

**WE'RE READY.
ARE YOU SET?**

OK GO

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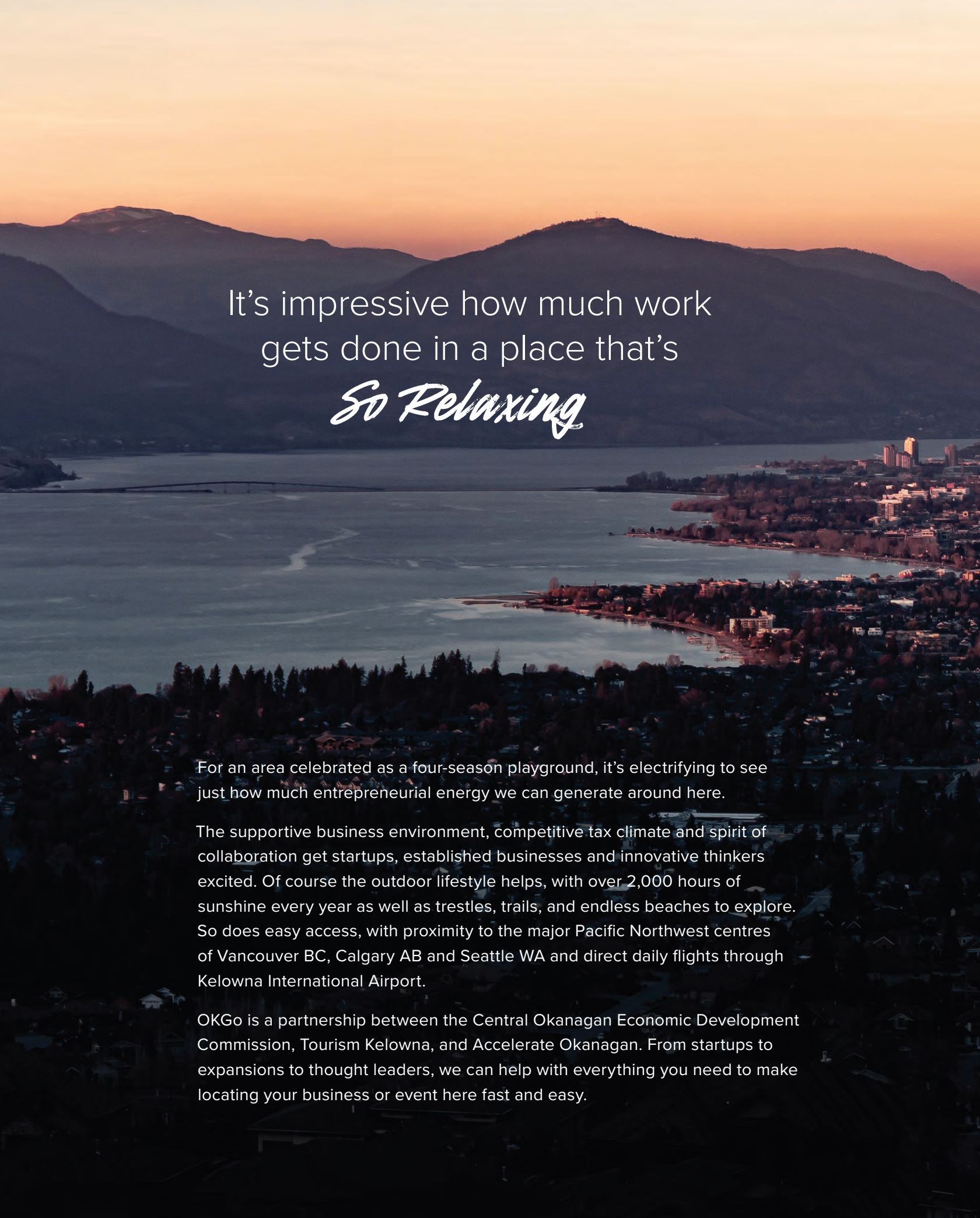
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A pixellent adventure

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It's impressive how much work
gets done in a place that's

So Relaxing

For an area celebrated as a four-season playground, it's electrifying to see just how much entrepreneurial energy we can generate around here.

The supportive business environment, competitive tax climate and spirit of collaboration get startups, established businesses and innovative thinkers excited. Of course the outdoor lifestyle helps, with over 2,000 hours of sunshine every year as well as trestles, trails, and endless beaches to explore. So does easy access, with proximity to the major Pacific Northwest centres of Vancouver BC, Calgary AB and Seattle WA and direct daily flights through Kelowna International Airport.

OKGo is a partnership between the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Tourism Kelowna, and Accelerate Okanagan. From startups to expansions to thought leaders, we can help with everything you need to make locating your business or event here fast and easy.

OK

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**COMPANIES COME
HERE TO
MAKE THINGS
BETTER.**

\$51B

in generated revenue (2017) in BC, making manufacturing one of the largest sectors in Canada

609

manufacturing firms call the Okanagan home, employing 5,760 people (Census, 2016)



INNOVATIVE IDEAS, MATERIALS, PRODUCTS AND NEW WAYS OF PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

High-tech composite jet components. Fiberglass film props. Compostable phone cases. Solar generators. Fruit beverages and snacks. Supercritical extraction systems. Snow plows. We're making all kinds of interesting things.

The sheer diversity of manufacturers makes it easy

for existing and new businesses to find high-quality local partners to help with specific challenges. Canada's digital technology sector is also on hand to power up the industry, helping investigate how to make production faster, more flexible and sustainable. And in some cases, more intelligent, as AI for self-regulating systems is explored.

On top of that, our schools are onboard. The University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) is leading advanced manufacturing research with a variety of programs in partnership with the federal government, exploring various coating and sensor technologies for combat clothing. The university is also partnering with Vernon-based KAL Tire to use recycled tire crumbs in synthesizing metal alloys.

With world-class research and innovation in everything from aerospace to waterslides, local companies are developing the technologies and materials of the future, which in turn is attracting forward-thinking entrepreneurs and businesses.



PELA IS MAKING A STRONG CASE FOR ELIMINATING PLASTIC.



With over 3,600% sales growth of its compostable phone cases, the company wanted to consolidate operations in one place. They chose Kelowna.

After seeing plastic debris in the water around Hawaii, Saskatoon environmental consultant Jeremy Lang felt compelled to do something about it. So, in 2011 he helped invent Flaxstic®, a tough but compostable material made from flax straw. Then he started making phone cases. Then things got interesting.

After meeting Jeremy in 2015, entrepreneur Matt Bertulli invested in Pela, and soon became CEO. “I didn’t particularly care too much that he was making phone cases,” says Bertulli. “But I definitely liked that he had this compostable material that seemed to have a better end of life than plastic. So I was really

interested in what else it could be used for.”

The company went on to diversify. “Now we have all kinds of other compostable accessories like smart watch straps and Airpod cases. We’re also making sunglasses and lenses from special polymers that are landfill biodegradable. We own



336,438

pounds of plastic is the amount Pela has prevented from being produced

1 Billion

pounds of plastic stopped from ever being made (Pela's BHAG)

a personal care brand for deodorant, shampoo and conditioner and currently have several new products we're working on. Pela is a brand that makes products with a graceful end of life. The idea is to get rid of plastic waste."

"While looking for a location, Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary and Kelowna were all options. We flew out here at seven in the morning and met with the mayor and then Corie and Krista from COEDC. In just one day I think we met anybody and everybody in Kelowna. They were really welcoming."



"The thing that surprised us was everybody was singing the same tune. In Toronto, there's a lot of different businesses competing for attention and here was Kelowna telling us they're really focused on startups and tech. The community was clearly thriving and it seemed like a really good



place for business. So Jeremy and I moved here with all the injection molding machines and set up a small manufacturing facility."

"I think my initial fears around a city this size was just recruiting talent locally, finding certain senior levels of people. But it's been pretty easy so far, I've been pleasantly surprised. We've managed to attract some pretty wicked people."

"PELA IS A BRAND THAT MAKES PRODUCTS WITH A GRACEFUL END OF LIFE. THE IDEA IS TO GET RID OF PLASTIC WASTE."

Matt Bertulli
CEO, Pela

"The lifestyle here is awesome. I'm a mountain biker and I like to ski and this place facilitates a very active outdoor lifestyle. And that's also great for the kind of brand we're building. We attract those kinds of people

and they're creating the kind of culture we need to build."

"The perception is the pace of work here is slower, but people are just as effective and they get more done and they're just happier. So this has been very refreshing. Sort of like a restart to my entrepreneurial journey."

How does Bertulli sum up that journey? "We liken it to surfing. We happened to be in the water with a surfboard and a very large wave came along and we happened to know how to surf very, very well. So it's all just good luck but the right sequence of events counts. I call it a really good return on luck."





BRINGING THE SPLASH.

From its name, you would assume that waterparks and splash pads would be the only industry that Kelowna-based Waterplay Solutions services. But according to company President Jillian White, through acquisitions, this group of companies now services far more than that.

“Basically, anything you see in a public, open space we either manufacture or source and then sell. Playgrounds, spray parks, street furniture and amenities such as benches, shade structures, washroom facilities, tree grates, bike racks, litter bins, you name it.”

“Depending on how you segment our industry, we would be the second or third largest supplier of equipment for splash pads in the world and a similar position for the suppliers of park and playground equipment across Western Canada.”



“Of course as a manufacturer dependent upon the export market, proximity to a growing international airport is important,” she adds.

“Since moving from Penticton, we’ve grown from nine employees to seventy locally, with about twenty-five more who are based elsewhere.”

After three decades, the company still adheres to its rather lofty goal; “for every child to have access to an amazing park within a ten-minute walk of their home. For a vast array of reasons, but most importantly for

the social fabric of society, equitable access to quality parks should be deemed essential.”

“Here in the Okanagan, we’ve achieved a lot, but not every child has access to a high-quality park nearby. In those terms, we have a lot to do still as an industry advocate. I haven’t counted, but I’m guessing we’ve contributed product to perhaps 75 - 100 parks in the Okanagan and that has a pretty big impact locally. So there is a certain amount of success in that to be proud of.”

“DEPENDING ON HOW YOU SEGMENT OUR INDUSTRY, WE WOULD BE THE SECOND OR THIRD LARGEST SUPPLIER OF EQUIPMENT FOR SPLASH PADS IN THE WORLD AND A SIMILAR POSITION FOR THE SUPPLIERS OF PARK AND PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ACROSS WESTERN CANADA.”

—
Jillian White

President, Waterplay Solutions





EXTRACTING HIGH VALUE.

Named the third fastest growing company in Canada by the Globe and Mail (2020), Vitalis manufactures the most sophisticated industrial supercritical CO₂ extraction systems in the world. Say what? Okay, a brief technical explanation.



Widely used in the botanical, food, and pharmaceutical industries, CO₂ extraction is a process that uses pressurized carbon dioxide to pull phytochemicals, waxes and oils from plants. For example, it removes the caffeine from coffee beans. In the world of cannabis, it allows companies to create product

lines derived from a broad spectrum oil.

“Vitalis was born from a long journey of seeking better CO₂ extraction solutions and systems,” explains Co-founder and Chairman Joel Sherlock. “We went to all the big players to study their equipment and spoke to extractors about what they liked and didn’t like, then used those findings to engineer the largest commercialized CO₂ extraction systems on the market.”

“Today, producers come to us from all over the world and all types of industries - cannabis, hemp, pharmaceutical, F&B, and essential oils - to turn their organic materials into pure extracts. What separates us from a lot of our competitors is the fact that we’re an OEM. Our systems are fabricated, manufactured, and tested in-house at our Kelowna facility, giving us complete control of the quality and reliability of our products.”



“While our operations have grown to span five continents – and counting, we’re proudly rooted in Kelowna. Over the years I’ve launched a number of businesses in the area and what I’ve learned is that there’s no greater support than the help you get in small communities.”

“If I could offer any advice when it comes to starting a company here, it would be to put yourself out there in different ways. Be active in the community through organizations and events and build authentic relationships with others who can share their own learnings. One day, you’ll be on the other side, repaying the favour.”

“IF I COULD OFFER ANY ADVICE WHEN IT COMES TO STARTING A COMPANY HERE, IT WOULD BE TO PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE IN DIFFERENT WAYS. BE ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH ORGANIZATIONS AND EVENTS AND BUILD AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS WHO CAN SHARE THEIR OWN LEARNINGS. ONE DAY, YOU’LL BE ON THE OTHER SIDE, REPAYING THE FAVOUR.”

–
Joel Sherlock
*Co-founder and Chairman,
Vitalis*

SO MANY PEOPLE HERE HAVE THEIR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS...



KELOWNA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

\$2.4B

in annual revenue generated provincially (\$1.3 billion direct GDP)

18%

of BC's aerospace companies are located in the Central Okanagan

8,300+

direct jobs and up to 19,000 indirect

10th

busiest airport in Canada over 2 million passengers (YLW, 2019)

60

daily non-stop commercial flights with 9 airline partners (YLW, 2019)



BUT WHEN IT COMES TO BUSINESS, WE'RE FIRMLY GROUNDED.

They say location is everything. The Central Okanagan's close proximity to the Asia Pacific and Washington State aerospace industries, as well as its central position between Vancouver and Calgary, has helped local companies take off.

From aircraft maintenance and engineering to cargo delivery, high-tech flight tracking and aviation communications, this area plays an important role in Canada's aerospace sector, the third-largest in the

world. Despite some global turbulence, the Central Okanagan's aerospace industry is continuing its upward trajectory.

With industry leadership in avionics, pilot training, fixed-wing and rotary aircraft manufacturing and maintenance, as well as innovative research in advanced materials manufacturing and defense technology at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), local researchers and engineers are helping to shape the future of flight craft.

With all this technical expertise and skilled workers graduating from local aerospace programs, the region offers a wealth of on-the-ground resources. This includes the \$25 million KF Aerospace Centre for Excellence, scheduled to open in 2022 with conference suites, a museum, aircraft hangars, classrooms and 15,000 sq. feet of dedicated training space for Okanagan College's Aircraft Maintenance Engineering programs.

KF AEROSPACE MAINTAINS ALTITUDE DURING CHALLENGING TIMES.

How the region's largest private-sector employer stayed aloft while the rest of the world was grounded.

As the largest commercial Maintenance Repair and Overhaul (MRO) operation in Canada, KF Aerospace has built an enviable reputation since 1970, servicing major airlines, corporate fleets and military aircraft from around the world. That is until they all stopped flying during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The COVID-19 crisis really decimated the airlines,” says Grant Stevens, Vice President of

Corporate Services. “Air Canada, WestJet and other customers were flying at 5% of their previous level. It was very, very difficult for them. I tell you, I’m really proud of the fact that four months into the pandemic, we still had all 1,100 employees working and getting paid full time.”

KF Aerospace employs about 800 people in BC, 200 in their newly expanded Hamilton, ON facility and about 100 at their

flight training centre in Portage la Prairie, MB. In addition to aircraft engineering, maintenance and modifications, KF Aerospace also operates regular cargo charter services, leases aircrafts and operates a 22-year pilot training contract for the Royal Canadian Air Force.

“The government certainly helped us to financially weather the storm,” Stevens reports. “But we were able to maintain our staff by



AEROSPACE



working with our customers to come up with some pretty innovative solutions to keep the work coming into the hangars, keep flying and to do the things needed to survive.”

“For example, we ended up with three passenger plane lease returns, so we are converting them over to cargo aircrafts. That’s where you take out the whole inside, put in a roller floor so you can move pallets of cargo around and install a big 10’ by 12’ cargo door. That’s one of the things we’ve been able to do.”

“We also talked to each airline and asked them, ‘Okay, what are your issues and what can we do to help you?’ We worked to give them more favourable rates and terms to incentivize them to bring their work in during the pandemic, rather than waiting until they got the green light to start flying again. That’s worked very well.”

“I think there’s a strong future for aviation in the Okanagan,”

Stevens says. The Central Okanagan is home to about 18% of the province’s \$1.8 billion aerospace sector. “Kelowna is a great city to be based out of with a great airport and good infrastructure.”

“We believe it’s very important to have a strong feeder system into the aviation sector to make everybody that much better off in the long term. We do quite a bit of work with the colleges. We have strong partnerships with Okanagan College, Mohawk College in Hamilton and with Stephenson Aviation College, part of the Red River College group in Manitoba.”

“Okanagan College offers two different programs here in the Okanagan and one of their facilities is actually in one of our hangars. Students get an opportunity to work alongside us and see the work that happens right before their eyes. We have a real belief that home grown talent will

stay home and I would guess that around 95% of students who graduate from these programs stay in the Okanagan Valley, which is a great thing.”

“We’ve also been working with UBCO. They have good engineering programs in a number of disciplines, and we’d like to see aerospace added. So, we’re working through the powers to try and

also planning to open additional lands, creating more access to its runways, and I think that will spur new businesses to come to the Okanagan. I think the future is really quite bright.”

After overcoming the hardships of the pandemic, Stevens says the company isn’t taking its success for granted and is thankful for its ability to improvise, strategize and pivot.



bring that to fruition. And that helps develop intellectual property and makes all the aerospace companies much more valuable when you can develop and keep the brain trust in BC.”

Looking ahead, Stevens sees new possibilities for the industry. “I think one of the untapped opportunities is probably to be a parts manufacturer, parts supplier or repair depot, as around 50% of the aerospace business is in manufacturing aircrafts and our proximity to Seattle and Boeing is huge. The airport is

“We might be doing better than some of the other aviation companies at the moment, but it’s because we survived better, not because we thrived better.”

“I THINK THERE’S A STRONG FUTURE FOR AVIATION IN THE OKANAGAN, THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN IS HOME TO ABOUT 18% OF THE PROVINCE’S \$1.8 BILLION AEROSPACE SECTOR.”

—
Grant Stevens
VP of Corporate Services,
KF Aerospace



NICHE EXPERTISE KEEPS COMPANY ON TOP.

They say when one hangar door closes, another one opens. The AEM story began in 2009 when respected avionics company, Northern Airborne Technology, ceased business after thirty years. Employees saw an opportunity to purchase it and have since grown the new company AEM into a vertically integrated provider of specialty aviation solutions, and they've never looked back.

Today, AEM is an approved OEM supplier to aircraft manufacturers such as Bell, Boeing Rotorcraft, Leonardo, Airbus Helicopters, Sikorsky and Embraer. In their 32,000 square foot Kelowna facility, over 100 highly specialized people design, develop and manufacture avionics components such as loudspeaker systems, caution/warning panels, illuminated panels and keyboards, and specialty audio products. Having

experienced substantial growth in recent years, AEM will soon begin construction on a new 40,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility in Kelowna's north end.



“In our industry, AEM is considered a small to medium sized business,” explains CEO Brian Wall. “We operate in a niche market, so the majority of our products compete with only two or three key competitors. Our employees’ commitment to high standards and continuous improvement are instrumental in achieving a high level of customer satisfaction.”

Attracting qualified talent in such a specialized area can

be challenging for AEM, but professional networking and community outreach help them find the people they need. “We’re fortunate to work through the COEDC “Connector” program,” explains Wall. “I help mentor young professionals looking to practice their craft here in the Okanagan. The goal is to retain the talent that comes through our local educational institutions.”

“The aerospace industry has become a key economic driver in the region and Kelowna is an attractive place for emerging talent looking to develop their careers. We find that many non-local applicants want to move here because of the relaxed, vacation-style setting; they can enjoy the lakes, trails and other amenities at their doorstep, in a growing city full of opportunity.”



“THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY HAS BECOME A KEY ECONOMIC DRIVER IN THE REGION AND KELOWNA IS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR EMERGING TALENT LOOKING TO DEVELOP THEIR CAREERS. WE FIND THAT MANY NON-LOCAL APPLICANTS WANT TO MOVE HERE BECAUSE OF THE RELAXED, VACATION-STYLE SETTING IN A GROWING CITY FULL OF OPPORTUNITY.”

—
Brian Wall
CEO, AEM

SATELLITE DATA SERVICE ENHANCES EFFICIENCY & SAFETY.

Founded in 1986, SKYTRAC helped develop the first generation of real-time flight tracking communication systems.

Today, their suite of satellite monitoring solutions enables operators and pilots to make better decisions by providing greater visibility into their flight operations. From flight data and following, voice and text communications to real-time alerts, the service provides aircrafts in all environments (including remote or dangerous), with instant data and communications.

“Our customer base includes an assortment of clients including offshore oil and gas operators, government agencies, and aircraft OEMs,” says Malachi Nordine, President of SKYTRAC. “They require transparency into how their aircraft are being flown to improve safety

and enhance operational efficiencies. Access to voice and data communications from pole-to-pole, can be the difference between a successful or failed mission. Our satellite communications allow mission-critical organizations such as EMS, SAR, and aerial firefighting the capabilities they require, even in severe weather events.”



“In the early days, the Okanagan region was critical to our success,” he explains. “Partnerships with organizations such as AEM, Alpine Helicopters, Okanagan Mountain Helicopters and the RCMP helped form the basis of our flight following and voice communications technologies. We extended our services to numerous

aerospace organizations within the region - tourism, search and rescue, forestry, firefighting and agriculture. The National Research Council’s Innovation Assistance Program also assisted us in obtaining grant funding for the development of new technologies.”

“The close-knit nature of Kelowna makes cultivating the right organizational culture easy,” says Nordine. “With dedicated innovation clusters, short daily commutes and a technology sector that breeds the entrepreneurial spirit, it’s highly conducive to professional success. For those looking for the right work-life balance, the Okanagan’s four-season playground includes beaches, regional hikes and ski resorts that captivate those looking to relocate here.”



“THE CLOSE-KNIT NATURE OF KELOWNA MAKES CULTIVATING THE RIGHT ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE EASY, WITH DEDICATED INNOVATION CLUSTERS, SHORT DAILY COMMUTES AND A TECHNOLOGY SECTOR THAT BREEDS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, IT’S HIGHLY CONDUCTIVE TO PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS.”

—
Malachi Nordine
President, SKYTRAC



**SOME OF
OUR LEGENDS
ARE EASIER
TO SWALLOW
THAN OTHERS.**

Fortunately, award winning wines aren't as difficult to spot as our mythical lake monster, n'ha-a-itk, the spirit of the lake (commonly referred to as the Ogopogo).

84%

of the total vineyard acreage in BC

250km

of vineyards planted

182+

licensed wineries in the Okanagan

72

Okanagan-based beverage manufacturing companies, including kombucha, mead, spirits and cider

\$2.8B

in annual provincial economic impact



After planting the first apple trees at his Kelowna mission in 1859 (starting the Okanagan's tree fruit industry), Father Pandosy also tried his hand at winemaking. The industry didn't really ramp up though until the 1930's, when Calona Vineyards, BC's oldest continuously-operating winery, began producing on an industrial scale. In 1966, Mission Hill Estate Winery opened with other winemakers arriving, elevating the quality and bringing acclaim to BC wines.

With quiet family-run boutique vineyards to world-class operations, the Okanagan Valley wineries are rich in tradition and character, consistently ranking among the world's best at international competitions.

Boasting 84% of the province's vineyard acreage, the Okanagan Valley is

BC's premier grape growing region. With an ever-changing panorama, the valley stretches over 250 kilometres, across sub-regions, each with distinct soil and climate conditions suited to growing a range of varietals from sun-ripened reds to lively-fresh and often-crisp whites.



Today, most vines in the Okanagan are less than fifteen years old, but consumer demand has grown so quickly that only about 5% of Okanagan wines ever reach the export market. It may be ironic, but it's been a blessing for local wine lovers.

Along with production, wine tourism is becoming increasingly popular, with many wineries offering exceptional dining opportunities in their on-site restaurants, generating over \$476 million in tourism-related economic impact, regionally.

Kelowna's Walter Hainle started Canada's \$25 million icewine industry when he left his grapes on the vine beyond normal harvest time to develop the right concentration of sugars and flavours.

Mission Hill Family Estate strikes gold twice; initially winning for 'Best Chardonnay in the World' (ISWC, 1994) and then winning top honours as the 'World's Best Pinot Noir' (DWWA, 2013).



SETTING THE DOUBLE GOLD STANDARD.

Before it even opened, Indigenous World Winery was competing (and winning) at an international level.



Indigenous World Winery is the brainchild of Robert and Bernice Louie, descendants of the Syilx first peoples who have lived in the Okanagan for generations. Back in 2011, the couple secured 2.5 acres to start a vineyard and joined forces with winemaker Jason Parkes to make wines that could compete at a world level.

“The goal was a big award winner,” explains spokesperson Ryan Widdup. “They wanted to open the doors with some big showpiece red wines.” So while the couple were planting their first vines and building their facility in 2013, Parkes had already been crafting wines for them at a nearby estate winery. “Jason spent a lot of time crafting a small production

red called Simo, and in 2015 it won two medals and the first Double Gold Medal a few months before we opened the wine shop in 2016.”

Since then, the gold and silver medals have kept on coming, with the 2014 Simo receiving Double Gold at the 2019 All Canadian Wine Championships, beating out 1,378 other entries. In addition, their wines have earned gold at many international competitions in the United States and Europe.

“WE’RE ATTRACTING A HUGE AMOUNT OF TALENT ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE TO COME HERE AND MAKE THEIR NAME AND DISCOVER WHAT IT IS TO MAKE WINE IN BC.”

—
Ryan Widdup
*Sales Manager,
Indigenous World Winery*

In 2020, the winery launched their Indigenous Spirits craft alcohol line, starting with vodka. “We’ve been working on a gin recipe using botanicals and locally sourced ingredients with a medicinal history in the Syilx culture. We also have eight barrels of whiskey that turn three years old this year, so we’re going to release a single barrel and a barrel-blend single malt. So that’s really exciting.”

Located across Okanagan Lake in West Kelowna, making it an ideal spot for

meetings and events, the winery is sited on land belonging to Westbank First Nation. “Robert and Bernice are very proud of where they come from,” says Widdup. “The focus of the winery is not to necessarily be a cultural learning place, but it is a part of the family’s heritage and they are passionate about sharing their culture. Wine is an exceptional way to showcase the terroir of traditional lands that have sustained their people for thousands of years.”

Indigenous World Winery also understands the importance of giving back to the community. Robert Louie was the elected Chief of Westbank First Nation for decades, serving on many boards and band businesses, in addition to being Chair of the National First Nations Advisory Board. “Robert travels a lot, so Bernice is the main person in the family who oversees the winery’s day to day operations,” Widdup explains.

Widdup himself grew up in an agricultural community in



rural Saskatchewan. “When I got into the wine industry in BC, I thought it would be quite competitive. Instead, it’s very collaborative. Everybody knows everybody and they really support each other. The interesting thing about being situated in West Kelowna is that there’s huge diversity. We’ve got two of the biggest wineries in all of BC up the road and some of the smallest ones right next door.”

“Winemaking is essentially glamour farming, to steal a phrase from the folks up at 50th Parallel Estate Winery. But it’s incredibly interesting because every year is different. It’s the one industry where you could know everything about every wine in the world this year and then next year you have to go out and learn every single wine all over again because everything’s changed.”

“The industry here is less than forty years old,” says Widdup. “Right now we’re still in the pioneering phase. We’re not like California, Oregon or Chile where these industries



are hundreds of years old, we’ve only been doing it for a short amount of time. We’re attracting a huge amount of talent from all across the globe to come here and make their name and discover what it is to make wine in BC, so it’s extremely exciting and I’m very proud to be part of this industry.”

“It’s also amazing to be a part of a community where everybody is really trying to help each other out. It was especially cool during the pandemic, just the number of trade and tourism industries that tried to bring everybody together to share their stories and best practices and what they’ve learned. I think if anything, it strengthened the community even more.”



THE HIGH POINT OF ORGANIC WINEMAKING.



Serving as the CEO of ‘Canada’s most visited winery’, Ezra Cipes is part of the second generation at Summerhill, a pioneering winery producing 100% organic wine. What makes Summerhill so unique? A pyramid wine cellar, second only to the Great Pyramids of Egypt for alignment and precision, in which the family allows their organic and biodynamic wines to rest before release.

“My parents moved our young family here from the suburbs of New York in 1986 for a total

change of life,” explains Cipes, one of four brothers. “I am so grateful they did. It was just a little farming community, no modern wine industry at all. They both helped build the modern wine industry in BC and were founding members of the BC Vintners Quality Alliance and of the BC Wine Institute.”

On arriving in 1986, Ezra’s father, Stephen, believed he’d found unique conditions to produce “intensely flavoured small grapes,” the perfect base for sparkling wine. He brought grape

clones from France and “personally planted them on his hands and knees.” After entering the organic certification program in 1988, Cipes Sr. produced his first vintage in 1991 and the winery received Demeter Biodynamic certification in 2012.

“We’re a mid-sized winery with a large team, mostly because of the extensive hospitality we offer,” says Ezra. “We have a beautiful restaurant and banquet room, both overlooking the vineyard, lake, and mountains.”

“For us, the next level of success will be seeing our wines on restaurant lists in major centers around the world. Certain wines we make are absolutely relevant to the global wine market because of their outstanding quality and a taste that can come from nowhere but the Okanagan.”

“FOR US, THE NEXT LEVEL OF SUCCESS WILL BE SEEING OUR WINES ON RESTAURANT LISTS IN MAJOR CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD. THEIR OUTSTANDING QUALITY AND TASTE CAN COME FROM NOWHERE BUT THE OKANAGAN.”

—
Ezra Cipes
CEO,
Summerhill Pyramid Winery





100% FARM TO FLASK.

BC's oldest and Canada's most internationally awarded distillery, Okanagan Spirits is a fourth-generation family business. It's also the first farm-to-flask distillery in Western Canada since the days of prohibition.



"We hand craft terroir-driven spirits entirely from 100% local grains and fruits that present the true flavours and aromas of the Okanagan Valley," says Tyler Dyck, CEO and Director of Operations. "We feel each and every one of our spirits tell a story, which by extension, is our family's story to tell. That's why it's so important to us

that our grains and fruits come from local fields and orchards. Farm-to-flask is truly in everything we do, from our premium whiskies, gins, vodkas, liqueurs, brandies, aquavit and even traditional absinthe."

OK Spirits is also committed to reducing their impact on the environment. "After we finish mashing, all edible materials go back to feed local livestock. We even use distilling by-products to power all our vehicles to cut down on emissions."

"To us, success is all about creating a legacy that will

outlive each of us presently at the helm of our family distillery. We've spent the last two decades travelling the world learning from the very best distillers and brewers, immersing ourselves in everything spirits. We also participate biennially in the World Spirits Awards Competition in Austria to have our spirits judged with the very best distillers in the world."

"The Okanagan region is an ideal spot for true farm-to-flask authentic spirits production, as it really is one of the best spots on the planet for agriculture. It also has a community that's keenly invested in supporting local tourism and agricultural partners." Says Dyck, "we're all passionate about seeing the success of the Okanagan region, with the goal of establishing this valley as the place to be in Canada."



"THE OKANAGAN REGION IS AN IDEAL SPOT FOR TRUE FARM-TO-FLASK AUTHENTIC SPIRITS PRODUCTION, AS IT REALLY IS ONE OF THE BEST SPOTS ON THE PLANET FOR AGRICULTURE. IT ALSO HAS A COMMUNITY THAT'S KEENLY INVESTED IN SUPPORTING LOCAL TOURISM AND AGRICULTURAL PARTNERS."

—
Tyler Dyck
CEO, Okanagan Spirits

**CLIMBING THE
CORPORATE LADDER
MEANS
SOMETHING
DIFFERENT
HERE.**

870

farms employing
4,467 people
(Census, 2016)

794

agri-food businesses

299

fruit and tree nut
farming businesses

65

greenhouse, nursery
and floriculture
producers



OUR FARMING ROOTS HAVE GROWN DEEP IN THE PAST 160 YEARS.

When Father Pandosy planted the first apple trees at his French Catholic mission in 1859, little did he know the agricultural powerhouse his spindly cuttings would grow into.

Years later, many of the cattle ranches and grain fields that had once fed Cariboo gold miners had transitioned into irrigated orchards. And for a time, vast fields of tobacco that gave birth to 'Kelowna Pride' cut and cigar tobaccos.

Today, the Central Okanagan is home to many different types of farm operations, including tree fruits (apples, cherries, plums, pears, peaches, and apricots), vegetables (fresh and greenhouse), and cattle ranching, of course. (Those guys are tenacious.)

There's no question the region's soil, topography and hot, sunny climate provide an excellent agriculture environment, which is supported by food processing facilities, administration infrastructure and reliable transportation routes.

The industry is constantly evolving and innovating thanks to input from The Summerland Research and Development

Centre and research from The University of British Columbia Okanagan and Okanagan College. Because we're all about keeping it fresh.

BC Tree Fruits Cooperative promotes, packages and transports the freshest tree fruits in BC's interior. The industry represents over 800 growers in BC, generating over \$130 million in wholesale revenue and \$900 million in economic activity.

—
2016 BC Agrifood & Seafood Export Highlights



THE FUTURE IS PEAR- SHAPED.



One of the area's oldest farms, Day's Century Growers, goes high-tech to increase efficiency and quality.

Day's Century have been farming in the Okanagan Region for almost as long as there's been farming in the Okanagan. In the late 1890's, Ephraim Day homesteaded property in the heart of Kelowna and over five generations the family holdings have since expanded to encompass over 136 acres.

This includes the largest pear orchard in the province, distributing Bartlett, Bosc and Green and Red D'Anjou pears across North America. The family also sells freshly picked vegetables, fruit and sweet corn in their own farm market.

"Almost 75% of our revenue comes from pears, yet it's probably just a little over a quarter of the actual ground we farm," says Kevin Day, who runs the current operation with his sister Karen Day. "According to my grandfather, this area is the best pear growing land in Canada. Very, very high quality. It's a combination of climate, the heavy clay loam soil, the nearness of the lake, really just so many reasons."

In 2012, the Day's made a bold move to take control of their pears. "My sister and I felt we could manage our crop

more efficiently if we removed ourselves from the pool system. So we built our own packing house, taking responsibility for the storage, packing and shipping of the pears we grow. Fortunately, it's worked out."

The family stepped things up again in 2019 when they installed a state-of-the-art packing machine and a high-resolution optical pear-sorting system, the first of its kind in Canada. The system scans pears for external defects, taking sixty images of each pear to ensure the highest quality and proper grading.

"IT'S SUCH A COOL EXPERIENCE TO HAVE DINNER AND TO KNOW THAT EVERYTHING WE'RE EATING WAS GROWN ON THE FARM."

—
Erin Day-Johnson
*Operations Manager,
Day's Century Growers*



“Food safety and the retail marketplace demand you touch the fruit as little as possible,” Day explains. “Pears are very prone to surface scuffing. In Holland, more than 50% of their tree fruits are pears, so when they design equipment, they design it for pears. Whereas any other countries, such as New Zealand, Australia, the United States, their machines



are geared for maybe 90% apple-use and 10% pears. So I knew I’d be able to find the best machine in Holland, one designed specifically for pears.”

“Optical sorting was a big step for us to please retailers. Each pear is touched only twice; once when it’s picked

into the bin and then months later when it’s packed into a box. It’s both labour efficient and complies with food safety regulations.”

“Properly managing our highest-value farm commodity has changed our lives substantially. We were quite diversified before, but the packing house has ensured that all of our other diversification isn’t being drained to put into the pear crop.”

This innovation has changed other lives in the Day family, too. Daughter Kati is the company’s Communication

Manager and other daughter Erin is Operations Manager, with her husband Riley handling Shipping and Receiving. As the next generation, Erin and Riley oversee all aspects of the farm, including growing, harvesting and production of feed crops, carrying on the legacy of the Day family.

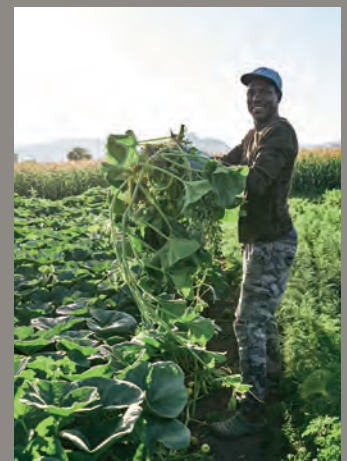


“All my life I’ve known working alongside my dad on the farm was pretty important to me,” says Erin. “I was drawn to it as young as eleven years old, when I had my first job in the fruit stand, working alongside my aunt. When I started my post-secondary education in 2013, I was going for my bachelor’s in biology, with an emphasis on botany. At that time, we’d already been packing our own fruit for two years and that’s kind of where my dad’s attitude changed. Things started to prove themselves with the packing line and the new business, so instead of, ‘You need to get an education, get a career, farming is not viable,’ he started calling us back, giving us all the information we needed to make this jump.”

“In 2016, after about half of my degree was finished, I decided to change my direction and started full-time on the production line in the packing facility. Then about seven months in I got

a promotion and I just kind of moved up from there. I’m Operations and Food Safety Manager for Day’s Century Growers now.”

“I think it’s a very attractive lifestyle,” she says enthusiastically. “It’s such a cool experience to have dinner and to know that everything we’re eating was grown on the farm. I can’t wait for the day when I can raise my kids on our family farm and teach them what I know about the importance of hard work and growing your own food.”





ICONIC BC BRAND EVOLVES AND INSPIRES.

Since the mid 1950s, the SunRype brand has been a household name in Western Canada, leading the way with their trusted apple juice, fondly referred to as Blue Label. Fueled by society's greater emphasis on health and nutrition, the company has been steadily introducing a host of new snack products made from simple, wholesome ingredients including fruit, grains, seeds and coconut.

President and CEO, Lesli Bradley, says the company's vision is to help people live healthier lives. "We make really great things out of fruit and other simple ingredients, and our mission goes beyond product development to also include supporting community initiatives that help to promote a healthy active lifestyle for families throughout the Okanagan and all across Canada."

SunRype has over 300 employees who work at the production facility in Kelowna, spanning 19 acres near scenic Lake Okanagan. "People are very important to us", states Bradley. "We are proud of

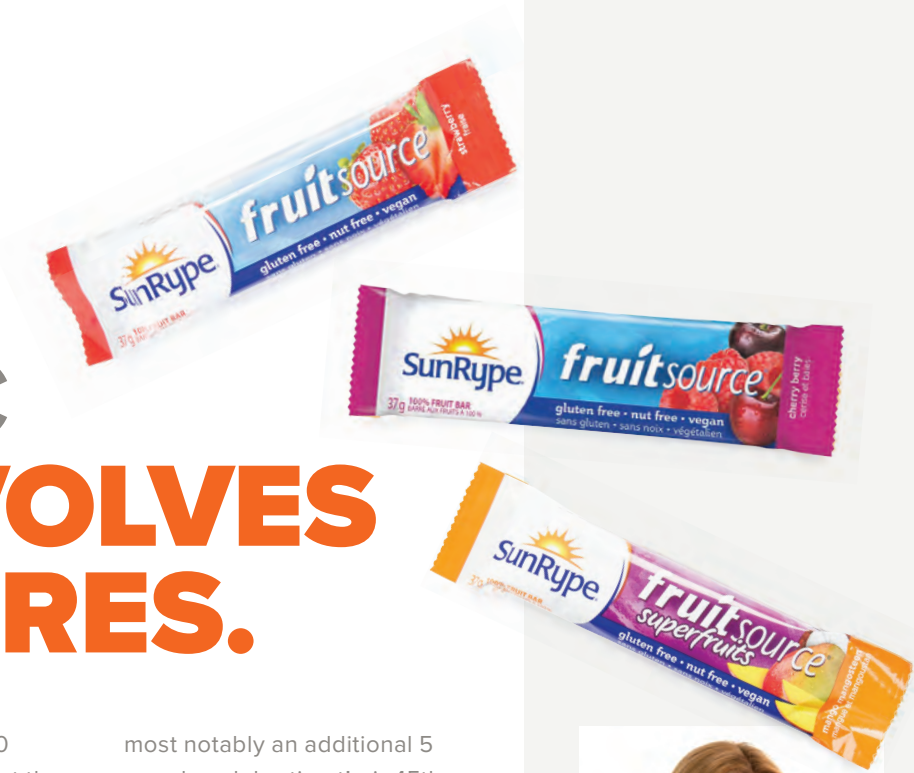


our culture and that over 45% of our plant operation employees have been with us for over 20 years. In fact, this year throughout various departments, we are celebrating 26 employees with anniversaries ranging between 20 and 35 years, 3 employees at 40 years and

most notably an additional 5 people celebrating their 45th work anniversary at SunRype!"

"Ultimately, success is measured by sales," she adds. "Brand trust and brand equity are key. We've added many different fruits to our juice line-up, a whole range of popular fruit snacks and new categories that go beyond fruit. SunRype goodness is now shared with families all across Canada, and we're also proud to offer a growing array of products across the U.S."

"The Okanagan Valley is a pretty special place. Abundant sunshine makes it the perfect place to grow fruit, which is important in our business. We're surrounded by so much natural beauty that really makes it a wonderful place to live, work and play. If you've never been here, come visit and see why we're so lucky to call this place home."



"THE OKANAGAN VALLEY IS A PRETTY SPECIAL PLACE. ABUNDANT SUNSHINE MAKES IT THE PERFECT PLACE TO GROW FRUIT, WHICH IS IMPORTANT IN OUR BUSINESS. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN HERE, COME VISIT AND SEE WHY WE'RE SO LUCKY TO CALL THIS PLACE HOME."

—
Lesli Bradley
President & CEO,
SunRype



POISED FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE.

Legalization has transformed cannabis agriculture from an underground niche market into an attractive mainstream commercial opportunity. First movers like Flowr are accelerating their efforts at production.

From its operations in Canada, Europe and Australia, Toronto-based Flowr produces fully licensed recreational and medicinal cannabis. Its flagship campus in Kelowna comprises an 85,000 square foot licensed indoor growing facility, the FLOWR Forest - a 595,000 plus square foot outdoor growing operation, and the new Hawthorne R&D Facility, a state of the art 50,000 square foot cannabis R&D centre, largely funded by Scott's Miracle-Gro & Hawthorne Gardening.

Founded in 2017, Flowr has more than doubled its staff in the last year, employing



over 150 people locally. 30% of those are highly accomplished professionals (engineers, scientists, executives, industry experts) who relocated to Kelowna from across Canada and internationally. One of them is Aman Malhi, Director of People and Culture.

"I moved to Kelowna in November 2019 and have absolutely loved the Okanagan area since day one," states Malhi. "The Okanagan climate is attractive to people and

plants alike, with a huge tourist industry and a long growing season.

Flowr's investment in the area offers the opportunity for long term careers and benefits the community through spending on local vendors, contractors and service providers. The company also provides opportunities for local university co-op students, investing in the leaders of the future to help take our business to the next level" says Malhi.



"THE OKANAGAN CLIMATE IS ATTRACTIVE TO PEOPLE AND PLANTS ALIKE, WITH A HUGE TOURIST INDUSTRY AND A LONG GROWING SEASON."

—
Aman Malhi
Director of People and Culture, Flowr

WE'RE BUILDING A COMMUNITY THAT'S UP TO [CODE]

\$1.67B

in annual revenue

693

tech companies,
12,500 employees

\$35M

Innovation Centre
puts multiple high-tech
businesses under
one roof

36km

of Dark Fibre network
in Kelowna



TECH THAT'S PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT.

Today, there are more people employed in the BC tech sector than in mining, oil, gas and forestry combined. And it's no secret that technology has dramatically changed the local landscape, particularly in Kelowna, which is part of Canada's Digital Tech Supercluster.

The Okanagan region is an important part of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor, linking innovators in British Columbia with others in Washington State and as far down as Silicon Valley.

The diversity of the area's digital tech boom is exciting.

Animation studios, game developers, Canada's premier medical record platform, AI-powered online content filtering systems, aviation satellite data tracking systems ...and the list goes on.

One success story is Lane Merrifield, currently a Dragon on CBC's Dragon's Den, and the co-founder of the massively popular online game, Club Penguin. After selling the business to Disney, he started FreshGrade, a portfolio and assessment platform used by educators around the globe. He also helps Wheelhouse, which supports the growth and development of early-stage tech companies and entrepreneurs.

The Okanagan's position as a recreational mecca is also

part of its appeal for start-ups. The lifestyle, the relaxed pace, lower costs of living and good weather make a pretty attractive addition to the compensation package.

Kelowna's downtown has also become a tech hub that attracts businesses and investors from around the world, with buildings like the Innovation Centre promoting collaboration and idea-sharing. There is also 36km of dark fibre infrastructure installed in Kelowna, ready for company networks to get hooked up.



ASHLEY & TODD'S PIXELLENT ADVENTURE

Yeti Farm Creative's husband and wife founders drew on their big city experience to animate Kelowna's digital studio scene.

Rocket Monkeys. Pete the Cat. Angry Birds. Beat Bugs. DNAce. Hotel Transylvania. Any of these animated series ring a bell? If not, maybe you're familiar with where they're playing: Netflix, Amazon Prime, Nickelodeon, Teletoon, Corus, YouTube.

It's big time stuff for Yeti Farm, the Kelowna-based digital animation studio that has hit warp speed in the last few years. Animating shows under contract for other companies, they've steadily expanded to the point where they're writing, developing and pitching their own series. Recently three ideas have been green lit to develop into prime time pilots, one of them a live action series. How did this all happen?

Rewind to 2007. Creative guy Todd Ramsey has been working as an animator and director in Vancouver, while Ashley has been producing various children's animated shows. After starting their own company and becoming parents, they decided in 2010 to move closer to family in Kelowna.

"It was a huge risk and took us a few years to get going," Ashley explains. "The animation industry was just beginning here. There was Disney, then Bardel Animation and The Centre for Arts and Technology was teaching animation. So we were lucky we had lots of existing relationships outside the region to build on."





In 2012 the couple rented space, hired five students from the school and secured their first roster of work with Electronic Arts, producing the heads on the athletes in various games like FIFA, UFC and NHL. “Pretty soon we signed a three year lock-in output deal with Atomic Cartoons for Netflix shows like Rocket Monkeys and Beat Bugs, and that was when it really took off. 2013 to 2016 was pretty mega-scale, scaling up to about 50 employees. Then we expanded again, and by 2019 we had about 160 artists and a 7,000 square foot studio space.”

“Starting out I think we definitely benefited from a blend of support systems with municipal, provincial and federal aid behind us.



While we were scaling up, I worked weekly with advisors looking at different financial models and how to handle our operation, which was changing drastically. We also participated on the advisory board of Okanagan College to shape their animation program so it would fit our talent needs and they really supported us in that.”

“Now that we’re a certain size, we benefit from the BC Film and Media Tax Credits (17.5%). There are also unique tax credit bonuses for being in this region (12% Regional + 6% Distance) which gives us a bit of an edge in terms of

our competitors in a tough market, particularly against the overseas studios. The animation industry here is definitely bigger because of our studio. It’s basically grown from zero to one of the mid-sized employers of the area, maybe tripled in size. Now with the pivot in our studio space strategy (they’ve gone 100% mobile since COVID-19), I think it presents more opportunities for ourselves and our staff.”

“Today we’re producing three prime time pilots. Prime time animation is a totally different category in animated content, which is emerging because live action shoots have been discontinued for the foreseeable future. This is where I see huge potential. Then we’re also producing our own animated property, Sweet Tweets, and are in development with a Canadian network for Kick Flip, a girl’s live action sports dramedy to be shot locally.”

“It can be seen as very brave to start a studio here, but it’s also been a very selfless and humbling thing. Todd and I are both really proud and grateful. We feed and build families.”

“A lot of people in the studio now have kids and homes and mortgages and cars and it’s kind of neat, right?”



Where else can they lead a really healthy balanced lifestyle where they animate in the morning, hike in the afternoon and then hop back on at night? “That’s the best part about the lifestyle here. Oh, and the wine. Which every stressed-out entrepreneur needs a lot of.”

“WE WERE ALSO PART OF THE EARLY DAYS OF ACCELERATE OKANAGAN AND THAT DEFINITELY HELPED ME AS AN ENTREPRENEUR.”

—
Ashley Ramsay
Founder & CEO,
Yeti Farm





CONNECTING CANADA'S HEALTHCARE.



Digital healthcare saw a significant boost during the pandemic, with patients connecting directly to their healthcare providers through video and messaging platforms, including Medeo Virtual Care from Kelowna-based QHR.

The innovative healthcare technology company produces a suite of industry-leading products designed to streamline medical practices. Their flagship product is

AccuroEMR, Canada's largest single-platform electronic medical record software.

Mike Checkley, President of QHR and one of the three original developers of AccuroEMR, explains how it came about. "I studied Computer Science right here in the Okanagan. It's been an amazing experience to see it grow from those early days to now the largest tech company in the Okanagan with customers all across the country."

QHR has two more products in market: FreedomRx, an e-prescription management tool for pharmacists, and Pharmacy EMR, which helps pharmacy staff manage their professional services. Both of these are now used in over 1,200 Shoppers Drug Mart pharmacies in Canada, following Loblaw's purchase of QHR in 2016.

QHR currently has 523 employees across Canada, with 368 of those in the Kelowna head office.

"Our market is all across Canada, but from a talent perspective Kelowna continues to deliver," says Checkley. "Kelowna is on the map now, not only as a tourist destination, but also for new business, maturing business, and as a result, career opportunities."



"KELOWNA IS ON THE MAP NOW, NOT ONLY AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, BUT ALSO FOR NEW BUSINESS, MATURING BUSINESS, AND AS A RESULT, CAREER OPPORTUNITIES."

—
Mike Checkley
President,
QHR Technologies



TO PROTECT AND SERVE – ONLINE.

“We have a mission to make the internet a place where everyone is free to share without harassment or abuse,” explains Two Hat Founder and CEO, Chris Priebe. Since 2012, his company’s AI-driven content moderation platform has been identifying and preventing harmful online behaviour, including cyberbullying, abuse, hate speech, violent threats and child exploitation, all while enforcing rules of conduct in online communities.

“Some of the largest companies in the world trust our team to keep their users safe,” Priebe explains.

“We now process over 100 billion human interactions every month. To put it in perspective, that’s six times the reported size of Twitter.”

Two Hat’s success was recognized in 2017 when they were awarded the largest

MITACS cluster grant of over three million dollars to work with universities. “We looked all over Canada for leading universities to partner with, and to our surprise, one of our best has been here at home with UBC Okanagan.” Priebe states.

Most recently, the World Economic Forum selected Two Hat as one of its most promising Technology Pioneers of 2020 for its groundbreaking platform, offering the opportunity to engage with other industry leaders and work with public and private experts.

When asked about the infrastructure in place to help get his organization off the ground, Priebe credits the many programs designed to support start-ups here in the Okanagan. “Accelerate Okanagan has definitely been a great friend and



supporter of Two Hat and our mission,” says Priebe. “I was still in my basement when I heard about AO and their programs. They helped us get our first desks, a mentor, community services, as well as legal and accounting firms who volunteered and helped get us set up. It would have cost thousands of dollars to hire any of their services and here they all were giving me amazing deals.”

“WE LOOKED ALL OVER CANADA FOR LEADING UNIVERSITIES TO PARTNER WITH, AND TO OUR SURPRISE, ONE OF OUR BEST HAS BEEN HERE AT HOME WITH UBC OKANAGAN”

—
Chris Priebe
*Founder & CEO,
Two Hat*

/ MEET THE PARTNERS



DRIVING COMMUNITIES FORWARD.

Looking for general information? Statistics? Quarterly Economic Indicators? Industry-specific profiles? Export advice? Business development assistance? Local government connections? Workforce sourcing? Housing prices? Today's temperature? We're your first stop for all this and more.

Our priority is to facilitate the development of a dynamic and sustainable economy in our region by encouraging business investment and supporting existing businesses. With minimum fuss and maximum speed.

We can provide 1 to 1 support on anything you'll need and connect you with anyone you need – from government, industry, business support organizations, and talent. Speaking of talent, we can also help you source, recruit and retain talent with the Okanagan Young Professionals Collective and by connecting you to fresh talent - students, recent grads, young professionals and newcomers - through our Connector program.

investkelowna.com

FACTOIDS

/01
MOST COST COMPETITIVE
REGION FOR BUSINESS IN
THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

KPMG, 2016

/02
THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN
WAS NAMED THE MOST
ENTERPRISING REGION
IN CANADA

The Financial Post, 2016



WHERE BUSINESS MEETS PLEASURE.

Encouraging meetings and conferences is part of our four-season strategy to attract visitors (and businesses) that economically benefit Kelowna and the region. So we support Canada's Business Events strategy by hosting national and international gatherings with specific emphasis on everything you've seen in this magazine. It's a great way to introduce potential businesses to what this area has to offer.

Event planners can lean on us for everything; we'll distribute your RFP to venues, help with site selection, facilitate guest speakers, build agendas, suggest and arrange off-site activities and tours, manage financials, help build promotional materials to attract delegates and provide concierge services where needed.

Want to visit us in person? We'll check you in to one of our many hotels and give you the royal tour and even connect you with local industry ambassadors to give you a better picture of what's happening here.

tourismkelowna.com

/03
KELOWNA WAS RANKED
THE #1 LOWEST COST CITY
FOR BUSINESS IN THE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

KPMG, 2016

/04
KELOWNA – BEST CITY
IN BC TO OPEN A
SMALL BUSINESS

*Canadian Federation of
Small Businesses, 2018*



ACCELERATING INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURS.

Our mission is to give entrepreneurs everything they need to successfully build their technology-driven ventures. Mentorship and coaching for startups, mature companies and everything in between. Our goal is to help businesses grow and create high paying knowledge-based jobs and positive economic and social benefit to the region.

Looking for help or advice? We can support all facets of your business, including finding investors, recruitment, and providing interim office space.

Prefer something more structured? No worries. We offer multiple mentorship programs as well.

Many of the entrepreneurs in this magazine mention us and the help we provided. It was a pleasure working with them. We'd love to help you, too.

accelerateokanagan.com

/05
KELOWNA HAS AN AVERAGE
COMMUTE TIME OF JUST
OVER 19 MINUTES

Census, 2016

/06
KELOWNA WAS THE #1
WESTERN CANADIAN
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INVESTORS IN 2020

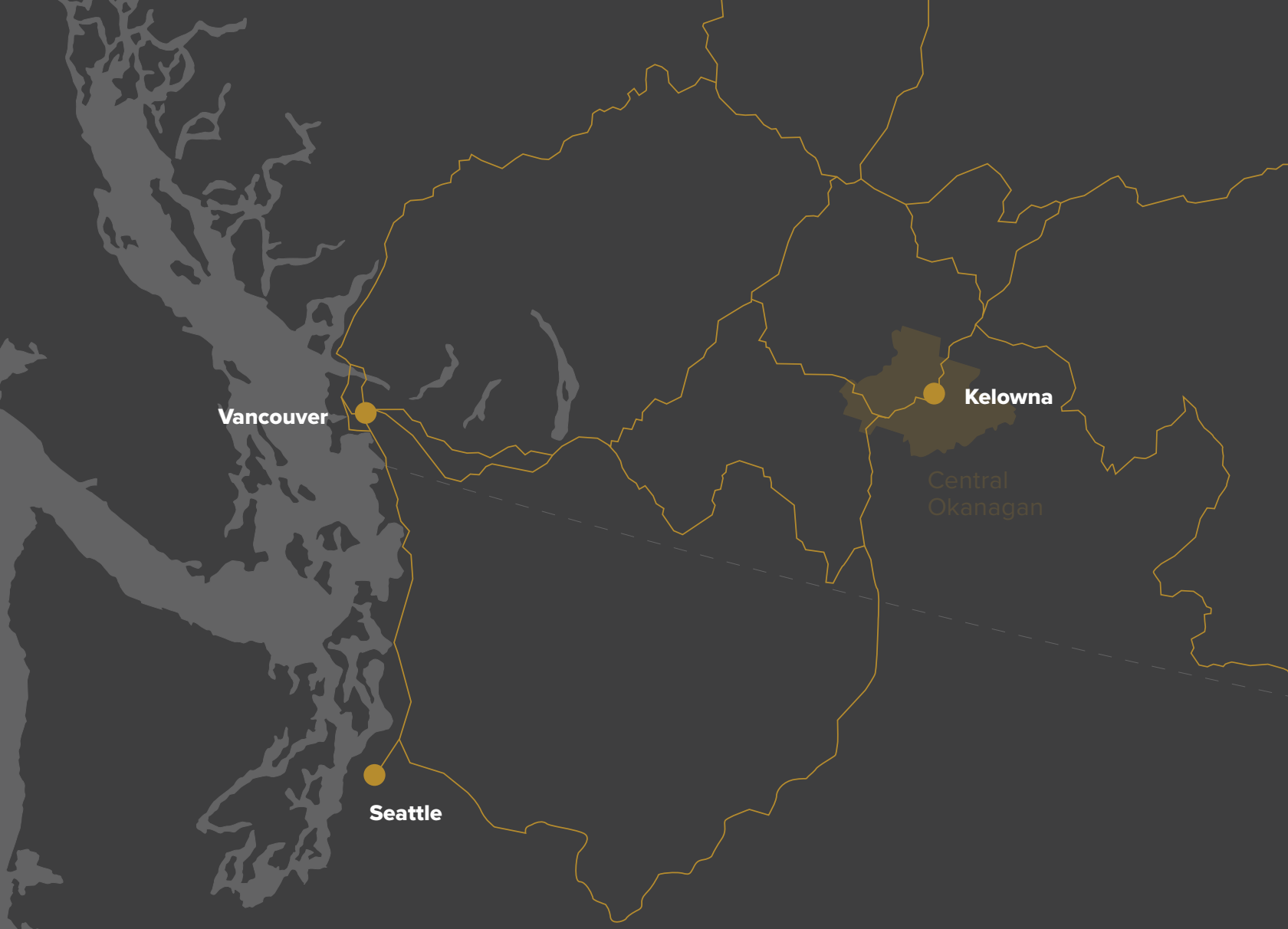
Western Investor, 2019

WE'RE READY.

ARE YOU SET?

OK **GO**

QUESTIONS?
OK-GO.CA



Vancouver

Kelowna

Central Okanagan

Seattle

OK GO

VISIT US AT OK-GO.CA

A PARTNERSHIP OF:

