



John Savard, who has worked in commercial real estate for years, has established his own company, BedRock Realty Advisors. ELIZABETH CAMERON

Local medical imaging firm sees potential in oil and gas

Calgary Scientific plans expansion with tech suited to many sectors

AMANDA STEPHENSON

A Calgary company whose mobile technology allows doctors to make diagnoses on the go is expanding into other sectors, including oil and gas.

Calgary Scientific Inc., best known for its Resolution MD viewer, which lets doctors view medical images on mobile devices, is entering a "new growth phase" with a focus on branching into new industries.

Dave Waldrop, executive vice-president of sales and marketing, said that after more than a decade in the medical space, Calgary Scientific is promoting other applications for its technology.

"Medical imaging is how Calgary Scientific got started," Waldrop said. "But what we found out is that the underlying technology that we used to build the Resolution MD product can be applied in other markets."

While privately-owned Calgary Scientific is not exiting the medical space — in fact, it believes it still has room to grow in that sector — it has taken the functionality of the Resolution MD viewer and used it to create a new product, PureWeb.

This software allows companies to move desktop and workstation enterprise applications to mobile platforms, keeping data secure and without the need to re-write code.

"The problem we're solving for radiological images is the same type of problem that a lot of other types of companies have — which is accessing large amounts of data on multiple storage systems over the Internet securely on low power devices or mobile devices," Waldrop said.

The PureWeb software can be used by any company that has large amounts of data on an older, legacy application and wants employees to be able to access that data on their mobile devices.

But Waldrop said several mid-size oil and gas companies have already adopted the product, in spite of — or even because of — the current oil price environment.

"A lot of the oil and gas companies are looking at this slowdown as an opportunity to modernize their infrastructure and become more efficient," he said.

As part of the company's plan for growth, Waldrop said, Calgary Scientific will be expanding its workforce.

The company has 80 employees now — the majority in Calgary, but a handful in the U.S., Hong Kong and U.K. — and expects that to grow. It is actively hiring now for its Calgary office, and is looking to expand its global sales team.

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"It's conceivable we may open an office in other parts of Asia, even in Greater China. And also in Latin America — Latin America is an area where we see an opportunity for some presence," Waldrop said.

Founded in 2004, Calgary Scientific's original focus was a Web-based medical imaging viewer, but the company quickly got on board the smartphone revolution.

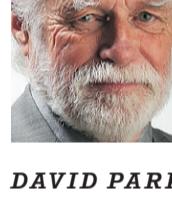
Using ResolutionMD on a mobile device, doctors can get access to high-resolution images — such as those produced by a CT scan — as soon as they're taken.

In recent years, the company has celebrated landing a number of major contracts with health care networks, including the Veterans Affairs hospital network in the U.S. as well as the Mayo Clinic.

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AROUND TOWN

BedRock lays its foundation



DAVID PARKER

Since he moved to Calgary from Toronto in 1989, John Savard has been heavily involved within our commercial real estate community. His first position was with the former Torode Realty, and when it was sold and became Barclay Street Real Estate he stayed on until moving over to J. J. Barnicke.

Since 2012, Savard has been serving as vice-president, office leasing at Avison Young, but last month he decided to go on his own and has established BedRock Realty Advisors with an office along 4th Street S.W.

During his career he says he has experienced many up and down real estate cycles and feels that his experience plus an established list of clients give him the confidence to launch on his own.

Specializing in and focusing solely on office leasing, Savard says he offers a big plus to clients in that he serves only tenants and has no obligations to landlords. He understands their needs and their budget requirements.

His partner in his new venture is his wife, Miren, who also owns single family developer Mercedes Homes. A true entrepreneur, she has a master's degree in real estate development from Massachusetts Institute of Technology as well as a master's degree in entrepreneurship and bachelor of science in management engineering from Manila University.

Among the clients served by BedRock Realty Advisors is Wood Group Mustang, a market-leading global energy services provider headquartered in Aberdeen, Scotland, that employs 43,000 people worldwide. It established an office in Calgary in 2013 and contracts BedRock for all of its real estate needs.

Recently, Savard acted on behalf of Wood Group to sub-lease two of its floors in Selkirk House — the 19th to Norwest Engineering and the 20th to Sentio Engineering. And he is busy trying to find a new tenant for the 21,000-square-foot seventh floor of Keynote.

Currently, he is assisting the new CHBA-UDI Calgary Region Association in sub-leasing its 4,100 square feet on the main floor of Deerport Centre as it needs to move into larger space,

so Savard is quite busy already.

But he and Miren also find the time to pay an annual visit to the Philippines during the Christmas holidays. Along with their two daughters they stop off to buy food and clothing and deliver everything to the charity they support, Home of Love Orphanage, run by the Sisters of Charity in Antipolo City.

Savard has also been associated with the Hong Kong Canada Business Association-Calgary for the past 15 years and served as a director for a decade.

NEWS AND NOTES

Recently on the Chicago Theatre stage, in front of more than 700 members of its worldwide distribution partner teams, Calgary-based DIRT Environmental Solutions unveiled its demonstration of ICEreality for the first time.

It's a mixed reality technology for design and construction in which mixed reality overlays virtual reality. I watched the demonstration on a link that showed how users can see the physical world around them, including people, while experiencing and manipulating virtual objects.

Using ICEreality the 3-D design of a proposed interior space is placed into real environments allowing designers and owners to walk through a design while making changes and keeping track of the budget while creating new iterations on time.

A planned cabinet may not be the right height — change it; a solid wall might look better with a few panels of glass — change it; a door might be more convenient a foot to the left — change it.

Owners and tenants walk through rooms and can design, experience, modify and price their interiors in ICE while the software simultaneously produces the construction directions for DIRT to build it to the decimal point of a millimetre.

Barrie Loberg, DIRT's vice-president of software development who is leading the ICEreality team, says, "You can virtually build or add to what's already physically around you, and you can do that as a group experience, regardless of location."

He was a hit at the Chicago show where some 4,000 people donned goggles for a demo of new mixed reality for construction.

Forty-two young regional Canadians have been selected to participate in the Japan Exchange and Teaching program this year to teach English in schools across Japan, and were given a bon voyage by Japanese Consul General Kunihiko Tanabe at his official residence in Calgary.

David Parker appears Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Read his columns online at calgaryherald.com/business. He can be reached at 403-830-4622 or by email at info@davidparker.ca

Saskatchewan, B.C. brewers cry foul over Alberta beer tax changes

AMANDA STEPHENSON

Brewers in B.C. and Saskatchewan are crying foul over changes announced this week to Alberta's beer tax system, arguing the new markup structure erects a barrier between producers and consumers and could be a violation of inter-provincial trade rules.

"You're virtually building a wall," said Kevin Beattie, executive director of the B.C. Craft Brewers Guild on Thursday. "Our members cannot absorb the increase and they will pass it along, which means the consumer will pay more for beer produced outside of Alberta."

The Alberta government announced Monday that it will be eliminating the lower graduated markup rate applied to beer produced by small craft brewers in the three western provinces (those covered by the New West Partnership trade agreement). The graduated rate will be replaced by an across-the-board markup of \$1.25 per litre for all beer, regardless of where it is produced. However, Alberta brewers — as opposed to those from Saskatchewan and B.C. — will get at least some of the money back, through a new grant program exclusively targeted to brewers with brewing operations and jobs in this province.

Details of the grant have yet to be released, but Michael Micovcin, president and CEO of Saskatoon-based Great Western Brewing Company, said he is worried it will simply be a thinly disguised rebate program with the intent of making Alberta brewers whole in the aftermath of the move to a higher markup rate. He said he believes that kind of preferential treatment could be a violation of trade rules.

"It would be offside in two areas: the New West Partnership agreement, and also I believe with the Constitution Act," Micovcin said, adding his brewery will be forced to raise prices to offset the higher markup.

The current Alberta markup system, introduced last fall, was aimed at boosting the province's craft brewing industry. Because of their inclusion in the New West Partnership, brewers in B.C. and Saskatchewan were also granted the graduated markup rate and were quick to increase their presence in the Alberta market accordingly.

"We saw new entrants in the Alberta market we've never seen before," said Jason Foster, an Edmonton-based beer blogger. "There's no question in my mind that B.C. brewers, in particular, had moved in to take advantage of the space created by the former policy. It was manna from heaven for them."

The policy sparked outrage from beer producers in other parts of the country. Toronto's Steam Whistle Brewing took the province to court earlier this year and got an injunction on the higher markups, contending Alberta was creating a barrier to interprovincial trade.

While brewers in B.C. and Saskatchewan are now making similar allegations, Foster said he's not sure they have a strong argument. While the shift to a grant program for only Alberta companies undoubtedly weakens the position of outside brewers trying to compete here, Alberta brewers face barriers in other provinces, where government-controlled liquor stores encourage the promotion and sale of local products above others.

"B.C. brewers, Ontario brewers and to a lesser extent brewers in Saskatchewan all essentially have government acting as a shield for them," he said, adding that it's not unusual for provinces to use grants to try to grow their craft industry, pointing to Ontario's Microbrewery Strategy program.

Leah Holoiday, a spokesperson for Alberta Finance Minister Joe Ceci, said the government believes its new markup system does not violate the terms of any interprovincial trade agreements.

"As the New West Trade Partnership intends, our changes mean a level playing field for small Alberta brewers both selling domestically and exporting to other jurisdictions," Holoiday said in an email. "They in no way restrict any manufacturer or distributor from selling beer in Alberta."

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