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Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

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NEWS



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Mason Corridor to leave the station

New agreement sets up business, economic benefits

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — For Bob Flynn, the Mason Corridor project has been a very long time coming.

Flynn was a member of the Mason Corridor Citizen Lead Team that helped create the corridor's original design about 14 years ago and is a resident of the Troutman Park neighborhood that sits adjacent to the corridor. He has been closely watching the sometimes glacial pace of negotiations between the city and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway to develop the five-mile transportation corridor.

But those negotiations have finally borne fruit, and an agreement between the two parties was signed in late March. Flynn said he's happy to see the agreement signed but wonders why it took so long.

"I don't think it was ever anticipated that it would take as much time as this did," he said. "Overall, I'm glad and my hat's off to the people who had to negotiate with the railroad and I think it's a big

step forward.

"I've always said this will be a showcase for the city and good for both transportation and economic development," Flynn added. "But let's keep it on the schedule we have now and not have any more delays."

The \$82 million Mason Corridor project — which includes a new rapid bus system called the Mason Express or MAX

See MASON, 28A

Using nature's bounty to solve global issues

State grants to UNC biological research supports projects

By Joshua Zaffos
news@ncbr.com

GREELEY — Stephen Mackessy was a teenager when he became interested in snakes, and he learned the first and most essential lesson of handling lethal creatures early on — the hard way.

At his after-school job for a company that supplied snakes for schools and zoos, Mackessy, then age 15, let his attention slip for a moment while moving a Southern Pacific rattlesnake.

"I wasn't using my head," recalled Mackessy, now a biology professor at the University of Northern Colorado.

He picked up the snake by its tail, allowing it to whip around and bite him between his fingers. The rattler was a newborn so its bite wasn't as dangerous as an adult

snake's, but Mackessy's arm ballooned up to his shoulder and he had to spend six nights recovering in a hospital.

"Fortunately, I can be taught," said Mackessy, although what he learned wasn't to stay away from poisonous animals. The UNC professor now keeps more than 100 snakes in his lab, researching how compounds in their venom can be used in cancer-fighting drugs.

Mackessy isn't alone at UNC in finding inspiration from nature to help solve global problems. Biology and biotechnology professor



BITING BACK — A University of Northern Colorado researcher extracts venom from a Gaboon Viper to be used in the fight against cancer.

Chhandak Basu is studying how plants and trees can offset pollution from cars and industrial sites, or maybe meet fuel needs. Both professors have received state funding to explore the commercial applications of their research, and the studies in emulating nature's

See VENOM, 27A

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Joe's Upholstery continues downtown legacy



Steve Porter, Northern Colorado Business Report

STILL JOE'S – Even though his father, Joe Cienfuegos, was retired from Joe's Auto Upholstery for 25 years before his death in April, his son Richard, above, is still operating the 65-year-old downtown Fort Collins business under his father's name.

Cienfuegos worked his way up from beet fields to auto business success

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Joe Cienfuegos' journey from Mexico to Fort Collins spanned nine decades and included working in the beet fields of Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, fighting in

war-torn Europe and miserable captivity as a German prisoner of war.

But nothing could stop him on his road to success that eventually resulted in the founding of his own auto upholstery business in downtown Fort Collins in 1945. It's a business that goes on under his son, Richard, following Joe's



Courtesy Cienfuegos family

ENLISTED MAN – Mexican-born Joe Cienfuegos enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 and was wounded and captured in fighting in Germany, spending six months in a POW camp before being liberated in 1945. He was granted his citizenship by the Army after World War II.

death on April 14 at age 90.

Richard, 65, is proud of his father and the legacy he left behind as a successful businessman.

"He started from nothing and he worked hard and he did well," Richard said. "He taught me everything I ever

See CIENFUEGOS, 30A

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THE EYE

Survival communities - like the '60s all over again

The trouble with panic rooms is that they can be terribly isolating. So why not make them bigger, with modern comforts, and encourage your neighbors to build one, too, in case you need to borrow a cup of sugar after the world ends?

Some thought the end of the world was at hand in October 1962, when the Soviets parked those nuclear missiles off Key West. Still others thought it might happen Jan. 1, 2000. If you're reading this on Monday, we know it wasn't May 21, as a Denver-area billboard recently proclaimed.

When confronted with potential global doom, the natural reaction of our species is to stock up and bunker down. Now we can do it in style, thanks to Colorado Springs-based **Surefire Living**.

The Surefire communities feature fortified structures above ground with secure underground shelters, trained security defense teams, medical staff, food supplies, water supply and a community of "like-minded" people including barbers/stylists, musicians, engineers, scientists and clergy.

See what the company can do for you on its website at www.surefireliving.com or, like The Eye, watch for the three-part **Discovery Channel** special on survival communities. Filming for the show started this month.

Oh yeah, the next predicted apocalypse, according to students of the Mayan calendar, will take place in late 2012. We'll see, won't we?

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Activity picks up in banking sector

New offices open, plans for branches wait for approval

By Molly Armbrister
marmbrister@ncbr.com

In another sign there might be an actual economic recovery in the wings, banks are opening new branches and preparing to begin lending money again. Smaller banks from around the state are planning to expand into Northern Colorado, and local banks have plans to branch outside their established territories.

A new loan production office has already opened its doors in Greeley. Patty

Gates, formerly with Bank of Choice, will serve as the vice president of Business Development for the newly formed FMS Bank, an offshoot of Fort Morgan State Bank in Fort Morgan.

Officials at Fort Morgan State Bank saw a great deal of potential in Northern Colorado and decided to expand into the area with the loan office, which could become a full-service deposit and lending institution within 12 months, according to CEO John Sneed.

The loan office, which will focus on providing residential mortgages initially, will retain servicing of the loans so that customers will continue to deal with a local source as long as they hold the loan, Gates said. In recent years, mortgage loans have been sold to investors almost as soon as the closing papers were signed, leaving con-

sumers to deal with out-of-town financial institutions, so local servicing represents a back-to-basics innovation.

"We're very confident in it," Sneed said of the new branch's ability to withstand current banking conditions. "Additional regulations make it difficult to get into the mortgage business, and we're already in the mortgage business."

The loan office, located at 1919 65th Ave., currently employs three people, and plans to add one or two more, Gates said. A grand opening is slated for the beginning of June.

Sneed said Weld County was a good fit for the new branch because it is "a very good market," with more homes per square mile than Morgan County, where the home office is located. He also said he expects

See **BANK ACTIVITY**, 33A

F O C U S

Young entrepreneurs: Just do something



Courtesy LifeSoap Co.

LOTS OF LOVE - Colorado State University graduate and LifeSoap Co. co-founder Juwon Melvin with children in Nicaragua as part of his volunteer efforts with international charity Arms of Love.

LifeSoap venture intended to help clean-water cause

By Molly Armbrister
marmbrister@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — In their first three years out of college, most young adults have usually found a job, moved into their

own place, started paying their own bills, and, in some cases, gotten married and started a family.

In their first three years out of college, Colorado State University graduates Aaron Madonna and Juwon Melvin have started two companies, written two books, embarked upon a mission to clean up the drinking water of South American children, and have inspired countless students with their motivational speeches and blogs.

The pair graduated from CSU in 2008

and immediately began working toward their goal of making a difference in the world through helping students discover their paths in life. They wrote a book, "Destination College," as part of their first business, DreamReel Media.

DreamReel Media was also the launching point for the men's first blog, "Live Young, Live Well, Live Now," which included daily posts meant to inspire and encourage readers to stay positive and push through the obstacles to achieving

See **LIFESOAP**, 34A

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High tech, high touch at Twin Peaks Travel

Media, personal service combines to sustain business

By Michelle Venus
news@ncbr.com

LASALLE — Beth Sharbonda laughs a bit ruefully when she talks about websites like Expedia and Travelocity. “I encourage my clients to do their research and see what these sites offer,” said the owner of Twin Peaks Travel Agency. “That way, they know that I’m getting them the best travel deals out there.”

Having been in the travel business for over 35 years — 24 heading up her own agency — Sharbonda has seen trends come and go and knows that certain people will rely on her expertise regardless of online options.

“There have been ups and downs since online booking became so popular, and there are people who will book over the Web no matter what,” she said. “But when something comes up, like the recent tornadoes in the South or catastrophes like 9/11, they want the human contact that a travel agent offers. A website can’t compete with us on that level, and people are coming back to us for our knowledge and that one-on-one relationship. We also make sure we stay in touch with our customers and keep them updated on travel opportunities.”

The bulk of Sharbonda’s client base rely on her and her staff of three travel agents to plan their vacations. Her team researches different resort and travel options based on the clients’ needs and their capabilities.

“A family with small children looks for a different vacation than say, a retired couple,” she said. “Young families want a more inclusive resort that will have a variety of activities to keep their children engaged and active, whereas the retired couple may want to bicycle through Italy or Provence and visit vineyards. We ask a lot of questions and listen carefully to the

answers, and then we craft a trip based on what our clients tell us about their lifestyles and preferences. We often come up with great ideas for destinations they would have never considered.”

One of the most interesting trips Sharbonda planned was to the Holy Lands, which included a baptism in the Jordan River. “At just the spot Jesus was said to have been baptized,” she explained. “I found a Christian company that helped us map out a route that followed the steps of the Bible. The clients loved it.”

Recession tough on travel

The recession was rough on Twin Peaks.

“There were times I considered making a career change,” Sharbonda admits. “But we stayed positive and pushed through the last year, which was very hard; there were definite lean times.”

Sharbonda put a lot of effort behind building a stronger online presence through advertising and search engine optimization. A third of her clients have found her through Twin Peaks’ website, with over 20 percent of the entire client base located outside of Colorado. More than half of her business comes through referrals and repeat clients.

“One of my agents completely revamped our corporate website,” Sharbonda said. “And we’ve been a lot more active with social media. I spend at least one to two hours a day just supporting those efforts.”

In addition to a Facebook fan page, the company is actively engaged with LinkedIn groups and has a profile on the Merchant Circle website. And business so far in 2011 is ahead of last year and looks to continue that way.

While new media has helped to tell Twin Peaks’ story and garner new clients, Sharbonda still utilizes more traditional marketing strategies.

“We still send out mailers and spend a lot of time on the phone, maintaining our existing relationships,” she said. “People really do appreciate that personal touch, and they always seem surprised when we call just to say hello.”

C O R R E C T I O N S

In a story in the April 22 issue of the *Business Report*, the vice president for public affairs for the National Small Business Association was misidentified. Her name is Molly Brogan.

The *Business Report* will correct any errors that appear in its pages. To suggest a correction or clarification, please contact editor Kate Hawthorne at 970-232-3142, or e-mail her at khawthorne@ncbr.com.

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Company seeks to end needle pain in dentistry

St. Renatus nears FDA approval of nasal mist anesthetic

FORT COLLINS — St. Renatus CEO Steve Merrick is spending a lot of time on the road these days, seeking to interest potential investors in a new drug that he says will revolutionize dentistry.

The Fort Collins-based startup is working to get final FDA approval for “the world’s first needle-free dental anesthetic administered through the nasal cavity,” according to the St. Renatus website.

That’s right — a dental anesthetic that’s misted into the nose.

And that’s something many needle-fearing adults and probably most kids would be very interested in trying when they sit down in that dentist’s chair, Merrick said.

“When this drug is proven effective, it will provide a better way to handle pain in dentistry,” he said. “That’s my mantra: This is absolutely something

that will revolutionize the whole concept of dental pain and gets rid of the phobias that go with needles.”

According to St. Renatus’ consumer research, 90 percent of dental patients said they were “very likely or somewhat likely” to choose the nasal mist product over a needle-injected anesthetic, and 96 percent of dentists surveyed said they would offer the nasal mist anesthetic when it becomes available.

The road to FDA approval has already been a long one. The first patent for the drug was filed in 2000, and was awarded in 2002. It took another five years to complete the first phase of safety studies and two more to complete Phase 2 efficacy studies.

Merrick, formerly the vice president for global marketing for Septodont — a world leader in injectable anesthetics — was hired in September 2009 to help St. Renatus get its product across the FDA goal line.

Nearly two years later, the drug is about to enter the final phase of efficacy studies. Merrick said the company is about to begin a 60-patient, three-week study in June that will set the stage for large-scale studies expected to begin by mid-July or early August.

“We want to make sure our data is



MERRICK

very strong before we start large-scale studies,” Merrick said.

In those large-scale studies, more than 300 patients will be tested in dental schools across the nation, including some as young as three years old.

The product has one large caveat: Initially, it will only anesthetize upper teeth.

“Sometimes it’s easier to take these tools in steps,” said Merrick. “We know we have a very effective formula for upper teeth with 100 percent efficacy, but when you move to other areas of the mouth we don’t get the same efficacy.”

But getting away from needles in dental work performed in the upper teeth is a good start, he noted.

“The roof of the mouth is one of the most painful areas to inject,” Merrick said, adding that research is continuing on a needle-free anesthetic for the entire mouth.

Merrick said the notion of topical anesthetics is not a new one, but added “none have tried to give total anesthesia to the top teeth.”

“The drug is unique in that it anesthetizes the pulp of the tooth so you can drill it, and we’re doing our research to prove that point,” he said.

Merrick said the road to final FDA approval, which he hopes will be secured in 2012, has also been an expensive one. More than \$25 million has been invested in the product so far

“This is absolutely something that will revolutionize the whole concept of dental pain ...”

Steve Merrick, CEO
St. Renatus



HEALTH CARE
Steve Porter


“and we’re not done,” he added.

“Fundraising is an ongoing process.”

But Merrick says he’s confident that the long and expensive journey will be worth it.

“In the U.S. alone, there are roughly 125 million injections into the top part of the mouth every year,” he said. “I believe there’s going to be a strong demand for the drug once we get our approval. I think it will be a very fruitful experience when it’s over.”

Steve Porter covers health care for the Northern Colorado Business Report. He can be reached at 970-232-3147 or at sporter@ncbr.com.

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Courtesy City of Loveland

SCULPTURE IN THE PARK – Loveland has become known as a sculpture-lover’s destination, especially in August when the city celebrates with Sculpture in the Park and the Loveland Sculpture Invitational. Similar arts events draw tourists to cities and towns throughout Northern Colorado each summer.

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Arts events draw tourist dollars to NoCo

Summer season full of festivals, picnics, exhibits of creativity

Summer is fast approaching and people across Northern Colorado are gearing up to drink beer, listen to good music, and check out the local art scene.

It seems every city and town has a big summer draw or two — Brew Fest, NewWestFest, Blues Jam, Arts Picnic, Sculpture in the Park, just to name a few — but how important are these to the local economy? Do they draw visitors — and their wallets — to our region? And are there numbers to back up how many of the attendees actually come from somewhere else and spend those out-of-town dollars here?



BUSINESS AND THE ARTS
Kiki Gilderhus

In Loveland the connection between the arts and tourism as an economic driver is very direct. At the beginning of May, city council approved \$34,000 to promote the Loveland Sculpture Invitational and Sculpture in the Park, events scheduled for Aug. 12-14. The grant was recommend by the Community Marketing Commission, the city board charged with spending proceeds from a 3 percent tax on lodging that voters passed in November 2009.

“Loveland has a lot of public art and professional artists,” said Marcie Erion, business development specialist for the city’s Office of Creative Sector Development. “The arts compose 8 percent of the working sector in Loveland. With 3,000 workers in the creative sector, that is equivalent to HP at its peak.

The difference is that if you lose one or two artists it doesn’t collapse the economy. Coupling arts with tourism makes a stronger economic environment.”

Erion describes Loveland’s emphasis on the visual arts as “placemaking,” or focusing on what you have, what you do well, and how you leverage it. The intent is to draw artists and attendees from around the region. The Loveland Sculpture Invitational features more than 250 artists, and nearly two-thirds are from outside of Colorado. The Invitational received \$19,000 of the grant for promotion, while Sculpture in the Park received \$15,000 for direct marketing to high-income Denver ZIP codes.

“To track out-of-town visitors we collect data, we collect zip codes of patrons at events,” Erion said. “Interviewing people at key sites is important and we contact vendors like hotels to see how they do.” For the 2010 Loveland Sculpture Invitational and Sculpture in the Park, “We figure 20,000 visitors with 35 percent local, 50 percent regional and 15 percent national.”

Music is a part of “placemaking” in Greeley.

“We have absolutely great music,” said Kim Parker, conference and tourism director at the Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Bureau. Events like the UNC Jazz Fest and the Blues Jam draw patrons from both inside and outside of the community. “Our main gauge for outside attendees is the number of hotel rooms booked for certain events,” Parker said. “This year there were 7,000 people in attendance at Jazz Fest and it brought in \$450,000.”

The Blues Jam, slated for June 10-11 this year, generated \$190,000 in 2010.

Fort Collins presents yet a different scenario.

“We do a visitor participation study that tracks summer visitors, but it does not survey events individually,” according to Jim Clark, president and CEO of the Fort Collins Convention and Visitor Bureau.

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County assessors say flat is where it's at this year

Property values stay about the same after 2010 reassessments

Homeowners across Northern Colorado received notice of the change in their property values early this month, after state-mandated reassessments conducted in both Larimer and Weld counties. Most have avoided the sticker shock of previous years.

In Larimer County, the reassessments stayed relatively unchanged from previous years, according to Larimer County assessor Steve Miller. Residential property values decreased 1 percent to 1.5 percent on average, Miller said, but this change is nothing significant.

"Flat is the new up," Miller said, indicating that the relative lack of change was to be expected and not a negative thing, in light of the recession in the past three years. "Considering how Larimer stands in relation to other Front Range counties, we're OK. It's easier to keep the market values we have than it would be to lose value and then



REAL ESTATE
Molly Armbrister

have to regain it."

Colorado property tax law requires assessors to conduct reassessments every two years in odd-numbered years. June 30 of the preceding year, in this case 2010, is used as the benchmark or "level of value."

The values were determined by using trends from the previous 60 months, meaning that the most recent assessment uses data collected from July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2010. Larimer and Weld County values are appraised in very similar ways, according to Brenda Jones, Chief Deputy Assessor for Weld County. "The formulas are statewide, so the methodology is the same," she said.

Assessors have until August to certify final valuations for the county commissioners to prepare their budgets.

The reassessment determines how much an owner is required to pay in property taxes for the following two years, 2012-13.

Residential properties account for 110,000 of the 150,000 Larimer County properties assessed, with the remainder falling into the commercial/industrial and vacant land categories.

Larimer County residents have until June 1 to submit a protest concerning their reassessments, something they can complete either in person at the assessor's office, located in the Larimer County Courthouse at 200 W. Oak St., or online at www.larimer.org/assessor/protest.

Miller said that his office has not handled very many protests yet, but that

is to be expected when the average assessment goes down, meaning that the property owner will be required to pay less in property tax.

The decrease in taxes means less money for government programs that are funded by property taxes, including roads and public education, but will be good news for the individual taxpayer when it comes time to pay their property taxes in the next two years.

Larimer County Manager Frank Lancaster said that the flatness of the reassessment was a positive thing, especially in light of the fact that an 8 percent drop had been anticipated for budget purposes.

Properties in Weld County also stayed relatively flat, according to Weld assessor Chris Woodruff, with the exception of agricultural property, which increased 15 percent on average. Assessments of agricultural property are not based on market value, but rather on production potential.

Woodruff said that there was no blanket observation to be made about residential values in Weld County because the property values were too localized within districts.

"The values were not uniform at all in residential properties," Woodruff said.

Oil and gas values are rising in Weld County, Woodruff said, a relief to many county residents after a 45 percent drop in value in 2010. Oil and gas properties are reassessed every year, according to

Woodruff, and are also valued on production potential.

"Half our tax base in Weld County is in oil and gas," Woodruff said. "So we're hoping we're starting an upward trend."

Weld County protests are also due by June 1, either in writing, at the assessor's office at 1400 N. 17th Ave., or online at www.co.weld.co.us/departments/assessor.

Woodruff estimated that about 5 percent of parcels are protested in Weld County every reassessment, but that he has seen few protests so far. He has heard from some residents who are concerned that the declining value of their properties could become problematic if they want to sell or refinance in the near future.

Eric Thompson, President and CEO of The Group Inc. Real Estate, which serves both Larimer and Weld counties, said that the flatness of the reassessment demonstrates that the Northern Colorado market is strengthening, even though other markets are still in decline.

"Prices have held up compared to other metro markets," Thompson said.

He added that Northern Colorado is currently a "dual market," appealing to both buyers and sellers, which is a "unique dynamic."

Molly Armbrister covers real estate for the Northern Colorado Business Report. She can be reached at 970-221-5400, ext. 209 or at marmbrister@ncbr.com.

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Why employees stay with a job

On list of reasons to stay, it's not all about money

Here's the scenario that I see emerging in multiple companies: One valuable and respected employee is frustrated by the way she's been treated by her employer over the last few years — reduced hours, lost pay, no advancement, and some personal conflicts with her boss. She finally works up the courage to look outside for other jobs.



LEADERSHIP 2011
Carl Dierschow

Because she has valuable skills, she manages to get a great job with the competitor across town. This sends shock waves through her previous co-workers, because they now realize that it's quite possible, and beneficial, to start looking for jobs elsewhere.

Those who get jobs first, of course, are the employees who are the most valuable. They have the best skills, experience and soft skills. The holes that open up are significant, and the company will pursue one of three avenues for recovering.

First, these may become opportunities for promotion. That may be quite attrac-

tive for some who want to advance, depending on how the process is handled.

Second, the company could take this opportunity to continue to eliminate jobs and save money. The remaining employees will interpret this as a strong signal that advancement is only an illusion, and the company is falling behind the competition.

Third, the company might replace key positions by hiring from the competition. This will encourage circles of job-hoppers in the industry, encouraging employees to look for external opportunities rather than staying with their current employers.

As the boss, why should you care? After all, a certain amount of turnover is good: It helps to bring in new ideas and approaches, and gives opportunities to restructure the workforce with new skills.

Imagine, though, that you end up losing 80 percent of your capability (remember, your strongest employees will leave first) in a short time. What happens to your key processes? Do you still have your base of knowledge? What happens to your customer relationships?

Even if you hire high-quality replacements away from your competition, each departure will cause significant damage.

So what can you do to encourage your employees to stay? Multiple studies have shown, surprisingly, that money is not the top of the list. Employees need to make enough income to survive, of course, but beyond that, other factors start to take over.

Why we work

■ **Liking the work.** This tops the list, but it is a complex mix of several factors: having a supportive and constructive relationship with your direct manager; seeing value and meaning in the work you do; being recognized and encouraged for your accomplishments; and liking the other people you work with. It's important to note that recognition doesn't necessarily involve money. Often, timely kind words will go much further than a fleeting bonus or even a thank-you gift card. This is because money can be given out without regard to you as a unique individual, whereas meaningful conversations often acknowledge the deeper value of your contribution.

■ **Opportunity to improve.** Few people want to be doing the same exact work that they're doing now in 10 years. Most desire some kind of change, development, or advancement. Realize that the recent business environment has shown many people that moving into management is not an attractive option. Instead, many employees now seek increased influence, more significant contribution, skill development and ability to innovate.

■ **Belief in the organization.** Many find this surprising, because of the perception that workers mostly just focus on doing their assigned jobs. But we all strive for deeper meaning in our lives, and that includes the time people spend at work. We are fortunate to have a number of notable examples here in Northern Colorado. I've run across a

significant number of small companies that build employee motivation on a compelling, powerful mission.

■ **Job conditions.** This encompasses many things such as work hours, location, work environment and flexibility. Some of these are very personal, but others, as the employer, you'll have great influence over. That includes a number of things that don't cost much money at all, and you can immediately reap the rewards of greater productivity. Being flexible around each worker's individual needs will create a basis for long-term loyalty.

■ **Financial considerations.** While this comes in near the bottom of the list, it would be dangerous to assume that pay is unimportant. But once you've reached a level appropriate to the lifestyle of the individual employee, and they perceive that it's fair, then other factors become much more important. This is especially true now that most employees understand that pay raises are uncommon in a tough economy.

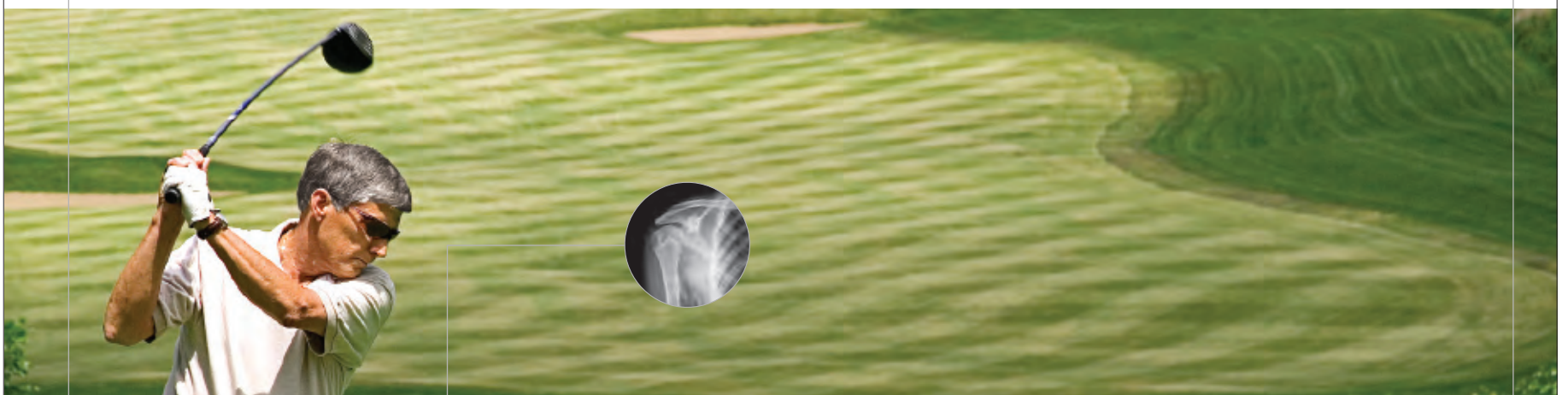
What are you doing in your company to:

- help people like their work and the people they spend the most time with?
- have opportunities to improve, grow, and advance?
- believe in the mission of your organization?
- love the conditions around the work they do?
- provide employees with fair and reliable pay?

These are the reasons why your employees will stay with you as their opportunities increase to move to your competition.

Carl Dierschow is a Small Fish Business Coach based in Fort Collins. His website is www.smallfish.us.

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ETC.

Daily in Review

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Job misclassification can cost you

Workers, employers could both pay price of faux independence

By Kate Hawthorne
 khawthorne@ncbr.com

Employment is still a lagging indicator of the fragile economic recovery. The latest figures show unemployment in Northern Colorado averaging near the state rate of 9.2 percent, slightly higher than the national rate.

Part of the problem is that employers are not yet confident in that recovery, especially how long it will last. Even though there is more work to do, there's not necessarily enough money coming in to pay for a salary, which comes with payroll taxes, workers' comp insurance, withholding, perhaps benefits, and the whole range of other costs associated with hiring.

So, why not just find an independent contractor to do the work? Then all those other
See JOB, 31A

You might be an employee if

You think you are an independent contractor; your employer thinks you are an independent contractor. But does the state of Colorado? Here are some red flags that might lead the Department of Labor and Employment to look more closely at your relationship.

- **Where do you work?** If you work onsite for the person signing your paycheck, using his or her company's equipment, you might be an employee.
- **When do you work?** If the person signing your paycheck tells you when to show up, when to go home, and when and how long to take a lunch break, you might be an employee.
- **Who do you work for?** If you work for only one client, especially if the relationship started while you were an employee of that client and he or she determines how you do your job, you might still be an employee.
- **Who else does the same work you do?** If the person signing your paycheck has employees doing your job, you might also be an employee.

For more guidance, check out the CDLE website under www.colorado.gov or the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

SOURCE: BUSINESS REPORT RESEARCH

'Leave this world a little bit better'



**WHAT'S
 WORKING**
 Brian Schwartz

Munsch creates legacy with Cattleman's Choice Loomix

JOHNSTOWN — Ken Munsch started working for the agricultural products producer Loomix in 1978. He continued working for the company after it was sold to P.M. Ag Products in 1991, eventually becoming general manager of the company's liquid feed division.

In 1997 Munsch seized the opportunity to spin off the division into a separate company, and he and Mike Troska established Cattleman's Choice Loomix. The company has enjoyed at least 10 percent annual growth since then and is eight times larger today than at inception, with approximately 350 distributors nationwide.

Munsch wasn't always his own boss, however. In his youth,

he worked at a 24-hour gas station — in 24-hour shifts.

Q: What is the vision of the company and the community you serve?

A: Our company's roots date back to 1952. Our primary business is supplying vitamins and minerals to momma cows. We are like the GNC to momma cows. We also have a secondary company that imports European technology to the United States primarily to be used by high-performance animals. In Europe you cannot use drugs on animals without a prescription. Of course in America, we can use a lot of drugs over the counter. For example, we market our product to the thoroughbred



MUNSCH

See WHAT'S WORKING, 23A



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39 month lease plus tax

\$2000 cash or trade plus 1st months payment plus tax plus \$750 Audi loyalty cash* due at lease signing. MSRP \$38,415 10K miles per year. Stk#39211 Expires 5.31.11



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*Must be current owner of 2001 or newer Audi to qualify.

DAILY IN REVIEW

Two area banks directed to raise capital

Editor's note: Daily in Review is a partial digest of stories reported in the Business Report Daily online service between May 2-13. Follow Business Report Daily each day at www.ncbr.com — click on "Breaking News" on the home page — or subscribe to have each day's top items delivered to your inbox twice a day.

GREELEY — The Federal Insurance Deposit Corp. announced on April 29 that it had issued directives to two area banks to increase their capitalization in March.

Signature Bank in Windsor and Bank of Choice in Greeley were both required to increase the volume of their capital to restore an "adequately capitalized" level or face sale of stock or merger with another bank to restore funds.

The Bank of Choice, which holds \$1.1 billion in assets, received its notice on March 14 and Signature Bank, holding \$75.9 million in assets, on March 31. The FDIC directives referred to Signature Bank as "undercapitalized," while Bank of Choice was referred to as "significantly undercapitalized."

Both institutions were given 30 days to correct the problem.

To date, the FDIC has announced 20 prompt corrective action directives nationwide. For all of 2010, 52 PCAs were issued, according to the FDIC website.

Harshaw closes Shaw Sign & Awning to join YESCO

FORT COLLINS — Jonathan Harshaw is closing his 13-year-old business, Shaw Sign & Awning Inc., and joining the team at YESCO Custom Electric Signs.

Harshaw said his decision was the result of "an epiphany" last fall when he realized that YESCO, one of the largest sign fabrication, installation and service providers in the country, wanted to expand into the Fort Collins market.

YESCO currently has locations in Denver and Colorado Springs in addition to a service station at 219 N. Timberline Road in Fort Collins. The company employs more than 90 people in all three locations.

Weld County to settle ACLU civil suit for \$295,000

GREELEY — Weld County has resolved a civil lawsuit filed by the ACLU in January 2009 that asserted law enforcement officers from the county's Sheriff's Office and District Attorney's Office violated the rights of clients of a Greeley tax preparer during an identity theft investigation.

The county has agreed to pay \$295,000 to the ACLU for attorney fees

in connection with the suit, which said the officers violated the Fourth Amendment rights of clients Amalia Cerrillo when they seized tax documents while serving a search warrant at Cerrillo's business on Oct. 17, 2008.

As a result of the search, 1,338 individual files were identified as having evidence of identity theft and criminal impersonation, according to the law enforcement offices. Because of the ACLU suit, the majority of 142 cases that were filed were dismissed without prejudice.

The legal fees are the final settlement amount for the lawsuit and will be paid from the county's general fund.

Forsyth steps down at Innosphere

FORT COLLINS — Mark Forsyth will be stepping down as the CEO of the Rocky Mountain Innosphere.

In an email sent on May 5, he said he will be transitioning out of the role "over the coming weeks," working closely with RMI's COO Ryan Speir who will become interim CEO.

Forsyth said the move will allow him to "shift to a part-time role of institutionalizing RMI's FastTrac TechVenture program and taking it to the next level." The program was launched last spring to help tech-oriented entrepreneurs devel-

op the business skills needed to run a successful startup.

Sysum advised of rights in Weld County Court

GREELEY — Matthew Sysum, a Greeley businessman indicted on 14 counts of pattern racketeering, forgery and theft, appeared in Weld County Court May 4 and was advised of his rights.

Sysum, 41, was indicted on April 22 after a two-year investigation by the Weld County District Attorney's office.

According to the indictment, Sysum is accused of engaging in racketeering activity that resulted in "financial gain through fraud and deceit in the purchase and sale of real property for the purpose of investment in real property." The activity allegedly took place between Jan. 31, 2003, and Dec. 31, 2007.

The land parcels involved in the indictment include a corner property in Kersey, a ranch in Firestone, a property in Platteville near U.S. Highway 85, and a property in Kiowa, as well as Sysum's home in Loveland.

Sysum posted \$50,000 bond after his arrest April 22 and is scheduled to appear again in Weld County Court July 28 for a status conference, Finch said. The investigation is ongoing.

Together is how we're expanding our business.

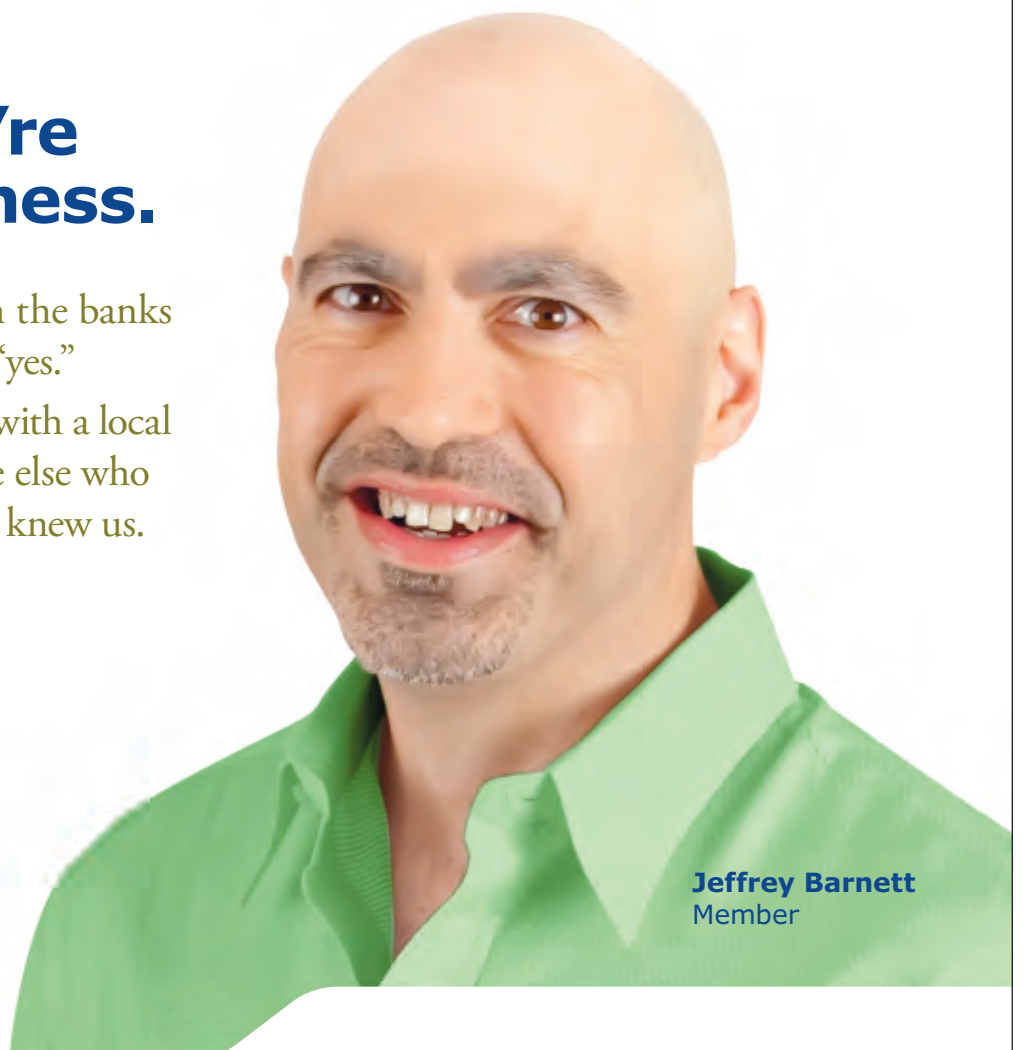
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ON THE JOB

FINANCE

Paul Hummel of Investment Centers of America Loveland was recognized at the company's national educational conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. The annual event provided an opportunity for attendees to share strategies for developing effective solutions to help clients reach their financial goals.



HUMMEL

HEALTH CARE

Ginny Riley, director of Larimer County's Department of Human Services, is this year's recipient of the 2011 Joseph Jabaily Public Health Hero Award. The award is given in honor and remembrance of the many contributions to public health and the selfless spirit of **Joseph Jabaily**, a Loveland neurologist who died in a charity bicycle race in the summer of 2004.



RILEY

Scott Baker has joined Banner Health as the Western Region Vice President of Operations for Banner Medical Group. Baker is an experienced group practice executive who has many years of leadership experience in an integrated health system and in large multi-specialty medical groups.



BAKER

REAL ESTATE

Carol Mastrofini, JD, joined Alliant National Title Insurance Co. in Longmont as chief operating officer. Mastrofini is charged with overseeing agency and legal requirements and helping form and implement the company's vision and strategies.

ACADEMICS

Matt Hickey, a professor of health and exercise science at Colorado State University, was recognized with the Board of Governor's Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award. The award recognizes professors who stimulate curiosity in students and help them develop and explore ideas while continually motivating and challenging them.

LAW

Commercial litigation attorney **Michael C. Payne** of Otis, Coan & Peters LLC has been appointed to the town of Windsor Planning Commission. Payne will serve as an alternate member of the commission, which handles the review of land use and development applications for the town.



PAYNE

INSURANCE

Debbie Mackey, a team manager for State Farm at the Greeley Operations Center, was named the "Claims Professional of the Year" at the National Association of Insurance Women's regional conference. The award recognizes a claims professional who has demonstrated superior knowledge of the claims field, experienced professional advancement through educational pursuits, demonstrated leadership in the field and is an active participant in NAIW activities.

AGRICULTURE

The Colorado Association of Wheat Growers, based in Fort Collins, announced the winners of this year's \$1,000 scholarships. **Alison Seedorf** of Yuma is the recipient of the CAWG Scholarship, and **Ben Williams** of Hayden is the winner of the Friends of Wheat Scholarship.

GOVERNMENT

John Mulligan, long-time Poudre Fire Authority Fire Chief, has retired after 33 years of service to the community. As Fort Collins Fire Chief, he was able to work with then Poudre Valley Fire Protection District Chief **Chuck Willis** to create the Poudre Fire Authority in 1981. PFA has yet to determine details on a replacement process that will include a nationwide search.



MULLIGAN

Two Greeley firefighters have received honors for their accomplishments: Lieutenant **Brian Kuznik** was the "Firefighter in Blue" for 2010, awarded for his dedication to the department. Paramedic Firefighter **Troy Valente** received an endorsement in the April 2011 edition of the Journal of Emergency of Medicine concerning his recently published book, "Capnography King of the ABC's: A Systematic Approach for Paramedics."



KUZNIK



VALENTE

BOARDS

Dean A. Beers, CLI, of Forensic Investigators of Colorado LLC in Fort Collins has been elected to the Board of Directors of the National Council of Investigation and Security Services. Beers is a Certified Legal Investigator and expert in criminal defense homicide and civil equivocal death investigations.

MISCELLANEOUS

Ann Pederson, vice president of Apex Shredding Inc. in Berthoud recently earned her Certified Secure Destruction Specialist designation from the National Association for Information Destruction. Apex Shredding is a NAID AAA Certified member providing on-site information destruction services and consulting in policy and procedure development throughout Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming.

York Keilnecker, IA mechanic with Gates Aviation at the Fort Collins-Loveland Airport, received his certification to service and repair Rotax engines on aircrafts.



KEILNECKER

If you have an item to share about a promotion, job change or career news of note, e-mail it to Noah Guillaume at nguillaume@ncbr.com, or mail it to On The Job at NCB, 1550 E. Harmony Road, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

2011-2012

Business Report Events

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ECONOMIC FORECAST	January 12, 2012 A lunch event Tickets \$39 per person, Corporate tables seating 8 - \$400
greensummit 2012	April 2012 The Green Summit shows how business and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand. Exhibit space & sponsorships available.
MERCURY 100	May 18, 2011: Midtown Arts Center - Fort Collins Awards program and cocktail-hors d'oeuvres reception honoring 100 fastest growing privately-held companies in Northern Colorado. Sponsored by: Mueller & Associates; CPA; Midtown Arts Center; Better Business Bureau; Employer Solutions Group; Just Office Furniture; Palmer Flowers; Claypot Creative; DaVinci Sign Systems; Social Media Pilots and KUNC Radio.
MID-YEAR ECONOMIC UPDATE	July 21, 2011 Tickets \$39 per person Sponsored by: Tandem Select; Better Business Bureau; Palmer Flowers; Social Media Pilots and KUNC Radio.
NORTHERN COLORADO WOMEN OF DISTINCTION	August 10, 2011: Embassy Suites Celebrating the contributions women make to the Northern Colorado community. An awards event. Nominations now open at ncbr.com . Sponsored by: Poudre Valley Health System; EKS&H; 1st National Wealth Management CPA; Columbine Health; Palmer Flowers; Cache Bank and Trust; Social Media Pilots, KUNC Radio and DaVinci.
bixpo	September 15, 2011 Embassy Suites, Loveland Game On! Exhibit spaces and sponsorships available. Sponsored by: Krueger and Clary, CPA; Palmer Flowers; Social Media Pilots; Health District of Northern Larimer County, KUNC Radio and DaVinci.
BUSINESS LEADERS BREAKFAST	September 15, 2011 Embassy Suites, Loveland Recapping the first 6 months and projecting for the next 6. Sponsored by: Kennedy & Coe; Better Business Bureau; Palmer Flowers; Social Media Pilots and KUNC Radio.
bixpo ROCKS AFTER HOURS	September 15, 2011 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Embassy Suites, Loveland A cocktails and hors d'oeuvres event. Tickets \$25 per person Sponsored by: Public Service Credit Union.
BizFit CHALLENGE	September 15, 2011 At Bixpo - Embassy Suites A lunch event filled with awards and fun. Sign-up at ncbr.com for team and individual participation. Sponsored by: Banner Health-North Colorado Medical Center & McKee Medical Center; Shirazi Benefits; Palmer Flowers; DaVinci Sign Systems; KUNC Radio; Social Media Pilots and Daily Endorphin.
40 Leaders Northern Colorado Business Report	October 6, 2011 An awards event honoring young professionals. Nominations now open at ncbr.com . Sponsored by: Emerge Colorado and Palmer Flowers

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James Ayers - Elizabeth, CO
Dix Baines - Parker, CO
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Carl Bandy - Green Mountain Falls, CO
Guadalupe Barajas - Cheyenne, WY
Craig Bergsgaard - Scottsdale, AZ
Kimberly Bowen - Parker, CO
Garnet Buster - New Braunfels, TX
Jim Clements - El Dorado, KS
James Collender - Broomfield, CO
Jim Connelly - Jenison, MI
Jess Davila - Tucson, NM
Robert DeLeon - Santa Fe, NM
Michael Ewing - Tucson, AZ

Jenny Forge-Schmalstieg - Effingham, KS
Jonathan Frank - Moab, UT
Jake Gaedtke - Longmont, CO
Mimi Grant - Great Falls, MT
Margaret Graziano - Columbia Falls, MT
K Henderson - Weed, NM
Jennifer Johnson - Lakewood, CO
Becky Johnson - Green Mountain Falls, CO
Greg Kelsey - Ignacio, CO
Julie Kramer Cole - Loveland, CO
David Mayer - Louisville, CO
James G Moore - Ft Collins, CO
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Jerry Palen - Saratoga, WY

Pedro Ramos - Loveland, CO
Sheila Rieman - Sentinel Butte, ND
M Haynes Scott - Jefferson, CO
Cathy Sheeter - Aurora, CO
Sallie K Smith - Boulder, CO
Nathan Solano - Pueblo, CO
Cydney Springer - Estes Park, CO
Pati Stajcar - Golden, CO
Jami Tobey-Kiendra - Marietta, CA
Clive Tyler - Taos, NM
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Northern Colorado
**BUSINESS
REPORT**



TIME OUT



OUT FORE FUN - 1. Ryan Mayeda, Mayeda Family Chiropractic; Ryan Mausbach, American Family Insurance; Loren Wright; and Romia Pritchett, RC Auto Detail & Carpet Cleaning stop for a round at the Greeley Young Professionals at Bogey's, Highland Hills Golf Course May 5. **2.** Banner Health staffers Dan Dennie, Scott McPherson, Leslie Gramm Exner, Paul Matthews, and John Ward, get ready for lunch at the Upstate Colorado Economic Development Annual Meeting in Windsor on April 28. **3.** Jason Eckman, Longacre Expeditions; Bryan McEndaffer, Daves Place; Lisa Hidalgo, Channel 7 News; Micheal Duncan, Michael Duncan Carpentry visit at Emerge at the Budweiser Events Center, Executive Club Café May 10. **4.** Employees and commercial contractors stopped by the Habitat for Humanity's Women Build table during Commercial Appreciation Day at Lowes in Fort Collins May 6.



E-mail your event photos to Editor Kate Hawthorne, khawthorne@ncbr.com. Include complete identification of individuals.



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CALENDAR

May 21 - Hope Lives! Pink Boa 5K, starting at 8:30 a.m., Front Range Village, 2720 Council Tree Ave. in Fort Collins. Cost: \$25/general. Contact: Kerrie Luginbill at 303-621-6772 or kerrie@mantoothcompany.com.

May 21 - 22 - Strawberry Festival Antique Show, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Boulder County Fairgrounds, Exhibit Building, 9595 Nelson Road in Longmont. Cost: \$4, free/under 12. Contact: Mary Pearson at 303-776-1870 or office@stvrainhistory.org.

May 21 - Learn to Fly Day, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Greeley-Weld County Airport. Cost: \$25. Contact: Aims Community College at 970-339-6472 or aviation@aims.edu.

May 21 - The Sound of Color, starting at 6:30 p.m., Myra Monfort's Highland Farms, 5558 N. Highway 1 in Fort Collins. Contact: Fort Collins Symphony at 970-482-4823 or note@fcsymphony.org.

May 22 - 3rd Annual RAM Bicycle Classic, from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Colorado State University, in Fort Collins. Cost: \$35-\$75. Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 19. Contact: Sandy Dahlberg at 970-491-6937 or Sandy.Dahlberg@business.colostate.edu.

May 22 - Madama Butterfly, starting at 2 p.m., Edna Rizley Griffin Concert Hall, University Center for the Arts, 1400 Remington St. in Fort Collins. Contact: Lincoln Center Box Office at 970-491-2787 or www.csuarttickets.com.

May 23 - Children's Speech and Reading Center Open House, from 5 to 7 p.m., Children's Speech and Reading Center, 1247 Riverside Ave. in Fort Collins. Contact: Children's Speech and Reading Center at 970-419-0486.

May 23 - NoCoNet presents Resume Panel, from 8 to 10:30 a.m., Faith Evangelical Free Church, 3920 S. Shields St. in Fort Collins. Contact: Mary

Moessinger at 970-224-4887 or www.noconet.org.

May 24 - 21 - Computer Basics, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., The Education and Life Training Center, 401 Linden St. in Fort Collins. Cost: \$150-\$295 (based on income). Contact: Laura Barron at 970-482-4357 or Laura.Barron@eltcenter.org.

May 24 - Social Media - A Starting Point, from 4 to 6 p.m., SBDC office (Key Bank Tower), 125 S. Howes, Suite 150 in Fort Collins. Cost: \$25. Contact: Terri Donovan-Keirns at 970-498-9295 or admin@larimersbdc.org.

May 24 - Cholesterol Screening, Harmony Library at Front Range Community College, 4616 S. Shields in Fort Collins. Cost: \$15. Registration Deadline: 05/23/2011. Contact: Cheri Nichols at 970-224-5209 or cnichols@healthdistrict.org.

May 24 - Greeley City Council hosts a Speak Up session, starting at 6 p.m., Monfort Elementary School, 2101 47th Ave. in Greeley.

May 25 - Civil Rights Training, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Frederick Town Hall, 401 Locust St. in Fort Collins. Contact: Lauren Mueller at 720-382-5571 or lmueller@frederickco.gov.

May 25 - Loveland Chamber In Focus Series, from 7:30 to 9 a.m., Loveland Chamber, 5400 Stone Creek Circle in Loveland. Contact: Jim Worthen at 970-667-6311 or jworthen@loveland.org.

May 25 - Small Business Marketing, from 1 to 4:30 p.m., SBDC office (Key Bank Tower), 125 S. Howes, Suite 150 in Fort Collins. Cost: \$40. Contact: Terri Donovan-Keirns at 970-498-9295 or admin@larimersbdc.org.

May 26 - Windsor Chamber May 2011 Business BEFORE Hours, from 7:30 to 9 a.m., ProTECHtion, 541 E. Garden Drive, Unit 0 in Windsor. Contact: Windsor Chamber of Commerce at 970-686-7189 or information@windsorchamber.net.

May 26 - Business After Hours, from 5 to 7 p.m., Greeley Stampede, 600 N. 14th Ave. in Greeley. Cost: \$30/guest. Contact: Kim Barbour at 970-352-3567 or kim@greeleychamber.com.

May 26 - Greeley Historic Preservation Lunch and Learn, from noon to 1 p.m., Greeley Fire Station Museum, 680 10th St. in Greeley. Contact: Betsy Kellums at 970-350-9222 or betsy.kellums@greeleygov.com.

May 26 - Cholesterol Screening, from 8:15 to 10:30 a.m., Health District of Northern Larimer County, 120 Bristlecone Drive in Fort Collins. Cost: \$15. Registration Deadline: 05/25/2011. Contact: Cheri Nichols at 970-224-5209 or cnichols@healthdistrict.org.

May 27 - 29 - 10th Annual Realities Ride & Rally, starting at 5:30 p.m., Old Town, Walnut/Linden in Fort Collins. Cost: \$30. Registration Deadline: Register by May 27th for the VIP treatment. Contact: Jennifer Varner at 970-484-9090 or jennifer@realitiesforchildren.com.

June 2 - 2011 Northern Colorado Worksite Wellness Workshop, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Embassy Suites, 4705 Clydesdale Parkway in Loveland. Cost: \$50 (\$40/person for groups of three or more from the same organization). Registration Deadline: May 26. Contact: Aubrey Hoover at 970-495-7513 or aah3@pvhs.org.

June 2 - Continental Labor & Staffing Resources Ribbon Cutting and Open House, from 3 to 6 p.m., Continental Labor & Staffing Resources, 7251 W. 20th St., Building L, Suite 101A in Greeley. Cost: no charge. Registration Deadline: Please RSVP to aday@clsri.com or 970-339-9819. Contact: Andrea Day at 970-339-9819 or aday@clsri.com.

June 2 - Loveland Chamber Business After Hours, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Schlosser Signs Inc., 3597 Draff Horse Court in Loveland. Cost: \$12/pre-register, \$15/at the door. Registration Deadline: pre-registration deadline is 5 p.m. the day before the event. Contact: Jim Worthen at 970-667-6311 or info@loveland.org.

June 2 - Memories in the Making - Alzheimer's Association, starting at 5:30 p.m., The Drake Centre, 802 W. Drake Road in Fort Collins. Cost: Call for pricing. Contact: Megan Balmforth at 970-472-9798 or megan.balmforth@alz.org.

June 3 - 4 - Windsor Chamber All Town Garage Sale, All Over the Town of Windsor, in Windsor. Contact: Windsor Chamber of Commerce at 970-686-7189 or information@windsorchamber.net.

June 3 - Competent Assistance for Nonprofits, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Embassy Suites, in Loveland. Contact: Midge Toomey at 970-689-0171 or midgetoomey@mynewwings.com.

June 4 - Northern Colorado Walk For Life, from 8:30 to 11 a.m., Chapungu Sculpture Park @ Centerra, I-25 & Hwy 34 in Loveland. Cost: FREE. Registration Deadline: June 3, 2011. Contact: Jenny Langness at 970-221-5121 or mail@thealphacenter.org.

June 4 - 11 - Excel-Basic, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Front Range Community College, Blanca Peak Room 110, 4616 S. Shields St. in Fort Collins. Cost: \$149 (includes textbook). Registration Deadline: 5/31/11. Contact: Laurie Rue at 970-204-8686 or laurie.rue@frontrange.edu.

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TaG Enterprises
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Dr. Ann Yanagi



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Foundation

BRIEFCASE

Nonprofit notes

The Community Foundation Serving Greeley and Weld County awarded 68 scholarships totaling over \$111,000 to college-bound students at its annual Scholarship Reception on May 10. The Community Foundation has been granting scholarships since 1997, and since then, 318 students have received Hansen Scholarships, including 10 more this year, bringing the total scholarships distributed to \$1.6 million. This year, scholarships were awarded to Greeley and Weld County students from 23 different funds, including one new to the Community Foundation.

Gregory D. Anderson, CLU, ChFC, from Fort Collins, secured a \$5,000 grant from the **MDRT Foundation** for **Pathways Hospice** on behalf of **Island Hospice** in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. This year, the MDRT Foundation will award more than \$850,000 in grants to more than 100 charities. Anderson of **Vision Financial Group** is an MDRT member.

Community members raised over \$65,000 at **Project Self-Sufficiency's** 25th Anniversary Community Breakfast in March. More than 375 people donated or pledged at the benefit at The Drake Centre in Fort Collins. Project Self-Sufficiency is a nonprofit organization based in Larimer County that helps low-income single parents achieve economic independence and become free from community and government assistance.

KUDOS

Public Service Credit Union based in Denver with office throughout Northern Colorado, received the Diamond Award of Merit, which recognizes outstanding marketing and business development achievements in the credit union industry.

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

In honor of its 75th anniversary, Fort Collins-based **Custom Blending** has introduced a new line of organic extracts and other baking products. The **Rodelle Organics** line, as well as an energy-efficient stove project in Uganda, was debuted at the Natural Products Expo West.

DEALS

Fort Collins city government is doubling its water rebates for energy-efficient appliances purchased from April 1 to May 31. Rebates for dishwashers are \$50, up from the usual \$25; for washing machines \$100, up from the usual \$50. The city is also offering to haul away old refrigerators and/or freezers on three different pick-up dates a month – and giving customers a \$35 bill credit for recycling the old unit. **Appliance Factory Outlet** offers help with both the water rebates as well as a haul-away and recycle program for major appliances and mattresses.

ANNIVERSARIES

Allnutt and Resthaven Funeral Homes have been serving the Northern Colorado communities since 1886 – 125 years. Bill Allnutt is a fourth-generation owner and Rick Allnutt the fifth generation. Rick's son Spencer has recently joined the staff, with the hopes of a sixth-generation owner in the future.

Alumicolor is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2011. For 30 years, Fort Collins-based Alumicolor has provided customers with customized promotional products.

PROJECTS

With the help of student volunteers from **Colorado State University** and **Front Range Community College**, **Colorado State Forest Service** personnel in the Fort Collins District planted nearly 900 seedling trees at Hughes Stadium. The Colorado blue spruce, Rocky Mountain juniper, ponderosa pine, Scotch pine and various shrub seedlings, all grown at the CSFS Fort Collins Nursery, were planted on stadium grounds as part of a larger CSU green project.

MISCELLANEOUS

The number of vehicles equipped with **EXpressToll** transponders has reached a new milestone with 750,000 issued. EXpressToll is the automatic toll collection system used by E-470, the Northwest Parkway, and the I-25 Express Lanes north of downtown Denver.

If you have an item to share about name changes, new products or business news of note, e-mail it to Noah Guillaume at nguillaume@ncbr.com, or mail it to Briefcase at NCBR, 1550 E. Harmony Road, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

40

40

Leaders

Northern Colorado Business Report

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN

If you or someone you know is under forty years of age and is shaping the future of Northern Colorado by being a business leader and an active participant in the community, go straight to the 40-40 Leaders nomination by scanning this QR code.



Scan now. Nominate now. And do it more than once. Awards will be presented in distinct business categories, and you may nominate as many qualified candidates as you know.

And spread the word: THE PARTY IS ON!

The 5th annual 40-40 Leader Awards will be presented October 6 at the Embassy Suites

The nomination deadline is July 15, 2011. Candidates must be under the age of forty on December 31, 2011. Candidates must also live and work in Larimer or Weld Counties. Nominations may be submitted by email, events@ncbr.com, or by mail, 40-40 Leaders, Northern Colorado Business Report, 1550 East Harmony Road, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Not using a smart phone? The nomination form is on the Northern Colorado Business Report website, **NCBR.com**. From the homepage click on Events and scroll to the 40-40 Leaders logo.

40 - 40 Leaders is an event production of the Northern Colorado Business Report and Emerge Colorado.

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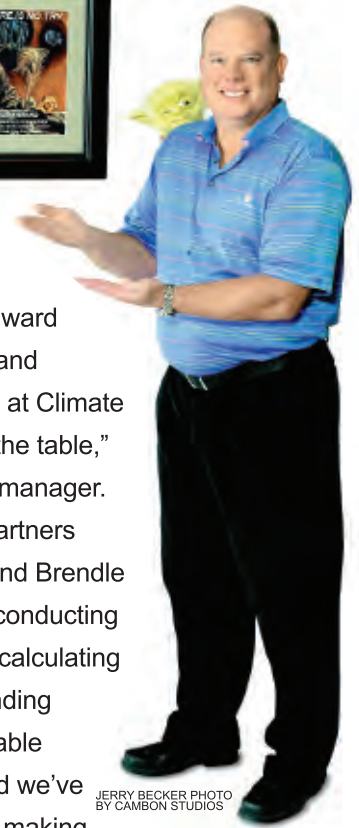
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HANS BREUER PHOTO
BY CAMBON STUDIOS

Vineyard Church of the Rockies.

Since 2007, the Vineyard Church of the Rockies has learned from other Climate Wise partners, incorporating ideas and tools that will work best for their organization. Climate Wise staff is a strong resource, and helps Vineyard put new practices into action. One unique project is the community garden behind the church, formerly a volleyball court. Nurturing nature and community, the garden provides food for homeless and under-resourced people in the community. Manned by volunteers, it's a source of pride for the church with bumper crops of tomatoes, onions and squash.



JERRY BECKER PHOTO
BY CAMBON STUDIOS

Woodward.

Climate Wise has been instrumental in educating Woodward as a whole on waste reduction and energy conservation. "The folks at Climate Wise bring a lot of expertise to the table," explains Jerry Becker, facilities manager. Other Climate Wise business partners and supporters, such as CSU and Brendle Group, provided guidelines for conducting independent assessments and calculating measurable results to justify funding for conservation efforts. "Invaluable tools," according to Becker, "and we've learned how to become a profit-making entity within Woodward, not just a drain on the bottom line." He adds, "I think of what Yoda said: *Do or not do. There is no try.* I actually give an award to my team members who come up with great ideas or go the extra mile based on that statement. We do what we need to do."

Clean Air Lawn Care.

Clean Air Lawn Care uses electric mowers powered by solar panels mounted to their fleet trucks. Larger mowers run on locally produced biodiesel fuel. Electric mowers emit 3,300 times less hydrocarbons, 5,000 times less carbon monoxide and one fifth as much nitrogen oxide as gas lawn mowers. "The collaboration with other Climate Wise partners has been amazing," states Annie Carey, Clean Air's Marketing Director. "We constantly find new ways to save here, reduce there. Every Climate Wise event is a learning experience for us. We also love helping our colleagues up their efforts and better their practices. We get to work with great people doing great things for our community."



ANNIE CAREY PHOTO
BY CAMBON STUDIOS

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INNOVATION

Madwire targets clicks to customers

Media company combines services for clients' success

By Tracee Sioux
news@ncbr.com

LOVELAND — A website is only one necessary piece to a successful online business. Without online marketing, the website sits there, stifled on page 15 of Google, under all the other similar sites. But what makes online marketing successful?

“Converting clicks to customers” is what Madwire Media promises, and it uses an arsenal of weapons to accomplish the mission. The firm specializes in online marketing, Web design, search engine optimization, keyword writing, Google ads, social media management and customization, blogging services, press releases and public relations. All of the services are customized to the target market of each client’s business.

As one of the fastest growing Web design and Internet marketing companies in Colorado, Madwire brought in \$1 million in 2010, its first full year of

See MADWIRE, 21A



Courtesy Madwire Media

MARKETING HEROES – Madwire Media employees Jerry McGuire, left, director of Marketing; Farra Lanzer, Public Relations executive; and J.B. Kellogg, COO, stand with Batman and Spiderman mannequins. Madwire uses a utility belt’s worth of weapons to convert clicks to customers for its clients.

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40 Leaders
Northern Colorado Business Report



"I think one of the reasons why we're growing as quick as we are is that we make online marketing a reality and so affordable, compared to other website and design companies."

Farra Lanzer, public relations executive
Madwire

which they feel will really work for the client. It's usually a good tool to earn their business."

Once the design is complete, Madwire uses online marketing strategies to get a company to page one on keyword searches.

"The marketing piece is really about working with the client directly, building strategies, campaigns and solutions, the nuts and bolts of it," Kelly said. "We measure effectiveness through Google analytics and make improvements. It's continuous and ever-changing. At the end of the day, it's working alongside (clients) and with (clients)."

Kellogg says it's "the price and our design quality," that accounts for Madwire's success. "If you compare design of equal quality, you're going to find that our price is dramatically lower than our competitors. We're focused on

building a long-term relationship."

That focus factors into the company's growth, according to Farra Lanzer, public relations executive, and the size of the firm factors into customer satisfaction.

"I think one of the reasons why we're growing as quick as we are is that we make online marketing a reality and so affordable, compared to other website and design companies," she said. "A lot of other design companies are much smaller and don't have the manpower to handle what we can. We can get it done more efficiently."

Madwire Media is making contributions to the Northern Colorado community as well. Madwire has recently launched a program in which a nonprofit organization receives a percentage of every sale resulting from a referral to Madwire.

Madwire designed a website for St.

John's Catholic School in Fort Collins, where J.B. Kellogg's children attend, to launch and promote the program.

"If they refer anybody in their community to us, we kick back 7 percent of what the sale was to the school," he explained. "There are a lot of business owners involved in the school who could use our services. If it's recurring business, the 7 percent donation goes on until they cancel, every month. It could really add up over time."

Madwire is a platinum sponsor for Sierra's Race Against Meningitis. The company designed a website for the organization and is donating \$1 for each person who "Likes" Madwire Media on Facebook. The firm is also partnering with the Larimer County Humane Society this year.

"We're always looking for better ways to give back," J.B. Kellogg said.

MADWIRE, from 20A

operation. The company is projecting \$4.5 million in revenues for 2011. It has quickly become a significant Northern Colorado employer as well, hiring 57 employees and projecting a staff of over 100 by year's end.

The Madwire offices overlook Lake Loveland and boast bigger-than-life Batman and Spiderman mannequin mascots in the hallways, giving the physical space the same over-the-top, edgy, hip feel of the firm's website, www.madwirewebdesign.com.

Madwire is a family company, owned and operated by a father and son team. In 1997, Joseph Kellogg, son J.B. Kellogg, and their business partner John Crane launched a cutting-edge website, Market Center Direct, to allow users to trade futures and commodities from their home computer. It was one of the first of its kind, a huge innovation in the investment industry at the time.

The successful online marketing of that website inspired the Kelloggs to branch off and start an online marketing company.

"We discovered that we were gifted at marketing ourselves, targeting leads, search engine optimization," said J.B. Kellogg, who is COO of Madwire. "We realized the same stuff could be applied to any business. We built our website in 2009, optimized it, captured leads, and we've seen incoming demand every month."

The Madwire site gets hit between 6,000 and 11,000 times a month, according to Compete.com.

Designing with marketing in mind

Converting such hits to meaningful business means drawing site traffic specific to a customer's niche market.

"It's not just designing, it's designing with marketing in mind," explained Jerry Kelly, Madwire's director of marketing. "It has to be marketable to a company's specific clients, so you can have the conversions you need in regards to sales."

To attract potential customers, Madwire offers a free "super sick" website mockup, SEO analysis, and 22-page Marketing Online 2011 guide.

"We offer the design as a loss leader to get them into marketing," Kellogg said. "Our free design is not just a template-y thing. One of our designers spends an entire day creating a custom design,

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Largest Web-Design Companies

Ranked by number of Web developers



RANK	PREV RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	NO. WEB DEVELOPERS EMPLOYEES 2011 NO. OF WEB SITES DESIGNED 2010	REVENUES FROM WEB DESIGN 2010 TOTAL REVENUES 2010	INDUSTRIES SERVED	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE TITLE YEAR FOUNDED
1	NR	MADWIRE MEDIA 504 W. Eisenhower Blvd. Loveland, CO 80537 970-663-7635/970-663-1767	35 57 400	N/A N/A	N/A	mad@madwiremedia.com www.madwirewebdesign.com	Farra Lanzer Joe Kellogg JB Kellogg Public relations executive Owners 1999
2	3	SQUAREI TECHNOLOGIES 1315 Oakridge Drive, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-377-0077/970-377-8488	8 8 25	\$590,000 \$762,000	Web applications, custom software, database. Higher education, government, non-profit, general business.	info@squarei.com www.squarei.com	Kent Bejcek President 1996
3	4	BURNS MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS INC. 4848 Thompson Parkway, Floor Four Johnstown, CO 80534 970-203-9656/970-203-9657	6 50 30	N/A \$680,000	Advertising, Web design, public relations, branding, social media, technology, real estate and development, manufacturing, bioscience, financial services, energy, health care.	sheilaw@burnsmarketing.com www.burnsmarketing.com	Laurie Steele Vice president 1972
4	NR	CLAY POT CREATIVE 323 W. Drake Road, Suite 120 Fort Collins, CO 80526 970-495-6855/970-495-6896	6 9 N/A	\$187,000 \$454,890	All	info@claypotcreative.com www.claypotcreative.com	Julia Leach Andrew Leach Owners 2000
5	5	DAGAMA WEB STUDIO INC. 7110 W. 12th St. Greeley, CO 80634 970-378-7822/970-378-7822	6 7 18	N/A N/A	All	lori@dagamawebstudio.com www.dagamawebstudio.com	Lori Gama CEO, Owner, President 1997
6	6	CROWN POINT SOLUTIONS 2695 Rocky Mountain Ave., Suite 240 Loveland, CO 80538 970-221-0082/N/A	5 6 N/A	N/A N/A	Travel, tourism, real estate, construction, retail, restaurants, professional services, health care.	mbren@crownpointsolutions.com www.crownpointsolutions.com	Michael S. Bren President 2003
7	NR	HUEBNERPETERSEN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS 4650 Royal Vista Circle Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-568-8126/N/A	4 12 N/A	N/A N/A	Manufacturers and their dealer/distribution networks.	info@huebnerpetersen.com www.huebnerpetersen.com	Jim Huebner President 1989
8	8	LIGHTSOURCE CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS 121 W. Laporte Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-224-2806/970-224-2814	3 9 15	\$400,000 \$1,200,000	Many, including high-tech.	lisa@lightsourcecreative.com www.lightsourcecreative.com	Lisa Malmquist Gordon MacKinney Colleen Greshock Owners 1996
9	7	INFORMATION POINT TECHNOLOGIES 135 W. Swallow Road, Bldg. A Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-266-0703/970-266-0704	3 7 N/A	N/A N/A	Construction, retail, health care, technology, real estate, manufacturing.	pete@ipoint-tech.com www.ipoint-tech.com	Peter Fardal Director of sales & marketing 2002
10	NR	ADVANCED MEDIA SERVICES INC. 155 W. Harvard St., Suite 301 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-282-9502/970-282-9728	3 5 22	N/A N/A	Technology, bioscience, medical, construction, engineering, manufacturing, government, banking, agriculture.	info@advmediaservices.com www.advmediaservices.com	Chris Bell President 1995
11	9	AGTOWN TECHNOLOGIES 800 Eighth Ave., Suite 321 Greeley, CO 80631 970-353-6227/970-313-4648	3 5 17	\$56,319 \$408,000	Agricultural and water.	contact@agtown.com www.agtown.com	Clair Orr Matthew Furister Founder CEO 1999
12	NR	TEAM BTS 7800 Miller Drive, Unit C Frederick, CO 80504 303-678-2927/303-684-7507	3 4 12	N/A N/A	Website design, development, hosting, full range of IT services.	barbg@teambts.net www.teambts.com	Barb Goettsch Partner 1997

Region surveyed includes Larimer and Weld counties and the city of Brighton.
N/A-Not Available.
NR-Not Previously Ranked.
Web Your Business Inc. declined to participate.

Based upon responses to Business Report survey researched by Ross Manley
To be considered for future lists, e-mail research@ncbr.com

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RANK	PREV RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	EMPLOYEES 2011	REVENUES 2010	BRANDS OF SOFTWARE SOLD	SERVICES PROVIDED	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE TITLE OF PERSON IN CHARGE YEAR FOUNDED
1	1	TECHNIGRAPHICS INC. - CACI CO. 3351 Eastbrook Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-224-4996/970-224-3001	160 165	N/A N/A	N/A	GIS mapping.	N/A www.caci.com	Stefanie Walts Plant manager N/A
2	2	INTEGWARE INC. 1612 Specht Point Drive, Suite 101 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-282-0400/970-282-0500	120 134	\$15,260,146 \$14,430,756	Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) services and solution provider for Life Sciences and Consumer Packaged Goods industries	PLM implementation services and ENOVIA life science accelerators.	chris.kay@integware.com www.integware.com	Chris Kay President and CEO 1992
3	3	COLORADO CUSTOMWARE INC. 1109 Oak Park Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-212-4001/970-223-4204	107 106	\$10,980,635 \$10,844,579	RealWare, CollectWare, RecordWare, MatixDV, MatixMobile	Assessment, tax collection and data visualization software for state and local government.	info@cci.ws www.coloradocustomware.com	Lori Burge President and CEO 1989
4	4	NEW CENTURY SOFTWARE 2627 Redwing Road, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80526 970-267-2000/970-206-0157	40 45	N/A N/A	Application suite for oil & gas industry including geospatial (GIS), Web applications, mobile and desktop	Provides GIS applications, mapping services, integrity management and consulting in the oil and gas pipeline industry, including gas and liquids transmission, gathering, and offshore.	ron.brush@newcenturysoftware.com www.newcenturysoftware.com	Ron Brush President 1994
5	5	VISIBLE PRODUCTIONS 213 Linden St., Suite 200 Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-407-7240/970-407-7248	25 25	\$2,565,280 \$2,662,900	N/A	Software: 3-D modeling, 3-D model libraries, 3-D visualization services and biomedical illustration.	vip@visibleproductions.com www.visibleproductions.com	Paul M. Baker CEO 1996
6	NR	DATASPLICE 414 E. Oak St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-0841/970-484-0965	20 18	\$2,890,000 \$2,400,000	DataSplice for CMMS/EAM Inventory	DataSplice provides mobile hand held computing solutions to allow remote users to interface with enterprise CMMS systems.	datasplice@datasplice.com www.datasplice.com	Scott Kunze CEO 2001
7	6	CARTOPAC FIELD SOLUTIONS 736 Whalers Way, Bldg. F Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-493-9500/970-482-1485	15 16	N/A N/A	Custom mobile field data collection solutions	Mobile mapping technology, field data collection software and asset management solutions.	info@cartopac.com www.cartopac.com	Ken Schrader CEO 1998
8	NR	ROCKET JONES INTERACTIVE 204 Walnut St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-428-5790/866-746-0052	14 14	\$860,000 \$605,000	RocketCore	Professional Web development: custom applications and e-commerce.	jeff@rocketjones.com www.rocketjones.com	Jeff Bristol Principal 2000
9	8	VISTA SOLUTIONS CORP. 2619 Midpoint Drive, Suite F Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-212-2940/970-212-2950	12 12	\$6,368,738 \$6,199,166	Microsoft, HP, IBM	Full-service IT partner, offering business-class technology; unique and customized hardware, software, and services.	info@vistasolutions.net www.vistasolutions.net	Linda Vomaske Owner 1992
10	10	ROCKYSOFT CORP. 736 Whalers Way, No. F-201 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-493-0868/970-493-0887	12 10	N/A N/A	RockySoft inventory management suite	Inventory management software and services for distributors and manufacturers.	info@rockysoft.com www.rockysoft.com	Larry Watson President 1999
11	13	CHECKMARK INC. 724 Whalers Way, Bldg. H-101 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-225-0522/970-225-0611	12 8	N/A \$1,500,000	CheckMark Payroll Software, MultiLedger Integrated Accounting, and Forms 1099 Software	Accounting software and payroll solutions for Windows and Macintosh. Technical support.	sales@checkmark.com www.checkmark.com	Mohammed Ghani President/CEO 1984
12	NR	HEIBERG CONSULTING INC. 120 Mathews St., Suite 1 Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-221-4440/970-221-4447	11 11	N/A N/A	StudentAccess	Student tracking and support software. IT support services.	info@heiberg.com www.heiberg.com	David Heiberg President 1996
13	7	ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS INC. - ASI 324 Remington St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-419-3210/970-416-0732	10 15	N/A N/A	Sage software that includes, SYSPRO, accounting & business management software, MAS 500 and MAS 90, and Cougar Mountain software	Consulting, customizing, implementing, training and ongoing service of third-party software systems to enhance clients' accounting and business technology and overall profitability.	bredt@asisucceed.com www.asisucceed.com	Bredt P. Eggleston President 1991

Region surveyed includes Larimer and Weld counties and the city of Brighton.
N/A-Not Available.
NR-Not Previously Ranked.

Based upon responses to Business Report survey researched by Ross Manley
To be considered for future lists, e-mail research@ncbr.com

ARTS, from 8A

The summer 2010 survey was based on intercept interviews at a number of sites including microbrewery tours, brewpubs, tourist retail, downtown dining establishments, Foothills Mall, Horsetooth Reservoir and commercial whitewater rafting companies as well as mail-back surveys distributed through several hotels. According to the study, the top three primary reasons for choosing Fort Collins were being on vacation, visiting family and friends, and outdoor recreation.

Big events like the NewWestFest, then, are not necessarily the primary draw. "Performing arts adds culture and character to the destination but people come for a variety of reasons," Clark said. "It gives added value to a place but it's not a question of black-or-white or yes-and-no. Arts makes the town cool, and Fort Collins is one heck of a cool town, but there is a cornucopia of things this community offers."



Lincoln Center reopening in July

Fort Collins' Lincoln Center has announced the first act booked into the new and improved space for the 2011-12 season. Béla Fleck & the Flecktones will perform on April 4, 2012; the rest of the lineup could be revealed any day now.

For those of us who can't wait that long to see the results of the \$8 million renovation and expansion, the Lincoln Center will host a public open house from 1 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 14.

And, in fact, the venue will reopen for events and performances on July 15.

In addition to the new rooftop deck, other improvements include state-of-the-art acoustical upgrades in both performance halls, a new self-contained and climate-controlled visual arts gallery, greatly expanded lobby spaces with three new permanent bars, new (and more) bathrooms, and a newly remodeled ballroom and outdoor terrace.

Renewing subscribers will be contacted about their 2011-12 season tickets soon; new subscribers will be able to purchase tickets on July 1, and single tickets will go on sale to the public on Aug. 9.



Center Forward at The Center for Fine Art Photography

"Center Forward," an exhibition at The Center for Fine Art Photography, 400 N. College Ave. in Fort Collins, brings together a compelling range of imagery. Primarily figurative, the works range from Gabriela Herman's evocative color photograph, "The Gloss," of a woman working in the glow of her laptop to a black and white fleeting glimpse of a masked child in Peter Martin's "Venice-041." The exhibition runs through June 11, with an artists and public reception June 3.

Kiki Gilderhus, Ph.D., dean of Fine + Liberal Arts at the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design in Denver, covers the arts for the Business Report. Contact her at news@ncbr.com.

WHAT'S WORKING, from 11A

industry. In that one industry alone, we have 23 of the top 40 thoroughbred trainers using our product. We market our products through distributors, dealers, and through the Internet.

Q: What was the genesis of the idea for your company?

A: There was something we call "the three-bucket test" that actually served as the delivery system for the liquid feed. The "three-bucket test" was where three buckets of feed would be offered up to livestock to see which they prefer. It was during one such test that we stumbled upon a proprietary blend that made all the difference. It became a key product that helped fuel Loomix's growth ever since.

Q: What was your initial startup cost and source of funding?

A: \$500,000 from angel investors and \$500,000 from banks.

Q: How long until you saw a positive cash flow?

A: It was immediate. Our company was profitable and cash flowed from day one. As the company grew much larger we experienced cash-flow issues due to rapid growth. We were fortunate that our asset base also grew very rapidly and we were able to cash-flow with our assets.

Q: Did you use a business plan?

A: Yes, I did. In fact, my partner Mike and I locked ourselves away in a hotel for three days while we wrote the business plan. In fact, every year, our management team has a retreat where we create a detailed strategic plan.

Q: What is the passion that the business fills for you personally?

A: Creating a legacy of being the best in our industry. I have a real passion for the company, as does my wife. When I say company I mean our entire Loomix family, encompassing our entire staff, dealers and their families.

Q: Looking back now, is there anything you wish you had done differently? What do you know now that you wish you'd known sooner?

A: I would have hired different people with different skill sets sooner. Don't be afraid to hire people smarter than you, and don't hire people like you. Bring in people with strengths where you are weak. Give away less in the beginning.

Q: Are there one or two things you can attribute your success to? Luck, timing, someone who helped you?

A: Luck and timing definitely helped, but patience was key. Integrity is everything. Three things in my life come before all else: my faith, my family, and my job. Also, I try to live by the saying: "Control the market data, and you'll control the market." That is something I learned in "The Ultimate Sales Machine" by Chet Holmes. Embracing my competition has helped, as well as being active with trade organizations.

Q: What is a slogan to live by or what might it say on your tombstone?

A: That is an easy one because I have told many, many, people this throughout the years. I hope my tombstone says, "When you leave this world, strive to leave the world just a little bit better than when you arrived." And I hope there is an asterisk saying, "He did."

Brian Schwartz is the founder of 50 Interviews Inc., and can be reached at www.50interviews.com.

Largest Bioscience Companies

Based in region, ranked by number of local employees



RANK	PREV RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	EMPLOYEES 2011 EMPLOYEES 2010	REVENUES 2010 REVENUES 2009	PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE W/ TITLE YEAR FOUNDED
1	2	TOLMAR INC. 701 Centre Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80526 970-212-4500/N/A	290 265	N/A N/A	Fully integrated pharmaceutical company. Product development, clinical trial expertise, and manufacturing.	N/A www.tolmar.com	Michael Duncan, CEO 2006
2	4	JORGENSEN LABORATORIES INC. 1450 N. Van Buren Ave. Loveland, CO 80538 970-669-2500/970-663-5042	65 60	N/A N/A	Veterinary specialty instruments and animal-health products.	info@jorvet.com www.jorvet.com	Hans Jorgensen, President 1965
3	NR	SOLIX BIOSYSTEMS 430 N. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-692-5600/N/A	40 N/A	N/A N/A	Algae cultivation and algae products and services.	N/A www.solixbiofuels.com	Joel Butler, CEO 2006
4	NR	CHATA BIOSYSTEMS INC. 323 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-221-4919/970-221-9488	30 30	N/A N/A	Manufactures custom blended chemistry for use in quality control, research and development, analysis, etc. with shipment in patented flexible film bag.	sales@chatasolutions.com www.chatasolutions.com	Ted Ziemenn, CEO 1997
5	11	INVIRAGEN INC. 1613 Prospect Parkway, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-672-4918/970-372-0693	21 15	\$2,206,149 \$2,383,679	Focused on vaccines for emerging infectious diseases worldwide. Developing vaccines for dengue fever, hand, foot and mouth disease, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile, HPV, chikungunya, influenza and plague.	info@inviragen.com www.inviragen.com	Dan T. Stinchcomb, CEO 2005
6	NR	SUMMIT PLANT LABORATORIES 3003 W. Vine Drive Fort Collins, CO 80521 970-224-2021/N/A	20 10	N/A N/A	Wholesale disease-indexed seed and transplant production.	info@plantlabs.com www.plantlabs.com	J. Thomas Smith, President 1986
7	6	SYNGENTA CEREALS 806 N. Second St. Berthoud, CO 80513 970-532-3721/970-532-2035	15 15	N/A N/A	Wheat seed, wheat seed genetics.	N/A www.agriprowheat.com	Rob Bruns, General manager Paul Morano, National marketing manager 1973
8	9	ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTRUMENTAL LABORATORIES INC. 108 Coronado Court Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-266-8108/303-530-1169	11 11	\$1,000,000 \$1,100,000	Contract pharmaceutical analysis, including HPLC/Mass spectrometry.	rklantz@rockylab.com www.rockylab.com	Robert K. Lantz, Ph.D., Director 1980
9	8	KEETON INDUSTRIES INC. 1520 Aquatic Drive Wellington, CO 80549 970-568-7754/970-568-7795	10 10	\$2,500,000 \$2,500,000	Biological remediation products for recreational pond and lakes, waste water treatment facilities and fish farms.	luke@keetonaqua.com www.keetonaquatics.com	Luke Keeton, VP, operations 1972
10	NR	MACLEOD PHARMACEUTICALS INC. 2600 Canton Court, Unit C Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-482-7254/970-482-7454	10 8	N/A N/A	Pharmaceuticals for veterinarians.	sales@macleodpharma.com www.macleodpharma.com	Michael G. Pay, President 1989
11	10	COLORADO HISTO-PREP 702 W. Drake Road Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-493-2660/970-493-8834	10 10	N/A N/A	Prepares microscopic histology slides, conducts hematology/clinical chemistries and complete pathology services.	rbawa@histoprep.com www.histoprep.com	Rajan Bawa, Ph.D., President 1983
12	5	PUREVISION TECHNOLOGY 511 McKinley Ave. Fort Lupton, CO 80621 303-857-4530/N/A	9 9	\$260,000 \$200,000	Develop bio-refineries that profitably produce useful products and energy from diverse bio-materials while reducing hydrocarbon use, greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.	info@purevisiontechnology.com www.purevisiontechnology.com	Ed Lehrburger, President and CEO 1992

Region surveyed is Larimer and Weld counties and the city of Brighton.

N/A-Not Available.

NR-Not Previously Ranked.

Hach Co., Heska Corp. and Biobubble Inc. did not respond in time to be included on this list.

Based upon responses to Business Report survey researched by Ross Manley
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INNOVATION

Thinking small yields big boost in power

Prieto builds strong batteries with latest nanotechnology

By Joshua Zaffos
news@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — A movie called *Revenge of the Electric Car* premiered at this year's Tribeca Film Festival in New York. It's not a horror flick, but a followup to the 2005 documentary, *Who Killed the Electric Car?* Six years later, the same director is now suggesting that the demise of electric vehicles was greatly exaggerated.

From a small laboratory on the second floor of the Chemistry Building at Colorado State University, Amy Prieto and her team of scientists are trying to lead the electric-car revival. Using nanowire technology, Prieto has developed a lithium-ion battery that can run 1,000 times stronger and 10 times longer than conventional lithium-ion batteries and other alternatives, such as nickel-cadmium cells.

Her company, Prieto Battery, has recently added a chief financial officer and marketing vice president to enable CEO Prieto to concentrate on technical work. Early tests continue to meet and exceed expectations, and Prieto Battery could have products ready for commercial sale as long-lasting, rapid-recharge cell-phone batteries in the next few years.

"There's such a high demand for better batteries in so many different markets," Prieto said. "We thought one (battery application) would be obvious, but there are five or six."

And while a high-performance battery for cell phones and laptops are among the opportunities Prieto has her eye on, she's also focused on the grand prize of battery innovation: the electric car.

The so-called — and seemingly premature — death of electric vehicles has been partly attributed to Detroit and D.C.'s past resistance and indifference. The lack of interest slowed progress on building a better battery, one that allows drivers to open up on the open road and



Courtesy Colorado State University

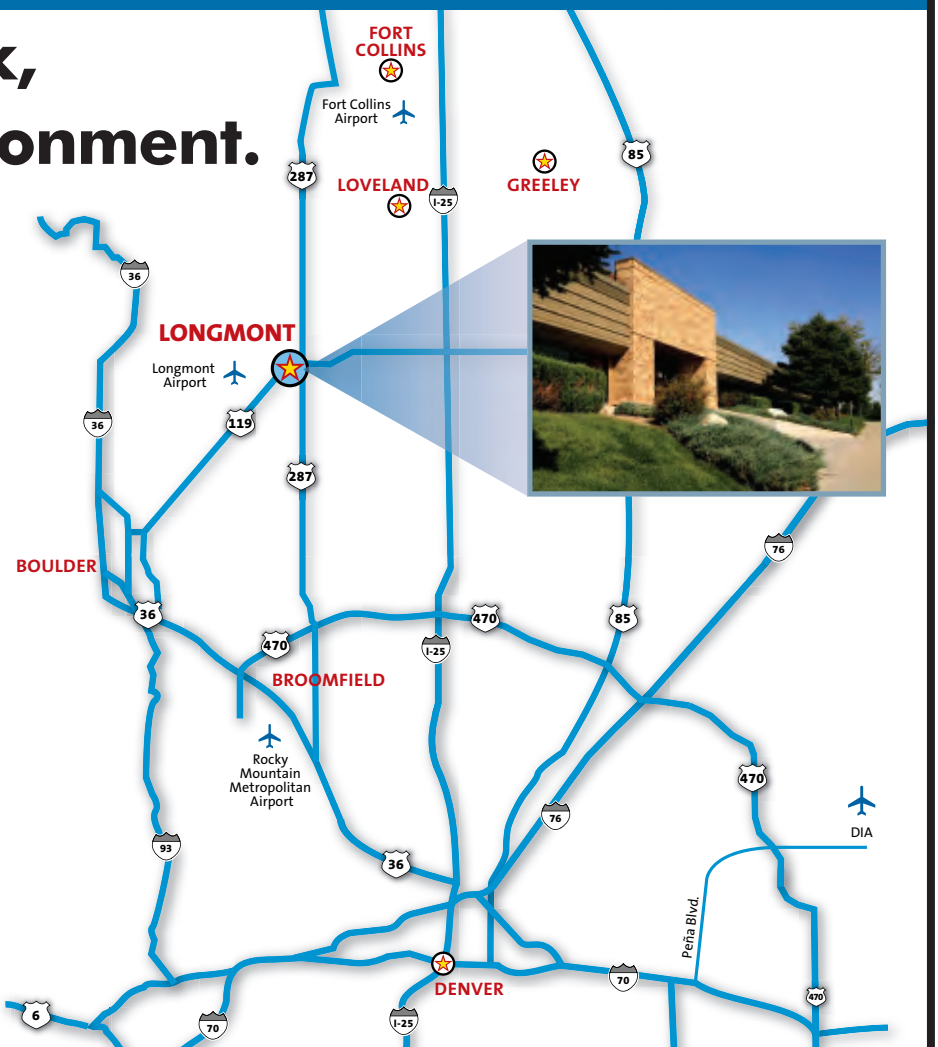
POWER TO THE MAX — Inventor Amy Prieto in her lab at Colorado State University shows off part of her high-performance lithium-ion battery that could revolutionize the portable power industry.

See PRIETO, 26A

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"I don't know of any other company that's trying the three-dimensional approach we're trying."

Amy Prieto, CEO
Prieto Battery

PRIETO, from 25A

travel long distances without having to stop and recharge every hour.

"The performance is there," said Ahmad Pesaran, energy storage task leader at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, of electric batteries. "It's just the life cycle needs to come up and the cost needs to come down."

The auto industry and the White House have both come around. Chevrolet and Nissan recently released electric plug-in cars, and Ford and other carmakers are slated to roll out their own electric vehicles this year. And then there was the suggestion by President Barack Obama, in his 2011 State of the Union address, that the nation should aim to have 1 million electric vehicles on the road by 2015.

To go along with the big words, Obama pledged \$2.4 billion to support research and development in the electric-vehicle sector. Some of the money has gone to NREL to build up its battery-testing capabilities, while other funds have been made available as grants to researchers and startups, such as Prieto Battery.

A chef of chemistry

Amy Prieto began studying nanostructures in graduate school at University of California in Berkeley, and then continued her research during a postdoctoral appointment at Harvard. When she joined the chemistry faculty at CSU in 2005, she turned her attention to lithium-ion batteries and how to enhance their performance through nanotech.

Prieto launched Prieto Battery in 2009 with support from CSU's Clean Energy Supercluster, known as Cenergy. The company received a total of \$1.5 million through CSU and Bohemian Foundation to get off the ground and develop the technology.

"My real expertise is figuring out how to make things," Prieto said. "In the chemistry world, I'm kind of what a cook would be."

Conventional lithium-ion batteries are composed of a positive (graphite) and negative (lithium) electrode separated by an electrolyte. The electrodes are arranged in layers — in cylinder batteries, the layers are rolled — and the ions pass back and forth as a battery spends its energy and then gets recharged. In order to avoid overheating and shorting, the electrodes need to be sufficiently spaced from each other, which limits the cell's lifespan and adds to recharge time.

Prieto cooked up a new recipe using copper nanowires — so small that 1,000 add up to the width of a human hair — in place of the graphite electrode. The arrangement creates a three-dimensional interior structure in a battery that can handle twice as many lithium ions as graphite, due to the surface area of the nanowires. The material's stability and heat resistance diminish concerns about frying the battery, and the nano-enhanced cell has shown elevated power and energy levels beyond those of typical cells.

"I don't know of any other company that's trying the three-dimensional approach we're trying," Prieto said.

The performance boost also means less battery space is needed in the back of a cell phone — or under the hood of a car. The all-electric Tesla Motors Roadster, which became the first such vehicle available in the United States in 2008, can go from zero to 60 in under four seconds and run for 240 miles between charges. But to meet those benchmarks, the car has over 6,800 lithium-ion cells equal to the same number of laptop batteries. The technology of Prieto Battery could dramatically reduce the size of such configurations.

Building momentum

Pesaran of NREL, who oversees battery testing for products of small and very large companies, said the results that Prieto has announced so far are "significant," without being incredible. But, he added, there are hundreds of companies trying to advance lithium-ion batteries and other electric alternatives. The electric car will likely be avenged through the technology of many businesses.

Prieto plans to continue to run prototypes in the tight quarters of the CSU lab and to enlist third-party testers, such as NREL, to produce their own results. The company's latest tests have shown that its batteries could fully recharge a cell phone in minutes, instead of hours, another promising development.

"We're so close on this next prototype. It's really exciting," Prieto said. "Some of the breakthroughs made recently were kind of the highest risk part of this project, so now that we have good evidence it's going to work, we're building momentum."

Prieto Battery is pursuing its second round of investment, up to \$6.25 million, through this fall, and the company should find out in July if it has won a \$5 million federal grant. The company has also "generated a lot of interest" from venture capital groups, Prieto said.



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Courtesy University of Northern Colorado, School of Biological Sciences

ALL SMILES – Stephen Mackessy, a biology professor at the University of Northern Colorado, holds one of more than 100 snakes he keeps in his lab. Mackessy researches compounds in snake venom for fighting cancer.

VENOM, from 1A

services could lead to seemingly super-natural scientific breakthroughs.

Stressed trees filter air

Basu grew up the curious son of teachers in Calcutta, India, and, like Mackessy, his research interests date back to his youth.

“I’ve always been fascinated with plants,” Basu said.

At his lab at UNC, Basu studies the underlying molecular and genomic responses that occur when plants are impacted by changes in the environment. Chemists from the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder asked him to look into the biological aspects of plant stress response.

Working with graduate student Brenda Thornton and NCAR chemists, Basu has discovered that when poplar trees filter air, helping to rid the environment of smog or other pollution, they show elevated gene levels that increase their cleaning prowess.

“When plants are stressed, they turn on these genes — probably to purify,”

Basu said.

The findings, published last year in the influential peer-reviewed journal *Science*, indicate that stressed plants can clean air pollutants 36 percent faster than scientists had realized. Basu said the results could lead to the development of genetically modified plants to reduce air pollution. The modified plants could then be planted along highways and around industrial zones.

“He’s onto something that could be really beneficial, not only to the country, but to the Northern Colorado region with the farming communities we have here,” said Robbyn Wacker, assistant vice president of research at UNC.

Basu is now aiming for federal funding to continue and expand on his work and to develop his findings toward commercial viability. Basu is also studying other ways people might harness powerful plant traits, including the potential of tropical species as biodiesel fuel sources.

So far, that project has received \$15,000 through UNC’s Office of Sponsored Programs and nearly \$100,000 through a bioscience grant from the state Office of Economic Development and International Trade.

Mackessy has also turned to the state

economic-development office to support his work. After preciously receiving more than \$53,000 from the state in 2007, he was awarded a second grant for \$50,000 earlier this year.

Fangs in the back

While Mackessy isn’t alone in studying medical applications from venom-derived products, he has carved a somewhat singular focus. Most research projects with snakes have studied front-fanged species that produce a lot of venom, such as rattlesnakes. Mackessy also works with rear-fanged snakes, like hognose snakes that occur in Colorado, which release smaller doses of venom.

“At the moment, there’s probably about three venoms from rear-fanged snakes that are commercially available worldwide,” Mackessy said. “So, generally speaking, if you’re even looking at these things you’re going to have to get the snakes and do the extractions yourself.”

Besides being understudied, rear-fanged snakes are a little easier to work with since their venom is typically low in toxicity. Scientists have to anesthetize the snakes and then stimulate the slow release of venom. With front-fanged snakes, on the other hand, venom can be collected quickly while the creatures are active — but handlers risk a higher toxicity bite.

After collecting the venom, Mackessy purifies it and then looks at the effects of the crude and refined elements on cells. If they trigger changes, such as cell proliferation, Mackessy and student assistants do further tests to study the impacts of different components on skin, breast, lung and colon cancer cells. The cell-specific consequences on different cancers suggests that the venom-derived products are not just annihilating all forms of

life and could have medical applications as anticancer drug compounds.

Mackessy hopes his results and research will attract more funding from entities such as the National Institutes of Health. He has also had some preliminary conversations with small biotech companies.

“We’re still at a pretty early stage, but I think we have compounds ready for second- and third-stage testing within a year,” Mackessy said. “Indications are we do have something of commercial potential.”

Support for tech transfer

While the scientists both have more research — and grant-writing — ahead of them, their biotech projects are receiving support for tech transfer services from University of Northern Colorado.

Both projects have “great potential” for commercialization, according to Wacker, and the administration is helping the professors explore options as they move forward.

“We are trying to establish services for faculty to help with consultations about intellectual property and tech transfer,” Wacker said, “and to maybe work with them to determine whether things are patent-able.”

Beyond the researchers’ inspiration through nature, Mackessy is also driven by a factor other than his passion for snakes. Twelve years ago, he was diagnosed with Stage II (high-risk) melanoma, so he knows the fears and hazards faced by a cancer patient.

The motivation hasn’t gotten the better of him, though: Mackessy estimates he has handled roughly 10,000 snakes since he was bitten years ago and he hasn’t had another accident.



Courtesy City of Fort Collins

BIG BUSES – The Mason Express, or MAX, rapid bus system will include six 60-foot-long articulated buses that will travel up and down the Mason Corridor and load and unload passengers at 12 stations along the way.



Courtesy City of Fort Collins

NEW TRANSIT CENTER – A new South Transit Center will mark the end of the MAX bus line going south and the beginning of the line heading north. It will be located just south of Harmony Road, west of College Avenue.

Mason Corridor highlights

Total cost	\$82 million
Expected work put out to bid	\$58 million
Annual MAX operation cost	\$2.5 million
Length of corridor	Five miles, from Maple Street on north to just south of Harmony Road
Number of boarding stations	12
Number of transit centers	Two; one existing on north end and South Transit Center to be built
Number of MAX buses	Six 60-foot buses
Bus arrival frequency	Every 10 minutes
Length of five-mile trip	20 minutes
Construction timetable	Work begins this summer, with most construction to take place in 2012-13 and completion set for December 2013

SOURCE: BUSINESS REPORT RESEARCH



Courtesy City of Fort Collins

NEW OVERPASS – This drawing shows a \$2.8 million overpass that will be constructed in 2012 over the Mason Corridor to connect with the CSU Natural Resources Research Center. The overpass will include a large elevator that will allow for loading bikes and trailers and provide handicapped access.

MASON, from 1A

— has been in development since 1997, as the city has worked to design it, fund it and get a final agreement with the railroad to share Mason Street with bus traffic.

That final agreement, signed March 22, sets the project in motion. It starts with a \$3.9 million payment to BNSF for an easement to build a concrete “guideway” for the city-owned MAX buses to run up and down Mason just east of the BNSF tracks.

City engineer Helen Migchelbrink said the project is mutually beneficial to both parties. “They (BNSF) want to replace their tracks because they’re in a state of some disrepair, and that’s something they’ll do at their own expense,” she said.

Lena Kent, a BNSF spokeswoman, said the railroad is most interested in improving safety in the corridor. In the downtown portion of the project, the railroad tracks will be separated from the roadway and Mason Street will become a two-way street, eliminating cars and bicycles crossing the tracks in the middle of a block.

“With this project, we’ll now have defined road crossings, and that will improve safety in that area,” Kent said. She also noted a new \$1.4 million underpass to be constructed at Troutman Parkway and a \$2.8 million overpass at the Natural Resources Research Center as other key safety improvements.

Kent said the railroad also insisted on the city passing a strict trespassing ordi-

nance to keep people from crossing the tracks at unsafe points.

“We asked the city to enforce that you need to cross in designated areas and that if you don’t, it’s a crime,” she said.

The railroad said the trespassing ordinance had to be in place by May 31 or the entire agreement would be void. The Fort Collins City Council adopted the trespassing ordinance on May 3, Migchelbrink said.

Economic impacts

Migchelbrink said about \$58 million in construction contracts will be awarded for the infrastructure needed for the Mason Corridor. Some of that will likely go to local companies, she said.

“The whole thing will be bid according to federal rules,” she said. “This is a big project, and with these kinds of dollars and timeframe, I expect it will bring some big construction companies from out of the area, but also local suppliers for sure.”

Kent said the railroad expects to hire local workers to help with drainage and track replacement work, adding to the economic boost to be obtained through the project’s construction.

Migchelbrink said the city has been buying up properties along the corridor for construction of the MAX guideway, 12 boarding stations and the South Transit Center. She said a total of 44 properties need to be acquired and about half have been purchased in the last 18 months.

“That’s going great. It hasn’t been a problem,” said Migchelbrink, who added the city has so far not had to exercise its

power of eminent domain to acquire the properties, which are mostly very small.

It’s been estimated that completion of the Mason Corridor and the MAX bus system will potentially help create 2,800 new housing units and raise millions in new property tax revenue and millions more in economic development.

Josh Birks, the city’s economic development adviser, said the project is crucial to the city’s plan to help revitalize the midtown area near Foothills Mall.

“The Midtown Development Study assumes we will have this great piece of infrastructure coming in,” he said. “We see this as a tremendous opportunity to move that development forward.”

Birks said the corridor project will help stimulate new residential development along with new office and retail jobs.

“Absolutely, there’s a big economic upside to this,” he said.

Transformational project

The Downtown Development Authority is also expecting the project to stimulate development and shopping in the downtown area. The DDA contributed \$600,000 in 2007 to help leverage some state funding, which in turn was used to leverage federal funding.

“I think it’s going to be transformational,” said DDA Director Matt Robenalt of the Mason Corridor. “It’s going to transform College Avenue’s ‘B-side face’ into another corridor for residential and commercial development.”

Mason Street lies just west of College Avenue, Fort Collins’ main north-south

thoroughfare, and the improvements and new bus system will provide another major north-south city connection.

Robenalt said he’s already hearing buzz on the street about possible downtown business improvements and additions as a result of the BNSF agreement being signed.

“It brings it one step closer to reality,” he said.

Funding for the massive project will come mostly from the Federal Transit Administration, which has pledged \$65.9 million of the total \$82 million cost.

Migchelbrink said most of the rest of the cost is being paid by CDOT and through in-kind land contributions from Colorado State University. Only a small portion — including the \$3.9 million paid to BNSF for an easement in the corridor — will come from city revenues, she said.

Migchelbrink said no train traffic will be stopped or redirected during the construction period and vehicle traffic allowed in the corridor now will still be allowed when the project is completed.

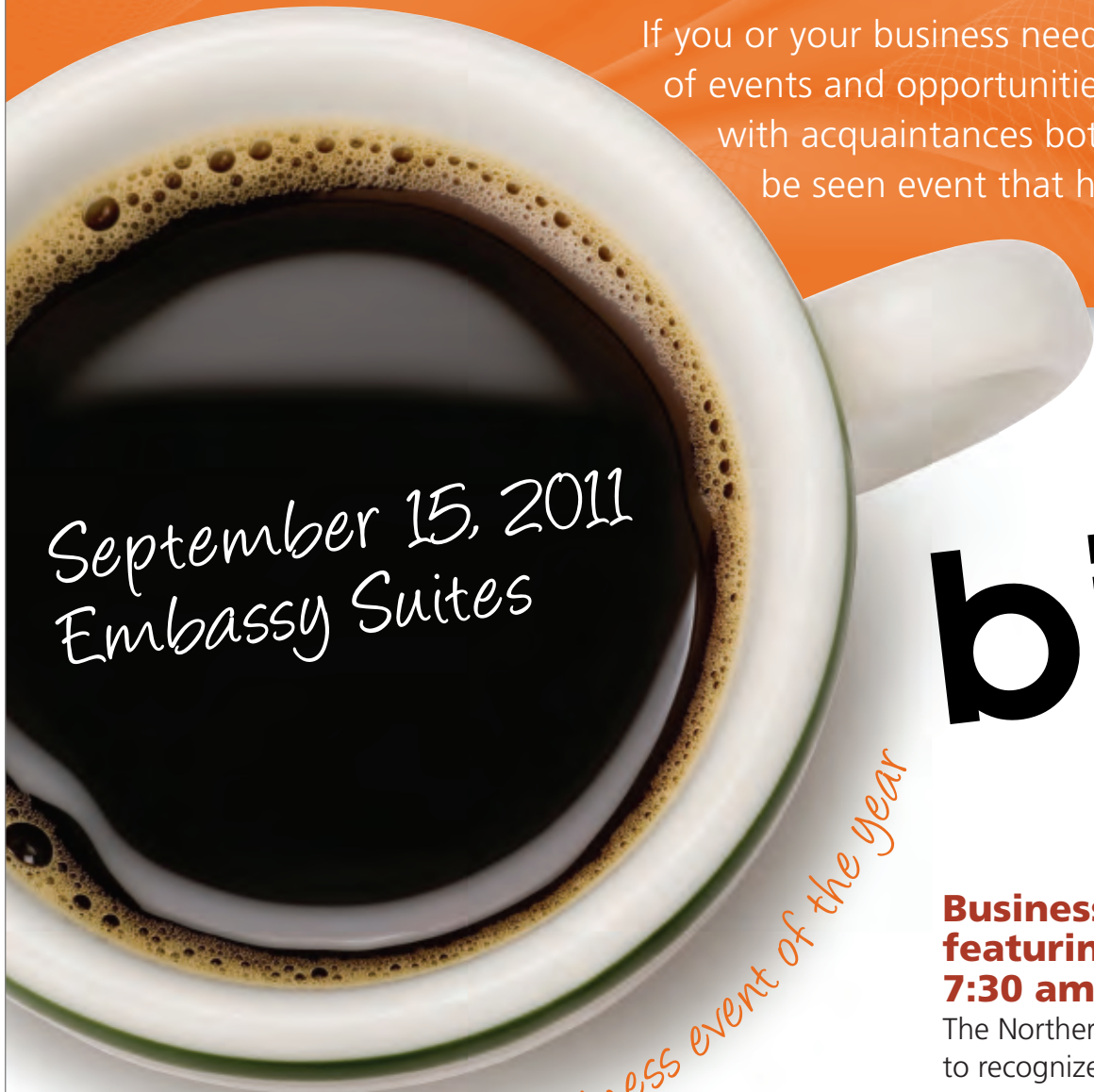
“Wherever vehicles travel today, there will still be vehicles allowed,” she said.

Migchelbrink said disruption of east-west traffic will be kept to a minimum during the two-year construction period.

“Prospect, Drake, Horsetooth and Harmony will be impacted, but we obviously won’t be working on all four intersections at the same time,” she said. “A lot of the construction (between the intersections) won’t impact anybody at all.”

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September 15, 2011
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The see and be seen business event of the year

Business Leaders Breakfast featuring the 2011 CFO Awards, 7:30 am

The Northern Colorado CFO Awards are presented to recognize chief financial officers in the Northern Colorado region whose efforts successfully guide a company's financial future. Nominations are open until August 1.

BizFit 2011 Challenge Power Lunch, 11:30 am

The challenge for a healthier lifestyle, better productivity and potentially lower health care costs began on May 1st. We will be honoring company teams at Bixpo.

Business Expo, 10:00 am - 7:30 pm

Give your business a jolt by showcasing your products and services — or by discovering new vendors at the largest business expo event of the year. Sip your favorite brew and stroll the isles — you're sure to make some personal connections.

Bixpo After Hours, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Enjoy live music and a little something extra in your coffee to put a nightcap on this event. If you can't make it during the day, this extra social, social event is a great time to network and visit the expo at the same time.

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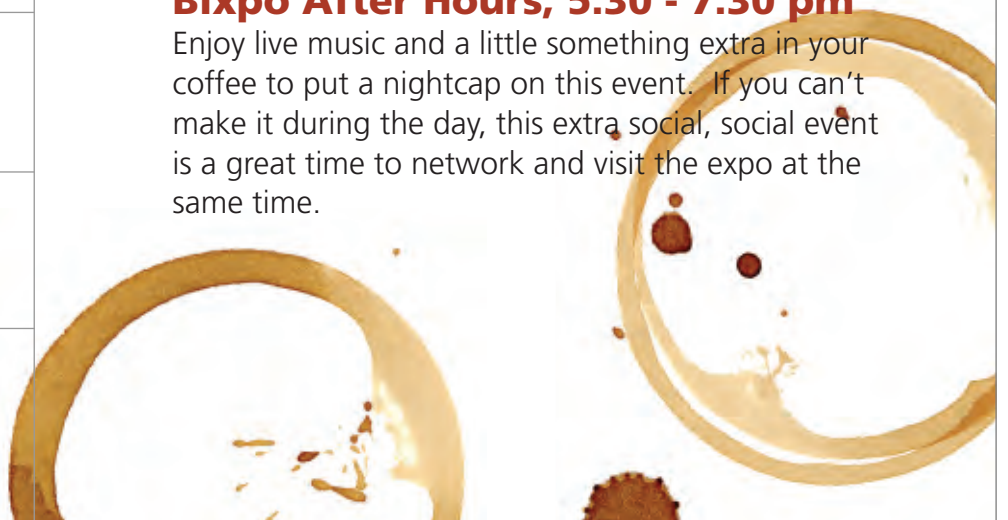
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CIENFUEGOS, from 2A

knew — how to weld, how to sew — and I've made a good living with my hands.”

The auto upholstery business is not as busy as it once was, of course. People aren't as likely to get their vehicles reupholstered the way they used to do in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. But there's still a steady stream of business for collectible vehicles and those who would rather renew the interior of their vehicle than just trade it in for a whole new one.

Came to pick beets with family

Richard said Joe moved to the United States when he was very young.

“His family was contracted to pick sugar beets here and in Wyoming and Nebraska,” he said. “They needed the laborers from Mexico and that's why they were here. Once they got here, they stayed,

“He started from nothing and he worked hard and he did well.”

Richard Cienfuegos

working odd jobs to make a living.”

Richard said his father attended local schools and worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps for \$30 a month — good money in those Depression years. Later, Joe worked for the railroad and was there when the war started in

December 1941.

“The railroad job gave him a deferment, but he decided to join the Army,” Richard said. “He became a mechanic and was sent to England and could have stayed there, but he wanted to be part of the action.”

Sent to Europe after D-Day, Joe was wounded fighting in Germany and taken prisoner, spending the next six months in a POW camp. Six feet tall and beefy when he entered the service, Joe came out of the POW camp weighing only 120 pounds.

After his release, Joe was granted his U.S. citizenship by the Army. He returned to Fort Collins and opened what would become Joe's Auto Upholstery, now one of the city's oldest businesses.

Richard said Joe had a strong work ethic, but he always played by his own rules. “He opened the shop every day about 10 till eight and he closed the shop at five,” he said. “If you got there after



Courtesy Cienfuegos family

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OWNER — Joe Cienfuegos opened Joe's Auto Upholstery at 247 Linden St. in downtown Fort Collins just after the end of World War II. Here he stands near the front of his shop with an unidentified downtown worker.

five, he was gone.”

Richard said Joe kept track of every penny and made a lot of money during the heyday of auto reupholstery.

“We used to make three sets of seat covers a day in the 1950s,” he said. “Each set cost \$55 and wages were 90 cents an hour, so he made good money.”

His father was also very strict about being paid for his work, Richard said. “He was a good businessman — a little harsh, though. If you owed him money, he'd get it.”

But the quality of Joe's work kept customers returning. “All those years, he had people who kept coming back and coming back,” Richard said. “He was a good craftsman.”

Retired, but in the shop

And when Joe turned 65, that was it. He retired, but he could never stay away from the shop, which remains full of Joe's collection of antiques and mounted deer and elk heads from his hunting days.

“He'd come in and sit in the recliner and watch me, every day,” Richard said. “Sometimes I'd bring him out of retirement to do a custom Model A or Model T convertible top. He was a whiz at that.”

Richard said much has changed over the years in the downtown area, with new restaurants, shops and bars constantly coming and going. But the shop — and almost everything in it — remains the same.

“We've gone from tack hammers to staple guns, but otherwise everything is still the same,” he said.

The shop on Linden Street, cramped as it is, was a location Joe never wanted to leave, Richard said. “My Dad thought Linden Street was the best place in the world to do business,” he said. “He loved the town and this country.”

Richard said even though Joe turned the shop over to him in 1986, he's never for a moment considered changing its name.

“Everybody's always known it as Joe's, and it'll stay Joe's as long as I have it,” he said.

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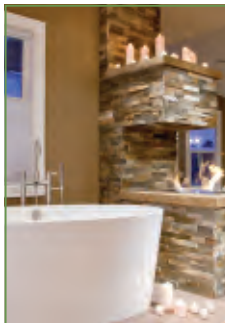
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When Terry Drahota founded Drahota in 1973, a handshake was all it took to seal the deal. This trust continues to be the cornerstone on which the company builds medical facilities, restaurants, retail spaces, country clubs, multifamily homes, schools, churches, office buildings and more.



HIGHCRAFT BUILDERS

In 1998, Dwight Sailer and Bryan Soth co-founded HighCraft Builders with a commitment to professional and ethical remodeling excellence. Today, that commitment is shared by the entire HighCraft design-build team, which now includes HighCraft Home Services for small remodeling projects.



David Niemann combines his passion for music with retail as owner of Niemann & Sons Music, a small-town music store in Cheyenne that serves customers throughout Wyoming, Colorado and western Nebraska. The music store sells and repairs all instruments and offers free local delivery — even for 350-pound pianos.



Trihydro

Trihydro, headquartered in Laramie, began in 1984 as a two-person environmental consulting firm and today has 270 employees and 13 offices nationwide providing environmental, engineering and surveying, air quality and process management, information technology, sustainable business solutions, and water and natural resource services.



WALKER MOWERS

Since 1980, Walker Manufacturing has focused on designing, developing and producing mid-size commercial-grade mowers and attachments and celebrated the production of its 100,000 mower in 2008. The company has 23 North American distributors, 23 international distributors and more than 1,100 dealers worldwide selling and servicing Walker Mowers.

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“When in doubt, treat everyone like an employee.”

Blair Trautwein,
attorney

JOB, from 11A

costs are somebody else’s headache — unless the employer and/or the worker cut too many corners and wind up with misclassified employees.

And that can cost you. Since June 2009, if a Colorado employer is found to have misclassified employees as independent contractors in willful disregard of the law, that employer can be fined up to \$5,000 per employee for the first incident and up to \$25,000 for a second or subsequent misclassification.

Then there are the Internal Revenue Service fines, which can range from \$1,000 to \$5,000, not to mention potential liability if the workers seek reimbursement for unpaid wages and benefits or make other claims under state or federal labor laws. The IRS is in the second year of a three-year audit of 6,000 randomly selected businesses who maintain independent contractor classifications.

The 2011 federal budget includes \$25 million for the Department of Labor to hire 90 new investigators and 10 new lawyers to target worker misclassification. That could be money well-spent from the government’s point of view, since the General Accounting Office estimates that worker misclassification costs \$2.72 billion in federal revenues annually.

Misclassification can be particularly tricky for very small businesses approaching the magic number of 50 employees, where certain requirements, such as benefits created by health-care reform, kick in.

So why would an employer take the risk?

“It’s a huge cost-saver upfront,” said Blair Trautwein, an attorney in Fort Collins. “It can be very tempting for small employers who don’t have to provide benefits or pay unemployment or Social Security or workers’ comp. But they have to make sure that someone is taking care of those things, or the government will come back at them.”

Employee or contractor?

A good place to start ensuring that your independent contractor is independent is with an employment contract.

“If you’re hiring a contractor, you should have the terms of employment spelled out,” Trautwein said. “Who is responsible for what, when you will get paid and for what, that sort of thing. It also helps if the contractor has created a business entity.”

The most important test to determine if a worker is truly an independent contractor is the question of control —

behavioral, financial, and relationship. Who controls the person’s hours? Who owns the equipment he or she uses? Who determines what he or she will do on a daily basis?

“If a janitor shows up to clean a building with his own cleaning supplies, and knows that he can’t start before 6 p.m. but has to be done by 8 a.m., he’s an independent contractor,” Trautwein said. “If he shows up and the supervisor hands him a mop and a bucket and tells him to start over there and he can take a break at 10, he’s an employee.”

Companies that offer the services of their employees to perform tasks such as cleaning or temporary office work are obviously responsible for all the paperwork and taxes for their people. But working with individual contractors can be less clear cut.

Trautwein used another example of a personal assistant, who might be hired as an independent contractor but wind up driving his sole client’s car on errands at hours determined entirely by the client. He contrasted that with a neighborhood lawn mowing service, where the high-school entrepreneur makes a deal with a number of homeowners on the block and brings his mower over sometime every other Wednesday.

“The personal assistant looks more like an employee than the kid who mows the lawn, because of the level of control the employer exercises,” Trautwein explained.

And then who pays the taxes?

“Many ‘independent contractors’ are shocked to discover they are responsible for both sides of Social Security taxes, the employee’s and the employer’s,”

Trautwein added — and that self-employment taxes are due quarterly.

It’s at that point that “contractors” can get angry and report the employer to the state Department of Labor and Employment for investigation, he said.

Employers can make the first move by requesting an advisory opinion from the state on the proper classification of workers. It has to be in writing and accompanied by a nonrefundable fee of \$100. The labor department’s website lists about a dozen questions to address in the written request; by the time an employer answers them all, he or she will most likely have figured it out on his or her own.

“When in doubt, treat everyone as an employee,” Trautwein said he advises his business clients.

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BANK ACTIVITY, from 3A

Weld County to grow dramatically in the next five years.

Fort Morgan State Bank will celebrate its 30th year in 2012.

Verus closing branch, Cache merging two

Verus Bank of Commerce also has plans to grow, and is preparing to do so by making a move that seems counterintuitive. It will close its branch at 1432 Mulberry St., Unit B, in Fort Collins in August.

Gerard Nalezny, co-chairman, said that the closure is simply taking advantage of a window of opportunity. He said that the company's lease on the Mulberry property is set to expire in August, and that the facility lacks desirable features such as a drive-through.



NALEZNY

Verus Bank had a strong first quarter 2011, according to Nalezny, and plans to expand within the next two years.

"Closing an inferior branch facility now positions us better to add branches in the future," he said. "We're analyzing a number of markets for expansion opportunities, including Greeley."

He added that Greeley has an affinity for community banking that Verus Bank, which was formed in February from Larimer Commerce Bank, Loveland Commerce Bank, and Fort Collins Bank of Commerce, finds attractive.

Once the Mulberry branch closes, Verus Bank will have two remaining physical locations, one at 3700 S. College Ave. in Fort Collins, and the other at 102 E. 29th St. in Loveland.

Nalezny also attributed the closure to trends in banking that are moving toward fewer physical branches. "People are using the Internet, remote deposits and mobile banking," he said.

Cache Bank and Trust will merge two of its Greeley branches effective Aug. 29. All accounts at the downtown branch at 924 11th St., will be moved to the corporate branch at 4601 20th St., and employees from the downtown branch will be transferred to one of the other offices.

Cache Bank has leased the downtown facility for 15 years, but the bank's strategy is to operate bank-owned facilities, according to CEO Byron Bateman.

"We are committed to the downtown Greeley area and will continue to look for a sustainable branch which complements our corporate strategy," he said in announcing the merger earlier this month.

Wray State branching to Windsor

Also moving into the Northern Colorado market is Wray State Bank, based in Wray, which has filed a notice of intent with the Colorado Division of Banking to open a branch in Windsor. The Windsor State Bank, a full-service office that will make business loans and accept deposits, would be located at 1130 Main St., which formerly housed the now-defunct New Frontier Bank.

The notice of intent was filed in the first part of May, said Wray State Bank President Pete Wilson, and officials are waiting to hear what the regulator has to say on the matter.

"In this regulatory climate, there are things you have to do and take care of,"

Wilson said. "But we don't anticipate any holdup."

Wray State Bank wants to branch into Northern Colorado to diversify its predominantly agriculture-based loan portfolio. "There is a good mix of industry in (Northern Colorado)," Wilson said.

Wilson estimates that the branch, if approved, will hire five people, and will cater to a market that appreciates smaller, relationship-oriented banking. Like Sneed of Fort Morgan State Bank, Wilson is confident in the branch's ability to succeed.

"Our strength lies in the fact that we are patient, careful, and methodical," Wilson said.

He and other officials expect to hear from the state regarding the new branch by May 24, but since the offices would have to be stocked with furniture and computers, there is no certain timeline for when it could open after its approval.

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LIFESOAP, from 3A

their goals.

Melvin and Madonna also speak at schools, motivating students and helping them realize that not only was college within their reach but also that they could achieve anything they want.

Now, the two have written a second book, "Help! I DK What I Want to do with my Life!" They are also starting up another entrepreneurial venture, this one to help children growing up without clean drinking water.

Soap for clean water

LifeSoap Co. is a for-profit venture that has promised to give 90 percent of its after-tax profits to a clean-water partnership in South America. Details of this partnership are not yet finalized, according to Melvin.

The company will sell three different "flavors" of organic soap, delivered to the purchaser's door monthly. Melvin and Madonna say that they chose soap as their product because it is something that is used every day, and that they can spice up an otherwise boring product that will be a daily reminder of the plight of those who don't have access to clean water.

The soap is manufactured in Montana, and has been available for purchase for one month, according to Melvin. To date, the pair have sold their soap to more than 100 people at \$20 per box, which includes three bars of soap.

Melvin and Madonna were inspired to get involved in the clean-water cause after discovering that one in eight people worldwide do not have access to clean drinking water, and that 6,000 people die every day from water-related illness. They learned that children in some parts

of South America have to spend their days walking miles to find water for their families instead of attending school.

The men are both strong believers in the value of education and want to change the destinies of these children by allowing them to go to school and break the poverty cycle.

As entrepreneurs, Melvin and Madonna want to change the way their generation thinks about business by turning LifeSoap into the best social impact venture possible.

"We care more about our impact on the world than the impact on our bank statements," Madonna said.

"Don't just make a profit," Melvin added. "Make a profit and more important, make a difference!"

In five years, Melvin said that he hopes to be donating \$10,000 a month to clean water initiatives around the world. He also envisions a storefront, rather than maintaining the business solely online. Madonna sees LifeSoap as the employer of 10 to 15 staff members by then.

Continuing mission

In addition to getting LifeSoap off the ground, the men want to continue their blog, which now operates as ThriveorDie.com, and publish one book per year to continue their DreamReel Media venture, Melvin said.

"Our corporate mission for DreamReel Media centers on empowering young adults to live with purpose and make the most of this gift of life," Melvin said. "It's our way of sharing things we've learned."

Public speaking by the founders is also an important part of DreamReel Media.

"I love to give speeches and inspire



Courtesy LifeSoap Co.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – Co-founders of ThriveOrDie.com and LifeSoap Co. Juwon Melvin, (left) and Aaron Madonna are working to change the lives of children and young adults both in the United States and abroad.

people, so I can see myself giving at least one talk per month to college students who are looking to become entrepreneurs or to people who are committed to social causes," said Madonna.

All profits gleaned from the sale of "Help!" are reinvested in the company, Melvin said.

Both young men remember where they came from, shooting video blog posts on CSU's campus and keeping their families close.

At a book signing May 6 at the Old Firehouse Bookstore in Old Town Fort Collins, they read excerpts from their most recent book and regaled the crowd with stories of how they ended up where they are today.

They also introduced LifeSoap with a video detailing a recent trip to South America and the children who inspired their clean-water initiative.

Later this summer, Melvin and Madonna will embark on a year-long trip to South America to volunteer with organizations related to their cause, such as Arms of Love, an international organization that works to give abused and abandoned children a home.

The trip will begin with a three- to six-month stint in Argentina, where the pair will work on clean-water research and mentor at-risk youth. The trip will be financed by money saved from jobs Melvin and Madonna held outside of their companies until this spring.

The men plan to continue running LifeSoap from South America, via Internet connections, with a team member back in the United States to package and ship orders of as they come in. Melvin and Madonna's goal for 2011 is to donate \$2,500 to clean-water initiatives in South America.

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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

A region is as a region does, looks

Sometimes it takes a stranger to see what we can't recognize in ourselves.

The governor's bottom-up economic development process lumped Larimer County and Weld County together into Region 2 for planning purposes. It's logical — we've been big fans of the "Northern Colorado" brand for more than a decade and a half.

And now that the two counties have completed the exercise to create a matrix of economic goals, strategies, actions and outcomes, the areas where larger regional issues overshadow county-centric concerns are obvious.

Job creation and support for emerging enterprises. Education and workforce development. Transportation and infrastructure. Water storage and delivery. Building on existing partnerships on all levels — and there are many, on both sides of the county line.

In short, we're all in this together. Although tax-based funding for government services, especially sales-tax-based funding, creates natural rivalries for new business, additional cooperative efforts can benefit more of us than fiercer competition.

Granted, the process of combining all the issues facing both counties then whittling them down to the top six goals and strategies on a relatively short — and constantly shifting — deadline took elected officials and staff outside their analytical comfort zone. And as representatives from Save the Poudre have pointed out, the changing dates may have condensed the time allotted for public input.

But in the end, the matrix was completed with the cooperation of the business community as well as other groups interested in looking at the larger regional picture rather than running out the clock pushing a one-issue agenda. As a result, some interesting ideas made it into the final document submitted to the state, ideas that might have been second-guessed out of the discussion given more time to develop "consensus."

Relocating the Broncos training camp, the National Western Stock Show, the Governor's Energy Office and the state Department of Agriculture to the region — and building a NASCAR track — could be filed under Blue Sky Ideas, but Brand Improvement is one issue that we think regional eco-devo types should already be addressing. "NoCo" just doesn't have the same ring as "Silicon Valley" or "Research Triangle."

Since this is a bottom-up process, we're asking readers to submit their best ideas for a new brand for the Larimer/Weld County Region. What do you think would best describe who we are, what we do, and how many advantages we offer businesses and individuals?

Send your ideas to editor@ncbr.com, and we'll share them in this space.

FORT COLLINS, IN THE NOT-SO DISTANT FUTURE...



Time has come for Committee to Reduce Government Waste

During the last election, Americans spoke loud and clear. Regardless of the political party they belong to, they want Congress focused on the economy, and they want us to work together to get our nation's fiscal house in order.

Specifically, they want Congress and the President to focus on reining in federal spending. We face a \$14 trillion debt, and every day we wait to take responsible steps to control spending, we leave our fiscal situation less sustainable for the future.

We need to take action now, and a recent report by the Government Accountability Office offers a constructive suggestion for where to start. This eye-opening study identifies multiple overlapping federal government programs that, if consolidated or cut, could dramatically reduce administrative and overhead costs, among other savings.

The duplicative programs span a range of federal government agencies from domestic food assistance and education to homeland security and defense. For example:

- Over 20 federal programs address homelessness, spanning seven federal agencies, including the departments of education, health and human services, labor and veterans affairs.

- At least 44 programs run by the departments of education, health and human services, and labor provide employment and training services.

- There are 80 economic development programs at four agencies, 52 of which have authority to fund "entrepreneurial efforts."

- More than two dozen individuals appointed by the president are responsible for biodefense.

- And 15 agencies are involved in food safety — a costly overlap that

GUEST COLUMN
Orrin Hatch
and
Mark Udall

GAO says has caused inconsistent oversight, ineffective coordination and an inefficient use of resources.

While many of these programs were created with good intentions, they were also often created without first examining whether a similar program already existed. In fact, most departments and agencies are not even able to tell Congress how many programs have been authorized. We need to study which federal programs are needed and which can be consolidated or cut.

In March, we proposed legislation that would create a Committee to Reduce Government Waste. Our bill would require the committee to submit a report to the Senate at least once a year identifying under-performing and wasteful government programs in need of cuts or elimination. The report's recommendations would receive expedited consideration in the Senate.

The committee would be composed of 12 members, four from each of the Senate Finance, Appropriations and Budget committees. The Senate majority and minority leaders would each pick six members, and each member's service would be limited to six years.

A similar committee was formed in response to increased government spending during World War II. That committee succeeded in saving more than \$38 billion in present dollars over three years just by reducing wasteful spending. We are convinced that such a committee, if reconstituted today, could save over \$100 billion.

That is real money.

While we acknowledge that it will take more than cuts to duplicative discretionary programs to reduce our structural debt, this is an obvious and important place to begin. Each American's share of our current debt equals \$42,000. It's time to bring more fiscal accountability to Washington and much-needed relief to taxpayers.

Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Mark Udall, D-Colorado, are U.S. Senators.

Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

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Write the *Northern Colorado Business Report* to comment on our content or to raise issues of interest to the business community.

Letters must be limited to 300 words. Longer guest opinions may be considered upon request. Please include address and telephone numbers so that we can verify your submission.

The *Business Report* reserves the right to edit for length, and to reject letters that are potentially libelous.

E-mail letters to Kate Hawthorne, khawthorne@ncbr.com or submit comments through our website, www.ncbr.com. Snail mail to 1550 E. Harmony Road, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Cheers to the library expansion!

Cheers to the thoughtful and positive Fort Collins municipal voters who gave their resounding support and vote of approval for the Main Library Expansion.

The Poudre River Library District has the \$4.2 million available and dedicated to fund the construction of the planned 9,000-square-foot expansion and remodel. We are looking forward to the expansion of the children's library services, meeting and study areas, innovative technologies and additional space for books and new collections. Each and all of these improvements will be a benefit to our community. Now, the members of the Poudre River Library Trust will seek donor support for those facility enhancements that will make the Library expansion a state of the art facility and a source of continued pride for Fort Collins citizens.

Thank you.

Linda Hopkins, Member
Poudre River Library Trust
Fort Collins

Where the emission testing money goes

Everybody is complaining about the emission testing program because we all know that about 94 percent of the vehicles will never fail a test; therefore, any possibility for air quality improvement is extremely small.

So, where does your money go?

You pay a \$25 inspection fee. The state plans for 449,768 vehicle tests over two years, with half, or 224,884 vehicles being tested, or retested, each year (emis-

sions tests are not required for the first four years). The test fee dollars are allocated: \$24.75 (\$5,565,879/year) to Environmental System Products (Envirotest); \$0.25 (\$56,221/year) to the state for forms and data management.

Environmental System Products is headquartered in Connecticut; therefore, profit to this corporation leaves Larimer and Weld counties, as well as the state of Colorado. Is this a plan for redistribution of our wealth to Connecticut?

You also pay an additional vehicle registration fee of \$2.20 every year for all 465,036 registered vehicles within the testing boundary. This fee is allocated: \$1 (\$465,036) to Colorado Department of Revenue HUTF-Air Account; \$0.50 (\$232,518) to Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment-Air Account; \$0.70 (\$325,525) to the appropriate county (Larimer or Weld).

The testing and registration fees total over \$6.5 million each year, and allow the government to become larger and more bold in their ability to take away our money/freedoms for their pet projects. Most people believe the testing "fee" is really a tax and requires a citizen vote.

It's important to know that the emission testing is not required by the EPA, and the federal government cannot withhold our share of federal highway funding if we eliminate emission testing.

Evelyn King
Loveland

Loveland agrees to buy Agilent property for \$5.8 million

(*Business Report Daily*, May 11, 2011)

Loveland makes a great investment in their future and what does Fort Collins do? Buy up open space!!!

David Austin
Fort Collins

Health insurance exchange bill moves closer to adoption

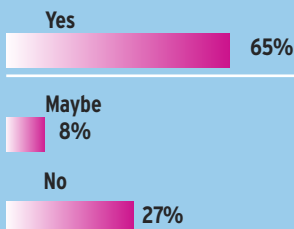
(*Business Report Daily*, May 5, 2011)

As a small business owner I (and my employees) are suffering at the greedy hands of the insurance companies. With my previous business I couldn't afford a plan for my employees. My spouse and I paid horrific rates just to offset catastrophe. Now, I am losing business opportunities to larger companies because candidates can get coverage for a third of what I can offer. Thank you, Sens. Boyd and Stephens for listening.

Cori Smith
Estes Park

NCBR poll watch

Would mandatory sales tax change your online shopping habits?



Next question:

What do you think of "Northern Colorado" as a regional brand?

Answer now at www.ncbr.com. Responses will be accepted through May 31.

These results reflect responses to the online poll at www.ncbr.com May 3 - 17.

We definitely need major changes in health insurance. My wife and I pay over \$400 per month and that's with a \$7,000 co-pay. I was forced out of my career for health reasons and now it's hard to pay this premium.

Robert Armstrong
Fort Collins

Private exchanges already exist. If politicians or entrepreneurs want one or more in Colorado, they should start one, rather than using the force of law. Further, a state-run exchange is subject to federal rules. For more, see "State Health Insurance Exchanges Will Impose Federal Control" by Twila Brase of the Citizens Council for Health Freedom, and coverage at PatientPowerNow.org.

Brian T. Schwartz
Boulder

If only people really understood why insurance rates are so high. It is not only because of "greedy insurance." Greedy consumers do not care about prices when they don't pay the bill. Car salespeople are greedy too, and if it wasn't for competition, they would charge whatever they wanted. What about greedy retail stores? Get the point? Open up the door to out-of-state insurance companies and the competition would force down prices. Our silly laws are effectively creating a monopoly in each state when they limit out-of-state competition. Also, patients need to take control of their doctor bills and question the overpriced invoices of our hospitals and clinics. How many of you spent more than 30 seconds looking over that last doctor bill when you knew that it was covered by insurance?

Travis Greeley

Loveland using lodging funds to promote sculpture shows

(*Business Report Daily*, May 4, 2011)

Strange that this much money was awarded to events during a timeframe when the hotels in the city are already sold out. Great events, and we love Sculpture in Loveland, so I am happy they can be more profitable, but I thought this was to help bring in new business.

Elliott Loveland

Mountain View Goodyear closes

(*Business Report Daily*, May 2, 2011)

It saddens me to see a good business go away. It isn't easy, even with 26 years of experience under one's belt, to make a business work in this day and age.

Marybeth Snyder
Fort Collins

POLL COMMENTS

Editor's note: Let us know how you really feel. Vote in our online poll, then leave an extended comment at www.ncbr.com.

Would mandatory sales tax change your online shopping habits?

Most people buy online because it is cheaper and easier. If a mandatory sales tax were required it would offset the advantage of buying online because most online sellers require that the buyer pay for the shipping. If the buyer is required to pay for both shipping and mandatory sales tax, then it becomes less advantageous to buy online.

James Nuttall

Rather than cut waste from the budget, the political solution to any problem has become: raise taxes, and/or increase regulation.

Lew Barr

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Rising tuition: More than collegiate consequences?

Fort Collins is small town of only 133,000 people located along the Poudre River, one of the nation's most beautiful college towns, according to US News. The number one employer of residents within the Fort Collins community is still Colorado State University, employing more than 7,000 people, not including student employees.

Surrounding the campus is a variety of local businesses, all of which rely on the Colorado State University student body to stay afloat in the current economy. However, with rising tuition costs,

the university's student body may very well decrease in size. If there were a massive decrease in the school's population size, Fort Collins would suffer. With fewer students, the surrounding businesses have a smaller community to sell to, and would therefore suffer.

Such a thing has a chain of reactions, which could have altering consequences on the Fort Collins community so much so that it could push many of the local businesses out of the local area. Shops, bars, clubs, restaurants and theaters that surround the campus would feel the impact the most.

With higher tuition, fewer students will be able to afford their education at Colorado State. According to FinAid, an organization that helps undergraduate students with scholarships and financial aid, there is an average rise in tuition by 8 percent per year. This means the cost of a degree doubles every nine years. Tuition fees at Colorado State University could rise by up to 20 percent, according to *The Collegian*, for both in- and out-of-state students. This could cause a direct major effect to the student body, as well as a direct effect on the community.

As the number of students who can afford to pay the rising tuition rates goes down, two things could happen. One, there are fewer people to support local businesses, and two, the students who are still at CSU don't have as much money to spend outside of school expenses. I myself have had to think about transferring to a less-expensive school.

In a survey I conducted of 122 freshmen and sophomores who live in different dorms at CSU, nearly 75 percent said that they were worried about rising tuition costs and more than 15 percent said they had debated about whether or not they can afford to stay at school here in Fort Collins.

Trying to cut costs

The rising tuition indicates that CSU is trying to cut costs. The direct consequence on the community is that the number one employer will most likely encounter layoffs. The already struggling community will only struggle more, because after all, why would the university's administration elect to raise the cost of tuition before first cutting budget costs, such as excess employees and unneeded construction projects? Why would the administrators not "trim the fat," so to speak, from the current budget?

So the question is, do we really need to be spending thousands on a new entrance to the library? Do the athletic teams really need such a grand new practice facility? Do we need to be paying for unnecessary renovations like the non-cost-efficient projects — the new Academic Village and the Student Rec. Center? Knowing how these projects could impact the local community, we have to ask ourselves, do we need them? Are the rising tuition costs because of these construction projects worth their reciprocal effects?

I believe not. There is a delicate symbiotic relationship between the University and Fort Collins. With a smaller student body, the community will suffer as there are fewer people paying taxes to the city and fewer volunteers for community programs. With a suffering Fort Collins, Colorado State University will not be as attractive a school as other higher-education options.

The status quo of Northern Colorado has changed. In the near future, Colorado State may not be as great of a school as it has been over the last few years. So then, how do we rebalance the community? Is there a way that both CSU and Fort Collins can thrive?

Andrew Ellermann is currently a freshman Health and Exercise Science Student at Colorado State University.

GUEST COLUMN
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Local companies still growing despite recession

Whether it feels like the Great Recession ended in June 2009, as government economists maintain, some Northern Colorado companies are acting like it. The companies on this year's Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in the region all reported revenue growth of at least 1 percent between 2009 and 2010.

This is the 12th year that the *Northern Colorado Business Report* has presented awards based on this list – it actually started as a list of 75 companies in 1997, and has grown and evolved with the economy. Previous lists measured growth over two and three years, and were divided into companies with revenue over and under \$2 million, to accommodate all the firms worthy of recognition.

But after September 2008, growth became harder to sustain for many businesses. And we discovered that comparing revenue figures for 2010 with 2007 and 2008 severely limited candidates for this list. As we've said before, flat had become the new spike.

So we went back to our roots this year, measuring revenue growth from 2009 to 2010 to find a meaningful comparison of post-recession growth. We also recombined the companies into one list, including businesses that posted at least \$150,000 in 2009 regardless of the dollar amount of revenue in 2010.

We hope to be able to measure sustained growth over two years in our new Mercury list. This year, we are happy to salute these businesses for working their way through the Great Recession, and look forward to honoring even more in 2012.

Sincerely,



Jeff Nuttall
Publisher



Jeff Nuttall
Publisher
Northern Colorado Business Report

MERCURY



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Our Number One Job is to Make You Look Spectacular!

Benchmark Electrical Solutions hits the mark in just three years

By Michelle LeJeune
news@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Just three years ago as the recession roared through the country at full tilt catching up businesses and tossing them like so many trees in a tornado, Dave Aguiar started Benchmark Electrical Solutions. And quietly began to succeed.

From year one to date, Benchmark Electrical Solutions increased its project count from one to two in 2008, four projects in 2009, and 20 projects and numerous service clients in 2010. In the same time period staffing at Benchmark increased from one to 25 employees. Profit margins doubled from 2008 to 2010, and revenue grew from \$150,000 in 2009 to \$2.2 million in 2010.

That growth placed Benchmark at the top of the Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in Northern Colorado this year.

“We’ve been smart,” Aguiar said. “We aren’t using profits to get the best furniture in the office. We’ve been using it for tools.”

Aguiar is philosophical about the timing of Benchmark’s beginning. “It was the right time in my life, just the wrong time in the economy,” he said.

The timing was right for him because his kids were in middle and high school. He’d worked the bulk of his career as a project manager for Sturgeon Electric in Denver. Following that job, he worked as a consultant for a renewable energy company, Range Fuels, as the electrical and instrumentation control lead helping with plans for a \$300 million plant in Georgia.

With nearly 20 years in the business, Aguiar said he felt he’d amassed enough experience to go out on his own. That meant providing the same sorts of services larger electrical companies do such as pre-construction, construction, maintenance and servicing. He hired exceptional workers.

Encourage innovation

“The scope of our work is typical of larger electrical guys like Sturgeon,” he said. “In addition, we encourage innovation. We’re process-oriented in operations. We work on building relationships.”

He said that Benchmark’s ability to



Kate Hawthorne, Northern Colorado Business Report

HITTING THE BENCHMARK —David Aguiar, left, president of Benchmark Electrical Solutions, pictured with Kayla Evavold, office manager; and Robert Fowler, estimator, has been smart with his company’s success opting to upgrade tools and equipment instead of office furniture.

diversify to work with public projects such as schools as well as private jobs such high-end residences has helped his company grow. “Industrial jobs and servicing were the balance we needed to stabilize in tough economic times,” he said.

Benchmark is serious about service. When an industrial facility in Berthoud wanted to swap out all its lights to energy-efficient florescent bulbs, Benchmark also helped the company obtain available tax rebates and incentives, so that it would see a return on the investment.

Sometimes, a client company knows what it wants to do, but isn’t sure how to get there. In the case of Sundrop Fuels, a solar gasification-based renewable energy company with corporate headquarters in Louisville, Benchmark worked nearly daily for six months with company engineers to get the job done.

The Sundrop project was a good example of what Benchmark can do, Aguiar said. Benchmark installed a fully automated feed stock production system and heating expansion, as well as upgraded electrical utilities.

worked in hazardous locations where explosions were possible and everything was urgent.”

Benchmark’s resume includes well-know public and private companies throughout the state and into Wyoming



No. 1 Revenue > 1,367% growth

“With renewable energy, we are building while design is being done,” Aguiar explained. “It’s more of crystal-ball construction. There was lots of interfacing with engineers, sometimes a few times a day. We had to ask a lot of questions to make sure nothing had changed. Most of the time it had. We

including the Poudre Valley REA administrative offices; the Federal Center in Denver; buildings in the Weld County School District; The Abby of Saint Walberga; Our Lady of the Valley; East Morgan City Library, and the Pierce Wastewater Treatment facility, just to name a few.

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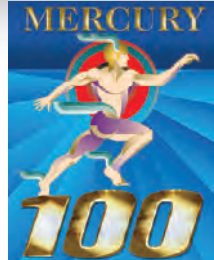
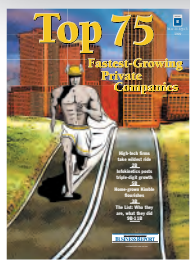
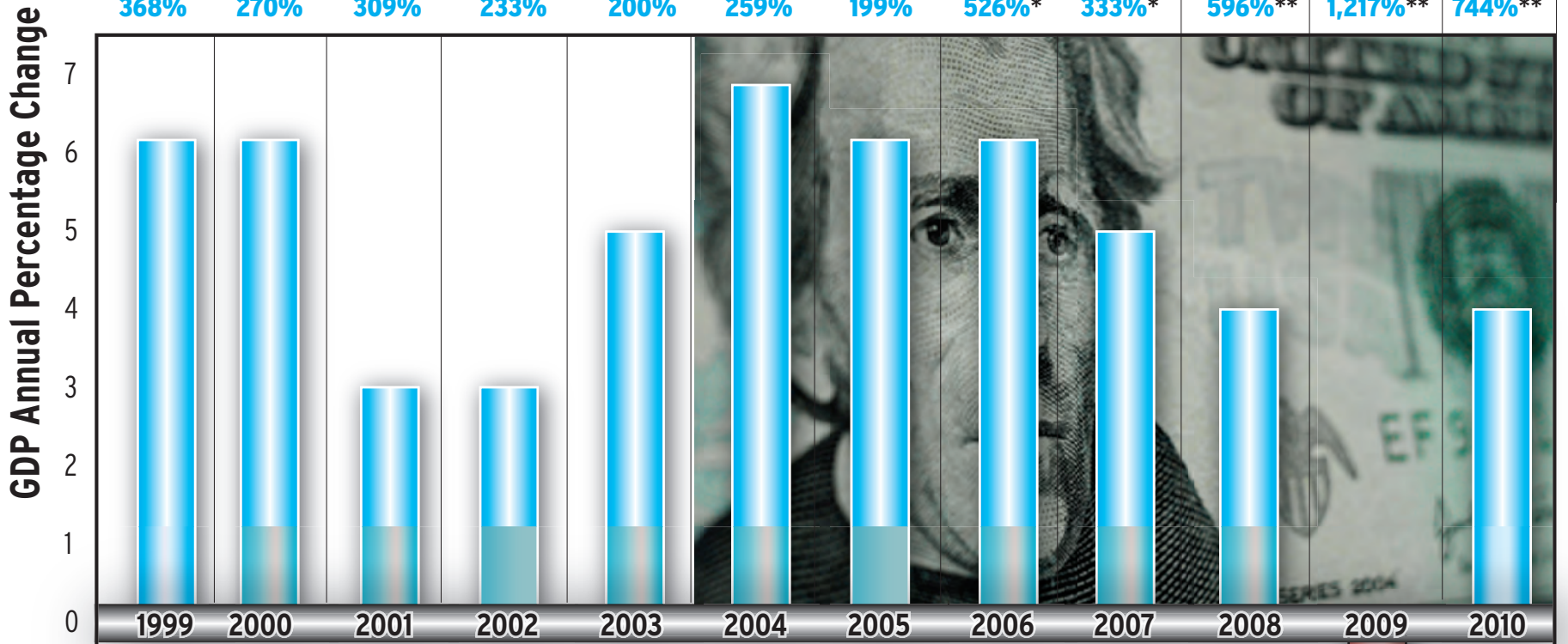
Mercury 100 Fastest Growing Private Companies 1999-2010

Percentage growth from previous year vs. United States Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

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Infokinetics 368%	Ensign Power Systems Inc. 270%	McWhinney Enterprises 309%	Anlance Protection LTD. 233%	Naranjo Civil Constructors Inc. 200%	Across Colorado Lending 259%	Ensign Power Systems Inc. 199%	Brinkman Partners 526%*	Mobility and More 333%*	Under \$2 Million Bas Bleu Theater Co. 300%**	Under \$2 Million C&T Custom Fabrication Inc. 276%**	Under \$2 Million Claypot Creative 280%**
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GDP SOURCE: [HTTP://FORECASTCHART.COM/GRAPH-US-GNP.HTML](http://FORECASTCHART.COM/GRAPH-US-GNP.HTML)
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What we can learn about resilience from the Mercury 100

Companies employ different strategies to keep on growing

By **Kate Hawthorne**
khawthorne@ncbr.com

A funny thing happened on the way to the Mercury 100 awards this year, especially if you find humor in numbers.

In short, this is the year that we here at the *Northern Colorado Business Report* had to rethink our methodology for computing the fastest-growing companies in the region. We had been using first two-year, then three-year revenue growth to find the firms that exhibit not just rapid growth – that crazed one-year spurt that marked the dot-com bubble, for example – but the kind of growth that could be sustained for the long haul.

It was a good plan, but the economic downturn that turned into the market meltdown that fueled the housing crash that eventually developed into a full-blown, lingering recession got in the way. That allegedly ended about two years ago, although some economists are still concerned about the possibility of a double-dip, and there have been tentative signs of the beginning of the start of a recovery recently.

The graphic on the opposite page tells

How we picked the Mercury 100

The Great Recession hit *Northern Colorado Business Report's* Mercury 100 selection process this year. In 1999, the first Mercury event honored 75 of the region's fastest growing companies, regardless of size. By 2008, the list was divided into two lists of 50 – companies with revenues over and under \$2 million – to reflect the continuing growth that was going on throughout the region. That was May; the economic landscape shifted in September, and comparing 2010 revenue to pre-recession times is no longer meaningful.

So this year's criteria for companies to be included on the single Mercury 100 list are at least \$150,000 of revenue in 2009; at least 1 percent of revenue growth between 2009 and 2010; and a company must be a for-profit, private business with corporate headquarters or local ownership in Larimer or Weld counties.

the story. There is no meaningful way to compare the disastrous economic year that was 2009 to 2007 in search of sustainable growth. Call it a reset this year, back to the most recent year's growth. We hope we can get back to long-term growth calculations in the near future.

More diverse economy

The good news is that here in Northern Colorado we are coming out of the recession with a more diverse economy. That is reflected in this year's Mercury honorees.

Where in years past the list was dominated by high-tech companies and those in all aspects of the real estate and

construction industry – not only general contractors, but also mortgage lenders, commercial developers, real estate brokers — the 2011 list features marketing firms and mental-health counselors; transportation and “green” businesses; manufacturers and movers.

Construction-related companies are still here, as are technology firms. But the ones with the strongest growth tell us that the recession rocked their world, to say the least, and they attribute their success to being willing to make hard choices and take a different path than the one they were on before September 2008.

Others on the list were started almost simultaneously with the recession — not

necessarily by design — and have known nothing but hard times. They could be part of a renaissance of innovation like that in the 1970s, when so many entrepreneurial ventures arose from the economic turmoil of galloping inflation, rampant unemployment and global uncertainty.

Still others have taken the opportunity presented by the Great Recession to rethink and redesign the way they have always done business. There are some car dealerships on the list, for example, the ones who have been able to adapt to the 21st-century realities of Internet sales and make it work for their bottom line.

There are also some old friends on the list, those who make a perennial appearance near the top of the Mercury list – Otterbox, which will soon be moving into its new corporate HQ in Old Town Fort Collins; EnergyLogic in Berthoud, on the cutting edge of energy efficiency services; marketing firm One Tribe Creative and background-checkers Tandem Select, formerly known as Premier Employment Screening Services. They prove that a solid business plan coupled with excellent execution – and the flexibility to meet changing market demands – will sustain a company in any economic conditions.

We have profiled some of the companies with the strongest growth in this section, but everyone who appears on this list has a story to tell. And we can learn something from every one.

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PEAK SERVICE | PINNACLE RESULTS

Green Ride Colorado Shuttle cruising along

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — A shuttle service that provides rides from Northern Colorado and Wyoming to Denver International Airport is finding business is picking up.

Green Ride Colorado Shuttle saw its 2010 revenues increase by 289 percent over the previous year and finished No. 2 on this year's Mercury list of the region's fastest-growing companies as tabulated by the *Northern Colorado Business Report*.

Green Ride Colorado was founded in May 2009 by Robert Flynn and Ray Schofield, two former employees of Shamrock Taxi and Shamrock Airport Express. Since then, the service has grown to 13 vehicles and 65 employees, hauling 150 to 250 passengers in 21 trips to DIA each day.

"It's essentially a 24-hour service," said Schofield. "We have trips that start at 3:30 a.m. and that go to DIA hourly with the last van leaving Fort Collins at 11:30 p.m."

Green Ride Colorado goes head-to-head with SuperShuttle — another DIA shuttle service — but both Schofield and Flynn say that's not their main competition.

"We compete against SuperShuttle, but we think it's the people who drive themselves to the airport that we're aiming for," said Schofield. "We believe the two of us (Green Ride and SuperShuttle) have less than 10 percent of the market. There's about 5,000 passengers leaving Northern Colorado for the airport each day."

Green Ride Colorado's vehicle fleet is mostly gasoline-powered, but that's because suitable, affordable alternative-fuel vehicles are not yet available for the

service, Flynn said.

"I think we'll eventually get there and should be a part of the future for all transportation companies," he said.

Other shades of green

Flynn said the "green" aspect of the company lies in the fact that the service reduces vehicle emission pollution and traffic congestion by transporting passengers who would otherwise drive.

"The shared ride is reducing pollution and congestion and it's simply safer when you're taking vehicles off the road," he said.

But Green Ride Colorado has other "green" dimensions to its operations, including dispatchers that take reservation from their homes who don't have to drive to work and a strong recycling ethic that's resulted in the com-



Courtesy Green Ride Colorado Shuttle

GREEN THE WAY TO GO — Founded in 2009 by Robert Flynn, left, and Ray Schofield, Green Ride Colorado has grown to 13 vehicles, 65 employees and 150 to 250 passengers in 21 trips to DIA each day.

"We believe we have an extremely unique business model in this industry," Schofield said. "All of our drivers are employed by the company and not independent contractors as most others have. We're really trying to grow a culture that's all about this community."

Green Ride Colorado has served about 30,000 unique riders in its first two years of operation, and 2011 is looking very good for the company.

"We're experiencing about 100 percent month-over-month growth," said Schofield. "We just had the best week for reservations in our history, and May has started very, very strongly."

Flynn said recent steady increases in

gasoline prices have not yet caused the company to raise its fares, although that remains a possibility. But putting the rider first is what the company is all about, he said.

"We want people to recognize that we respect our travelers, so we operate from a position of trust and respect," he said. "Our passengers are our friends and neighbors, and building that culture differentiates us from other companies that aren't growing as fast."

That philosophy propelled their strong business growth in 2010 and is carrying them forward in 2011.

"We're looking forward to an even better year this year," Flynn said.

MERCURY

100

No. 2 Revenue > 289% growth

ceaseless trips back and forth across the region, according to Flynn and Schofield.

They've looked at propane and natural gas-powered vehicles, as well as electric vehicles, but none are yet at a stage of development that makes sense for the

company earning the 2010 Environmental Business of the Year Award from the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce and gold membership in the city of Fort Collins' Climate Wise program.

And the company fosters a strong community ethic in its business model.



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Safe Site protects lifelines of the community

By Anne Cumming Rice
news@ncbr.com

Johnstown — How does a company go from \$80,000 in sales to \$9 million in five years and in the middle of a recession?

“It all goes back to performance,” said Skip McIntosh, vice president of Safe Site, a Johnstown-based utility contractor that started in 2005. “In today’s economy, the businesses that will survive are the ones that step up their level of service.”

Safe Site contracts with Xcel Energy and CenturyLink (formerly Qwest Communications) to respond to “811” calls, the “call before you dig” requests that builders and homeowners make to locate underground utility lines before they start on a project.

Safe Site responds to about 2,000 requests a day, covering Northern Colorado and north Denver for Qwest and the entire state for Xcel Energy. In the last year the company has doubled the number of its employees, now at 150.

It has also grown its revenues from \$2.9 million to \$6.5 million between 2009 and 2010 alone, placing it at No. 5 on this year’s Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in Northern Colorado.

“It’s been a challenge to grow this fast,” McIntosh said. “But we know a lot of people would love to have the oppor-



Courtesy Safe Site

SAFE TO DIG — A Safe Site employee locates utility lines before street repairs can begin. The company also performs utility safety inspections, utility code compliance and mapping of underground utilities.

Skip McIntosh attributes Safe Site’s growth to simply doing things better than their competitors.

“We’ve taken market share from our competitors because we’ve done good work,” he said. “You have to deliver on-

line-locating request once it comes in, Safe Site developed custom software to manage its work. The company also does other utility services, including safety inspections, code compliance audits and mapping of underground utilities.

Skip McIntosh said the business philosophy behind Safe Site is the same for

Alphagraphics — taking care of customers and doing a good job.

“We are successful because of our employees,” he added. “I can’t speak highly enough of them. In this economy a lot of people are looking for work, but it’s still hard to find good people. But we’ve found good people.”

MERCURY

100

No. 5, Revenue > 122% growth

tunities we’ve been given.”

McIntosh and his wife Diane own Safe Site, with Diane as the majority owner. Before starting Safe Site, they were minority shareholders in a similar company. Skip McIntosh has been in the utility contracting business for 35 years.

The McIntoshes also own Alphagraphics, a printing company in Fort Collins. Both companies are family businesses, with their daughter Jeannette Flores at Alphagraphics while their son Justin, Skip’s younger brother and his father all work for Safe Site.

time, accurate work. In this business, if you can’t do things accurately, people are going to get hurt, their lines will get cut, their lights or Internet will go out. We literally protect the lifelines of the community.”

The company started contracting with Xcel in Northern Colorado, was asked to bid on the north Denver contract and was awarded it, then added Qwest Communications in 2010. Last fall, the company was awarded the Xcel contract for the entire state.

With two days to complete a utility-

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Mercury Fastest Growing Companies

Ranked by 1-year revenue growth



RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	1-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH	REVENUES 2010 REVENUES 2009	EMPLOYEES 2011 EMPLOYEES 2010	PRODUCTS/SERVICES	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE FISCAL YEAR END YEAR FOUNDED
1	BENCHMARK ELECTRICAL SOLUTIONS INC. 5739 Bueno Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-229-1885/970-229-1895	1,367%	\$2,200,000 \$150,000	25 22	Electrical contractors.	kayla@benchmarkelectricalsolutions.com www.benchmarkelectricalsolutions.com	Dave Aguiar, President Dec. 31 2008
2	GREENRIDE 344 E. Foothills Parkway, Suite 29 Fort Collins, CO 80525 888-472-6656/N/A	289%	\$1,360,500 \$350,000	N/A 60	Transportation.	support@greenrideco.com www.greenrideco.com	Ray Schofield, Owner Dec. 31 2009
3	OTTERBOX 1 Old Town Square, Suite 303 Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-493-8446/970-493-1755	253%	\$170,000,000 \$48,200,000	269 220	Innovators of protective solutions for mobile hand-held technology.	info@otterbox.com www.otterbox.com	Curt Richardson, Founder and CEO Dec. 31 1998
4	ENERGYLOGIC INC. 309 Mountain Ave. Berthoud, CO 80513 970-532-3220/970-532-5074	142%	\$4,600,000 \$1,900,000	80 80	Energy efficiency consulting and testing for homebuilders and homeowners. Also working in LEED-NC and EB, and performing commercial energy audits and recommissioning.	info@nrglogic.com www.nrglogic.com	Steve Byers, CEO Dec. 31 2006
5	SAFE SITE INC. 1309 Poplar St. Johnstown, CO 80534 970-622-9792/970-622-9593	122%	\$6,537,079 \$2,938,431	139 75	Utility locating, subsurface utility engineering, utility mapping, utility engineering services, utility pole attachment and code compliance audit. Safety inspection and compliance audit of all facilities. Field services.	gmcintosh@safesite.com www.safesiteco.com	Diane L. McIntosh, President Dec. 31 2005
6	COLORADO IRON & METAL INC. 903 Buckingham St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-530-2690/970-530-2691	108%	\$8,980,135 \$4,318,539	35 25	Full-service scrap metal recycling services and precision metal fabrication shop.	kentgarvin@coloradoironmetal.com www.coloradoironmetal.com	Kent Douglas Garvin, President and CEO Dec. 31 1995
7	JET MARKETING LLC 1929 W. County Road 56 Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-218-4797/970-224-1047	98%	\$396,000 \$200,000	3 2	Full-service marketing agency generating on-time, on-budget, and on-brand solutions.	jackie@jetmarketing.net www.jetmarketing.net	Jackie O'Hara, Owner, Account manager Dec. 31 2009
8	GHEENT MOTOR CO. 2715 35th Ave. Greeley, CO 80634 970-339-2438/970-339-8120	86%	\$28,972,743 \$15,596,241	49 45	Sells, leases, services new Chevrolets, Cadillacs, parts, all makes of used vehicles, collision center.	greatdeals@ghentmotors.com www.ghentmotors.com	Bob Ghent Dec. 31 1989
9	S.A. TECHNOLOGY 3985 S. Lincoln St., Suite 100 Loveland, CO 80537 970-663-1431/970-663-5898	74%	\$28,841,178 \$16,615,903	120 150	Complete design, engineering, fabrication and testing of remotely operated and robotic equipment and containment systems. Carbon fiber manufacturing including hand-layup and winding, and autoclave and oven curing. Custom machining and water jet cutting.	info@satechnology.com www.satechnology.com	Brian Dyck, President and COO Dec. 31 1992
10	FOUNDATIONS COUNSELING LLC 155 E. Boardwalk Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-227-2770/970-776-3301	73%	\$563,000 \$325,600	8 5	Marriage and family counseling and mental health therapy.	chris@foundationscounselingllc.com www.foundationscounselingllc.com	Chris Berger, Owner and Manager Dec. 31 2007
11	AFFORDABLE ROOFING 3621 Richmond Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-207-0000/970-207-0289	70%	\$5,272,044 \$3,095,066	12 2	Roofing services.	amyaffordableroofing@gmail.com www.affordableroofinginc.com	Troy Jennings, President Jim Simpson, VP Dec. 31 2005
12	ONE TRIBE CREATIVE 114 E. Oak St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-221-4254/970-224-1448	65%	\$828,800 \$502,400	7 7	Branding, marketing, public relations, websites, product packaging, presentations, trade-show booths.	info@onetribecreative.com www.onetribecreative.com	Paul Jensen, Creative director, Owner Dec. 31 1985
13	TANDEM SELECT 113 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-491-9655/970-491-9619	65%	\$5,236,310 \$3,181,944	53 40	Background screening and drug testing solutions.	kzwetzig@tandemselect.com www.tandemselect.com	Katie Zwetzig, COO Chris Baker, CEO Dec. 31 1995
14	PAYMENT SOLUTIONS 4065 St. Cloud Drive Loveland, CO 80538 970-685-3181/866-775-0075	62%	\$5,770,962 \$3,558,272	92 75	Credit card processing, ACH/check processing, credit card equipment, financial services, gift and loyalty cards, wireless terminals and Internet gateways.	info@paymentsolutionsdirect.com www.paymentsolutionsdirect.com	Kenneth Matthew Salazar, President and CEO Dec. 31 2004
15	AATA INTERNATIONAL INC. 300 E. Boardwalk Drive, No. 4A Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-223-1333/970-223-9115	59%	\$3,665,000 \$2,300,000	650 4	International environmental consultants for large natural resource developments, USA and worldwide. Water expertise.	info@aata.com www.aata.com	John G. Aronson, President Dec. 31 1989
16	OBBERMEYER HYDRO INC. 303 W. Larimer County Road 74 Wellington, CO 80549 970-568-9844/970-568-9845	56%	\$10,153,921 \$6,497,789	48 43	Large scale water-control gates for water storage, flood control, river diversion, environmental flow release, irrigation and hydro-power.	hydro@obermeyerhydro.com www.obermeyerhydro.com	Henry Obermeyer, President Rob D. Eckman, VP Dec. 31 1987
17	WERNSMAN ENGINEERING INC. 1011 42nd St. Evans, CO 80620 970-353-4463/970-353-9257	53%	\$290,000 \$190,000	1 2	Engineering services.	wei86@comcast.net N/A	Steve Wernsman, President Dec. 31 1986
18	RTN ROOFING SYSTEMS 5854 Lockheed Ave. Loveland, CO 80538 970-593-1100/970-593-1119	50%	\$3,006,000 \$2,008,000	13 12	Commercial and industrial roofing systems.	jeff.lozon@rtnroofing.com www.rtnroofing.com	Jeffrey S. Lozon, President Dec. 31 1996
19	ENVISION NETWORKS INC. 333 W. Drake Road, Suite 30 Fort Collins, CO 80526 970-377-0333/N/A	49%	\$1,128,000 \$755,000	11 8	IT consulting services and support.	mike@envnetworks.com http://envnetworks.com/	Michael O'Donnell, CEO Dec. 31 2003
20	WINDLION INC. DBA EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS 2711 W. 10th St. Greeley, CO 80634 970-353-8430/970-353-9485	47%	\$2,460,817 \$1,670,000	4 2	Temporary help, professional recruiting, HR audits and consulting.	kathy.egan@expresspros.com www.expresspros.com	Kathy Wallace Egan, Owner Dec. 31 1976
21	DAVINCI SIGN SYSTEMS INC. 4496 Bent Drive Windsor, CO 80550 970-203-9292/970-203-9293	45%	\$2,900,000 \$2,000,000	26 N/A	Award-winning architecture and electric signs. LED message centers. Signs for schools, hospitals, financial institutions, and retail. Custom metal fabrication, stone masonry. Electronic signage for interior and exterior applications. LCD displays.	info@davincisign.com www.davincisign.com	John "JJ" Shaw, President Dec. 31 2004
22	NUMERICA CORP. 4850 Hahns Peak Drive, Suite 200 Loveland, CO 80538 970-461-2000/970-461-2004	44%	\$9,189,570 \$6,367,014	49 47	Scientific research, advanced algorithm development and sub-system software solutions in the areas of: integrated air and missile defense, GIS, full-motion video tracking, layered sensing, chemical and biological detection, cyber security and space situational awareness.	info@numERICA.us www.numERICA.us	Jeff Poore, President and COO Sept. 30 1996
23	COE CONSTRUCTION INC. 2302 E. 13th St. Loveland, CO 80537 970-663-7636/970-669-4329	43%	\$8,100,000 \$5,650,000	13 13	Commercial general contractor.	admin@coeconstruction.com www.coeconstruction.com	Gregg Meisinger, President Dec. 31 1990
24	BAESSLER HOMES 3505 Holman Court Greeley, CO 80631 970-356-6251/970-352-5404	42%	\$9,200,000 \$6,500,000	8 8	Custom home builder.	jamie@baesslerhomes.com www.baesslerhomes.com	Jamie E. Baessler, Vice president Corie J. Baessler, VP of operations Kevin A. Archer, VP of estimating and purchasing July 31 1968
25	EXODUS MOVING & STORAGE INC. 1730 E. Prospect Road Suite 102 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-484-1488/970-484-4388	42%	\$3,170,000 \$2,240,000	63 56	Professional moving and storage; residential, commercial, local, national and international.	movers@exodusmoving.com www.exodusmoving.com	Ilan Levy, President Dec. 31 1996

Region surveyed is Larimer and Weld counties and the city of Brighton.
N/A-Not Available.
NR-Not Previously Ranked.
List does not include nonprofit organizations.
All listees realized revenues in excess of \$150,000 for years surveyed, 2009-2010.

Based upon responses to Business Report survey researched by Ross Manley
To be considered for future lists, e-mail research@ncbr.com

Mercury Fastest Growing Companies

Ranked by 1-year revenue growth



RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	1-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH	REVENUES 2010 REVENUES 2009	EMPLOYEES 2011 EMPLOYEES 2010	PRODUCTS/SERVICES	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE FISCAL YEAR END YEAR FOUNDED
26	METALWEST LLC 1229 S. Fulton Ave. Brighton, CO 80601 303-654-0300/303-654-0404	37%	\$243,000,000 \$177,000,000	120 120	Steel-service center, flat rolled-metal products, including cold-rolled, hot-rolled galvanized, galvanized, aluminum, stainless coils and sheets.	N/A www.metalwest.com	Doug Geisick, General manager Dec. 31 1986
27	EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS PERSONNEL SERVICES INC. 4206 S. College Ave., No. 107 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-407-9675/970-407-1214	36%	\$8,485,000 \$6,250,000	14 12	Staffing services.	rick@employmentsolutions.com www.employmentsolutions.com	Rick Wagner, Owner, President Dec. 31 1994
28	WELD COUNTY BI-PRODUCTS INC. 1138 N. 11th Ave. Greeley, CO 80631 970-352-1788/970-356-3890	34%	\$1,358,559 \$1,010,719	10 10	Frozen meat for pet food, hides and calf skins.	lulrich862@aol.com N/A	Lonna Ulrich, Office manager/ Partner Elmer Ulrich, President Dec. 31 1965
29	BRINKMAN CONSTRUCTION INC. 3003 E. Harmony Road, Suite 300 Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-267-0954/970-206-1011	33%	\$45,550,000 \$34,149,945	55 47	Integrated real estate services, construction, development, real estate brokerage, vacation properties, asset management.	pete.meyer@brinkmanpartners.com www.brinkmanpartners.com	Paul E. Brinkman Kevin Brinkman, Principals Dec. 31 2005
30	EXPONENTIAL ENGINEERING CO. 328 Airpark Drive Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-207-9648/970-207-9657	32%	\$4,100,000 \$3,110,000	25 24	Professional electric power engineering, including wind farm systems and interconnections and large scale designs.	support@exponentialengineering.com www.exponentialengineering.com	Thomas A. Ghidossi, President Dec. 31 1993
31	MIRAMONT FAMILY MEDICINE - COMPANY 4674 Snow Mesa Drive, Suite 140 Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-482-0213/970-482-9646	32%	\$3,856,755 \$2,927,731	53 52	Patient-centered medical home, with walk-in clinic, laser aesthetics, X-ray laboratory, extended hours, pharmacy.	info@miramont.us www.miramont.us	John Lumir Bender, Director Dec. 31 1940
32	FRONTIER METAL STAMPING 3764 Puritan Way Frederick, CO 80516 303-458-5129/303-458-1521	31%	\$5,000,000 \$3,827,000	23 18	Low and high volume metal stampings, assemblies, and complete product build. Tool and die design and build in house of progressive, single station and short run tooling. Engineering support of product design and development, including prototypes.	steve@frontiermetal.com www.frontiermetal.com	Jerry O'Donnell, President Dec. 31 1984
33	COMPUTER SUPERHEROES INC. 5325 Gary Drive Berthoud, CO 80513 720-205-5250/970-532-3189	30%	\$413,000 \$318,000	3 3	Quality, affordable managed IT services and support for individuals and small business.	info@computersuperheroes.com www.computersuperheroes.com	Jeff Lorenzen, President Dec. 31 2001
34	ALPINE CABINET CO. INC. 4125 Main St. Timnath, CO 80547 970-484-9030/970-224-3091	29%	\$3,360,000 \$2,600,000	40 35	Kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities for both residential and commercial use.	info@AlpineCabinetCO.com www.alpinecabinetco.com	James Chinn, President Dec. 31 1968
35	ABRAHAMSON ENGINEERING INC. 3101 Kintzley Court, Unit D Laporte, CO 80535 970-221-2569/970-221-2671	27%	\$595,000 \$467,000	5 5	Mechanical and consulting engineering, HVAC and plumbing design for schools, offices, universities, churches.	rogera@abrahamsoneng.com www.abrahamsoneng.com	Roger D. Abrahamson, President Dec. 31 1981
36	ADVANCED MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY 3920 Patton Ave. Loveland, CO 80538 970-612-0315/970-612-0320	27%	\$14,000,000 \$11,000,000	97 60	Empty container conveyance systems.	rfq@amtcolorado.com www.amtcolorado.com	Thomas M. Ingraham, President Rodney S. Talbot June 30 1996
37	RIVERSIDE TECHNOLOGY INC. 2950 E. Harmony Road, Suite 390 Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-484-7573/970-484-7593	27%	\$31,800,000 \$25,000,000	97 101	Consulting and integrated solutions for science, engineering and information technology supporting hydrology, climate change, and other environmental engineering disciplines worldwide.	brian.ashe@riverside.com www.riverside.com	Larry E. Brazil, President and CEO Dec. 31 1985
38	CLAY POT CREATIVE 323 W. Drake Road, Suite 120 Fort Collins, CO 80526 970-495-6855/970-495-6896	26%	\$454,890 \$360,000	9 7	Graphic design, Web development, marketing, and branding.	info@claypotcreative.com www.claypotcreative.com	Julia Leach Andrew Leach, Owners Dec. 31 2000
39	AMERICULE INC. 14266 Mead St. Longmont, CO 80504 970-535-9007/970-535-9014	26%	\$1,301,000 \$1,033,000	7 6	Custom molders of elastomeric products for use in wear or abrasion applications. Products produced: Cyclone liners, piping, spray nozzles, screen cleaning balls and non-sparking mallets.	americule@hotmail.com www.americule.com	James H. McLaughlin, President Dec. 31 1993
40	NELSON PIPELINE CONSTRUCTORS INC. 10741 Highway 52 Fort Lupton, CO 80621 303-857-1580/303-857-1581	25%	\$17,500,000 \$14,000,000	113 102	Water, sewer, storm services for housing.	npcinc@nelsonpipeline.com www.nelsonpipeline.com	Philip Scott, President Dec. 31 1977
41	HOME INSTEAD SENIOR CARE 3711 John F. Kennedy Parkway, Suite 317 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-494-0289/970-416-5365	25%	\$3,314,050 \$2,653,815	251 220	America's trusted non-medical source of companionship and home care for seniors.	mike.maguire@homeinstead.com homeinstead.com/northerncolorado	Mike P. Maguire Carol Maguire, Owners Dec. 31 2001
42	RLE TECHNOLOGIES 104 Racquette Drive Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-6510/970-484-6650	24%	\$4,918,752 \$3,971,578	18 14	Liquid leak detection systems, alarm monitoring/notification appliances and custom integration solutions.	sales@rletech.com www.rletech.com	Mike Orlich, President and CEO Dec. 31 1984
43	OFFICESCAPES 4950 S. College Ave., Unit A Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-223-5959/970-223-5858	22%	\$6,370,000 \$5,215,000	N/A 18	Office, health care and education furnishings, workplace consulting and planning, installation, moves and reconfigurations, cabling, flooring, audio visual.	sgrant@officescapes.com www.officescapes.com	Sharie Grant, President, Northern division Feb. 28 1969
44	C&T CUSTOM FABRICATION INC. 5186 Longs Peak Road Berthoud, CO 80513 970-532-2444/970-461-0284	22%	\$1,665,000 \$1,369,000	12 13	Metal fabrication, including precision welding, water-jet cutting, CNC machining, CNC punching and bending.	cam@ctcustomfab.com ctcustomfab.com	Cameron Matthie Terry Dettmann Dec. 31 1997
45	GRAND RENTAL STATION 3101 W. Eisenhower Blvd. Loveland, CO 80537 970-669-3866/970-669-4696	21%	\$994,000 \$819,000	14 12	Tool and equipment rental.	grandrental@friei.com www.coloradograndrental.com	Ray Hoekstra, Jr., President/ Co-owner Dec. 31 2002
46	MCCAULEY CONSTRUCTORS INC. 650 Innovation Circle Windsor, CO 80550 970-686-6300/970-686-6320	21%	\$15,446,241 \$12,733,212	14 16	Commercial and light industrial construction management; general contractor with projects ranging from interior finishes and remodels to large scale site development, building construction and industrial process facilities.	corporate@mccauleyconstructors.com www.mccauleyconstructors.com	Leon J. McCauley, President Dec. 31 2005
47	EHRlich DEALERSHIPS 2625 35th Ave. Greeley, CO 80634 970-353-5333/970-339-3930	21%	\$120,146,000 \$99,137,000	170 172	Auto dealerships.	sehrlich@ehrlichmotors.com www.ehrlichmotors.com	Scott Ehrlich, President Dec. 31 1946
48	J. P. MORAN DESIGN INC. 1112 Oakridge Drive, Suite 104 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-481-8489/970-207-9889	21%	\$264,475 \$219,138	1 1	Graphic design and consulting services for print, Web and trade shows.	info@jpmorandesign.com www.jpmorandesign.com	J. Patrick Moran, President Dec. 31 2000
49	DATASPLICE 414 E. Oak St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-0841/970-484-0965	20%	\$2,890,000 \$2,400,000	20 18	DataSplice provides mobile hand held computing solutions to allow remote users to interface with enterprise CMMS systems.	datasplice@datasplice.com www.datasplice.com	Scott Kunze, CEO Dec. 31 2001
50	THARP CABINET CORP. 1246 N. Denver Ave. Loveland, CO 80537 970-667-7144/970-635-2660	20%	\$7,750,000 \$6,450,000	67 58	Manufacturer of residential, commercial and specialty cabinets.	info@tharpcabinets.com www.tharpcabinets.com	Don Fraley, President Dec. 31 1971

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N/A-Not Available.
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Mercury Fastest Growing Companies

Ranked by 1-year revenue growth



RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	1-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH	REVENUES 2010 REVENUES 2009	EMPLOYEES 2011 EMPLOYEES 2010	PRODUCTS/SERVICES	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE FISCAL YEAR END YEAR FOUNDED
51	GOLDEN ALUMINUM INC. 1405 E. 14th St. Fort Lupton, CO 80621 303-654-8301/303-654-8356	19%	\$102,000,000 \$86,000,000	167 160	Bare and coated aluminum coils.	sales@goldenaluminum.com www.goldenaluminum.com	Leland Lorentzen, CEO Dec. 31 1983
52	HIGHCRAFT BUILDERS INC. 429 S. Howes St. Fort Collins, CO 80521 970-472-8100/970-266-8262	19%	\$3,200,000 \$2,700,000	13 12	Design-build company specializing in remodels, additions, basement finishes, fixed-price contracts, guaranteed construction.	info@highcraft.net www.highcraft.net	Dwight Sailer Bryan Soth, Owners Dec. 31 1999
53	THE MANTOOTH CO. 2715 Sage Creek Road Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-482-7644/970-204-9307	17%	\$605,010 \$515,042	9 10	Full-service marketing company and event planning.	connie@mantoothcompany.com www.mantoothcompany.com	Connie Hanrahan, Owner Dec. 31 1995
54	CO'S AUTO GROUP INC. 4150 Byrd Drive Loveland, CO 80538 970-292-5200/970-292-5719	17%	\$42,000,000 \$35,870,000	51 49	BMW and MINI Cooper automobiles, sales, parts, service, pre-owned cars and trucks.	sales@cosbmw.com www.cosbmw.com, MINIO Loveland.com	Christina Dawkins, Owner Dec. 31 1974
55	MAVERICK MOLD & MACHINE INC. 14377 Mead St. Longmont, CO 80504 970-535-4604/N/A	17%	\$500,000 \$428,000	4 4	Injection molds.	maverickmold@aol.com N/A	Brian Bradley, President Dec. 31 2001
56	THE NEENAN CO. 2620 E. Prospect Road, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-493-8747/970-493-5869	17%	\$139,000,000 \$119,000,000	210 203	Integrated design/build firm specializing in education, health care, government and commercial buildings.	info@neenan.com www.neenan.com	David G. Neenan, Founder and Chairman Randy Myers, President and CEO Dec. 31 1966
57	GALLEGOS SANITATION INC. 1941 Heath Parkway Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-5556/970-484-0662	16%	\$14,500,000 \$12,493,000	153 140	Recycling and waste diversion solutions at home, business, and construction projects, including zero waste special events and commercial food waste pickup. Seasonal yard waste and electronic recycling available too.	custservice@gallegossanitation.com www.gallegossanitation.com	Art Gallegos, Owner Jerry Gallegos, Owner, President Rudy Gallegos, Owner Dec. 31 1959
58	NEW BELGIUM BREWING 500 Linden St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-221-0524/970-221-0535	16%	\$145,000,000 \$125,000,000	380 245	Belgian-style craft beers, including eight year-round and four special-release brews.	nbb@newbelgium.com www.newbelgium.com	Kim Jordan, CEO Dec. 31 1991
59	ENERGY SOLUTIONS UNLIMITED LLC 1714 Topaz Drive, Suite 145 Loveland, CO 80537 970-685-4441/970-685-4450	16%	\$632,000 \$545,000	5 6	Energy efficient lighting and retrofits.	sales@esultd.com www.esultd.com	Michael Doran, Principal Paula Megenhardt, Account representative Dec. 31 1997
60	NARANJO CIVIL CONSTRUCTORS INC. 1863 Second Ave. Greeley, CO 80631 970-356-7909/970-356-0887	15%	\$7,000,000 \$6,100,000	50 50	Structural and flatwork concrete construction, drainageway reconstruction in urban environments, and stormwater/irrigation related utilities.	info@naranjocivil.com www.naranjocivil.com	Jerry Naranjo Herman Naranjo, Owners Dec. 31 1982
61	EWING LEAVITT INSURANCE AGENCY INC. 4025 St. Cloud Drive, Suite 100 Loveland, CO 80538 970-679-7333/866-456-4265	15%	\$2,292,273 \$2,000,000	14 16	Commercial and personal insurance sales and service, group health insurance, bonding.	steve-ewing@leavitt.com www.ewing-leavitt.com	Steve Ewing, President Bryan Brenning, Vice president April 30 1980
62	DRAHOTA 4700 Innovation Drive, Bldg. C Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-204-0100/970-204-0200	13%	\$34,000,000 \$30,000,000	36 36	Full-service construction manager/general contractor staffed with LEED Accredited Professionals.	info@drahota.com www.drahota.com	Terry L. Drahota, President Dec. 31 1973
63	ROBERTS EXCAVATION CORP. 1801 First St. Berthoud, CO 80513 970-532-1440/970-532-1442	13%	\$2,250,000 \$2,000,000	16 16	Commercial, industrial, residential earthwork, site grading and utility construction, environmental reclamation.	info@robertsexcaavation.com N/A	Gerald Roberts, General manager Dec. 31 1991
64	KING BUICK GMC 4175 Byrd Drive Loveland, CO 80538 970-667-8905/970-663-2445	11%	\$39,570,000 \$35,552,500	46 43	New and used cars, automotive repair and parts sales.	jerad.king@kinggm.com www.kinggm.com	Rex King, President Dec. 31 1998
65	SIEBERT & ASSOCIATES PC 8219 W. 20th St., Suite B Greeley, CO 80634 970-353-3750/970-353-3752	11%	\$417,000 \$375,000	N/A 4	Certified public accountants and consultants.	bill@siebertcpa.com N/A	William J. Siebert, President Dec. 31 1990
66	KRUGER & CLARY CPAS PC 515 S. Howes St. Fort Collins, CO 80521 970-482-6947/970-472-4061	11%	\$622,287 \$563,000	7 8	Tax preparation and planning, accounting services, QuickBooks consulting, business consulting, and payroll services.	info@krugercpas.com www.krugercpas.com	Melissa Clary, President Dale Kruger, Vice president Dec. 31 1993
67	VERUS BANK OF COMMERCE 3700 S. College Ave., Unit 102 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-204-1010/970-204-1590	11%	\$13,523,000 \$12,235,000	23 21	Banking and financial services.	gnalezny@verusboc.com www.verusboc.com	Gerard Nalezny, CEO Mark Kross, President Dec. 31 2005
68	G & M IMPLEMENT INC. 1717 Second Ave. Greeley, CO 80631 970-378-1202/970-378-1396	10%	\$9,200,000 \$8,400,000	19 19	Sales and repair of farm equipment.	gmimplement@aol.com www.gmimplement.com	Glenn Pfeif, Owner Dec. 31 2002
69	GOOD DAY PHARMACY - COMPANY WIDE 3780 E. 15th St. Loveland, CO 80538 970-461-1975/970-461-4042	9%	\$24,000,000 \$22,000,000	100 96	Full-service community retail pharmacies & specialty pharmacy servicing assisted living & long term care industries; medical equipment & medical supply retail locations; specialty prescription compounding pharmacies & more.	goodday@gooddaypharmacy.com www.gooddaypharmacy.com	Marla Worley, R.Ph., Pharmacy manager Vicki Einhellig, R.Ph., President, COO Dec. 31 1985
70	HIGH PLAINS MECHANICAL SERVICE INC. 2020 Airway Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-221-5645/970-221-5645	9%	\$3,970,800 \$3,650,000	22 20	HVAC service, maintenance and installation.	info@hpmsservice.com www.hpmsservice.com	Paul Finger Joyce Finger, Owners Dec. 31 1983
71	TAIT & ASSOCIATES INC. 6163 E. County Road 16 Loveland, CO 80537 970-613-1447/970-613-1897	9%	\$525,000 \$483,000	7 7	Land surveying, civil and environmental engineering. Fuel system design, installation, maintenance, and testing.	tletzring@tait.com www.tait.com	Tracy J. Letzring, PE, LEED AP, CDP, VP Tim Wind, Regional manager Sept. 30 1964
72	WELD COUNTY GARAGE 2699 47th Ave. Greeley, CO 80634 970-352-1313/970-356-8191	8%	\$59,083,516 \$54,567,766	123 122	Buick, GMC vehicle dealership.	wyoder@weldcountyggarage.com www.weldcountyggarage.com	Warren Yoder, General manager Dec. 31 1908
73	ANDERSON CONSULTING ENGINEERS INC. 375 E. Horsetooth Road, Bldg. 5 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-226-0120/970-226-0121	8%	\$3,836,824 \$3,556,460	22 23	Water resources, civil, environmental and river restoration.	baanderson@acewater.com www.acewater.com	Bradley A. Anderson, President Gregory J. Koch, Vice president Dec. 31 1998
74	SQUAREI TECHNOLOGIES 1315 Oakridge Drive, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-377-0077/970-377-8488	8%	\$762,000 \$708,000	8 8	Content management systems, project management solutions, business process automation and database driven applications.	info@squarei.com www.squarei.com	Kent Bejcek, President Dec. 31 1996
75	OGLESBY DESIGN LLC 123 N. College Ave., No. 390 Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-416-8829/970-416-8876	7%	\$526,000 \$490,000	8 4	Commercial interior design with an emphasis on hospitality and corporate.	coachko@msn.com www.oglesby-design.com	Dawn Oglesby, Owner, President Dec. 31 2005

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Mercury Fastest Growing Companies

Ranked by 1-year revenue growth



RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	1-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH	REVENUES 2010 REVENUES 2009	EMPLOYEES 2011 EMPLOYEES 2010	PRODUCTS/SERVICES	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE FISCAL YEAR END YEAR FOUNDED
76	COLORADO WATERJET CO. 5186 Longs Peak Road, Unit F Berthoud, CO 80513 970-532-5404/970-532-5405	7%	\$539,000 \$504,000	4 4	Machine job shop: abrasive water jet shape-cutting services.	sales@coloradowaterjet.com www.coloradowaterjet.com	Dan Nibbelink, President Dec. 31 1997
77	FRONTIER PRINT CENTER 1400 Webster Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-2950/970-484-2951	7%	\$817,330 \$765,840	10 11	Digital/offset printing, embroidery and ad-specialties.	info@frontierprintcenter.com www.frontierprintcenter.com	Steve Beddoe, Owner Douglas Iszler, CEO Dec. 31 1982
78	M & E PAINTING 540 W. 66th St., B1 Loveland, CO 80538 970-207-1005, Ext. 800/970-613-0772	7%	\$2,135,000 \$2,001,000	25 30	Residential and commercial painting services.	matt@mandepainting.com www.mandepainting.com	Matt Shoup, President Dec. 31 2005
79	UNITED POWER INC. 500 Cooperative Way Brighton, CO 80603 303-659-0551/303-659-2172	6%	\$134,783,000 \$126,713,000	161 160	Rural electric cooperative.	hstorz@unitedpower.com www.unitedpower.com	Ronald D. Asche, CEO Dec. 31 1938
80	LAWN DOCTOR P.O. Box 1784 Fort Collins, CO 80522 970-221-0441/970-221-0805	6%	\$1,195,000 \$1,125,000	20 19	Lawn fertilization, weed, insect and disease control. Tree spraying, deep root feeding and pruning, pest control, sprinkler repair.	group193@lawndoctor.com www.lawndoctor.com	Michael Verde, President Dec. 31 1983
81	FORNEY INDUSTRIES INC. 1830 Laporte Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80521 800-482-7271/970-498-9505	6%	\$40,150,000 \$37,800,000	235 225	Metal working product distributor.	sales@forneyind.com www.forneyind.com	Steve Anderson, President and CEO Dec. 31 1932
82	A-TRAIN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS INC. 215 W. Oak St., Suite 800A Fort Collins, CO 80521 970-419-3218/970-482-3442	6%	\$650,000 \$612,000	6 6	Branding, research, strategic planning, public relations, print materials, websites, event planning and non-profit marketing.	info@atrainmarketing.com www.atrainmarketing.com	Gretchen Gaede, President and CEO Dec. 31 1998
83	WALKER MANUFACTURING CO. 5925 E. Harmony Road Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-221-5614/970-221-5619	6%	\$37,572,000 \$35,427,000	148 125	Commercial-grade riding and walk-behind lawnmowers and attachments.	bobw@walkermowers.com www.walkermowers.com	Bob W. Walker, President Sept. 30 1959
84	INTEGWARE INC. 1612 Specht Point Drive, Suite 101 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-282-0400/970-282-0500	6%	\$15,260,146 \$14,430,756	120 134	PLM implementation services and ENOVIA life science accelerators.	chris.kay@integware.com www.integware.com	Chris Kay, President and CEO Dec. 31 1992
85	NEW HORIZONS TRAVEL AGENCY INC. 300 E. Boardwalk Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-223-7400/970-225-0538	6%	\$16,228,000 \$15,348,000	21 20	Full-service travel agency. Also specializing in athletic group travel.	dalec@travelnewhorizons.com www.travelnewhorizons.com	Dale D. Clarken, President Dec. 31 1980
86	HUSTON GRAPHICS & PRINTING 700 Automation Drive, No. B Windsor, CO 80550 970-686-0174/970-686-0170	6%	\$370,000 \$350,000	4 4	Screen printing, embroidery, laser engraving, promotional products and signage.	sales@hustongraphics.com www.hustongraphics.com	Luke Burton Dec. 31 1997
87	GROFF AG P.O. Box 990 Wellington, CO 80549 877-568-9816/970-568-3684	5%	\$2,320,000 \$2,200,000	7 7	Minimum-till and no-till planter attachments.	winickfarms@cowisp.net www.groffag.com	Allan E. Winick, President Dec. 31 1992
88	AGTOWN TECHNOLOGIES 800 Eighth Ave., Suite 321 Greeley, CO 80631 970-353-6227/970-313-4648	5%	\$408,000 \$389,000	5 5	Fully managed business partner, providing services in software and website development, e-commerce, Internet and traditional marketing for the agriculture industry.	contact@agtown.com www.agtown.com	Clair Orr, Founder Matthew Furister, CEO Dec. 31 1999
89	POUDRE VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION INC. 7649 REA Parkway Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-226-1234/970-226-2123	5%	\$95,000,000 \$90,582,090	90 91	Electric utility.	pvrea@pvrea.com www.pvrea.com	Robert "Brad" Gaskill, CEO Dec. 31 1939
90	STEWART ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS LLC 3801 Automation Way, Suite 200 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-226-5500/970-226-4946	5%	\$2,414,946 \$2,303,315	30 30	Process engineering, product commercialization, environmental services and laboratory services.	info@stewartenv.com www.stewartenv.com	David R. Stewart, President June 30 1985
91	ALLEN SERVICE, PLUMBING, HEATING AND AIR INC. 101 S. Link Lane Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-4841/970-484-4448	4%	\$8,500,000 \$8,200,000	36 72	Residential service, repair and replacement for plumbing, solar and HVAC systems.	info@allenservice.com www.allenservice.com	Jeff and Mike Allen, CEO and President Dec. 31 1962
92	CONNECTING POINT 2401 17th St. Greeley, CO 80634 970-356-7224/970-356-7283	3%	\$6,397,619 \$6,200,000	28 26	Network integration, remote managed services, hosting and co-location, network security, unified communications (VoIP), technical outsourcing, product sales.	esales@cpgreeley.com www.cpgreeley.com	Ted Warner, President Sept. 30 1985
93	ALPINE GARDENS 7029 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-226-2296/970-506-2730	3%	\$3,500,000 \$3,400,000	50 50	Commercial and residential landscape design, installation and maintenance.	info@alpinelandscaping.com www.alpinelandscaping.com	Jack Fetig, Chris Fetig, Owners Dec. 31 1978
94	MAGNUM PLASTICS INC. 425 Bonnell Ave. Erie, CO 80516 303-828-3156/303-828-3166	3%	\$3,700,000 \$3,600,000	52 32	Precision molds and intricate molded components for the medical industry processed in a 100,000-class clean room.	sales@magnum-plastics.com www.magnum-plastics.com	James Miller, President Dec. 31 1993
95	VISTA SOLUTIONS CORP. 2619 Midpoint Drive, Suite F Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-212-2940/970-212-2950	3%	\$6,368,738 \$6,199,166	12 12	Full-service IT partner, offering business-class technology, unique and customized hardware, software, and services.	info@vistasolutions.net www.vistasolutions.net	Linda Vomaske, Owner Dec. 31 1992
96	VISION GRAPHICS INC. 5610 Boeing Drive Loveland, CO 80538 970-679-9000/970-461-8073	2%	\$14,050,000 \$13,750,000	83 80	Full-service marketing communications, including printing, digital variable data printing, binding, direct-mail advertising, letter shop, product/material order-fulfillment, mailing list acquisition, database management and website design, and grand format graphics.	webinfo@visiongraphics-inc.com www.visiongraphics-inc.com	Mark Allen Steputis, President and CEO Dec. 31 1952
97	MARKLEY MOTORS INC. 3401 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80525 800-226-2213/970-282-6825	2%	\$75,495,653 \$73,913,954	160 156	Honda, Pontiac, Buick, GMC vehicles.	rbelisle@markleymotors.com www.markleymotors.com	Douglas E. Markley, President Dec. 31 1936
98	PEDERSEN TOYOTA-SCION-VOLVO 4455 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-223-3100/970-223-3651	1%	\$80,000,000 \$79,000,000	130 N/A	Automotive sales, service, parts and collision repair.	sales@pedersentoyota.com www.pedersentoyota.com	Gerry Pedersen, Owner Mark Pedersen, General manager Dec. 31 1972
99	COLORADO CUSTOMWARE INC. 1109 Oak Park Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-212-4001/970-223-4204	1%	\$10,980,635 \$10,844,579	107 106	Assessment, tax collection and data visualization software for state and local government.	info@cci.ws www.coloradocustomware.com	Lori Burge, President and CEO Dec. 31 1989
100	BURROWS ENTERPRISES INC. 2024 E. Eighth St. Greeley, CO 80631 970-353-3769/970-353-0839	1%	\$3,740,815 \$3,700,000	19 17	Roto-grind tub grinder, Roto-grind grain grinders, custom fabrication and machining, livestock feeding equipment.	royal@rotogrind.com www.rotogrind.com	Royal Burrows, President Dec. 31 1977

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Colorado, these companies know how to take care of business.



Scrap metal pulls CI&M through recession

MERCURY

100

No. 6 Revenue > 108% growth

By Luanne Kadlub
news@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — It's no secret that there's money to be made in scrap metal. But is it enough to pull a business through the Great Recession?

For Kent Garvin, owner of Colorado Iron & Metal in Fort Collins, the answer is a resounding yes.

"Our overall sales doubled in 2010," he said. "We are back to where we were in 2008."

In dollars, that would be a jump to \$8.9 million dollars in gross revenue in 2010, up from \$4.3 million in 2009. That's enough change to qualify him for the No. 6 spot on the *Northern Colorado Business Report's* 2011 Mercury 100.

Garvin, originally from Minnesota where he owned a successful towing and automotive repair business, relocated to Fort Collins in the early 1990s because, quite simply, he fell in love with the community during multiple vacations.

He spent two and a half years shopping for a new business when one within his budget range became available. That business was Nelson Metals.

"I discovered fairly quickly that most people buy businesses they know something about," Garvin said, although he knew nothing about the metals business.

"It wasn't for the meek of heart. I paid cash for the business and took it over sight unseen, and I had to teach myself the steel business very fast."

He renamed the business Colorado Iron & Metal.

"To our great fortune, the business was always profitable from the get-go," Garvin said. "But we didn't start to feel our stride until it took off in early 2001 to 2005."

The company was doing \$250,000 in sales when he took it over in 1996 and in 2008 the company was grossing \$10 million when the economy took a tumble.

Although the construction sector — one of the largest customers for fabrication services provided by Colorado Iron & Metal — is quiet as a result of the recession, it hasn't stopped the company from growing.

"Sales in 2010 were up 34 percent from '09," Garvin said. "Which means '09 was a complete disaster."

Everything metal

The business makes everything from railings to staircases to large steel metal assemblies. "We have a wide range of capabilities, including precision cutting with waterjets and plasma burn tables."

But thank goodness for scrap metal — everything from rusty buckets to

forklifts — that the public brings to recycle.

"The metal has always been out there, accumulating for generations, but until the price got to a certain place (currently an average of \$180 per ton), the time and effort to scour ditches, old farms

and even Craigslist wasn't worth the effort," Garvin said of the metal scrappers, many of whom make a good living doing so. "The biggest surprise is how one man's junk is another man's treasure. We don't recycle all the metals we get. Some are resold and reused. Some things get turned over to others who can use it — miscellaneous iron, furniture, steel desks and dividers, even a forklift that we've repaired and resold.

"We're definitely part of the green movement. We've diverted 18,000 tons of scrap metal out of the solid waste stream in Fort Collins," he added.

Garvin sells the metal to dealers in



Courtesy Colorado Iron & Metal Inc.

STRONG AS IRON — Kent Garvin understands the expression 'one man's trash is another's treasure' quite well. Garvin bought Colorado Iron & Metal in the early '90s and is now looking to expand despite the most recent recession.

Denver who run it through shredders.

Other changes in the business since 1995? In the beginning it was just Garvin and one employee. Today he employs 32 people in both the scrap metal and fabrication divisions, which he hopes to consolidate at the 6.5-acre Buckingham location later this year. He also plans to expand the metal scrap end of the business into additional communities, potentially Sterling, Cheyenne and Laramie. "We're always eyeing expansion."

And why not? After all, said Garvin, "I love what I do."

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Relationships keep Jet Marketing jetting along

By Molly Armbrister
marbrister@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Jet Marketing is a young company with only two full-time employees, but owner Jackie O'Hara has the passion and creativity to keep her marketing firm going strong despite economic conditions that don't always favor small businesses.

The nearly 100 percent growth of the company — from \$200,000 in 2009 to \$396,000 in 2010 — places it at No. 7 on the *Northern Colorado Business Report's* Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in the region for 2011.

O'Hara began her business in 2009 after holding various positions in marketing and communications following

recession that so many businesses in Northern Colorado have dealt with in the last few years.

O'Hara attributes this partially to the fact that she does most of her work remotely, allowing her to save on overhead costs, as well as the fact that there is only one other person on the payroll.

"I suppose my timing for starting a business wasn't great, but it has seemed to work out in spite of that," she said.

In addition to being dedicated to her company, O'Hara does work in her community. She serves as the Executive Chairperson of the Fort Collins Convention and Visitors' Bureau Board of Directors and does volunteer work for local nonprofits Respite Care and Hospice of Northern Colorado.



Jet Marketing

JET SET — Owner Jackie O'Hara, standing, and designer Erin Rogers are the entire staff of Jet Marketing, which uses 21st-century technology to provide services to clients across the country as well as companies in Northern Colorado.

MERCURY

100 — No. 7 Revenue > 98% growth

her 1977 graduation from Colorado State University. With designer Erin Rogers, O'Hara has grown her business into one that caters to not only clients in Northern Colorado, but across the nation as well.

Technology allows Jet Marketing to provide service to clients in other states, working remotely using Skype and conference calls. O'Hara says her business is ideal for clients that are large enough to need marketing but not large enough to have their own full-time marketing expert.

For these clients, which include local companies like Poudre School District and Tandem Select, O'Hara provides branding and marketing plans and helps the businesses implement them.

With such a small staff and Rogers working remotely in Chicago, O'Hara serves many roles in the business, from owner to bookkeeper to custodian.

"I have to be an expert at everything," O'Hara said.

When necessary, O'Hara outsources work that she or Rogers cannot complete, but said that she will stick with the two-employee model for the time being.

"The biggest challenge with growth is knowing how to grow," O'Hara said. She spoke about knowing when the line is crossed between having enough employees to handle the workload and needing to hire more.

Playing jack-of-all-trades for her business is a lot of work, but O'Hara remains committed to what she believes is her destiny.

"I was meant to be an entrepreneur," she said. "I have a set of values that I am in control of."

Relationships key

O'Hara established many relationships during her tenure at other marketing firms, and those relationships have served her well since starting her own business, which, of course, was no easy task.

"It was difficult, but my husband is an entrepreneur, so I knew what I was getting myself into," she said.

This attitude has worked well for O'Hara, who says that her business has not felt the effects of the economic

The set of values that O'Hara espouses and applies to her business practices is centered on trust.

"Business relationships, at the very core, are about trust," O'Hara said. Long-term relationships and an understanding of a client's products and culture are essential to keeping her business running, she said.

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Ghent has roots in the past, eye on the future

By Molly Armbrister
marmbrister@ncbr.com

GREELEY — Ghent Motor Co. has seen its share of ups and downs since it opened its doors in 1942 as a Ford dealership in Fort Collins. Two generations later, Bob Ghent is carrying on what his grandfather started, selling Chevrolets and Cadillacs at the corner of 35th Avenue and U.S. Highway 34 in Greeley.

Bob Ghent took over the dealership from his father in 1988, building a new facility in 1991 and adding the Cadillac brand to the lineup in 2001. In April, Ghent Motors was the highest volume Cadillac dealership in Northern

Koponen, the 200 used cars on location make it easier for customers to shop for the perfect vehicle, saving them time and money.

Ghent also attributes his business's success to the "world-class" technicians he employs, who take care of each and every car that comes in for service as if it was his or her own.

Ghent and his company also play a big part in the community of Greeley, donating time and money to various causes.

Among the organizations with which Ghent is involved are the United Way of Weld County and Toys for Tots. Bob Ghent serves on the leadership council of Upstate

"The Internet changed the car business," Koponen said.

According to Ghent, the store employs a team of Internet salespeople who are kept very busy by the high volume of online sales.

"Our Internet sales have doubled in the last year," Ghent said.

Ghent Motors also makes use of the Internet to reach out to vehicle owners and past customers through the blog on the website. The blog gives maintenance and driving safety reminders, written by staff.

Ghent also said that the company will be undergoing a facility upgrade in the next two years to come into compliance with General Motors' image standards, showing that the company has no intention of slowing down any time soon.

"We're doing business a different way," Koponen said. "It's all about customer service."

He added that the employees make a difference by operating as a team rather than as different departments.

Despite all the changes, there are things at Ghent Motors that have stood the test of time. Perhaps the most important of these is that the business is still under the watchful eye of a



Courtesy Ghent Motor Co.

NEXT GHENT-ERATION — Bob Ghent is at the helm of his family's car dealership, Ghent Motor Co. in Greeley, embracing the future of Internet sales while remaining true to the values set by his father and grandfather.

member of its founding family. "Bob Ghent is here each and every day," Koponen said.

MERCURY

100

No. 8 Revenue > 86% growth

Colorado, according to Ghent.

This growth is a result of hiring the right people, working hard, and doing the right thing, he said. The 86 percent growth in revenues from 2009 to 2010 — from \$15.5 million to \$28.9 million — has placed the dealership in the eighth spot on this year's *Northern Colorado Business Report* Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in the region.

Ghent Motors has also increased its selection over the last year and a half, and according to used car manager Kai

Colorado Economic Development and is the chairperson for the American Cancer Society Cattle Baron's Ball, an annual event that raises thousands of dollars for the American Cancer Society.

Ghent also participates in highway cleanup in Greeley and food and coat drives.

Embracing the future

Despite its roots in history, Ghent is embracing the future, making use of the Internet as a powerful tool for selling cars.

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Northern Colorado **BUSINESS REPORT**



S.A. Technologies sees growth in nuclear waste

MERCURY

100

No. 9 Revenue > 74% growth

By Noah Guillaume
nguillaume@ncbr.com

LOVELAND — Long gone are the days when workers drew straws to determine who would go into a dangerous area to get a job done. Providing solutions for keeping workers out of places like nuclear waste sites and 1,600-degree furnaces is Loveland-based S.A. Technologies.

Founded in 1992 as S.A. Robotics, the company changed its name to reflect the fact that it handles both engineering and construction in-house. “Usually, companies are either one or the other — we’re both,” said Marc Rood, vice president of Business Development and Marketing.

The firm specializes in concept-to-creation of remote and robotics arms and manipulators, specialty tooling, hazardous and radioactive containment structures, gloveboxes, and waste handling and packaging systems. However, Rood said, nuclear-related projects is the firm’s recognized niche.

Further separating S.A. Technologies from everyone else in the field is its use of composite materials, like carbon fiber, which allows the design of smaller,

lighter robotic arms and manipulators that can fit into constrained spaces.

According to Rood, the firm took its lumps along with everyone else when the economy went south, but he considers 2010 a good year for the company.

“Overall, we call it a recovery year,” Rood said.

With 74 percent revenue growth from 2009 to 2010 — from \$16.6 million to \$28.8 million — S.A. not only recovered but placed ninth on this year’s Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in the region, as calculated by the *Northern Colorado Business Report*. Rood attributes the firm’s 2010 growth partly to federal government stimulus programs.

“Government spending is loosely tied to the success of the company,” he said. “The stimulus money moved projects up.”

International interest

However, the company’s recovery from the economic downturn is not from domestic projects only. S.A. Technologies is looking to continue the ride and break into the Chinese market when representatives visit in June. The possible relationship represents

“huge growth potential (for the company),” Rood said.

The firm also is currently deploying a manipulator arm in the United Kingdom to clean tanks containing liquid waste from nuclear processing dating back to the Cold War. Rood estimates the arm will begin operations in the next two or three months.

“It’s challenging and difficult work,” Rood said. “We feel we’re on the edge of making it work.”

If things go well, Rood believes S.A. Technologies could be the premier supplier of tank-cleaning manipulators in the world. For perspective, one nuclear facility in Hanover, England, alone has 144 waste tanks.

It’s a dirty job that, thanks to S.A. Technologies, no human has to do.



Courtesy S.A. Technologies

LONG REACH — A manipulator arm to clean liquid waste from nuclear processing is currently being deployed in the United Kingdom. Arm developer S.A. Technologies believes it could be the premier supplier for these arms for the world.

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Foundations helps people cope with recession stress

By Michelle Venus
news@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Eleven years ago, Chris Berger was a film industry marketing executive with an office at Universal Studios in Los Angeles. Then he lost his mother to cancer, throwing Berger into a deep depression. Within three months he had started seeing a counselor to help him navigate through his tragedy.

The experience turned his life around, and Berger returned to grad school to pursue a degree in psychology. It was the start of a new career, and ultimately, the start of Foundations Counseling LLC, a mental health and

Foundations grew its revenues 73 percent from 2009 to 2010 – from \$325,600 to \$563,000 — to rise to the No. 10 position on this year’s Northern Colorado Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in the region.

Berger also uses a team of outside advisers including his accountant, attorney, two different business consultants and specialized marketing experts.

“We used one business consultant with the initial plan to start the practice and then six months or so into the business, we worked with another consultant to help us develop our growth strategy,” Berger said.

The Great Recession has created a



Courtesy Foundations Counseling LLC

and the staff via the company website. The company works with an agency out of Denver on search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising, according to Berger, as well as with local marketing firms on a per-project basis.

Looking forward, Berger sees strong growth potential. His strategy is to double the size of his practice every year for the next six to seven years, aiming to have 12 counselors on staff by the end of this year, up from the current eight. Double that in 2012, and you’re looking at a practice with 24 therapists. “We’ll expand all three locations and add a possible second office in Fort Collins,” Berger predicted.

In order to achieve that growth, Berger has been forming strategic alliances with what he has dubbed “The Big Four” — churches, schools, physicians and attorneys.

“We make sure that we’re known as a viable resource so that when someone who is struggling reaches out to their lawyer, or minister, their doctor or their children’s school that they can be pointed in the right direction and they can get the help they need. I also spend a lot of time networking and getting out into the community,” Berger said. “We’re a sponsor of a Rotary event called ‘Heroes Among Us,’ and do pro-bono work at churches, conducting seminars such as divorce recovery workshops. We don’t charge for these events — reaching out to people in our community who are trying to find their way is just the right thing to do.”

MERCURY

100 — No. 10 Revenue > 73% growth

family counseling practice with offices in Fort Collins, Loveland and Windsor.

Foundations Counseling opened its doors on Aug. 15, 2007, after 18 months of careful business planning.

“We set out to assemble an excellent team; each member is intelligent and has outstanding training, an innate ability to relate to people and a strong work ethic,” Berger said. “We created a culture of excellence and integrity.”

The Foundations team is demanding — of themselves and each other — and continuously work to improve their skills. Their work has paid off.

highly stressful environment for many people, manifesting in anxiety and depression. “We’ve seen our patients struggling and turning to a variety of unhealthy coping skills ranging from addictions to problems with relationships,” Berger said. “We’ve had great successes with helping them to develop healthier ways to manage their stress, as long as they spend the time it takes to turn themselves around.”

Building during the Great Recession

Planning and building a business during the recession has required some

FOUNDATION FOR HELP — Chris Berger, a former film industry marketing exec, returned to grad school for a degree in psychology and started Foundation Counseling LLC after he lost his mother to cancer.

turnaround, too.

“All this business has known is a struggling economy,” Berger said. “We knew we had something valuable to offer potential patients, so the overall business structure stayed the same. We put a strong emphasis on marketing, which we consider an investment, not an expense.”

A significant percentage of clients find Foundations Counseling on the Internet and get to know the practice

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Affordable Roofing grows back to its roots

By Michelle Venus
news@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Troy Jennings, president of Affordable Roofing, started his career as an insurance adjuster.

“Insurance companies would subcontract with me and send me out to sites all over the country to investigate claims after catastrophes occurred,” he explained. “I was the guy on the ladder checking out hail damage and assessing siding.”

Jennings and his wife, Amy, started their own roofing installation and repair company in 2003, changing the name to Affordable Roofing in 2005.

“The two of us did everything,” he said. “She handled all the administrative work and I ran the crews, and at the same time focused on sales and the follow up on jobs. It was a lot.”

There wasn’t a lot of money earmarked for advertising and marketing the startup. “We didn’t do a ton of roofing, but we did see steady growth,” Jennings said.

In 2008, the Jennings sold half of the business to colleague and fellow insurance adjuster Jim Simpson and his wife Gretchen.

When the economy soured, new construction starts fell to record low numbers, and people put off roofing repairs and replacements until it was an absolute necessity. To keep the doors open, Jennings went back to his adjuster roots and started engaging with insurance agents, offering inspections for pre-policy assessments. At present, approximately 60 percent of Affordable Roofing’s business comes from the insurance industry as well as property managers and real estate agents for appraisals and inspections.

“It’s been a good move for us (to pursue the insurance and real estate agents) and represents a big piece of our business,” Jennings said.

It also allowed the company to grow its revenues by 70 percent between 2009 and 2010 – from \$3 million to \$5.2 million — and earn the No. 11 spot on the

Northern Colorado Business Report’s Mercury 100 list of fastest growing companies in the region.

Affordable Roofing uses Xactimate, the same estimating software the insurance industry uses. It ensures that their estimates are in line with what clients get from their insurers. “Our backgrounds in adjusting give us the ability to thoroughly understand processes and to speak the language,” Jennings said.

While Jennings and Simpson have seen the inspection side of their business grow, they haven’t forgotten about the installation and repair side.



Courtesy Affordable Roofing

UNDER ONE ROOF – Affordable Roofing owners Troy and Amy Jennings, right, and Jim and Gretchen Simpson, expanded the business to include appraisal and inspections after the economy turned and new construction starts fell to record lows.

the Windsor tornado in May 2008.

“We just unloaded it and let people take what they needed to secure their homes,” Jennings said.

Affordable Roofing has established a partnership with ReSource, a nonprofit in north Fort Collins that sells reusable building supplies to the public. Every

month, the company donates all unused materials to the store, keeping them out of landfills.

“It works out well for us and for ReSource and their customers,” Jennings said. “This is something we can do to regularly support our community, on a lot of different levels. So we do.”

MERCURY

100

No. 11 Revenue > 70% growth

Since 2008, they have supplemented word-of-mouth exposure with Yellow Page ads as well as strategic mailers to neighborhoods that may have sustained storm damage.

“A lot of our clients do their research and check us out on our website first,” he said. “They pay a lot of attention to the testimonials, case studies and what we have to say about trends in the roofing industry. They will also call the Better Business Bureau to make sure we can be trusted to do an excellent job for them.”

Paying it forward is important to both Jennings and Simpson. After the Haiti earthquake in 2010, they donated a flat dollar amount of every roofing job to the Red Cross. Closer to home, Affordable Roofing’s sister company, Fort Collins Restoration, delivered a semi-truckload of plywood to victims of



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In new location, sky's the limit for Payment Solutions



Courtesy Payment Solutions

A PLETHORA OF SOLUTIONS – Ken Salazar, president of Payment Solutions, didn't see the need to develop proprietary software to process credit and debit card transactions for customers. Instead, the company helps clients find the best-fit product suites whether they have a bricks-and-mortar location or Internet-based.

client base from 2,500 to over 5,000."

And with 62 percent revenue growth from 2009 to 2010 — from \$3.5 million to \$5.7 million — the company earned the No. 14 spot on the *Northern Colorado Business Report's* Mercury 100 list of the fastest growing companies in the region for 2011.

"Our focus is providing turn-key solutions for merchants," Salazar said. "We partner with companies that develop technologies and products that we use to find the best-fit product suites for our clients. Technology is changing virtually every day, and there are so many different platforms, it doesn't make sense for us to try and develop proprietary software. This way, we have the ability to choose which products and services will suit our individual merchant's needs."

Average Mom-and-Pop client

Approximately 80 percent of Payment Solutions clients are retail, 15 percent online and 5 percent "other." The average merchant is a Mom-and-Pop shop.

"No doubt, the independent retailers are our bread and butter, but we work with franchise operations and other large organizations, too," Salazar said.

In 2010, nearly \$1 billion was processed through the company for clients. Payment Solutions has 16 sales regions from coast to coast, making the company a national industry player.

In January 2010, Payment Solutions moved from a 2,600-square-foot building in Greeley to a new 15,000-square-foot facility in Centerra. According to Salazar, building made more sense than buying an existing structure. He was able to get exactly what his company needed more inexpensively than what was available on the commercial sales market at the time.

"It's put us in a good place for long-term future plans," he said.

Salazar now has a talent pool of almost 220,000 potential employees within a 10-mile radius, compared to 85,000 within 10 miles of Greeley. The Loveland location is attractive to people as far south as Longmont, where they've

By Michelle Venus
news@ncbr.com

LOVELAND — For Ken Salazar, president of Payment Solutions in Loveland (no relation to the Secretary of the Interior), the greatest competition his company faces isn't the comparable pricing or services of other electronic payment processing agencies; it's the empty promises they make.

"That lack of follow-through, the non-delivery is what has put all compa-

MERCURY

100

No. 14 Revenue > 62% growth

nies like mine in a bad light. It's one of the biggest roadblocks we have to overcome with new clients," he said.

The Great Recession hasn't been as much of a roadblock for the company that processes credit and debit card transactions for bricks-and-mortar retailers as well as providing e-commerce solutions for Internet-based customers.

"We've looked at the recession as an opportunity, not an obstacle. It has helped us help our merchant clients to become more efficient with electronic payments, which has reduced their fees and made a positive impact on their bottom lines," Salazar explained. "Overall, our processing volume was down approximately 12 percent, but we offset those losses through acquisition of new clients. Last year we grew our

gotten a tremendous response from potential new hires. Between 2009 and 2010, the company grew from 26 employees to 84. The new facility has room for 60 more projected team members this year. Salazar credits his "phenomenal leadership team" with Payment Solutions' rapid growth. The team focuses on being at the forefront of cutting-edge technology, with mobile technology squarely in their sights.

The future of mobile technology has Salazar very excited for his company's potential growth.

"It's a game changer," he said. "Mobile payment processing is expected to exceed Internet transactions by about three times. It's a huge market, and we're not even at the starting line yet. This next year is going to be very big for us. The sky is the limit."

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For more information call Lindsay Gilliland at NCBR 970-232-3133

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Nominee company's name

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Company CEO's or owner's name

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Northern Colorado
**BUSINESS
REPORT**



2011 CFO of the Year Nomination

Nomination deadline: August 1, 2011

The Northern Colorado CFO Awards are presented to recognize chief financial officers in the Northern Colorado region whose efforts successfully guide a company's financial future.

Candidates for the Northern Colorado CFO Awards will meet the following three criteria.

1. Candidates for the Northern Colorado CFO Awards are the individuals responsible for the financial management of their companies. They may or may not carry the title of chief financial officer, but they carry the responsibilities of that office.
2. Candidates must work in Northern Colorado (Larimer and Weld counties).
3. The company for which the candidate works must be headquartered in Northern Colorado.

Award Categories:

The Northern Colorado CFO Awards will be presented to CFO's based their company's size ranked by number of employees. Non-profit companies categories are based on type of services provided either human services or creative industries. Please select one category into which the nominee's company falls.

- 1 – 9 Employees
- 10 – 24 Employees
- 25 – 49 Employees
- 50 – 99 Employees
- 100+ Employees

- Nonprofit – Human Services
- Nonprofit – Creative Industries

Candidates for the Northern Colorado CFO Awards will demonstrate their achievements in the following areas. Please limit the narrative for each section to 200 words or less.

- Describe how this candidate for the Northern Colorado CFO Award has advanced and contributed to the success of the company for which he or she works.
- Describe how this candidate has advanced and shown leadership within the industry to which her or his company belongs and /or the field of financial operations.
- Describe how this candidate is involved with and shown leadership within the community.
- Describe or list how this candidate has continued to develop professionally earning additional certifications and/or degrees.
- Describe or list this candidate's other significant achievements such as honors, awards and recognitions.

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