a living laboratory—a place to try new things. "We decided to make Fredericton the place where big companies came to try stuff, to beta test in a safe zone with a bias to yes," says Gallant. "We've been building our brand around that idea ever since."

It was a perfect fit. It meant the city wouldn't be about smokestacks and factories. "We made the decision that Fredericton would be about the knowledge industry," says Gallant. "Early on, the city's involvement in this space was about challenging a model, and some incumbents were uncomfortable back then. But that's old news now."

The experiment is working well. The Intelligent Community Forum named Fredericton one of the World's Top Seven Intelligent Communities two years in a row. It also ranks high in metrics such as livability and the cost of doing business. Fredericton has also been pumping out impressive world-class companies, including Radian6 and LuminUltra.

As for next steps? "We think we can be a player in the Atlantic region," says Gallant. "The old recipe of building a moat around a city is the wrong recipe. The new recipe is co-operation." — T.M.







An artistic SOUL

THE MOST IMPORTANT VISUAL ARTS COLLECTION in Atlantic

Canada resides in an unassuming building on the banks of the St. John River, across from the provincial legislature. The Beaverbrook Art Gallery began in 1959 as a gift from Lord Beaverbrook, a major art collector and one of Canada's richest people during his lifetime. His name—his peerage title, at least—is famous across New Brunswick. The man who was born Max Aitken is eulogized in the names of schools, streets, hotels, and other prominent edifices, but his gallery is his greatest legacy.

Today the Beaverbrook Art Gallery is the repository of a world-class collection of artworks by such masters as Turner, Gainsborough, Krieghoff, and Dali. "We're a major destination point for tourists," says Terry Graff, the CEO and chief curator. "People make pilgrimages to see our masterworks."

The location of the gallery is no accident. "That was deliberate on Lord Beaverbrook's part," says Graff. "He wanted to be at the seat of government, so he chose this property for that reason. We're also the spot where visiting dignitaries are brought to show what we have here in Fredericton. We're the gem—a community meeting place that links artists with audiences and that belongs to all New Brunswickers. We're an ambassador for the city of Fredericton and the province."

In a world of diminishing attention spans, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery provides a place to reflect, somewhere "to learn about yourself and your own values, to be challenged or stimulated," says Graff. It also provides a centrepiece for New Brunswick's capital city. Fredericton may be focusing on business these days, but it's also the provincial seat of government and a repository for the culture and heritage of New Brunswick.

There are other keepers of the culture in Fredericton as well. Just a short walk from the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, every year the The New Brunswick College of Craft and Design teaches around 280 students who study everything from the traditional crafts of pottery-making and fabrics to state-of-the-art multimedia and computer design. NBCCD was founded 75 years ago, primarily to teach seasonal workers the crafting skills they could use to see them through the lean winter months.

Today the college's campus is very much a part of Fredericton's development vision for the downtown area, says NBCCD director Keith McAlpine. NBCCD graduates are fundamental to the arts and cultural economy, and many go on to start businesses. "One of our strategic goals is to strengthen relationships between arts and business," says McAlpine. "Many of our students become entrepreneurs, and most stay in the province. At the same time, our graduates are prized by businesses for their ability to solve problems in creative ways."

The culture that comes together in Fredericton makes for a perfect mix, according to Patricia Donnelly, the marketing and communications manager at the Fredericton Convention Centre. The 36,000-square-foot facility opened in 2011, in part to capitalize on the city's ability to attract conventions, meetings, and events.

It's not a hard sell. "We like to say that we're a smart destination with bands and bandwidth," says Donnelly. The bands are courtesy of the dynamic music scene that has been building in Fredericton in recent years, punctuated by a string of annual music festivals such as Harvest Jazz and Blues, Shivering Songs, and Martime Countryfest. The bandwidth is courtesy of eNovations and GoFred. "We have free Internet in every city-owned venue and major commercial corridor in the city," says Donnelly. "That's a big incentive for people who want to hold an interesting meeting or event here."

Despite the accolades, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery isn't about to rest on its laurels. The gallery is putting shovels in the ground this fall on a \$25-million expansion that will include an artist-in-residence studio, a café, a multipurpose learning centre, and more space to host events and exhibit its huge collection of art.

"We see ourselves not as a frill but as an absolute necessity," says Graff. "We help with education, with heritage, and with tourism. We provide economic benefit by bringing tourists to the province and by working with businesses and the community. We're a vital part of Fredericton." — T.M.

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