

Bravo!

2001
ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS
Celebrating Excellence in Northern Colorado Business

SECTION
C

Nov. 2-15, 2001

Tom Gleason:

A tower of
the community

This year's

winners,

finalists and

nominees

inside



THE NORTHERN COLORADO
BUSINESS REPORT

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PHOTO BY STEVE PORTER

Entrepreneurs boost the region's economy

Entrepreneurship is alive and well in Northern Colorado.

From Fort Collins to Greeley, Loveland to Estes Park, Fort Lupton to Wellington, entrepreneurs continue to excel in their endeavors, sparking creativity and generating economic momentum for the region.

This year's nominees for Bravo! Entrepreneur run the gamut of industries, from high technology to development, retail to restaurants, agribusiness to manufacturing. And every nominee displayed the core values of entrepreneurship, including risk taking, overcoming adversity and business success.

They serve as beacons to others, both those engaged in their own entrepreneurial endeavors or just considering a new business venture.

This year's honorees include:

■ Spiro Palmer, Palmer Flowers, Bravo! Entrepreneur, Fort Collins.

■ Chad and Troy McWhinney, principals in McWhinney Enterprises, Bravo! Entrepreneur, Loveland.

■ Jerry Morgensen, CEO of Hensel Phelps Construction Co., Bravo! Entrepreneur, Greeley.

■ Joe and Bob Raith, Morning Fresh Farms, Platteville, Bravo! Entrepreneur, Outlying Communities.

■ Tom Gleason, chairman of First National Bank, Bravo! Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement Award.

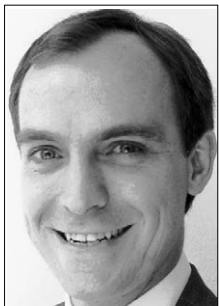
■ Jeff Whitham, chairman, Encorp Inc. of Windsor, Bravo! Entrepreneur Emerging Entrepreneur Award.

■ State Farm Insurance Cos., Greeley, Regional Spirit Award.

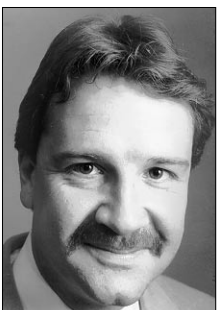
This special section also includes write-ups on finalists for these awards, as well as on the dozens of nominees.

What's the process for Bravo! Entrepreneur? First, Bravo! Entrepreneur is a program of *The Northern Colorado Business Report*, along with our event partners, the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greeley/Weld Chamber of Commerce, the Greeley/Weld Economic Development Action Partnership, the Loveland Chamber of Commerce and

PUBLISHERS NOTEBOOK



CHRISTOPHER WOOD



JEFF NUTTALL

Every nominee displayed the core values of entrepreneurship, including risk taking, overcoming adversity and business success.

the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp.

The president or CEO of each of those organizations serves on the Bravo! Entrepreneur Steering Committee, which is responsible for the overall success of Bravo! Entrepreneur. We also serve on that committee.

These representatives each appoint business leaders to an awards committee, which considers nominations from the public and from the awards committee itself.

This year's awards committee included Mark Driscoll of First National Bank in Fort Collins; Irene Johnson of Linsco Private Ledger of Loveland; Kelly Peters of the Loveland Center for Business Development; Kevin Schwindt of R.R. Donnelley Norwest of Greeley; David Thomas of the Estes Park Chamber Resort Association; Ted Warner of Connecting Point of Greeley and Rocky Mountain Technology Solutions of Fort Collins; and Marge Yoder of Travel Connection in Fort Collins.

As always, these awards-committee members pored over dozens of write-ups on nominees, giving each careful consideration. We thank them for all their hard work.

Thanks also to the talented folks at Burns Marketing/Communications for their creative assistance on the Bravo! Entrepreneur program, Advanced Media of Windsor for the video, All About Events for assistance in event organization and Balloonz and Bouquets for the floral decorations.

Of course, extra thanks go to the staff of *The Northern Colorado Business Report*, which works so hard on Bravo! Entrepreneur throughout the year, especially to Marketing Manager Jim Rath.

Lastly, special thanks to our many sponsors, including Platinum Sponsors Wells Fargo Banks and Engineering Computer Consultants Inc. Every sponsor played a critical role in the success of Bravo! Entrepreneur.



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STEVE PORTER • BUSINESS REPORT

BANKING LEGEND — Tom Gleason became president of First National Bank of Fort Collins in 1965 and guided the institution through Fort Collins' rapid growth over the next 30 years. He retired in 1998 but still serves as chair of the bank's board of directors.

Gleason steers bank through growth years

By Steve Porter
The Business Report

F O R T COLLINS — The story of Fort Collins' phenomenal growth over the last 40-plus years wouldn't be complete without including the impressive career of now retired banker Tom Gleason.

Fort Collins was a sleepy little college town of about 15,000 when Gleason arrived in the mid-1950s. His rise through the ranks to become president of First National Bank in 1965 and holding that position until 1994 parallels Fort Collins' rapid growth to a now bustling community of more than 120,000.

"When I started, our assets were about \$7 million, and now they're over

a billion, thanks to the growth of the community," Gleason said.

Because of Gleason's community-first style of banking that set a standard for others to emulate, he is this year's Bravo! Entrepreneur Award winner for Lifetime Achievement.

Past recipients of the award include the late Ken Monfort of Greeley, Bob Everitt of the Fort Collins-based Everitt Cos. and W. D. Farr, president of Farr and Co. in Greeley.

A Sioux City, Iowa, native and finance-company employee who was transferred to Fort Collins in 1954, Gleason fell in love with the area and declined an offer of another transfer to South Dakota.

"I said, I don't think so," he recalls with a chuckle.

Career starts in 1956

In 1956, Gleason went to work for First National Bank — one of only two banks in town — in the consumer-loan department. It was the beginning of a career at First National that would span more than 40 years.

"I just went through the chairs," said Gleason, who moved up until he was simultaneously president, chief executive officer and chairman of the board of directors.

"As the town grew, the bank grew
See GLEASON, 4C



Bravo!
Entrepreneur —
Lifetime
Achievement

Tom Gleason

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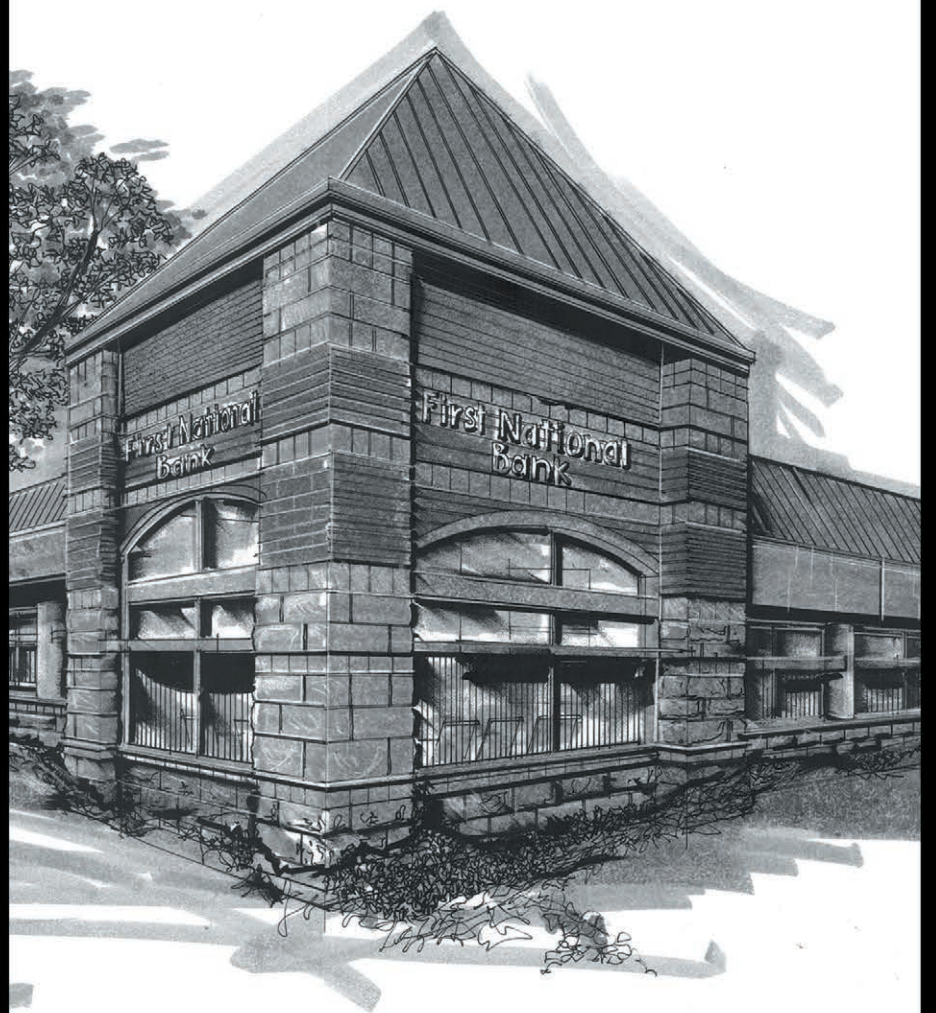
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GLEASON, from 3C

and I grew, so to speak," he said.

The 1960s was a time of major growth for First National. The bank moved from its original location at the southeast corner of College and Mountain avenues to a new building at its current location of 205 W. Oak in 1961. Eight years later, the bank added its 12-story tower — a local landmark that has become synonymous with the Fort Collins skyline and the first high-rise condominium-office building west of Chicago.

"When we moved to this location, we never looked back," Gleason said. "It gave us the momentum we needed to be the dominant bank in Northern Colorado."

Gleason said First National Bank — known as First Interstate Bank from 1981 until 1993 — has always had a close relationship with local merchants, especially those in the downtown. Another key aspect, he said, was in "taking care of the consumer," whether they were a business owner, farmer or individual account holder.

Taking care of those relationships was a large part of the fun of banking, Gleason said.

"The interpersonal relationships with the customers and the opportunity to grow the bank through those relationships and the opportunity to help the community to grow, that's the fun of banking — serving their needs."

Big banks bring challenges

Gleason recalls the challenges the bank faced with the advent of the

"super regional banks" based in other parts of the country, a phenomenon that sharply increased competition for customers and borrowers. But it's a challenge First National has embraced.

"We've been able to do that because we offer as good of service or better than they do," he said.

Gleason said he believes First National continues to "set the standard" for the region's banking community, taking the lead in such innovations as offering the state's first automatic teller machine and opening the first branch location in Colorado.

"I've always said we are the innovators," he said. "It's my belief that the competition looks up to First National Bank."

Gleason turned the reins of the bank over to current president Mark Driscoll in 1994 but remained on board as CEO until Dec. 31, 1998. Even without those titles, Gleason maintains an office at First National and his contributions continue on a regular basis, says Driscoll.

"When he's in town, he's in every week," Driscoll said. "He's a wonderful mentor and adviser to me and he always has been. We want to have his involvement as much and as long as he wants to."

Driscoll said Gleason occupies a central role in Fort Collins' recent history.

"When we look back at the history of Fort Collins, Tom will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the finest businessmen this community ever had," he said.

Driscoll points to Gleason's advancement of branch banking, ATMs and leadership in the early 1990s in moving First National out of the umbrella of First Interstate ownership back to a more community-centered bank.

"Tom was amazingly entrepreneur-

ial," he said. "The whole effort Tom led to buy the bank back from First Interstate and make it an independent bank was an incredibly entrepreneurial move."

Driscoll notes that Gleason's strong commitment to the Fort Collins community continues to this day, as he co-chairs the "Imagine Fort Collins" campaign to raise money for the arts.

Gleason, who's been married to his wife, Ginnie, for 47 years, has a grown son and daughter and two "real special" grandchildren. An avid bicyclist, he spends his time traveling and serving on First National's board and those of several community organizations, including Poudre Valley Hospital and the Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art. He recently left the board of the Colorado State University Research Foundation after 31 years.

"We have a huge hole on the board now," said Kathleen Byington, CSURF president and CEO. "Tom helped form CSURF in 1970 and he's been such a faithful steward of it."

Byington said she also considers Gleason a mentor and an invaluable resource on almost anything.

"It doesn't matter what you're talking about, Tom is a fountain of knowledge," she said. "His expertise and guidance will be very, very sorely missed. I've learned a lot from him and I respect his judgment completely."

Gleason, who continues to serve as the bank's chairman of the board, said he believes First National's future remains bright, even with growing competition from huge, national banking conglomerates.

"If we can continue to treat our customers as if we're a \$200 million bank as opposed to a \$1 billion bank, we'll do just fine," he said.

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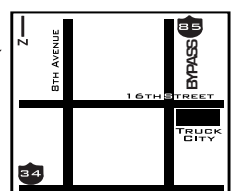


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Conditions ripe in area for nurturing new ideas

By Sue Lenthe

Business Report Correspondent

The pioneer spirit that fueled westward expansion in the 19th century still inhabits the area, taking shape at the dawn of the latest century as entrepreneurial spirit.

For Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce President Michael Gould, that spirit is palpable. "I get at least one new idea pitched to me once a week, here. It's just an environment where there's a lot of entrepreneurial thought."

Gould, a transplant from the Midwest, observes that there seems to be more entrepreneurial activity here than in his native Iowa.

Others have made similar observations about the state in general and Fort Collins specifically.

Inc. magazine rated Boulder and Denver No. 1 and Fort Collins No. 27 in its year 2000 "Best Cities to Start and Grow a Company Now." Meanwhile, according to the Colorado Office of Economic Development, the Corporation for Enterprise Development ranked Colorado third in the nation for new companies and seventh in new business growth during 2000.

Different mindset

"When you come out here you've got a different mindset," Gould said. "You've got a diverse population. You've got free-thinking individuals. You've got an environment where it's OK to try something and fail. And try something else."

Northern Colorado, in part because of the growing presence of high-tech firms, is increasingly a hub for entrepreneurial activity, said Dr. Anne McCarthy, director of the Center for Entrepreneurial and Family Enterprise at Colorado State University.

"The strong Hewlett-Packard presence here has really brought a lot of entrepreneurial firms here," McCarthy said.

These large firms tend to spark entrepreneurial activities in other ways, as well. "Truthfully, lots of times, when H-P goes through its restructurings, people decide to start their own firms," McCarthy said.

The presence of universities and community colleges and the varied research and development and business resources they offer creates a nurturing climate for entrepreneurs.

"University communities tend to be nurturers of new ideas and entrepreneurial thought," Gould said.

All the right pieces

As the right pieces fall into place — things like physical infrastructure, financing and a skilled work force — Northern Colorado is growing in its reputation as an entrepreneurial center, said Kathy Kregel, director of the Fort Collins Virtual Business Incubator.

"One of my charges in starting the incubator was to help build the critical mass of high-tech activity in the Fort Collins area."

There's an important reason behind that, Kregel said. "Our mission has to do with the creation of good-paying jobs. The best-paying jobs are in high tech

and manufacturing."

Already the incubator, formed in 1998, is seeing that mission become reality. "We periodically analyze what our companies have done that are in the incubator or that have graduated from it," Kregel said. "The average wage per job created was very close to \$80,000 per year."

Entrepreneurs help create jobs and build a community's tax base, McCarthy said. But there are other benefits, as well. "I think they make the community vibrant and growing and interesting."

That can benefit communities in ways outside the business realm, Gould said. "Entrepreneurial thought in business translates to entrepreneurial thoughts in other areas of society; how you manage your city, how the community does business, how people think about doing things."

The entrepreneurial approach may sometimes be unconventional but also can help produce new ways to solve problems, Gould said.

Enhancing this entrepreneurial presence in Northern Colorado means communities must step forward to help support entrepreneurs, he said.

Infrastructure important

Much like the 18th-century pioneers who preceded them, entrepreneurs today need money and infrastructure.

"Infrastructure is very important," McCarthy said. She divides the necessary infrastructure into several categories: physical, such as roadways, railroads and airports; technological, including high-speed Internet access; financial; human, including professional services and a quality work force; and social, which includes quality education and training opportunities from grade schools through universities.

Entrepreneurs need education, frequently about business practices, Kregel said. "Having a good idea is not a successful business."

The region's small-business development centers, community colleges and universities are important resources for helping entrepreneurs become successful business operators.

Encouraging entrepreneurial behavior means providing support from people willing to listen to entrepreneurs about their ideas, Gould said.

"The chamber is a resource in its own right. We listen to ideas and we direct people on a pretty regular basis with thoughts on how we can help them expand their market here. We can also help people with a good understanding of their concept but who may not have a good understanding of how to operate their business or market their business."

Because Northern Colorado is increasingly well-positioned when it comes to adequate infrastructure, even the recent round of layoffs can translate into opportunity. Layoffs have eased the labor shortage, put more talented employees into the pool and even mean more people may be inspired to start their own businesses.

Kregel looks for a steady upward trend in entrepreneurial activity. "This is a great place to live, infrastructure and funding are coming together; I see a real strong future."



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Spiro Palmer's love of flowers paying off

By Luanne Kadlub

Business Report Correspondent

F O R T COLLINS — You gotta love what you do to work long hours seven days a week, year after year. Spiro Palmer, president of Palmer Flowers, Palmer Decorating Gallery and Palmer Properties, has been doing just that.

"Clearly, he's built Palmer Flowers into the premiere florist business in Northern Colorado," said C. Gerard Nalezny, president of Community First Bank in Fort Collins. "You can drive by or drop by, and there's Spiro watering flowers. He's there, constantly redoing it, remaking it, staying in front of the industry trends. He's continually refining, looking out for the future."

Greek immigrant

Palmer immigrated to the United States from Greece in 1973 and immediately went to work in his family's floral business

2001



Bravo!

Entrepreneur —
Fort Collins

Spiro Palmer



STEVE PORTER • BUSINESS REPORT

BUSINESS IS BLOOMING — Spiro Palmer, a Greek immigrant, transformed Palmer's Flowers from a small downtown shop to one of the premiere flower stores in Northern Colorado.

in Boulder, a business begun in 1912 by uncles in Chicago and a business that continues to operate there today as well.

After a couple years working in Boulder, Palmer, in keeping with family tradition, was ready to pursue his big dream: a flower shop of his own. He moved to Fort Collins in 1975 and opened his business a year later in a 1,000-square-foot shop downtown.

He started the business with \$10,000 of his own money and a \$15,000 bank loan. "I knew it would work from day one," he said. "I loved the city and the people, and even though there was a lot of competition, I knew I could compete with them because I had the good location and low overhead. We had a good first year."

Cash and carry became a dominant part of the downtown business and cus-

tomers kept coming back because of good service and beautiful flowers. Palmer, his wife, Angela, and two other employees kept the shop hopping, with annual sales reaching \$600,000 in 1982. Typical annual sales for a florist shop 1,500- to 2,000-square-feet in size is between \$350,000 and \$500,000, he said.

Daring move made

But the downtown location became too small. Palmer started searching for a larger location, but found nothing to suit his needs in what was then the heart of the city. So he looked south, and bought land at South College and Horsetooth. It was a daring move on his part, since this area was, at the time, undeveloped. He persevered and the 15,000-square-foot store opened in 1983.

The store was large for Fort Collins' population in the early '80s, then about 60,000 people. "It was way too big for Fort Collins," Palmer said. But he built for the future, not for the present. As time went by, not only did the business grow, but so did Fort Collins in both population and development. His store, now in what many consider the retail heart of the city, brings in annual sales of \$3 million. His business is ranked among the top 100 Teleflora shops in terms of sales and is one of the 25 largest shops in terms of square footage. Teleflora includes 26,000 florists nationwide.

See PALMER, 8C

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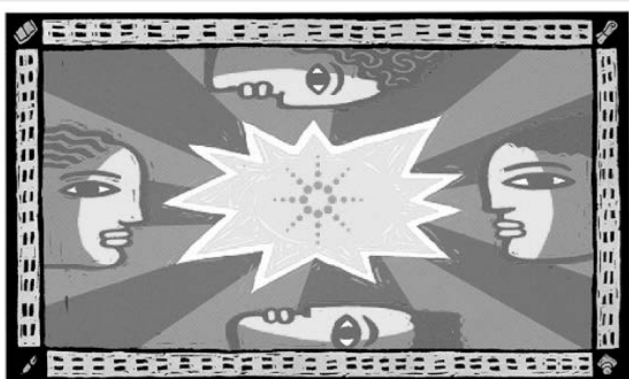
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Bravo! Awards finalists ignite Fort Collins area

Coming in as finalists this year for the Bravo! Entrepreneur Award for Fort Collins are William Ward, president of Front Range Internet Inc.; Dean Suposs, president of Avert Inc.; David Carson, owner of CBW Automation; and David and Jim Neenan, owners of The Neenan Cos.

William Ward founded Front Range Internet Inc., an Internet service provider, in 1995. The company employs 28 people and had 1998 revenues of \$1.65 million, first becoming profitable in 1997.

Ward invested his retirement funds to start the business, a risky bet that paid off.

The company now services thousands of customers and counts among its major clients the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, Atrix Labs, the U.S.D.A., Norlarco, Poudre School District, Hewlett-Packard Co. and New Horizons Travel.

David Carson is owner of CBW Automation Inc., a robotic manufacturer established 30 years ago. Robots produced by the company are used in machine shops and in various manufacturing processes. The company produces the world's fastest robotic arm.



WARD



CARSON

Carson brought the "Toyota" style of management to his company, which now employs about 100 people. Major clients include Kodak and Reynolds Aluminum.

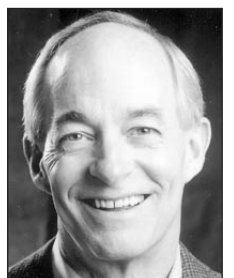
Dean Suposs started Avert as an information-services company in 1986, but that focus shifted to helping employers screen prospective employees through background checks.



SUPOSS

In 1996, Avert's business changed dramatically with the growth of the Internet and information that could be obtained through the Web. In 1999, the company recorded \$12.6 million in sales, and growth continues to accelerate.

David Neenan founded The Neenan Co. in 1973 with the idea of combining development, architecture and construction contracting into one streamlined operation.



DAVID NEENAN

The company specializes in medical office buildings and urban construction and recorded revenues of \$200 million in 1999. David Neenan serves as the company's CEO and Jim Neenan, his cousin, is president.

The Neenan Co. is involved with the United Way, American Cancer Society and Boys and Girls Clubs of Denver.

PALMER, from 7C

Part of the growth in sales came as a result of the expansion beyond selling flowers. "We started focusing more on the interior-decorating business." In concert with that, he built the first phase of the Palmer Design Center, anchored by the Palmer Decorating Gallery, which specializes in artificial silk trees, flowers, plants and art work.

A year later, phase two of the Design Center was built. Tenants, carefully chosen by Palmer to complement one another, include Expressions Custom Furniture, of which he is part owner, The Floor Store, Lighting Designs, Pella Windows, Elite Appliance and Schroll Cabinets.

"In terms of real estate, he's very strategic," Nalezny said. "The whole idea of the Design Center is something Fort Collins hasn't seen. It's a simple idea, but executing it takes time. He's very strategic. He's planning today what's happening in his business five or 10 years down the road."

Design school opened

One such business strategy may be to return to downtown with a second location, Palmer said. In the meantime, he opened

the Palmer Design School in January. Angela Palmer oversees the school, which has six to 14 students enrolled for five-week sessions to learn flower design.

"We always had a lot of requests," Palmer said of his decision to make such classes available. "Our industry, as a whole, has a hard time finding employees. Quite a few of the students are working in floral shops throughout Northern Colorado."

It doesn't bother him, he said, that he's training future employees of his competitors as well as for himself.

Palmer now has 35 employees and as many as 100 during the holidays. Holiday sales account for 40 percent of his annual sales of both artificial and fresh flowers and plants. Valentine's Day is the biggest day of the year, however. Employees prepare for a week to make 1,110 deliveries on the sweetest day of the year.

Weddings are a mainstay year-round, with flowers arranged for eight to 10 weddings a week, slowing down only in the fall before the Christmas rush.

In addition to delivering flowers, Palmer is a firm believer in delivering good will. He supports such organizations as Respire Care, United Way, Poudre Valley Hospital Foundation, Foothills Gateway, Colorado State University and Poudre School District.

Morgensen helps keep Hensel Phelps rolling

By Chryss Cada

Business Report Correspondent

GREELEY — Jerry Morgensen doesn't want to seem ungrateful, but he's wondering how he came to win an award for being an outstanding entrepreneur.

"I mean, I didn't start this company," he said of Hensel Phelps, the construction company he heads. "I don't really see how I'm an entrepreneur."

According to Webster's Dictionary, an entrepreneur is

"a person who organizes and manages a business undertaking, assuming the risk for the sake of the profit."

A look at the profits at Hensel Phelps, the business undertaking Morgensen "organizes and manages" as its president, might begin to answer his question.

When Morgensen came to the general-contractor construction company in 1973, its volume was \$87 million. In 1989, it was \$400 million. In 1999, it was more than \$2 billion. Put differently, since Jerry Morgensen has been running Hensel Phelps, the company has increased its volume by roughly 2,300 percent.

Impressive client list

A look at the list of clients Hensel Phelps has attracted and retained show just what a good job employees are doing of representing themselves and the company.

Major national clients include United Airlines, Lockheed Martin Corp., Denver International Airport, the Dallas/Fort Worth airport (the company is about to start building a new monorail system to move passengers from terminal to terminal), the University of Texas and Wal-Mart (distribution centers) and Sams Clubs.

Hensel Phelps is also the contractor on the remodeling of Pentagon wedges two through five (It was Wedge One that was hit during the Sept. 11 terrorist attack).

International clients include the Netherlands, which hired Hensel Phelps to build a prison on the Dutch-held island of Curacao. Future international growth will be pegged to existing clients who decide to go global. The company will not be making international cold calls.

As leader of Hensel Phelps, Morgensen promotes the "systematic construction approach."

"That means we take on major construction projects in a systematic way with the client in mind," he said. "Our overriding goal is always to make the clients dreams come true — which means being done on time and on budget."

On-time, on-budget reputation

This commitment has earned the Hensel

Phelps team the title, "the on-budget, on-time guys," according to Sue Powers, who worked with Hensel Phelps during her decade at the Denver Renewal Authority.

"They were the contractor you hoped you would get on a project," she said. "Certainly on the most-complicated projects."

Now that Powers has her own com-

See **MORGENSEN, 10C**



STEVE PORTER • BUSINESS REPORT

CONSTRUCTION LEADER — Jerry Morgensen has helped guide the Greeley-based Hensel Phelps through more than 28 years of incredible growth to become one of the most respected and successful construction firms in the nation.

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Jerry Morgensen



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Ehrlichs, Sears, Warde, Bensler star in Greeley

Finalists for this year's Bravo! Entrepreneur Award for Greeley include Ruben and Scott Ehrlich, owners of Ehrlich Motors, Inc.; Curtis Sears, president of Sears Real Estate; Tim Warde, owner and president of Northern Colorado Paper Inc.; and William Bensler, president of Flood and Peterson Insurance Co.

Ruben "Swede" Ehrlich opened a specialty auto-repair shop in Greeley in 1946. Nine years later, he established Ehrlich Motors, selling American cars of all brands. In 1963, he opened the first Datsun dealership in the area, recognizing a just-beginning desire by buyers for smaller, more-fuel-efficient vehicles.

Scott Ehrlich got an early start in his father's dealership while attending school and entered the business full time 10 years ago. In 1996, Scott became general manager. Over the years, Ehrlich Motors has added Toyota and Lincoln-Mercury dealerships to their mixture of foreign and domestic brands.

Scott Ehrlich is also actively involved in real estate development, including Westmore Shopping Center. He serves on the board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and is a sponsor of charity gold tournaments and Vic Nottingham football. He is also an



SCOTT EHRLICH

active alumnae booster for the University of Northern Colorado.

Sears and Company Realtors was established in 1972 by Greeley native Doug Sears and his two brothers. Doug Sears died in 1983 and his son, Steve, became company president. In 1985, Joe Whisenand joined the company as a general manager. By 1988, Whisenand was president and he and five agents were equal partners in ownership.

The company merged with Union Colony Brokers in 1989, and in 1990 a merger with Coldwell Banker, THE TEAM, changed the company's name to Sears and Company, THE TEAM, followed by a third merger in 1991 with John Cowart and Associates.

In 1995, the business' name changed to Sears Real Estate and in 1997 it divided into two companies, with Joe Whisenand focusing on development, and Curtis Sears — who had been the company's attorney — heading the original brokerage business.

By 1998, Sears Real Estate had the largest market share of residential sales for all real estate companies in Greeley. Under Curtis Sears' leadership, the company has encouraged its agents to contribute to the Greeley community, volunteering for such agencies



SEARS

as Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Eldergarden and a host of local service clubs.

Tim Warde founded Northern Colorado Paper in 1978, buying a train carload of Kimberly Clark Corp. paper products and selling them virtually door to door from a rented warehouse.

Twenty years later, Warde is still the company's top salesman and manages 85 employees at the company's Greeley and Pueblo branches. He sits on the national advisory boards of several of Northern Colorado Paper's top suppliers and is the



WARDE

incoming advisory board president of Affiliated Paper Cos., a national buying group of independent paper companies.

On the local level, Warde and his company contribute to the North Colorado Medical Center, Monfort Children's Clinic, United Way of Weld County's Tiller Club, the University of Northern Colorado Foundation, Colorado State University and the Long's Peak Council of Boy Scouts. In addition, he is a member of Centennial Rotary and a director of Weld County Bank.

For more than 15 years, William Bensler has served as president of Flood and Peterson Insurance Co., headquartered in Greeley.

The company, founded in 1939, now has offices in Fort Collins, Eaton and Denver and employs about 100 people.

MORGENSEN, from 9C

pany, Urban Adventures, she uses Hensel Phelps as the contractor for remodeling downtown lofts.

While at the Denver Renewal Authority, Powers worked with Morgensen on several projects, including construction of Elitch Gardens and The Pavilions.

"They went above and beyond


any other contractor I worked with," she said. "They would do whatever it takes to get the job done."

Finding good tradespeople to work their way up through the ranks at Hensel Phelps continues to be the company's greatest challenge.


The way Morgensen sees it, the need for new recruits will only continue to grow.

"There hasn't been a year since this company was founded in 1937 that it hasn't grown," he said. "And I certainly don't expect that to change anytime soon."

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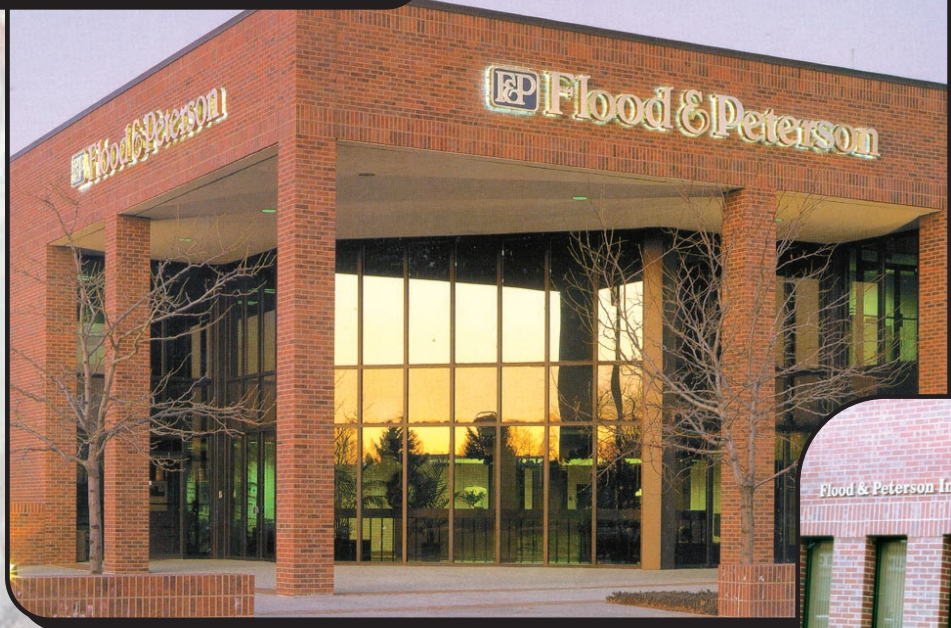
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McWhinney brothers remodel east Loveland

Editor's note: Chad and Troy McWhinney, recipients of the 2001 Bravo! Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Loveland, have developed their own mixed-use project, Centerra, at Interstate 25 and U.S. Highway 34, and guided development of other projects, such as the ConAgra Beef Co. headquarters in west Greeley's Promontory Business Park. The following profile of the brothers is excerpted from a story that originally appeared in the May 18 edition of The Northern Colorado Business Report, when McWhinney Enterprises topped NCBR's "Mercury 100" list of the fastest-growing Northern Colorado companies.

By Tom Hacker

The Business Report

LOVELAND — McWhinney Berries had no "Inc." or "Co." or "Corp." attached to its name when it opened on a Southern California roadside in the mid-1980s.

Chad and Troy McWhinney, then in junior high school, hawked berries produced by a farmer who leased Orange County fields owned by the McWhinney family. The youngsters sold the strawberries from a makeshift stall on Beach Boulevard, one of the region's busiest thoroughfares.

"It didn't take long to realize that we could make more money selling strawberries than we could doing chores around the house," Chad McWhinney said. "We got \$20 a week for our chores, and could make \$300 a week selling strawberries."

Two other McWhinney brothers saw the light and enlisted. By 1991, McWhinney Berries peaked, operating 28 stands that employed 75 people and churned more than \$1 million in sales during a four-month season.

Chad was 19, Troy 17.

A decade later, the brothers have done with land development what they did with California strawberries.

McWhinney Enterprises, the development company that has turned 3,000 acres of east Loveland farm fields into a master-planned project called Centerra, more than tripled its revenue during 2000. During the year, revenue climbed to within a few dollars of \$26 million, up from \$6.3 million in 1999.

Centerra booms

The accomplishment has lots of components: Centerra boomed during 2000 with new retail, hospitality, housing and office projects. The Prime Outlets, the factory-store mall that for years served as the core moneymaker for the McWhinney business, continues to post lofty sales figures. A California arm of McWhinney Enterprises has completed work on three major hotel projects in Anaheim and Garden Grove, and has new hotel projects under way.

And with most of its vast acreage spanning both sides of I-25 just north of U.S. 34 awaiting development, Centerra has just begun to show its promise.

The people most familiar with the



TOM HACKER • BUSINESS REPORT

STRAWBERRY HAWKERS — Troy McWhinney, left, and brother Chad McWhinney parlayed a \$300-a-week strawberry business in California into a Northern Colorado real estate development company that is transforming the landscape, earning them the 2001 Bravo! Entrepreneur Award for Loveland.

McWhinney brothers and their company say that success stems from locking onto a philosophy that real estate developers can make money by doing the "right thing."

"When I first met them, I was incredibly impressed with their maturity and their business acumen," said Kathleen Cherroff, a friend of the brothers' late father and who now serves as chief

financial officer for the company.

"They have another rare quality: They are always, always conscious of trying to do the right thing."

Cherroff is a charter employee of the company, having joined when McWhinney Colorado Enterprises LLC first incorporated in July 1994.

Since then, employment has grown from three to 23, and likely will continue to surge as the company prepares to move to new quarters in a 30,000-square-foot office building that will open next year on the shores of Equalizer Lake, a prime Centerra location north of the current headquarters.

Troy McWhinney attributes much of the company's success to the contributions of employees, most of whom have joined the company in the past two years.

"The key is the team members, our employees," he said. "Some of the people we have working for us have done a wonderful job of opening our eyes. We really try to empower them. Nobody second-guesses anyone else here."

Quality control

The McWhinney brothers serve with representatives from construction companies, architectural firms and even local governments on a design review committee that applies standards on Centerra development that are, in some ways, more stringent than those imposed by Loveland's planning-and-

See MCWHINNEY, 13C

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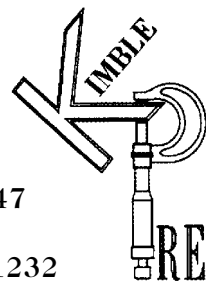


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Burke, DeWar, Donnan, Jessup lead Loveland

Mark Burke, owner of Burke Cleaners and Mister Neat's Formalwear; Van DeWar, owner of Northern Colorado Cost Cutters; Jerald Donnan, president of Factual Data Corp.; and Susan Jessup, owner of Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch, are this year's finalists for the Bravo! Entrepreneur Award in Loveland.

Mark Burke started Mister Neat's Formalwear in 1974, writing a business plan for the firm during his final year at Colorado State University. His professor told him it would never work, but Burke started with the goal of becoming — if not the biggest — the best tuxedo shop in the state.

Twenty-seven years later, Mister Neat's Formalwear is the largest formalwear company in Colorado, with 27 locations along the Front Range and seven Burke Cleaner locations.

Van DeWar moved to Colorado from Minnesota in 1986 and shortly after purchased a franchise of Cost Cutters, a Minneapolis-based chain of hairstyling salons. He opened his first store in Longmont and a second store six months later.

DeWar now has 23 Cost Cutters

salons in 13 locations spread across Colorado and southern Wyoming. Revenues were expected to top \$8 million in 2000.

DeWar recently bought the rights to a Super Cuts franchise for western Colorado. Super Cuts does only haircuts, while Cost Cutters does perms, coloring and cuts.

Cost Cutters raises money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and DeWar is a director of Open Fairways, a golf program for inner-city and at-risk kids. The company also raises funds for Frontier High School, an alternative high school in Fort Collins.

Jerry Donnan started Factual Data Corp. with his wife, Marcia, as a two-person mortgage credit-reporting agency in Fort Collins in 1985. Today, the now-Loveland-based company has grown to more than 48 locations throughout the nation and employs more than 700.

With its corporate headquarters located in the Centerra residential and

shopping center in east Loveland, Factual Data has recently completed a series of business acquisitions and posted \$28 million in revenue in 1999. Donnan said he plans to double his revenue every year.

Factual Data has technical centers in Loveland and Denver that provide information to 25,000 lenders throughout the United States. In addition to mortgage credit reports, the company also helps screen potential and current employees with background checks. The company also helps screen potential tenants for property managers.

Jerry and Marcia Donnan are active in numerous community and national organizations, including the American Cancer Society, Food Bank of Larimer County, Hospice, Loveland Habitat for Humanity, Loveland Parks and Recreation, Salvation Army and the United Way.

Susan Jessup took over management of Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch west of Loveland in 1982. The ranch was founded in 1946 by her father, Morris, a Greeley public-school principal who bought the guest ranch as a summer project.

During the 1990s, the ranch expanded its customer base from guest ranch tourists to businesses looking for a unique retreat, weddings and family reunions.

The ranch maintains a herd of 80 horses and employs 65 to 70 people in the summer and 25 through the winter months. The ranch struggled to remain open in the early 1980s but has steadily moved into the black after Susan Jessup began an active marketing program in 1987.



BURKE



DEWAR



DONNAN



JESSUP

MCWHINNEY, from 12C

zoning department.

The McWhinneys, still in their early 20s when McWhinney Enterprises was incorporated, credit the advice and counsel of other developers in the region for helping them move their

projects forward.

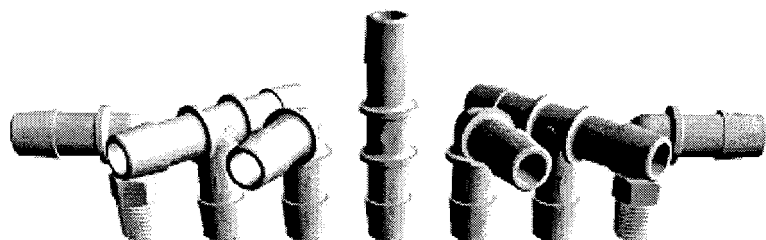
Chad McWhinney mentions names: Stu MacMillan of the Everitt Cos., David Neenan, founder of the Neenan Cos., Bill Neal, partner in Wheeler Commercial Property Services, and Tom Hoyt, who heads McStain Enterprises, the Boulder-based home builder that will construct most of Centerra's planned 5,000 homes.

Congratulations to Jeff Whitham, Encorp's Founder and Board Chairman-- finalist for the Bravo! Emerging Entrepreneur Award.

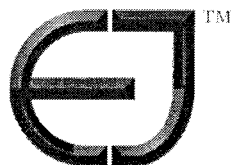


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Joe Raith hatches an egg-laying empire

By Sue Lenthe

Business Report Correspondent

PLATTEVILLE — Quality is what comes to mind when Bravo! Entrepreneur of the Year award winner Joe Raith talks about Morning Fresh Farms, the Platteville egg farm he helped launch and now leads as chief executive officer.

"We try to be a quality company. Quality is our No. 1 goal, and from top to bottom we try to do everything as quality as we can."

Morning Fresh Farms maintains about 1.2 million egg-laying chickens on a 1,000-acre operation. The farm produces three-quarters of a million eggs a day and distributes them in a five-state area.

Raith said most of the eggs produced by his operation are consumed in Colorado and go to McDonald's Restaurants, Safeway Stores Inc. or Sysco Foods. Morning Fresh produces

both white and brown eggs. In addition to private-label eggs, Morning Fresh distributes eggs under the Eggland's Best brand. The operation distributes some organic eggs, which are raised in California.

Morning Fresh Farms collects, processes, packages and refrigerates eggs daily, frequently delivering them to restaurants and stores within 72 hours of the time they are laid.

"We also sell eggs to our competitors that they distribute in their different markets," Raith said.

Company started in 1970

Morning Fresh Farms got its start in 1970, when the California egg farm Raith worked for decided to expand into Colorado. "Colorado was a deficit state on eggs," meaning that more eggs were consumed in the state than produced here, "and it had a good supply of corn, so we thought it would be a good place for a chicken farm."

Joe Raith was 13 when he got started in the egg-producing business. "I started working for a fellow who had a chicken ranch in Anaheim, Calif. I worked for him all through school. Took poultry courses in college. Then I eventually purchased this farm from my first employer."

Raith, who had worked his way up to general manager of the California corporation, purchased Morning Fresh Farms in 1978. His brother, Bob, joined him in the business soon after that. Bob retired this year and Joe purchased his interest in the business.

Morning Fresh has integrated farm oper-



STEVE PORTER • BUSINESS REPORT

EGG MAN — Joe Raith, with his brother, Bob, grew a modest egg facility in Platteville into a multimillion-dollar facility, supplying eggs to clients including McDonald's, Sysco Foods and Safeway Stores Inc.

ations to boost efficiency and productivity.

For example, most of the approximately 1,000 tons of chicken manure produced every week is dried and used as an ingredient in lawn and garden fertilizers. These are packaged on site and marketed under the

Richlawn Turf Food and Nature's Cycle brand names. Some of the manure is composted, packaged and sold as a soil amendment under the brand name EKO Compost.

This effort transforms a liability — tons of wet chicken manure — into a viable product, meanwhile reducing odors and eliminating the need to use chemical pesticides to control flies.

Raith said his company recently purchased a company that grinds wooden pallets and is now recycling the wood through its composting operation.

The compost Morning Fresh Farms produces is marketed throughout the Western states.

Morning Fresh Farms also mills its own chicken feed on site with corn purchased from local farmers.

The egg-laying and composting portion of the operation requires about 160 acres. Raith said the remaining acreage is dedicated primarily to alfalfa production. Hay raised by Morning Fresh is sold to dairies and feedlots.

Nearly self-sufficient

Timothy Croissant, vice president of Wells Fargo, notes that the company is largely self-sufficient. Morning Fresh Farms uses natural gas produced from wells adjacent to the property as an energy source to dry the poultry waste. The company also maintains its own fire-fighting equipment on site.

Croissant nominated Joe and Bob

See RAITH, 15C

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Gray, Salazar, Wexler, Lind and Watson shine

Tom Gray, former owner of Gray Oil Co. in Fort Lupton; Israel Salazar, owner of TSN in Frederick; Larry Wexler, owner of Ecomshare in Estes Park; and Martin Lind and Steve Watson, owners of Trolco. Inc. and Water Valley country club in Windsor are 2001 finalists for Bravo! Entrepreneur awards in outlying communities.

Tom Gray's grandfather started Gray Oil Co. in 1937, a firm that sells lubricants, hydraulic oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, antifreeze and methanol.

Tom Gray served as president of the company from 1984 to 2000 but sold it to three former employees in 2000 to ensure its continued success and avoid tax and estate problems in the event of his death. Gray continues to serve as the company's chief financial officer.

Gray Oil Co. recorded revenues of \$25 million in sales in 1999 and has expanded into the convenience-store business. It continues to grow at a rate of 5 to 7 percent each year and employs about 65 people.

Israel "Izzy" Salazar is the owner of TSN Inc., a packaging and distribution firm along Interstate 25 near Frederick. Salazar started the company in 1989, and it now supplies more than 60,000 convenience stores across the nation with everything from food to over-the-counter medicines to light bulbs and other sundry items.

The company was originally a product-brokerage firm but quickly changed to packaging and distribution, growing by more than 30 percent each year for the last 10 years. Sales topped \$100 million in 1999.

Besides convenience stores, TSN also counts King Soopers and Safeway gro-

ceries among its clients.

Larry Wexler, president and co-founder of Ecomshare Inc., moved to Estes Park from Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1986 looking for a new opportunity. Wexler started his first business, Colorado Bicycling Adventures — a retail bike shop that expanded into a bicycling touring company in 1990.

Wexler later founded Ecomshare to help small businesses in small towns like Estes Park compete with corporate stores and shopping malls by giving them a "virtual community" presence on the Internet. He has since added Vail and more than a dozen other communities to Ecomshare through a direct-mail company based in Cincinnati.

Martin Lind and Steve Watson were partners who founded Trolco Inc., a Windsor-based development company that built Water Valley, one of the state's premiere master-planned golf-course communities. At the heart of Water Valley is Pelican Lakes Golf and Country Club.

Lind, a fifth-generation local farmer, and Watson, a former Denver Broncos star wide receiver, started out as partners in a sand and gravel business called Poudre Tech Aggregates Inc., which they sold in 1998. Money from the sale of the business was used to build the 1,700-acre golf course and residential community, and the gravel pits helped form the 300 acres of lakes that wrap the development.

Watson has since returned to the Broncos organization as a coach and Lind is pursuing a career in development, including build-out of Water Valley, a project he estimates will probably take another 20 years to complete.

Egg production is also a labor-intensive business, but Raith said his operation has been fortunate when it comes to labor issues. Morning Fresh employs about 85 people. "Most of our people have been with us for a number of years. We have very low turnover."

Marketing also presents challenges, Raith said. While Colorado is technically still an egg-deficit state, egg production has continued to increase in the state and with it competition.

That competition is fed, in part, by pressures to keep costs down through ever larger and more sophisticated operations. In addition, consolidation among wholesalers and retailers has given those entities more leverage.

Raith said Morning Fresh Farms keeps its focus on quality. As a result, the business' main customers have been customers for better than 25 years, Raith said.

"We try to put out a safe, quality product and we've been able to maintain those customers, probably because of that."



GRAY



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RAITH, from 14C

Raith and Morning Fresh Farms for the Entrepreneur of the Year award in recognition of their management, dedication and innovation.

Joe Raith won't share revenue figures but says his business has grown steadily year by year since 1978 when the farm produced 175,000 eggs a day. "As the needs of our customers have grown, then we've grown with those needs," he said. "We've never had a year that we haven't grown."

This year, Morning Fresh Farms will produce over 23 million dozen eggs.

Raith said he enjoys the business, in part because of its challenges. Egg production is a capital-intensive business, requiring a lot of buildings and equipment. Chickens are susceptible to disease, so hygiene and disease control are challenges that must be addressed.

State Farm Insurance invests in region, people

By Bj Richardson

Business Report Correspondent

GREELEY — What happens when you put a guy who sells promises together with another guy who has a vision and 700 acres burning a hole in his pocket?

For Buck Moskalski, State Farm Insurance Co. regional vice president, and his friend Craig Harrison, the result became Promontory — the massive development at the crossroads of U.S. Highway 34 and Colorado Highway 257 in west Greeley.

About 11 years ago, Moskalski and Harrison discussed Harrison's prediction that the land he owned would eventually become the converging point for Greeley, Loveland, Milliken, Fort Collins and the surrounding communities — a doorway to Greeley. What was needed



Bravo!
Entrepreneur —
Regional Spirit

State Farm
Insurance Co.
in Greeley

was a prominent company to commit to purchasing a piece of this "Golden Triangle" in order to provide a capital base for a major commercial/residential development to open that doorway. Moskalski caught Harrison's dream, and State Farm committed to purchasing 65 acres for future office buildings.

Contributing to quality of life

This year's Bravo! Entrepreneur Regional Spirit Award recipient is the regional offices of State Farm Insurance Co. in Greeley. In addition to their part in one of the region's most important developments, the company and its employees have contributed significantly over the years to Northern Colorado's quality of life.

"Just like our slogan says, our mission is to be like a good neighbor," said Moskalski. This is the core of the company's philosophy, and it is ingrained in employees from their date of hire. State Farm's mission is to help people manage everyday risks, recover from the unexpected and realize their dreams.

"It's simple," said Eric Anderson, public-affairs spokesman for State Farm. Because the people in the community entrust State Farm to manage their everyday risks, the company feels a responsibility to give back to the community.

"We are not a stock company. Our objective is not to make money for shareholders, but to serve the people who buy our product," said Anderson. And that product is not something you



STEVE PORTER • BUSINESS REPORT

RETIRING VP — Buck Moskalski is retiring at the end of the year as State Farm's regional vice president in Greeley. Moskalski helped pave the way for State Farm transferring its headquarters from Evans to Promontory in west Greeley.

can hold in your hand and touch. "We sell promises to people," he said.

State Farm currently ranks 21st on the Fortune 500 list and is the largest insurer of homes, boats and cars in Colorado.

Anderson estimates the Greeley operation is among the top 10 employers in the area with about 1,250 employees serving the tri-state area of Colorado, Wyoming and Utah.

Community commitment

He credits their success to their commitment to community and customer service. When you take that many employees who, from orientation on, are trained to focus on being a good neighbor and provide them with a continuous list of opportunities to volunteer in the community, you have a significant force contributing to the quality of life, Anderson said.

Moskalski agrees. "Our involvement runs the gamut from the Greeley Stampede to bike rodeos for child safety. Our people sit on the Chamber of Commerce board, coach Little League and serve on school boards," he said.

Among the avenues for community involvement encouraged by State Farm management for its employees is the United Way program. Sandy Tomasovich, division manager for State Farm, coordinates the company's United Way campaign for the Greeley area.

"We really feel the United Way gives back to the community and that's why we support it so heavily," she said. "Our community gives us a lot. We try our very best to give back to it," she said.

Other organizations and programs State Farm supports are Habitat for Humanity, Junior Achievement and a company-sponsored child-safety day.



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Timing and ideas put Encorp on fast track

By Luanne Kadlub

Business Report Correspondent

WINDSOR — Jeff Whitham has gone where few have tread before — starting a company from scratch and nurturing it from infancy to multimillion-dollar adulthood in a matter of a few short years. In recognition of his success in building Encorp from the ground up, Whitham is the recipient of the 2001 Bravo! Entrepreneur — Emerging



Jeff Whitham

The Windsor-based company is recognized as a leading provider of products, services and solutions that address the growing demand for clean, reliable on-site power systems. The company's power technology products include grid-interconnection switchgear and energy-automation software.

Encorp's products create dependable, on-site power solutions that can reduce the overall cost of energy for commercial and industrial customers operating in the digital economy, which in itself is creating a new breed of power-thirsty companies. Customers include Chase Manhattan, Qwest, Elektryon and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Fort Collins native

Whitham, with a bachelor's in electrical engineering from Arizona State University, returned to his hometown of Fort Collins to work on engine controls at Woodward Governor. Four years later he returned to the classroom, this time at Colorado State University, to work on his master's in mechanical engineering. While there, he was engaged in research on engines and artificial-intelligence controls.

As graduation loomed, he researched engineering projects being solicited by the U.S. government. It was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense and was for a distributed control for small generators for mobile operations.

He was initially approved for funding, but then the project fell through. Rather than resubmit the project under another program, as had been suggested, Whitham looked at ways the concept could be applied to commercial applications. He wrote his business plan and raised \$2.5 million in seed money from what he calls his friends-and-family network. "I was fortunate to have the ability to do that."

Whitham then began recruiting his team, including Larry Adams, with whom he worked at Woodward, and his brother, Chris Whitham, who was at a software firm in Texas. The trio, and others as time

and workload progressed, spent four years in research and development.

"He kept you on his toes," said Adams, chief engineer at Encorp. "He moved pretty fast."

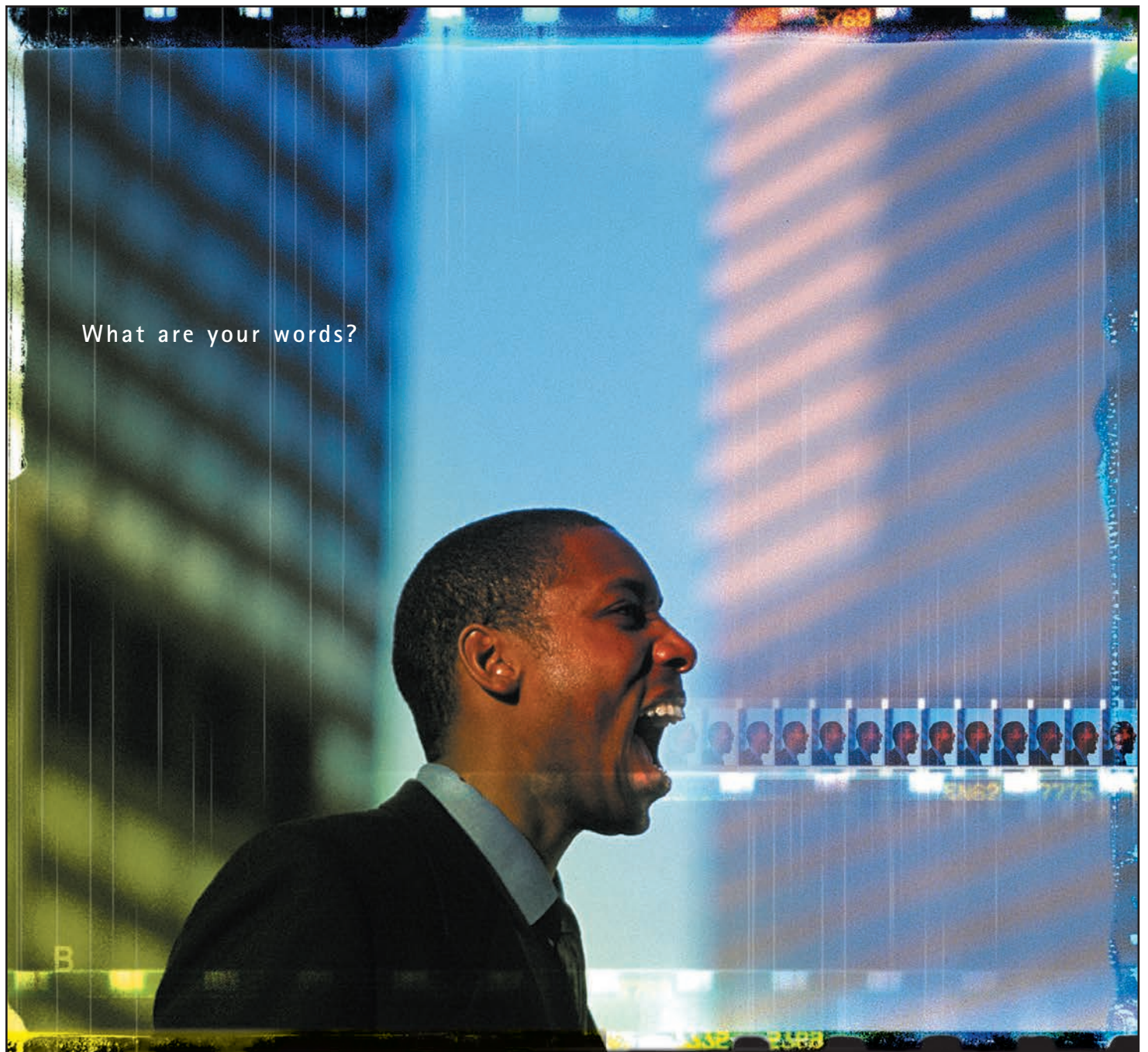
Venture capital support

Whitham did indeed move fast. In
See ENCORN, 18C



STEVE PORTER • BUSINESS REPORT

ENCORN'S FOUNDER — Area native Jeff Whitham took Encorp from an idea and transformed it into a major local manufacturer within a few years, with the company moving this year into a new building in east Windsor.



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THE NORTHERN COLORADO
BUSINESS REPORT

Technology tops list of emerging entrepreneurs

Mark Hopkins, president of Peak Industries in Frederick; Anita Sayed, CEO of Projectworx in Fort Collins; Bob Vinton and Larry Watson, co-founders of RockySoft Corp. in Fort Collins; and Sunil Cherian and Wade Troxell, founders of Sixth Dimension Inc. in Fort Collins are finalists for the Bravo! Emerging Entrepreneur awards.

Mark Hopkins is president of Peak Industries, a contract manufacturing firm located near Frederick in southwestern Weld County.

The company, founded in 1996, has been quietly growing into one of the top emerging companies in the region, counting customers that include Hewlett-Packard Co., Motorola, Ball Aerospace and Bolder Technologies. Peak Industries employs more than 170 people and had annual revenues of \$30 million in 1999.

That same year, Anita Sayed founded Projectworx, an Internet-solutions company that provides Web-site design, e-commerce design, extranet and intranet services, hosting and server support services and voice and data connectivity.

Major clients for Projectworx include Group Publishing, NorTel, the Saudi Arabian government, RealTec Commercial Real Estate Services, First National Bank and Cheetah Advanced Technologies.

Launched in 1999, the company now employs 15 and is already profitable.

Larry Watson and Bob Vinton co-founded RockySoft in 1999. Watson, a

former H-P employee, serves as the company's chief technology officer, and Vinton, a former Comlinear employee, is its CEO.

The company produces software that helps companies make decisions about their supply chains by sharing Web-based information on parts availability and manufacturing constraints between companies.

One of RockySoft's primary customers is Agilent Technologies. The company's product has applications in the electronics, telecommunications, automotive, aerospace and industrial-equipment manufacturing industries.

Sixth Dimension, an Internet-based company based in Fort Collins, was established in 1998 by Wade Troxell, a Colorado State University mechanical-engineering professor, and Sunil Cherian, a student who studied under Troxell.

The company provides an Internet infrastructure that has the capability of providing core networking technologies that connect energy devices to various energy-producing, consuming or measuring devices through Web-based products and services.

Sixth Dimension employs about 20 people and recorded revenues of about \$500,000 in the last year.



WATSON



VINTON



HOPKINS



SAYED



TROXELL

ENCORP, from 17C

the past three years, his company has received tremendous support from venture-capital firms. "They have tough requirements," Whitham said. "They look at a lot of business plans and they don't fund many of them. A lot of my job there (at Encorp) was getting the financing and general management."

The last round of venture-capital fund raising in February 2001 brought in \$38 million. The downside of the huge infusion of capital is that it spelled the end of Whitham's tenure at the helm of Encorp.

For now, Whitham's only involvement with the company he founded is as chairman of the board. "It's been very difficult for me," Whitham said of being asked to step down as president and chief executive officer. "This is not the

path I would have chosen for Encorp, but it's the path chosen by investors. Time will tell if it's the right path."

Rapid revenue growth

Encorp went from \$3.4 million in revenues in 1999 to over \$10 million in 2000. It had 25 employees in January 2000 and four times that by the end of the year with even more employees added in 2001.

The company also outgrew its offices in the Windsor Tech industrial park. Whitham looked at potential new sites throughout Northern Colorado, and decided Windsor would remain company headquarters. An 80,000-square-foot management and manufacturing facility on Eastman Park Drive was completed this summer.

Though the \$300 billion utilities industry continues to evolve through mergers and acquisitions, Whitham said Encorp is only now starting to have competition in its particular niche.

Nominees

Bravo! Entrepreneur 2001

Bravo! Entrepreneur - Fort Collins



Michael Aller & David Lingle
Aller-Lingle Architects PC

David Lingle and Michael Aller started out designing custom homes in Fort Collins and Loveland in 1986.

Since then, the two have made a name for themselves in Northern Colorado with their work on university campuses and his toric preservation.

The company's bread-and-butter work is multifamily buildings and university designs, such as the Lory Student Center addition and the Argus Tumor Center. However, some of their most well-known work consists of restorations such as the Rialto Theatre in Loveland and the Stanley Music Hall in Estes Park. They also will transform the old railroad freight center building between Maple and LaPorte streets in Fort Collins into the Downtown Transit Center for Transfort.



Robert and Heather Bisetti
Bisetti's Italian Restaurant, Pelican Fish Market, the Bisetti Co.

Restaurants and real estate are an unusual combination, but Robert and Heather Bisetti aren't the most usual of people.

The couple has been running their Italian restaurant since Robert took over the 22-year-old establishment from his parents in 1988. Heather had grown up with her family's five restaurants on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina.

Bisetti's has grown to encompass another Italian restaurant in Highlands Ranch and the Pelican Fish Restaurant and Fish Market in Fort Collins.

The two also branched into real estate and maneuvered themselves to a point where The Bisetti Co. will get heavily into ownership of more commercial real estate projects further down the line.

Joe and Karen DeAnda

Joe and Karen DeAnda founded Trios Salon, Spa and Store in Fort Collins in 1998. The company has grown steadily since then, nearly tripling its space and employing between 35 and 40 people.

In 2000, the business had revenues of more than \$1 million and the DeAndas hope to double the number of their employees in the near future.



Nigel Ferrey
Cytomation Inc.

Though recent international headlines announced the sequencing of the human genome, scientists are gearing up for the formidable task that still lies ahead — figuring out what it all means.

Complete genetic de-coding will take years, and officials with Cytomation Inc. in Fort Collins are counting on the company's high-speed cell sorter to land them in midst of that search.

Cytomation, a privately held company, manufactures a product known as a modular-flow cytometer, or MoFlo. The technology has been around since the start of the human-genome race in the 1980s, but Cytomation has added innovations that enable the machine to process enormous volumes of material in a short time.



Russ and Carolyn Kates
Steele's Markets Inc.

Being friendly to the community simply makes good business sense for Steele's Markets.

But the company goes far beyond what typically is expected of area grocers. The locally owned company has a long-standing responsibility to the communities in which it does business.

Anyone familiar with Steele's Markets knows the effort placed on making customers happy.

Additionally, the meat, deli and bakery departments are known for their attention to detail and service.

And community donations are a matter of course for

the grocer. Nearly 100 community organizations and events benefit from Steele's on a regular basis.

Additionally, Russ and Carolyn Kates give their time to no less than 17 organizations.

Tom and Kristi Johnson

Tom and Kristi Johnson are owners of Bingham Hill Cheese Co. founded in 1999. The company's first batch of cheese went on sale in early 2000 and the company's products are now carried in many stores, including Alfalfa's Markets.

Other markets for the firm's cheeses include restaurants and caterers along the Front Range and in Colorado's ski-resort towns. The Johnsons plan to eventually market their products across the nation.



Richard Keith
Center Partners Inc.

Richard Keith opened Center Partners in 1997, after selling his 7-year-old temporary employment agency to CoreStaff Inc. His temp agency had offices in Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Boulder, Denver

and Colorado Springs.

The new company was a call center staffed with agents trained to answer technical inquiries about products and services for corporate clients. Center Partners operates several locations, including Fort Collins, Idaho and Tennessee, as well as its newest facility in Loveland.

Center last year was acquired by The Winona Group. The company envisions sales of \$50 million by 2003.



Keith and Alan Lipps
Invision Integrated Creativity

What Keith and Alan Lipps do for other people's companies, they also have done for their own. The brothers and their employees are masters of marketing, helping propel products and companies to new heights.

Keith did the same thing in 1997 with Invision Marketing. Back then, he bought an existing design firm with nine employees. Now, they have a full-fledged marketing firm with 29 employees. The company grew to \$4 million in billings in 1998.

Alan later invested in the company, too. The company, now known as Invision Integrated Creativity, aims to offer the same quality of service as Madison Avenue, but with a Front Range style.

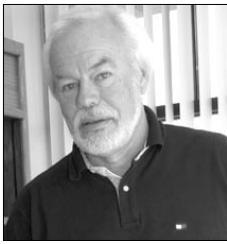


Loren and Carl Maxey
Maxey Cos.

Thirty-one years ago, Loren Maxey decided it was time to control his destiny. The company for which he worked was thinking of selling or leaving Fort Collins. Maxey didn't want to leave, so he purchased a small manufacturing firm and started making trailers.

Loren Maxey is president and chief executive officer of the company, and his son, Carl, is general manager and chief operating officer.

Through the years, Maxey has given back to the community in numerous ways. He is president of the Fort Collins Historical Society and a member of the Colorado State University Rams Club. Carl Maxey served as president of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce.



Bill Neal
Wheeler Commercial Property Services LLC

Bill Neal moved to Northern Colorado in 1972 to save the area from developers. Though he ended up becoming one himself, he has worked hard to ensure that his projects enhance the lives of the people who live here.

Building cities is his primary focus. One of his companies has built 20 percent of the city of Fort Collins in the last 30 years, 40 percent of the city of Greeley and parts of Windsor, Loveland and Boulder.

Major developments in Fort Collins include Great Crossing, Brown Farm, Kingston Woods and Poudre Valley Plaza. In Greeley, Neal has developed Bittersweet, Country Club Estates, Virginia Hills and Encampment.



Doug and Wynne Odell
Odell Brewing Co.

Doug and Wynne Odell started Odell Brewing Co. in 1989, after they determined that microbrewing would be a growing industry, not just a passing fad. When they arrived in Fort Collins from Seattle, microbrewing had no vendors, no demand and

no equipment readily available, but the startup company was profitable within six months, largely because the two did all of the work themselves.

Between 1991 and 1997, the company grew more than 850 percent. Odell remained debt-free until building and moving into a new facility near the Poudre River in Fort Collins. Odell's beer is distributed in a number of states — including Colorado — largely in the American West.



Gunther Preuss
Genesis Fixtures Inc.

Genesis Fixtures is Gunther Preuss' second go-round at making it in the cabinet and store-fixtures business after selling Innovative Cos. to a Swiss investment group in 1992.

Preuss has had to deal with cash-flow problems, growing pains and finding qualified people in a tight labor market.

Genesis makes store fixtures for a variety of clients, including Domino's Pizza, Kinko's, Ultimate Electronics, Sunglass Hut and more. Preuss sold Genesis Fixtures in March to Leggett & Platt, a furniture, bedding and furnishings manufacturer. Preuss made the sale because he saw that Leggett & Platt had the potential to take his company higher than it's ever been before.



Clayton Schwerin
Alliance Construction Solutions Inc.

Alliance Construction Solutions was founded in Fort Collins in 1982 as Baldwin Construction. Clayton Schwerin joined Baldwin in 1993 under a planned succession agreement with Ed Baldwin that

was complete in December 1995. Schwerin was instrumental in the company's expansion from public-bid work to negotiated-contract work in the private sector.

In 1996, the company's name was changed to Alliance Construction Solutions. Revenues and employment have grown steadily at the company, which recently announced plans to build a new headquarters in Loveland in the Centerra development at Interstate 25 and U.S. Highway 34.



Rayno Seaser
The Egg & I Inc.

Rayno and Patty Seaser opened the first Egg and I restaurant in 1987 in Fort Collins, offering upscale breakfast and lunch. Today, the company has expanded with restaurants along the Colorado Front Range and

in Wyoming. While the Seasers have majority ownership in several of the restaurants, the company began franchising in 1997, with the first franchise opening in Greeley. Others have opened in Cheyenne, Estes Park, the Denver Tech Center and Windsor.



Frank Vaught & Joe Frye
Vaught-Frye Architects PC

Frank Vaught and Joe Frye began their company 14 years ago, but have known each other for 30 years — since college freshman days.

They came to Fort Collins in the early 1970s when it was a town of 40,000.

They saw the bad times in the late '70s and '80s, as well as the resurrection of Old Town. They've done a golf course in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and a project in Houston, but primarily their work is in Northern Colorado and Fort Collins: The renovation of the Linden Hotel, the construction of the new building for Associates in Family Medicine, a renovation to the Foothills Fashion Mall.



Ellen and Ted Zibell
The Perennial Gardener

Ellen and Ted Zibell opened The Perennial Gardener, a garden- and nature-inspired gift store, in the summer of 1994. Through a combination of innovative store design, unique products and customer service, the store began showing a profit before the end of the first year. The Zibells have been an active part of downtown Fort Collins. The building that houses the store on North College Avenue has been restored following guidelines of the Fort Collins Preservation Commission and the Colorado Historical Society.

The Zibells last year added a complementary business next-door, Sense of Place.

Bravo! Entrepreneur- Greeley



Zeke & Todd Garretson
Garretson's Sports Center Co.

Listening to customers and keeping up with their changing needs has helped fuel a 35-year run in the sporting goods business for the Garretson family.

Zeke Garretson launched the business in Sterling in 1965, then expanded to Greeley in 1983.

Sons Todd and Eric work in the business with their father. Garretson follows a formula that has worked well for other retailing entrepreneurs. His store is divided into sections, with certain employees being completely responsible for their own area.

Areas include hunting, fishing, golf, football, basketball, baseball and aquatic sports.

For example, the employees in the baseball area do all the ordering and selling of baseball equipment.



Rob Haimson
Potato Brumbaugh's Inc.

Rob Haimson managed Potato Brumbaugh's when it opened in 1981, and later purchased it in 1984.

He returned the restaurant to its original mix of laid-back formality that suited the Greeley population looking for an upscale Monfort beef prime rib and a white-tablecloth experience without the fuss.

Since his purchase of Potato Brumbaugh's, Haimson has promoted the concept that management should circulate among the customers. Managers get to know regular customers, they bus tables, they are present and visible. As a result of a return to upscale informality and personal attention, the restaurant has become the place to go for birthdays and anniversaries.



Mark and Mary Kendall
Kendall Printing Co.

Kendall Printing's story began in 1984, when Mark and Mary followed through on their long-held dream of owning their own print shop. The couple looked into acquiring print shops already in business but decided it was in their best financial interest to start from scratch.

By day, Mark and Mary worked at gaining clients; at night they worked the presses.

After significant growth, they built a 40,000-square-foot building on the west side of Greeley. And now Mark Kendall says the company has already outgrown this space. To remedy the situation, he has acquired three adjoining acres and has Hensel Phelps Construction Co. working on plans for a 30,000-square-foot addition.



Mike Morgan
StarTek Inc.

In 1987 when Mike Morgan founded StarPak, now StarTek, it only had a presence in Greeley. Now, there are

Nominees

Bravo! Entrepreneur 2001

offices in Denver, the United Kingdom and Singapore. Morgan figures out which behind-the-scenes services a company might need, then fills those needs through his outsourcing company.

StarTek has grown to include four main parts: Process management focuses on packaging; fulfillment for e-commerce fills and ships orders; teleservice offers technical and back-office support for high-tech companies, and project management takes entire projects and manages them on a client's behalf.

StarTek has 4,000 employees worldwide. The company is traded on the New York Stock Exchange.



Powell Prothe
Vintage Corp.

Greeley native Powell Prothe started in the real estate business right out of college, working for Wheeler Real Estate. He later purchased Wheeler's property management division and founded his company in 1986.

At the time the real estate market was suffering and interest rates were high. However, Prothe anticipated the growth that was forming along the Front Range and trusted his ability to sell both property and services.

Prothe credits his employees for much of the company's success. Most have been with him for years, some for a decade.

Over the last five years, company growth has been in the 25 percent to 40 percent range.



Tom Roche
Roche Constructors Inc.

General contractor Tom Roche is proud of the company he leads.

A second-generation business, Roche Constructors Inc. was founded in 1971 by Roche's father, Patrick T. Roche.

The construction firm has a Las Vegas office and does approximately half of its business in Nevada and the rest along Colorado's Front Range.

He is proud that his company was general contractor for the multimillion dollar Flatiron Crossing Mall in Broomfield.

An extensive client list points to several notable customers. They include Hach Co., EFTC, Primex Plastics, State Farm, Cabela's World Headquarters, Aims Community College buildings, the Weld County North Jail Complex, various Target, Albertson and Safeway sites, and schools.



Tim Thissen
Thissen Construction Corp.

Like so many entrepreneurs, Tim Thissen launched his company from his basement.

That was 23 years ago, and this year Thissen Construction will produce \$20 million to \$25 million in revenues.

Thissen Construction does commercial work throughout the Front Range, as well as in New Mexico and Wyoming.

In addition to manufacturing buildings, Thissen's presence along the Front Range includes projects such as Lodo Self Storage in Denver, One Wynkoop Plaza in Denver, Garretson's Sports Center in Greeley, the Anheuser Busch gift shop in Fort Collins, the Western Plains Health Network building in Greeley and several projects on both the University of Northern Colorado and Colorado State University campuses.



Betty Tointon
Antiques at Lincoln Park

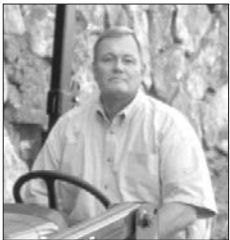
Betty Tointon opened her antique store 10 years ago in an old JC Penney building in downtown Greeley. With part of the main floor filled, it took two more years to fill the two upper floors and get enough merchandise to open the downstairs.

Now, the 22,000-square-foot showroom is filled to capacity with 25 dealers and a waiting list.

Tointon has added a tea room for the serving of high tea from fall to spring. It

adds an incentive for people to visit the location even if they are not shopping for antiques.

The showroom's reputation has grown since its opening, and has become a destination shop for the region.



Duane Wallin
Bi-State Machinery Co.

When Duane Wallin took over Bi-State Machinery in Greeley with his partner in 1990, he didn't dream what kind of hurdles he was going to have to leap to keep the business going.

In 1996, farm prices started heading for the basement. A disastrous slump in cattle feed hit ranchers and by extension, Wallin's business. While he was recovering from that punch, commodity prices in general took a nosedive.

In order to stay afloat, he's had to broaden Bi-State's reach a bit with a lawn-and-garden line. Also, Wallin has gone into selling small skid-steer loaders and has entered into the construction market as a supplier of four-wheel-drive tractors.



Ted Warner
RTH Inc., dba Connecting Point of Greeley/Rocky Mountain Technology Solutions

As companies that deals in the computer market, Connecting Point of Greeley and Rocky Mountain Technology Solutions have

to deal with the rampant changes and continually declining prices of the industry.

The companies now are fully focused on service and solutions for other businesses, having recently gotten out of the home-computer retailing business. Partnering with other businesses had been a focus for many years, and now the companies are completely focused on working with business clients.

Since Ted Warner began managing the Greeley operation in 1990, revenues have increased five-fold. Additionally, three of the corporation's four owners are involved in day-to-day operations.



Lee and Warren Yoder
Weld County Garage Inc.

Weld County Garage continues to cling to its long-standing motto: "We make customers for life."

Now in its 92nd year, the Greeley company has outlived many of its best and most loyal customers.

The dealership that sells GM, Buick and Pontiac vehicles reported \$66 million in sales for 1999.

Lee Yoder, president of Weld County Garage, has been at the helm of the dealership since 1982, when he and partners Everett Francis and John Shupe bought the business from the McArthur family.

Yoder bought out Francis' share in 1988. Shupe's son-in-law, Kent Kingsbury, and Yoder's son, Warren, are now partners in the business.

Sid Wilke
Big R Manufacturing & Distributing Inc.

Sid Wilke began working for Big R in Greeley while a University of Northern Colorado student. In 1986, when the Big R retail operation was selling its bridge manufacturing business, Wilke made the purchase.

The company manufactures bridges, bridge components, culverts and other related materials. Most clients are in the Northwest and West.

Wilke has kept key management people by sharing ownership of the company with them, and overcomes some staffing frustrations by paying above-average wages and recognizing work well done.

Like Wilke, some employees have been with the Big R organization for more than 20 years. Wilke also shares his good fortune by paying bonuses annually and giving back to the community.



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Bravo! Entrepreneur - Loveland



Jerry Curtis
EagleSpan Steel
Structures Inc.

Jerry Curtis founded EagleSpan in 1996 to compete nationally in the \$7 billion metal-building industry against the industry giant, Butler Manufacturing, the world's leading producer of pre-engineered metal building systems with annual sales of almost \$1 billion.

Curtis' dream was to promote and sell a radically new structural steel beam that used rectangular tube construction with a revolutionary folded-web design. The end result was a super-strong, lightweight beam.

EagleSpan posts annual revenues of \$8 million, with plans to more than triple that to \$28 million by the end of 2002. Additionally, EagleSpan will build a new 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility by the end of 2000.



Jack Devereaux
The Home State Bank

Jack Devereaux founded The Home State Bank in 1950 and founded American Bank in 1974 in order to keep a good share of the market. Today, Home State has three Loveland locations and has expanded into the Fort Collins market with a facility in Old Town. Home State now is eyeing the south Fort Collins market as well. American Bank in Loveland also has expanded onto the west side of that town.

Devereaux came up in the banking business when everything was based on service and personal relationships. He has had to adapt to new technologies, as well as increased competition from national banks that have entered the market. Today, Home State boasts assets of more than \$166 million.

Erion Foundation

The Erion Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in Loveland that was founded in 1986 by Kenneth and Helen Erion to support the community and surrounding area through funding, advocacy and participation. The foundation strives to promote health and welfare, community and education as well as assist in providing for basic needs through monetary grants.

Recipients of foundation grants have included Habitat for Humanity, Namaqua Center, Hospice of Larimer County, McKee Medical Center Foundation, Project Self-Sufficiency, Chamber of Commerce Visitors' Center and Elder House.

Loveland High Plains Council

The Loveland High Plains Council is a nonprofit organization started in 1984 to bring recognition to local bronze foundries. The Western Bronze Show evolved into the largest outdoor juried sculpture show — "Sculpture in the Park" — and now includes stone, glass, wood and metal by artists from around the world.

Proceeds from the show, after payments to artists, go to the Arts Council for promotion of the following year's show and to purchase additional sculptures for the park.

McKee Medical Center Foundation

A nonprofit organization founded in 1982, the McKee Medical Center Foundation supports continued expansion and development of McKee Medical Center in Loveland and provides quality health-care programs to the community through philanthropic support.

With a paid staff of only three, the foundation gathers donations of up to \$2 million annually. Projects funded by the foundation include the Loveland Community Health Center, the Children's Center, an on-site day care; and Healthy Beginnings, a prenatal care program for low-income women.



Mike Severance
Cactus Grill Inc.

Building the Cactus Grill of Loveland into a \$2 million business has been a labor of love for restaurateur Mike Severance and his wife, Colleen.

Severance, who has worked in restaurants since he was 15, hired on as general manager at the downtown Cactus Grill 12 years ago. Severance and his wife are now sole owners of two restaurants, both named Cactus Grill. All of the recipes have been conceived by Severance, and everything is made as fresh as possible.

The downtown Cactus Grill doubled in size when Severance purchased the adjacent building, knocked a hole in the wall and put in a full-size bar and 80-seat meeting facility.

Richard Van Der Meer

Richard Van Der Meer moved Goldco Industries from Golden to Loveland in 1988, where the company has thrived on the production of case palletizers for product

packers. The technology can be adapted to glass, plastic and composite cans and bottles needed by both the food and beverage industry and the can industry.

Goldco supplies equipment to 70 companies worldwide and employs 150 people in Colorado, Wisconsin and the United Kingdom.

Andy, Mike and Derek Veeman, co-partners Veeman Dairy

Fifteen years ago, the Veeman family of Central Valley, Calif., saw in Northern Colorado an opportunity that appeared just about perfect. Good infrastructure, excellent transportation routes, quality of life and a growing population were exactly what they needed to make their dairy operation a success.

Veeman Dairy is run by Andy Veeman and his sons, Mike and Derek. They started with 100 acres east of Loveland and now own 350 acres with frontage along Interstate 25.

In June, Andy purchased 4,500 acres near Sterling.

He and his daughter and her family will manage the Sterling operation.

Bravo! Entrepreneur - Outlying communities



Margo and Jerry Barnhart
Dreamcatcher Learning
Centers Inc., Windsor

Margo and Jerry Barnhart launched Dreamcatcher Learning Centers Inc. in 1994. Its affiliate, Dreamcatcher Franchise Corp., operates 24 learning centers, while another affiliate, Dreamcatcher Instruction Centers Inc., operates three corporate-owned locations in Fort Collins, Greeley and Windsor.

Dreamcatcher Franchise Corp. recently sold almost all of its assets to IPI Inc. of Eden Prairie, Minn.

Dreamcatcher focuses on education in a one-on-one setting for K-12 students, home-school learners and adults. By educating one-on-one, Dreamcatcher can produce solid improvement in reading, math and spelling. In the company's first two years of operation, the average student gained one year of reading skills in 9.3 hours of one-to-one, direct instruction.



Michael Ricker
Michael Ricker Pewter,
Estes Park

Born and raised in Estes Park, Michael Ricker began his professional art career at age 20.

Over the years, after designing and producing

The Shape of a Competitive Advantage

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Office



R & D



Manufacturing



Retail



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"H·A·R·D W·O·R·K"

Congratulations to all of this year's BRAVO winners

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thousands of sculptures, he has emerged as one of the most collected artists in the world.

His work is collected by sports figures, celebrities and presidents. Ricker has created artwork for two presidents and for the United States Olympic Committee.

His vision is to preserve history in three-dimensional art for generations of children and their parents to enjoy.

Ricker has 28 retail galleries and is beginning to market products on a Web site. Long-term plans include expanding markets in the United States and internationally.

Bravo! Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement Award



Richard Boettcher
Professional Finance Co.

Richard Boettcher came to Greeley in 1948 to attend then Colorado State College because he wanted to teach and coach. Despite earning a degree, he never did teach.

Boettcher, who had taken a job with Professional Finance Co. in Greeley a few months before his graduation, opted to continue there.

Boettcher bought the company in 1954. Mike Shoop, Boettcher's son-in-law, purchased the business from him in 1993.

Over the years, Boettcher was frequently sought out for advice. No one ran for city council, county commission or state Legislature before talking to Boettcher first.

He also is a leader who has given generously of his time, serving on numerous boards, commissions and committees.



Dr. Donald Cook
Monfort Children's Clinic

Dr. Donald Cook was drafted before he had to choose between college scholarships in music or football. While serving with the medical corps during World War II he found his calling: Medicine.

He specialized in pediatrics.

Cook began practicing in Aurora in 1958 and moved Greeley in 1964.

Cook retired from practice in 1992 to direct the Monfort Children's Clinic in Greeley. Cook is credited with founding the clinic. He stepped down in 1998 but remains on the board of directors.

He served on the Greeley-Evans School District 6 Board, United Way Drug Abuse Task Force, Rocky Mountain Center for Health Education, as well as the Greeley and Colorado Medical Societies.

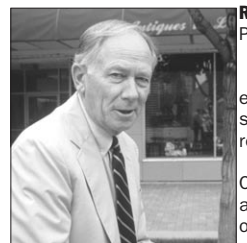


Joe Tennessen
KFKA Radio, 1310 AM

Joe Tennessen is synonymous with great broadcasting in Northern Colorado. For more than three decades he has worked in different aspects of broadcasting, culminating in ownership of Greeley's KFKA radio station.

Tennessen put together an investment team in 1990 that purchased KFKA, Greeley's radio station since 1921. Then, as president and general manager, he rebuilt the station's staff and reputation after a series of unsuccessful owners in the 1980s. Tennessen remains with the station even though the ownership team sold KFKA earlier this year.

Tennessen has served on several boards of directors, too, including United Way of Weld County, the Weld County Mental Health Center, Salvation Army, Weld County 4-H Foundation and Greeley Philharmonic.



Robert G. Tointon
Phelps-Tointon Inc.

Robert Tointon has enjoyed a career in a broad spectrum of construction-related industries.

He joined Hensel Phelps Construction Co. in 1963 and later became president of the company.

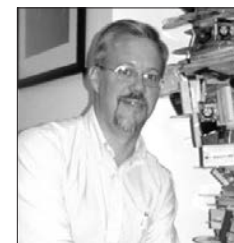
In 1982 he was named president of the newly-formed Phelps Inc., an employee-owned holding company engaged in contract manufacturing. Later, Tointon took two of Phelps Inc.'s divisions and formed Phelps-Tointon Inc.

He planned growth by acquisition, eventually having assets in real estate, development and coal bed methane gas with a combined volume of \$100 million.

Tointon also serves on boards of directors and is a member of many civic organizations.

During the course of his career, he has been recognized by his alma mater, the city of Greeley and his peers.

Bravo! Entrepreneur - Emerging Entrepreneur



Dave Howard
1Vision Software Inc.

Dave Howard left a long career in software management at Hewlett-Packard/Colorado Memory Systems in 1996 to found 1Vision Software. He and three colleagues from HP began work on 1Vision's now-patented Persistent

File System, with the idea of creating an entirely new storage management software platform for PCs. With it, they could build multiple products.

The four saw a market for storage management that performed better than typical file management, backup and restore applications.

1Vision also is introducing the first Web storage drive that incorporates file management, backup and restore, and operates as a true network server.

Revenues have increased from \$500,000 in 1997 to a projected \$4.7 million this year.



Melissa Katsimpalis & Laura Sandell
ISIS Public Relations & Marketing Inc.

In January 1997, Melissa Katsimpalis and Laura Sandell started a public relations firm in an in-home office with \$7,000.

With two clients and unshakable belief that

they could help clients reach business goals, the two launched what now is close to a \$500,000 agency.

Staying true to its mission of being trustworthy and committed to clients and community, ISIS Public Relations now has its own office, 25 retainer clients and a roster of dedicated employees.

Katsimpalis and Sandell work one-on-one with clients, building creative teams of designers, photographers and videographers to serve the client's creative needs.

The client base includes biotech and high-tech firms, private foundations and higher education institutions.



Bret Lampers
Dandelion Moving & Storage Inc.,
Dandelion Mini-Storage,
Dickerabid.com

Since taking over Dandelion Moving & Storage in 1995, Bret Lampers took a business that was \$40,000 in the hole and built it into a \$1.8 million moving company that transports all over the country.

He got into the mini-storage business and is starting a Web site, www.Dickerabid.com, giving customers a chance to find the best price for their move.

In 1997, Lampers started Dandelion Package Express, delivering parcels or overnight packages along the Front Range. A later venture into freight shipping didn't work out, so Lampers returned to the basics of the moving business.

Dandelion Moving has a new location at the Windsor exit on Interstate 25.



Marcia Sampson, president
Eldon James Corp.

When Eldon James Corp. decided it wanted to reach out to smaller customers, company president Marcia Sampson hit the road with a 30-foot trailer. She took along her children, parked in campgrounds along the way and lived out

of it as she made sales calls.

Eldon James Corp. manufactures plastic fittings used to connect hoses and tubing.

Sampson formed the company, named for her two brothers, with her sister, Dee Sampson. The two purchased a division of Value Plastics Inc. in 1992 from their parents, Kent and Gloria Sampson.

The approach reflects Eldon James Corp.'s effort to cultivate more smaller customers, rather just one or two large customers.



Rick Wagner
Employment Solutions Personnel Services Inc.

Employment Solutions specializes in industrial, office and technical placements in a wide variety of fields

Nominees

Bravo! Entrepreneur 2001

such as office administration, electronic testing and engineering, electronics, Web development and production labor.

The Fort Collins-based staffing service, launched in 1994, not only has to compete with national firms, but also has to compete using only local talent.

The company offers a special technical division called Synergy, that handles information-technology placements, product placements and contact placements.

Wagner appreciates his staff of 13 and tries to foster what he calls a "work hard-play hard" environment. The company offers bonuses for quality performance and the firm has a competitive fringe-benefits program.



Maury Willman
Ergonomic Health Systems Inc.,
Willman Productions,
MediaTech Productions

Maury Willman has founded and/or owned five diverse companies, successfully selling two. She currently is president and CEO of three companies,

including Ergonomic Health Systems Inc., Willman Productions and MediaTech Productions.

Ergonomic Health Systems, founded in 1998, focuses on creating unique and innovative ergonomic solutions for medium and large companies.

Willman Productions, founded in 1994, produces training and educational videos.

Willman recently founded MediaTech Productions, a turnkey e-commerce solutions company that offers Internet strategy, product development, video production, marketing and sales, accounting, fulfillment and hosting for its customers. One target for the company is Internet video and audio streaming, which will account for 5 percent of Internet traffic in 2000.

Bravo! Entrepreneur - Regional Spirit Award



Longs Peak Council of the Boy Scouts of America

The Longs Peak Council of the Boy Scouts of America serves more than 18,000 individuals in an area that spans northeastern Colorado, southeastern Wyoming and the Nebraska panhandle.

Participants are first-grade through high-school students.

The council intersects with the region's business community in a variety of ways.

The business community supports Boy Scouts in part because it sees the benefit in helping to build people of character who will one day be good employees. Boy Scout values such as encouraging boys to do their best, do their duty to God and country, help others, and remain physically strong, moral and mentally awake are part and parcel of a strong work ethic.

Monfort Family Foundation

The Monfort Family Foundation was started more than 50 years ago by Warren and Edith Monfort and has left its stamp on numerous educational, medical and cultural activities in Greeley, Weld County and Colorado.

The foundation is now directed by Kaye Montera, daughter of Ken and Patricia Monfort.

The Monforts have given \$33 million to various projects and organizations since 1985, \$23 million through the Foundation. While the family foundation was initiated by Warren and Edith Monfort, it was their son, Ken Monfort, who built it into the major philanthropic organization that it is today.

In all, Monfort Family Foundation has given to more than 100 different causes.

Northern Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce

Northern Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce executive director Jorge Amaya remembers the plaintive query of a municipal official: "Why can't you be more like a real chamber of commerce?"

The answer is simple: That wouldn't serve members.

The Latino chamber serves as a clearinghouse for resources, referrals and information on everything from business financing, licensing and registration requirements to housing and civil rights.

The chamber is deeply involved in community development, spearheading an effort to revitalize north Greeley neighborhoods through an effort called the Mercado Project.

And, among many other projects, Amaya's chamber is behind Weld County's first-ever voter-registration project aimed at helping Hispanics register to vote.



Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance

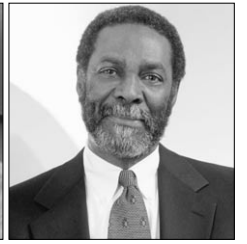
Among three communities that have as often competed as cooperated, the Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance is an exceptional example of regional cooperation.

Led by Sandra Hagen Solin, the NCLA is the united effort of the Fort Collins, Loveland and Greeley chambers of commerce to lobby the state and federal legislatures on behalf of the Northern Colorado business community.

The efforts of the alliance are overseen by a 21-member board; seven representatives from each of the three chambers.

All three participating chambers have delegated all policy, legislative or public policy authority to the NCLA.

Priority issues for the NCLA are education funding, tax policy and transportation. The alliance's efforts have brought many successes.



UNC-CSU agreement

There has long been a quiet spirit of cooperation between the University of Northern Colorado and Colorado State University, but it took place professor-to-professor or department-to-department.

In April 1999, the region's two higher-education outlets, under the leadership of presidents Hank Brown and Albert Yates, made a cooperative relationship official with the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

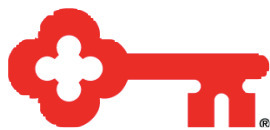
The agreement is aimed at improving efficiency and expanding educational opportunities for students through collaboration in areas ranging from expanding academic alliances to jointly pursuing purchasing agreements.

Since then, a variety of collaborative activities have been explored or undertaken by the two universities.

They include sharing faculty library privileges, human resource needs, staff training, surplus property, and collaborative curriculum discussions.

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