

# Saskatchewan's Fastest Growing Companies

Although it's got a little way to go to match the hype and excitement of our much-anticipated, annually compiled Top 100 Companies in Saskatchewan listing released each fall, the Fastest Growing Companies in Saskatchewan is becoming quite a distinction in its own right. And deservedly so. Any business owner will tell you to achieve growth is hard enough, but to do so with astounding significance in a province that often disdains capitalism and commercial success is an exponentially more difficult task.

Therefore, our hats go off to this year's representatives among Saskatchewan's Fastest Growing Companies. Yet again there is a mishmash of sectors, geographic regions and maturity levels in terms of the companies on our list, attesting to the fact that Saskatchewan's economy has come a long way from its agrarian roots to that of a much more diversified entity.

Case in point is the sector represented by our No. 1 company, Saskatoon's Edge Entertainment Inc., which makes its mark in the film and television industry, and is joined by Regina counterpart Minds Eye Pictures at the No. 6 spot. These two successful Saskatchewan

companies compete in the highly volatile, potentially lucrative and extremely labor-reliant film, television and video industry. Chances are, many people would not have imagined that

redistributing much of this capital throughout the Saskatchewan economy.

No surprise here, but conspicuously noticeable by its minuteness in the list of Saskatchewan's Fastest Growing Companies is the agriculture sector. Yet those who are on the list from the ag sector have achieved their growth by adopting the diversification trend themselves. As is implied by their name, Dalland Value Added Pork Inc. is one such example, as is InfraReady Products Ltd., who processes grains and seeds for export market, while Brandt Group of Companies has a thriving heavy equipment division as well as a golf and turf division to offset their agricultural products.

Saskatchewan's ingenuity and resourcefulness are evident from the abundance of companies who are making their mark in various "new technology" sectors. Companies such as Loose Foot Computing, Jump.ca, Enviro-Test Laboratories, Kipp & Zonen, Access Communications and CUETS, to name a few, all utilize cutting edge technology in their respective fields to deliver their products and services to their respective Saskatchewan markets and beyond.

Criteria for our Fastest Growing Companies survey are three-fold:

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Saskatchewan is a haven for internationally acclaimed production companies such as these. Yet here they are generating many millions of dollars and, in turn,

companies must have been in business at least three years to report upon the year-end figures of the most recent three years; the companies must be Saskatchewan-based, or report only the numbers applicable to the Saskatchewan operation; and (no minor encumbrance here), be willing to disclose their financial information so as to calculate their rate of growth.

With these requirements in place, no one proved better at their own right than Edge Entertainment Inc., who with their 3,150 per cent growth over three years not only represents the best of this year, but is also the highest-growing company since our initial survey in 1995. Company founder David Doerksen, who serves as president and CEO of Edge Entertainment Inc., says that market capitalization has greatly attributed to his company's ability to grow.

"Access to capital to grow the company has been key," says Doerksen, who adds that dividends were paid on common shares for the first time in January, marking a significant turning of the page for the seven-year-old company,

which had previously only paid dividends on preferred shares. "Our growth is all based on getting capital to finance the next production."

Doerksen admits that convincing prospective investors they should be investing in a Saskatchewan-based production may seem a little unorthodox at first, but once they are apprised of the many competitive advantages the province has to offer, they recognize that it's a wise investment indeed.

Among these advantages, Doerksen says, are the abundance of cheap labor in relation to other jurisdictions, the low cost of manufacturing, the attractiveness of the exchange rate from American dollars, and the expertise provided by his company.

In just a few short years, Doerksen has developed quite a reputation. Among his initial major conquests was to establish The Walt Disney Company as a client, when their subsidiary company, Buena Vista Home Entertainment, purchased the U.S. home video release of Summer of the Monkeys, filmed entirely on location in and around Saskatoon.

The next major coup was to earn the distinction of being the first company to bring a U.S. network picture to Saskatchewan. Family Blessings, a made-for-tv-movie, was co-produced by The Edge Production Corp., a subsidiary company under Edge Entertainment Inc., and Los Angeles-based New Star Worldwide for CBS Television. The drama starring Lynda Carter aired in 1999.

Despite a portfolio of works from many genres, Doerksen has recognized that Edge Entertainment's specialty is that of the family film. This realization is solidified by another of Doerksen's productions, The Impossible Elephant, which was chosen as the lead film of the 2001 Toronto International Children's Film Festival. There it was further honored by also receiving the Silver Sprocket Audience Award.

Understandably, Doerksen is extremely excited about the impending release of Ghost.com, the next family film to display Doerksen's unmistakable style and talent. And with a track record of 3,150 per cent growth over the past three years, it's evident this excitement is well-justified. ■

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# Saskatchewan's Fastest Growing Companies

# 1-30

Rank	Company	Location	CEO/President	Sask. Employees	Increase in Sales (%)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
1	The Edge Productions Corp.	Saskatoon	David Doerksen, President; Deidre Meeks, Vice-President, Finance	4	3150.0	1050.0
2	Hospitality Network Canada	Regina	Al Simpson, President/CEO	28	1198.9	399.6
3	Loose Foot Computing Limited	Regina	Robert Sauchyn, President; Andrew MacCorquodale, Vice-President	4	759.2	253.1
4	Dalland Value Added Pork Inc.	Kipling	Lorne Rygh, President	22	243.2	81.1
5	Jump.ca Wireless Supply Corp.	Regina	Chris Krywulak, President/CEO; Greg Krywulak, Senior Vice-President	68	172.8	57.6
6	Minds Eye Pictures	Regina	Kevin DeWalt, CEO/Executive Producer	45	171.3	58.0
7	TMC Technology Management Corporation	Regina	David Luterbach, President; Mike Hogan, Vice-President; Chris Teschauk, Vice-President	50	135.0	45.0
8	Enviro-Test Laboratories	Saskatoon	Nick Pidskalny, Director	23	126.4	42.1
9	Titan Transport Ltd.	Saskatoon	Barry Burke, President	54	107.1	35.7
10	Temple Gardens Mineral Spa	Moose Jaw	Brent Boechler, President; Rod Van Slyk, Vice-President	186	95.5	31.8
11	Hinz Automation Inc.	Saskatoon	Ryan Hinz, CEO	30	85.4	28.5
12	Redvers Co-operative Association Limited	Redvers	David Kenlar, President; Alain DeGagne, General Manager	42	79.6	26.5
13	Kipp & Zonen Inc.**	Saskatoon	Jim Yuel, CEO; Ben Dieterink, President; David Cortens, VP Finance	22	75.4	25.1
14	InfraReady Products (1998) Ltd.	Saskatoon	Mark Pickard, President	23	73.0	24.4
15	Northern Steel Industries Ltd.	Tisdale	Paul Roy, President; Darcy Simoneau, Vice-President	120	70.6	23.5
16	Brandt Group of Companies	Regina	Gavin Semple, President	320	68.8	22.9
17	LeRoy-Watson Co-op Ltd.	LeRoy	Les McGrath, President; Alain Quessy, General Manager	36	63.8	21.3
18	Ghost Transportation Services	Saskatoon	Clay Dowling, President	20	61.8	20.6
19	Access Communications	Regina	Jim Deane, President/CEO	174	57.7	19.2
20	Kocsis Transport Ltd.	Saskatoon	Ron B. Kocsis, President/CEO	90	56.5	18.8
21	Herbert Co-operative Association Ltd.	Herbert	Isaac Harder, President	20	54.8	18.3
22	Dominion Construction Company Inc.*	Regina	Dennis Burnham, President; Brian Barber, SR Vice-President - Sask.	100+	54.6	18.2
23	Superior Millwork Ltd.	Saskatoon	Charles Larre, President	135	50.6	16.9
24	Paradigm Consulting Services Inc.	Regina	Ken Gerhardt, CEO; Rene Carpentier, President; Mark Hustak, Vice-President	45	50.4	16.8
25	GDS & Associates Systems Ltd.	Regina	Willis Groshong, President; James Der, Vice-President; Douglas Smith, Vice-President	34	48.6	16.2
26	CUETS (Credit Union Electronic Transaction Services)	Regina	S.P. (Stan) Kuss, CEO	270	47.8	15.9
27	Spiritwood & District Co-op	Spiritwood	Jim Bedi, President; Warner Kabatoff, CEO	25	43.7	14.6
28	MGM Communications	Saskatoon	Bob Goettler, President of Operations; Gordon McKay, President of Creative; Jamie Miley, President of Client Services	N/A	42.6	14.2
29	Yanke Group of Companies	Saskatoon	Russel Marcoux, CEO	173	41.9	14.0
30	PIC Investment Group Inc.	Saskatoon	Jim Yuel, President/CEO; Hugh MacGowan, VP Finance	73	39.9	13.3

\*based on Sask only sales \*\*Canadian operations only