



YARDSTICK

Issue 3 • July 2020

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

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On the Cover Downtown Winnipeg at Portage and Main.

COVER PHOTO: DOUGLAS LITTLE PHOTOGRAPHY. LEFT: ALL WEATHER WINDOWS. RIGHT: PHU NGUYEN



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MASTHEAD

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IN•NO•VATE

The definition of innovate is to:

- **make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas or products.**
- **introduce (something new, especially a product). “innovating new products, developing existing ones”**

Generally speaking, when people hear the word innovate, big bold ideas come to mind such as the internet, Tesla, smartphones and the list can go on. But innovation in most cases doesn't just happen on the larger scale. Looking back on the past few months, 2020 has taught us that innovation comes in many forms, and at the business level, changing the way we do things, even in seemingly minor ways, is necessary if we want to survive. We need to start visualizing innovation as small changes that we can each make to implement new solutions that will allow us to be successful.

Why is innovation in our industry so important and necessary? It's because we cannot undervalue what the industry means to our communities. We have gathered some very important data about the industry following an economic impact study we commissioned to help the WRLA in its advocacy efforts. Across the Prairies, the building supply dealers sector is a strategically important retail sector with more than 1,300 stores employing 27,000 staff and generating \$7.2 billion in sales in 2019. The sector provided a significant boost to regional gross domestic product (GDP) through its operations.

Our industry will be an important driver of economic activity as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. A boost in sales in the building supply sector generates far more economic value in Canada compared to a boost in sales in other retail sectors, including automotive, appliances, communications equipment and clothing.

As an example of the role that building supply dealers could play in economic recovery, consider the following scenario: If every household in the Prairies spent, on average, an additional \$500 on repair construction activities, it would boost provincial GDP across the three provinces by \$1.5 billion, generate \$938 million in labour income and support 14,800 jobs (direct, indirect and induced).



As we continue to understand the industry's value, we continue to press forward on our advocacy efforts. The more we can showcase our importance to government, the stronger our voice. To learn more on our latest efforts and outcomes, please read my advocacy column on page 16.

Innovation is equally important to the WRLA, and as such, you will be able to read about how we are making changes to support the industry. Once again, the WRLA is here for you and our essential industry.

Liz Kovach
PRESIDENT, WRLA



The stronger our membership, the more we have to offer. Do you have colleagues who are not yet WRLA members? Refer them to join — you could get a \$50 Visa gift card and we all get a stronger voice at the table.

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INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS DURING COVID-19



Innovation and technology: Arguably two of the biggest buzz words used when attempting to grab one's attention and generate interest towards new products, developments or ideas. Both innovation and technology play invaluable roles in each and every aspect of our day-to-day lives. It is also worth mentioning that the two almost always work together symbiotically to create more innovation and technology. They need each other to maintain their perpetual movement forward!

Without spending time on how innovation and technology work together in our industry to bring us new and exciting products or manufacturing methods, year after year, I want to focus on how they have allowed us to maintain businesses profitability throughout this pandemic, and the potential roles they will play into the future.

With the limited amount of face time our outside sales reps have been afforded to connect with their current clients, "new" virtual communication platforms such as Google Meet, GoToMeeting or Zoom have played an integral role in the continuity of our businesses. They have allowed our sales teams to schedule meetings with clients, often one-on-one, while respecting the social distancing guidelines and various other company protocols during this pandemic.

With employees, clients and customers growing more proficient with virtual meeting platforms by the day, employers and business owners are able to reevaluate the necessity of their current place of operations. With the LBM industry holding steady during this pandemic, or dare I say even growing, often with severely reduced staffing numbers entering into their brick-and-mortar location of operations, employers and business owners are studying the efficacy of the once necessary office space used to house their team, and that square footage is translating into massive dollars! If sales are increasing and reps are staying connected to both employers and clients, what is the need for all the office space?

On that front, perhaps never before is having a well-organized, attractive, properly functioning website and social media presence been more important. The ability to access our businesses website, social media accounts and product lines easily, via PCs, tablets and most importantly, smartphones, is imperative to one's success during this time. A world of potential customers are at home, feverishly scrolling their devices for ideas, projects and products. By using digital media technology effectively, the outreach to potential clients that our businesses can achieve is virtually limitless.

If living and working through this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that life afterwards – and the way we conduct our business – will be forever changed. Adapting to new ideas, innovations and technology is no longer optional, it's imperative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Seibert'.

Joel Seibert
CHAIR, WRLA

Adapting to new ideas, innovations and technology is no longer optional, it's imperative.

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If you want to reach the building supply industry in Western Canada, our members are the perfect fit. The Western Retail Lumber Association (WRLA) represents more than 1,100 firms in the building supply industry in Northwestern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon. Our readers are decision makers – CEOs, presidents, vice-presidents, owners and buyers.



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WRLA NEWS

BUILDING SCIENCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY AWARENESS

We are thrilled to introduce our new online course, Building Science and Energy Efficiency Awareness. Designed for anyone in building design, construction and management who want a better understanding of how buildings work, it will provide a solid grounding in the fundamentals of building science, from air movement and moisture management to energy-efficient windows and doors. It will also get you up to speed on National Building Code requirements for new buildings, additions and major alterations.

You'll learn:

- fundamentals of building science – including heat, air and moisture flow
- basics of HVAC systems and HVAC requirements
- how to insulate and seal the building envelope
- various types of building materials and their effectiveness
- energy efficiency of different types of windows and doors
- National Building Code Section 9.36 requirements

The flexible online delivery lets you build knowledge and skills on your own schedule. Following completion of the course, you'll have the foundation needed to assess the energy efficiency and cost performance of various materials, building designs and mechanical systems.

For details and to register:
wrla.org/education

MISSION AND VISION MADE NEW

With the modernizing taking place at the WRLA and the new initiatives we have undertaken, we changed our mission and vision to better reflect our purpose and goals, and lead us into the future.

The new statements are:

OUR MISSION

WRLA is a member-based organization that advocates, connects and educates the building supply industry in Western Canada to facilitate the growth of member businesses.

OUR VISION

We aspire to act as an innovative leader and connecting force in the building industry of Western Canada and for every member to recognize the WRLA as a strategic and collaborative partner in their business prosperity.



AND A NEW NAME

WRLA has changed the name of the buying show to the WRLA Building & Hardware Showcase. This new name better reflects the purpose of the event today as our member businesses and the goals of attendees has grown over the years.

"The show has naturally evolved over the years and we are continuing to adapt and strengthen it to better represent the ways our members do business nowadays. The name change was a much-needed way to capture the growth," says Liz Kovach, WRLA president. "Between the new name and the move to Winnipeg for 2021, a new era is upon us, and members will see these changes are only going to enhance the event they look forward to each year."

WORRY LESS GOLF MORE

WRLA golf tournaments are a chance for members to meet, connect and strengthen relationships with peers. It's also an opportunity to forge new connections and exchange ideas and expertise. With the ongoing uncertainty in our world today, we have implemented a worry-free policy for the following golf events:

- **Saskatoon Golf Tournament** – August 11, 2020
- **Winnipeg Memorial Golf Tournament** – August 19, 2020
- **Calgary Classic Golf Tournament** – September 10, 2020

If a tournament has to be cancelled due to COVID-19, registrations and sponsorships will be refunded or deferred to 2021.

For details and to register: wrla.org/golf





UPSKILL YOURSELF

WRLA is offering multi-level Manual Estimating courses to help you become an expert estimator in the lumber and building supply industry. Starting from the introductory level to an expert on developing estimates for a variety of projects, we have it all.

Don't miss this chance to enhance your knowledge and take a step ahead in your career. Each course will have an exam with a certificate awarded upon completion. Once you have completed all of the courses, you will be awarded a "Professional Estimator" certificate.

To learn more and register:
wrla.org/education

LAST CHANCE! APPLY TODAY

Support your further education with our education grants available for our members and your children. There are only a few days left to apply for 2020 grants. Each grant will be \$1,300 in value and a maximum of 20 grants are available. Don't miss this opportunity. The last date to apply is July 31, 2020. Read all the requirements carefully.

For details and application form: wrla.org/programs/education-grants



Booth sales for the 2021 WRLA Building & Hardware Showcase are now in full swing. You can request to see the floor plan in a one-on-one virtual call with Jess, trade show and events manager to help in space selection.

Exhibitors interested in securing their space should visit our member portal at wrla.org/winnipeg2021 (password protected) or for more information, email jessicac@wrla.org.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Email us at marketing@wrla.org or reach out via social media.



LIMITED TIME SAVINGS OFFER



It has been a difficult year for everyone, and we understand. To help, WRLA is offering a limited time discount on our online Manual Estimating Level 1: Estimating Fundamentals - Decks & Garages course. The reduced price for the course is \$300 (from \$425).

This offer is available only until October 1, 2020.

To learn more and register:
wrla.org/education

MEMBER MONDAY

We have initiated weekly social media posts to thank our members for the great work they are doing in the industry.

Share your own initiatives or offerings with us or tell us about another member who is doing amazing things.

Email marketing@wrla.org with your ideas or suggestions.

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MEMBER CORNER



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WRLA'S COVID-19 ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Thank you for all the kind words about WRLA's advocacy efforts during the crisis. We do this for you, our members, so we are thrilled to know you see and appreciate our hard work.

I wanted to take a moment to say how impressed we have been here at Bissett at the style and relevance of your communications during this time. We are very much aligned in terms of our approach to managing this situation for our people, our customers, and other stakeholders in our business. Thank you!

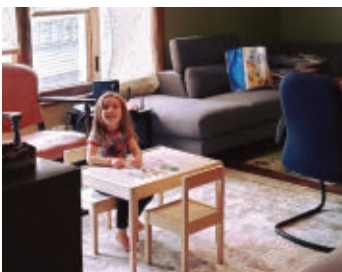
Martin Carsky, Bissett

We are staying busy ensuring we are touching all aspects of our businesses as well as helping communities where we can. I see you are doing much the same and I appreciate all that you and your team do for our industry. Take care and stay well!

Ernie Couillard, Regal Ideas

Just wanted to send you a quick email to say, "Great interview" (Liz Kovach's CTV Winnipeg interview: WRLA urges the government to provide more support to the LBM industry). Thanks for everything you do for us!

Ted Couture, Simpson Strong Tie



Working from home has some advantages and disadvantages... I'm pretty sure my three-year-old secretary is actually my boss. lol

Derek Vine,
Arctic Canada Roofing & Cladding

PROUD MOMENTS

I walked to my desk and thought, "That's weird, my copy of *Vogue* magazine usually doesn't arrive until the end of the month." Excitedly I flipped to the centerfold where *Vogue* normally has hair styling tips, which I read religiously. It was only then I realized that the handsome featured group was the WRLA team... and this is the *Yardstick*. Seriously, I believe you are now producing the *Yardstick* in house.

It looks great and the content is very well done. Congratulations.

If you ever want a distinguished older gentleman for the cover call me... and I'll give you Joel's number.

Steve Buckle,
Sexton Group



We love to shine a light on local talent. Saskatchewan photographer **Paul Chavady's** featured image in the May issue of *Yardstick* was his first published photo ever! (We sent him extra copies for his parents!)





UP NEXT



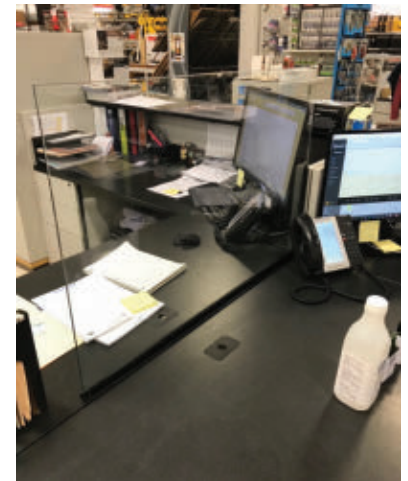
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RAISE YOUR GLASS

ALL WEATHER WINDOWS INNOVATES WITH PROTECTIVE BARRIERS

Tracy Nadiger

With an eye on innovation, All Weather Windows (AWW) had integrated an interior glass offering into their main line of business of windows and doors. Then, COVID-19 hit. Just like other organizations, the pandemic presented many new challenges for the Alberta-based company, but it has also provided many opportunities to help and to innovate.

“As we moved to remote work, redesigned our plant floors to maintain physical distancing requirements and implemented many protocols to protect our employees, the world kept getting smaller and smaller. But people still needed to get groceries, hardware and lumber, and the front-line staff in those essential businesses needed protection to keep the doors open. Our product manager for glass, Josh Stegman is an entrepreneurial type and a true blue ocean thinker,” says Tracy Nadiger, AWW’s director of marketing and customer experience. “So, after seeing two innovative dealer customers that had used our windows as protection barriers on their counters, Josh thought that perhaps our tempered glass could be a better solution.”

In doing their research, the team at AWW realized that although plexiglass – a common material used in personal protection barriers (PPB) – is light and readily available, it is a porous material so it doesn’t stand up well to cleaning agents. Glass, on the other hand, is nonporous, fully recyclable and does not break down with harsh chemical cleaners. Tempered glass provides the added safety component that if it breaks, it will break into small pebbles that are not sharp, so as not to injure anyone.

Knowing glass was a great alternative to the plexiglass barriers, Josh put together an initial concept for PPBs that transforms the interior glass products AWW normally produced for showers, mirrors, partition walls and stair and deck railings, and turns it into a reliable form of protection for front-line staff. Thanks to a large sales team and the use of social media, AWW was able to get the word out to their customer base, dealer members and networks quickly.

“The idea has truly taken off! We have gone from a single piece of glass and some standard hinges to helping design and install personal protective barriers for pharmacies, lumberyard dealers and eyewear locations, as well as providing many other ideas such as barriers for large lunchrooms,” says Nadiger.

AWW has always been known for its innovation in windows but as we navigate a new normal, their innovative nature helped to make life easier for the front lines. The forward-thinking company also made expanders with a 3D printer and donated them to front-line workers to alleviate ear soreness from wearing masks all day.

“All Weather Windows is very proud to be able to help our industry and many other industries survive by helping to keep employees safe during this incredibly difficult time,” says Nadiger.

Above: Protective barriers by All Weather Windows are in use at Insight Medical Imaging in Leduc, Alberta and LBH Building Supplies in St. Albert, Alberta.

LEFT PHOTO: INSIGHT MEDICAL IMAGING. RIGHT: LBH BUILDING SUPPLIES.

SUPPORTING YOU AND THE ECONOMY

Liz Kovach



We continue to move one foot in front of the other during this marathon we call advocacy. COVID-19 threw a mighty wrench into the world and it has created a lot of collateral damage, the economy being one of them. WRLA's goal throughout this time was and continues to be to act as a resource for members, including offering recommendations and assistance in finding incentives to help businesses get back on their feet, inject revenue into local communities and get people back to work so they can also start to rebuild their lives.

To update you, our recommendations made to governments for recovery were acknowledged and received well. While positive discussions have ensued, not being able to accurately communicate the economic impact our members have on local and national economies has been a struggle. We needed to fill that gap and so we commissioned an economic impact survey. This valuable resource will give us a strong story to tell and lend credibility to the industry and WRLA. It will help us foster relationships with government, as well as build a case for them to see us as an important partner in policy development

and conduit of information, and ensure recovery measures implemented involve the LBM industry due to the high impact it has on the GDP, employment numbers and induced local economies.

In addition to advocating to government, it is also part of our organization's mandate to represent the industry to the public. This crisis has provided the opportunity for us to do just that. It was no surprise that e-commerce blew up during the COVID crisis and it has become increasingly important for all businesses to have an e-commerce component if they want to be competitive. Amazon posted significant growth during this time and it made me ask "Why are people shopping on Amazon?" Rather than make the richest CEO in the world richer, we all need to become more conscious about how and where we spend our money, but convenience remains key. If businesses want to compete and continue to be relevant, they need to provide consumers with convenient options, and they need to get their brand top of mind.

To help, the WRLA has developed a campaign to elevate awareness of our member businesses and to drive

the public to support you. Phase one is primarily social media driven, and we hope it can help to rebuild your businesses, create a competitive online presence and educate customers and the public on the importance of shopping local and what that means to our communities. You are welcome to use components of the campaign and add your own logo to share or advertise to your customers. Reach out to marketing@wrla.org for campaign elements.

Just like Rome wasn't built in a day, economic recovery and rebuilding our communities will take time and conscious decision making. Our support local campaign is not intended to be a short-term solution. Rather, we will work with you to evolve it, ensure sustainability and continue to represent the best interest of the industry to the general public, while supporting YOU, our member businesses. The goal is to help drive the importance of supporting local and increase traffic to member retail stores for the long term, and not just for the coming weeks.



HR TECHNOLOGY

THE GATEWAY TO A BETTER BENEFITS EXPERIENCE

Faizal Mitha

66 A digital population cannot be well served by an analog government,” writes the Prime Minister’s advisory committee on the public service.

This is true not only in the Canadian government, but also in the private sector – and especially in human resources. Adopting a technology solution is a large investment that could open an organization up to risks. But it can also reduce costs and improve the way you support and motivate your employees.

Despite this, however, the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR) Canada reports that, to date, Canadian businesses are not investing sufficiently in technology. For example, the process of onboarding is known to involve onerous tasks and plenty of paper, and there is still resistance to introducing a technology solution to streamline the process. The CPHR report cautions that the resistance to technology is likely to lower productivity and render Canada less competitive globally.

Technology doesn’t have to be intimidating. In fact, employers should remember that technology is the gateway to a better experience for everyone. With the ability to present all types of

HR CORNER

benefits plans, maintain eligibility data, integrate with human resources information systems and facilitate necessary reporting and compliance, all in one online portal, a technology solution can remove manual and paper-based processes, reducing administrative headaches and expenses.

IF YOU’RE STILL NOT CONVINCED, CONSIDER THIS:

1 Technology drives the customer experience. In the world of HR, technology can make recruiting, onboarding, learning and communicating easier and faster. HR personnel can then focus on supporting existing employees, so they become happier and more efficient.

2 Technology makes tracking metrics easy. Which benefits are your employees using and which need more support to drive engagement? How long does it take your employees to select and enrol for benefits? Is there a way to streamline that process?

3 Technology helps open the lines of communication between employer and employee. A good benefits plan with great communication will trump a great benefits plan with poor communication. And good technology helps support this.

WHEN INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY, MAKE SURE YOU CONSIDER:

1 Proprietary vs. agnostic system: A proprietary system stores all information under one complete system. It’s very convenient and often less expensive, but you may be stuck with this system – even if you don’t like it – because it may be difficult to move to something else. An agnostic system allows you to choose the best solution for each individual category (i.e., benefits, payroll, HR), but you may have to create systems that link them together.

2 Data security: Because of federal and provincial regulations, it’s easier to house data within Canada than it is to store it elsewhere. Keeping it close to home keeps the data accessible and safe.

3 Costs: Make sure you fully understand the costs per employee, per month, including hidden costs or exclusions.

4 Short-term disruption: Consider the temporary challenges that may arise and how long it will take employees to adjust.

HR technology provides the infrastructure for your entire organization, so it needs to enable your overall benefits strategy and fit your goals, culture and budget.

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Cloverdale Paint

BRAG ABOUT YOUR FAILURES

Paul Sloane

Many organizations in both the public and private sectors suffer from a corporate culture which is risk averse and fearful of failure. People are reluctant to try new things or even to suggest innovations. They remember old stories about colleagues being punished for experiments that failed. They have learned that it is safest to keep a low profile and focus on standard operating procedures. Meanwhile the executive committee is desperately trying to think of ways to make the outfit more agile and innovative.

Changing a culture is a tough challenge but one dramatic action that the leaders can take is to talk about their failures. The CEO might talk about how she took a risk early in her career, how it failed and how she learned a valuable lesson. She might go further and praise an individual in the company for trying something bold that did not succeed. "John's initiative did not work out but we have learned a lot from it and it is just the kind of initiative that we need." People will get the message that it is okay to try

new things and that failure in an honorable endeavor will not automatically lead to blame and retribution.

Leading innovators do this and more – they brag about their failures. The renowned Italian design company Alessi has a display cabinet in its development department. The cabinet contains examples of Alessi's greatest failures, the products that were launched with a great fanfare and then flopped. The cabinet silently sends some powerful messages. We should not get complacent. Success is not guaranteed. Some failures are to be expected if we are going to produce radical new products.

Bessemer Venture Partners is one of the US's oldest and most successful venture capital funds. Its website boasts of the many successful investments it has made in start-ups that went on to stardom. But also on their site is a fascinating page entitled Anti-Portfolio (bvp.com/anti-portfolio). The Anti-Portfolio is a listing of all the great opportunities that Bessemer missed. The list includes Apple, Google, eBay, Intel, FedEx, HP, Intuit and Cisco.

The comments on why the rejection decisions were made at the time make for fascinating reading. It shows great confidence and humility for a successful company to admit to that list of misses.

Every innovative company has a similar list of flops hidden in its history. Nearly all successful executives have made some bad decisions and suffered reverses in their ascent of the corporate ladder. If we can publicize more of these failures, we can let people know that failure is allowable. More than that, it is a necessary consequence of taking bold decisions. If we want to launch radical innovations, then we have to accept that some of them will fail.

The innovative leader follows this mantra: "We celebrate success. We learn from failure. We punish inaction."

Paul Sloane of Destination Innovation, is an author, expert and the UK's top inspirational speaker on lateral thinking and innovation, destination-innovation.com.

DON'T WAIT TO INNOVATE

Jason Duniec



What has been most rewarding for me through my 23 years in our industry is that our efforts combine to build the world we enjoy. We've all witnessed monumental changes in materials, methods and mindsets. These have increased efficiency and effectiveness for what gets built today and tomorrow.

InStone embraces innovation and is always looking to the future. We've been able to adopt, enhance and invent products that have propelled so much of what we do forward. I've had the distinct pleasure of being involved in developing and delivering these innovations to our customers and their markets. What I've observed so often when presenting new and exciting products to market is that for dealers to be successful, they must embrace innovation. Too often during presentations, dealers will try to decline a new product by stating "No one has asked us for this." The frustrating part in hearing this is that we're presenting to retail dealers to then present to their markets, so this presents a serious weakness to our supply chain channel. If a growing number of dealers are strategically waiting to be asked for new and original products, there lies an inherent risk to the chain and the industry.

Customers purchase products to overcome challenges and increase effectiveness and efficiency. Sometimes customers are aware of the challenges and ask for products accordingly. When customers aren't aware of new options to make their projects better, they either plod along as they always have or start seeking alternatives.

As the world continues to get smaller and faster, modern customers are seeking solutions for their projects and problems without asking local dealers. If brick-and-mortar dealers aren't prepared to embrace and provide these products in any capacity, customers will purchase them elsewhere. This will be from a more innovative competitor nearby or an online dealer.

Success with innovative products requires a thirst for knowledge on products and methods to increase the customers' value from stores. Organizationally, successful dealers have kept open minds, which positions them to create opportunities with new and exciting programs. They view their customers, staff and vendors as partners and share successes together. They work in harmony to see what and where the needs are and how to overcome them. Through this culture of understanding and continued education they'll be positioned to minimize the

risks with any new products, and maximize their success by being proactive.

Although "no one has asked" for my thoughts on this, I felt compelled to share my feelings. I'm extremely thankful to work with so many strong dealers that embrace product innovation every day. More than that, I want to encourage more dealers to stop waiting for customers to ask, and to start embracing innovation. We'll all start building better and that's what we all want to do.

Jason Duniec is the national sales manager for InStone Products.



Want to submit an article to Yardstick for consideration? Or have an idea for a column?

Email marketing@wrla.org and we could run your article!

INNOVATIONS THAT ARE RIGHT ON THE MONEY

Lea Currie

Whether it's a brand-new product or the evolution of existing technology, innovation can help businesses be more efficient and effective – and save on the bottom line. Here are a few innovations that can help you modernize and monetize.

1 OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Nowadays, there are open source software programs for just about everything. Open source means the source code is free to users and doesn't come with licensing fees or other restrictions. There are software programs for everything from word processing and programming to photo and video editing. You can save money on costly subscription fees for everyday programs.

2 ELECTRONIC INVOICES/RECEIPTS

Using technology to send invoices and receipts can streamline your business, save money on paper and ink, and eliminate unnecessary paperwork for you and your customers and suppliers. Plus, it can reduce your carbon footprint, so it's a win-win.

3 MOTION SENSOR LIGHTS

Using motion sensor lights – lights that turn on when someone steps in the room and switch off after a certain amount of inactivity – can save money and energy by reducing the amount of time a light is left on in an office, storage room or bathroom when not needed. The switches are cost-effective and easy to install.

4 3D PRINTERS

The last few years have seen a major shift for 3D printers – costs have decreased and the printed item can now come very close to the real thing. These machines are great for businesses to create models or mock-ups to show clients at a fraction of the price.

5 SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the best – and possibly worst – innovations in the 21st century has been the

creation of social media. For business use, it creates a bridge to your clients like we've never seen before. You can reach people, promote your business and keep up to date on what your clients want, at virtually no cost. (To help you get started or to spruce up your social media channels, watch some of our past webinars, including Social Media Content Calendar, Instagram Lowdown and Facebook Refresh for Business. wrla.org/webinars)

6 E-COMMERCE

A website is no longer just a “nice to have” anymore, but a “must have” as more and more people want the ability to shop from the comfort of their home. Reach customers where they want to be while also saving money. Making a website can be relatively easy and inexpensive, while also generating sales with little effort.

7 TABLETS

Tablets are becoming the go-to alternative to laptops as they are cheaper and much more portable. Equipping your sales team, or anyone who travels regularly for work, is much easier and the myriad apps on tablets provides an on-the-go office so transactions can be done efficiently.



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PHOTO: DAN HARPER



BUILDING WINNIPEG EXCITEMENT

TOP 20 MUST DOS IN WINNIPEG DURING THE WRLA BUILDING AND HARDWARE SHOWCASE

Tourism Winnipeg

When the temperature drops, Winnipeg sizzles with unique and memorable experiences celebrated by the likes of *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Globe and Mail*. Winnipeg owns winter, but when you're here you'll see why this city is a stand-out in any season. We offer some equally amazing indoor experiences too. Either way, come early, stay later, but don't miss these must dos.

Two of Winnipeg's architectural marvels Esplanade Riel Bridge and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights create a striking skyline.



DON'T MISS OUT!

1 This town is infamous for its whiteout parties where thousands flood downtown streets to support their favourite hockey team. See why we are one of the loudest rinks in the NHL by checking out a Winnipeg Jets hockey game. Our arena is also a magnet for great concerts and events attracting big name acts such as Paul McCartney, Garth Brooks, Sum 41, Coldplay, Kanye West and Lumineers. Check the schedule of events at bellmtsplace.ca/events.

2 Winning accolades is True North Square's elevated food hall, which is located down the street from the RBC Convention Centre and comfortably connected through the skywalk. It features a top-notch brewery, chef-driven restaurants and kiosks, cocktail bar, café and a high-end grocery, Hargrave St. Market. There are also other great restaurants, pubs and bars to try in this area including Shark Club, Merchant Kitchen, Tavern United and Rudy's Eat and Drink.

3 Tune into Winnipeg's vibrant and diverse music scene. From Burton Cummings and The Guess Who to Neil Young, Chantal Kreviazuk and Christopher Burke-Gaffney, this city has a long history of turning out a lot of A-list singers, songwriters and producers, and it's still going strong. Find classics and up-and-comers at a live event around town (tourismwinnipeg.com/festivals-and-events/live-music).

4 Winnipeg is the culture cradle of Canada for a reason. A lot of renowned actors, artists and designers started their creative journey here. From the Royal Winnipeg Ballet to the Royal Manitoba Theatre and a plethora of galleries, there are plenty of options to explore. Get a complete low-down at tourismwinnipeg.ca/events.

5 Get your poker face on and try your luck at Club Regent Casino or McPhillips Station Casino, where there are plenty of games and restaurants to try as well as live entertainment options. casinosofwinnipeg.com

6 Take your gaming experience to the next level with Canada's first active gaming facility. At Activate Games, you have the chance to be in a video game with more than 150 levels that need to be beat in order to earn stars and get high scores (activate.ca). Or find a more traditional gaming experience at Across the Board Game Café, where you can choose from more than 1,500 board games and enjoy a fully licensed restaurant (acrosstheboardcafe.com).

7 Need to get some frustrations out while having fun? Axe throwing might be just the answer. Set aside two hours, get some instructions and enjoy the traditional Canadian backyard pastime that has moved indoors. badaxethrowing.com

8 The Rec Room also offers four axe-throwing cages, as well as a virtual reality arena and 250-seat full-service restaurant over 40,000 square feet of space. It has more than 50 TV screens across the restaurant as well as two massive screens if there is a major game you want to catch. therecroom.com

9 Have fun while team building as you get your group to try to solve a mystery in a limited timeframe inside one of the exciting escape rooms in the city.



TOP PHOTO: WINNIPEG ART GALLERY / MICHAEL MALTZAN ARCHITECTURE. LEFT: WINNIPEG JETS HOCKEY CLUB. CENTRE: BRYSON OSTEPCHUK. RIGHT: LILY CASTILLO.

10 The Forks is home to some of Winnipeg's best outdoor winter activities. Rent some skates and glide 10 kilometres along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers on the world's coolest skating trail. Take in the equally stunning and completely lit up land trails that wind towards our hockey rink under the iconic WINNIPEG sign. Get a group together and try our made-in-Winnipeg winter game, Croki-curl, which combines our love of curling and crokinole. Enjoy eccentric and whimsical warming huts that dot the area, made from a variety of building materials by famous architects and designers from across the globe. theforks.com

11 The best way to enjoy an après skate is with the locals inside The Forks Market. You can grab a beer or glass of wine from The Common and a bite to eat from a multitude of kiosks. With drink in hand, pick up a gift with a Manitoba flavour for family, friends or kids in the surrounding shops.

12 Want to be inspired? Also located at The Forks is Winnipeg's architectural marvel, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. One of the most photographed spots in our city offers an exploration of human rights exhibits through self-guided strolls in its ever-climbing galleries or take a variety of daily thematic tours. The on-site ERA restaurant whips up contemporary Canadian cuisine using local, sustainable and fair-trade ingredients. humanrights.ca

13 Head over the picturesque Esplanade Riel, our cable-stayed bridge which spans the Red River and connects downtown Winnipeg with our French Quarter in St. Boniface. Check out the great restaurants, pubs and specialty cheese and chocolate shops on Provencher Boulevard. tourismwinnipeg.com/stboniface

14 Do you have what it takes to scale one of Canada's largest ice towers? Many a person has tried to conquer the 20-foot Ice Tower in St. Boniface. It's open to all skill levels and you can even venture out at night as lights flood the ice. cesb.net

15 Cooler temperatures are actually the ideal way to enjoy Thermëa by Nordik Spa-Nature. The newest jewel in Winnipeg's luxury-spa crown, Thermëa brings a bit of Scandinavia to the heart of

Canada. Let the stress soak out of you in outdoor thermal pools, indulge your senses in Finnish saunas, treat yourself to the best in body treatments and massage therapy, then end your visit with some exquisite wining and dining in their robes-only restaurant. When it comes to total relaxation, the folks at Thermëa have thought of everything. thermea.ca

16 Get nose-to-nose with swimming polar bears and other Arctic species at Assiniboine Park Zoo's award-winning Journey to Churchill exhibit. It is the most comprehensive northern species exhibit of its kind in the world. Walk right under polar bears and seals as you make your way through the jaw-dropping Sea Ice Passage tunnel, experience interactive displays and grab a quick bite at the Tundra Grill. assiniboineparkzoo.com

17 Take a drive just outside the city to explore the world's largest snow maze at A Maze in Corn in St. Adolphe, Manitoba. Enjoy warming areas with bonfires, slide down the giant snow mountain, relax in the warming barn or hop on a sleigh ride. cornmaze.ca

18 It's not often you can say you've seen a bison herd inside city limits, but Fort Whyte Alive offers that and so much more. Listen to the crunch of snow as you snowshoe by moonlight at the nature oasis, go tobogganing, check out their songwriter series or sign up for interesting workshops with topics such as open fire-brewing techniques. fortwhyte.org

19 Tour your taste buds at our numerous distilleries, brew pubs, tap rooms and wine lounges. You can walk in off the street and enjoy a pint (tourismwinnipeg.com/eat-and-drink/breweries) or book a tour in advance (winnipeg-tasting-tours.myshopify.com). You won't be disappointed with the options.

20 Be one of the first people among your family and friends to say you strolled through the monumental Inuit Art Centre, opening in late 2020. Designed by LA-based architect, Michael Maltzan, it will hold the largest collection of contemporary Inuit art in the world. Nearly 13,000 pieces across three stories, behind an extensive wall of windows with views to the bustling intersection of St. Mary's and Memorial. inuit.wag.ca



TOP REASONS WHY THE WRLA TEAM IS EXCITED ABOUT WINNIPEG!

1. It is our hometown!
We are proud to show members where the WRLA staff live and work.
2. Exhibitors will love the RBC Convention Centre's indoor loading docks – no cold weather in there.
3. Windows. Lots of windows! Attendees will enjoy the new expansion to the RBC Convention Centre. It includes amazing floor-to-ceiling windows that stream natural light into the event.
4. Sing with me: "I can see clearly now..." The RBC Convention Centre is almost 99% pillar free – no pesky sight lines when booking a booth.
5. Food. it bears repeating but Winnipeggers love food and attendees have great restaurant choices right outside their hotels (and sometimes inside their hotel!).
6. Twelve minutes. That is how long it takes to get from the Winnipeg Richardson Airport to downtown Winnipeg. Trust us, our show manager, Jessica, has been testing this drive for a while.

WINNIPEG RAVES FROM WRLA MEMBERS

We love Winnipeg, but don't just take our word for it. Members are getting excited to be in a new city and some are eager to share their hometown with colleagues and friends.

As a Winnipegger, I'm looking forward to sharing my beautiful city with the rest of the West. Winnipeg has so much more to offer than cold winters and large mosquitoes. The downtown has transformed in the past 15 years – entertainment, food, and hospitality are among Canada's best. Should be a blast!

Winnipeg is a wonderful city to visit with a brand new convention centre for hosting our event. Come check it out and I promise you will not be disappointed.

James Fulcher, Johns Manville

We are looking forward to seeing existing clients but also meeting new potential clients that being in a new city brings. We are looking forward to another great year. With everything going on, we look forward to WRLA show being the kickoff to the 2021 year as we all work together to build a strong year ahead.

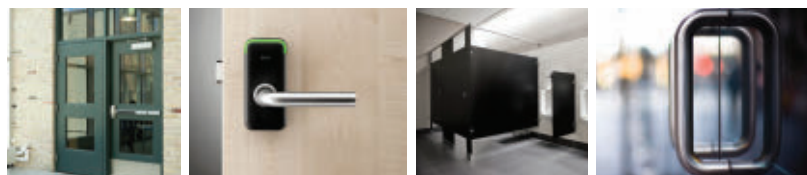
Eric Dalton, DFM West Distribution Inc.

The WRLA is a nationally based association. We've supported Saskatoon and Calgary for years. Let's experience Winnipeg and Friendly Manitoba. Winnipeg's downtown is full of culture and arguably some of the best restaurants in Canada. Did I mention Jeanne's Bakery, The Pancake House or Salisbury House's Nip burgers?!

With the venue having such a good location, it'll bring all of us attending closer together and I think will allow us to meet more lumberyard managers and buying group decision makers. Not to mention you should bring home a Jeanne's "log" cake.

Michael J Morrow, Clopay Corporation

While we hope that life will have returned to normal by January 2021, the WRLA recognizes that some of these activities may not be open or capacity may be limited due to COVID-19. Please check availability with each venue.



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WRLA INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Help us celebrate a strong leader in the LBM industry! The WRLA Industry Achievement Award recognizes a member (past or present) who has contributed to their business, the industry, WRLA and their community.

WRLA SALES REP OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Do you have a sales rep on your team that goes above and beyond? A real team player who does an exceptional job representing your brand and company?

(One award per region: BC, Alberta/Northwest Territories/Nunavut, Saskatchewan and Manitoba/Northwest Ontario.)

Nominate someone today!

DEADLINE: OCTOBER 30, 2020



Details and nomination forms:
wrla.org/events/industry-awards



Rob Hauser
2019 Industry
Achievement
Award winner



2020 BESTS IN SHOW

One of the best parts of any WRLA show is presenting the Best in Show awards. The annual WRLA Building & Hardware Showcase (formerly WRLA Buying Show) has two key awards that are handed out every year: Best Booth and Best New Product. Both accolades bring our members and their products front and centre, highlighting incredible innovation and creativity.

What always feels special about these annual awards is that they are voted on by our members during the two-day show. Our members take the time to single out a product and booth for their uniqueness, and want them to be recognized and celebrated. It is a big deal to those winners when they see that their hard work has paid off and been noticed by their peers.

We look forward to giving out these honours once again in 2021!



Submit a new product for consideration at the 2021 show! Submissions from exhibitors are due on October 30, 2020.

The new product application form is now available online in the member portal at wrla.org/winnipeg2021.

RAISE YOUR GLASSES TO EDGE EYEWEAR

NEVOSA SAFETY GLASSES WIN BEST NEW PRODUCT

Wendi Weaver

While there are plenty of products that turn heads, it's not expected that safety glasses will be one of them. For that reason, winning the best new product award at the WRLA 2020 buying show has Edge Eyewear extremely excited! Their new safety glasses, the Nevosa, have caught the eye of many and are raising the profile of protective equipment in the LBM industry.

"Since 1998, Edge Eyewear has been committed to help create a culture where the use of safety glasses is common. In order to do that we realized that our glasses need to be well made, comfortable, stylish and our lenses need to be free of defects that cause eyestrain and other negative side effects," says Kurt Daems, president of Edge Eyewear.

Knowing that not one pair will work for every user or job, Edge Eyewear strives to design safety glasses that fit multiple head sizes and incorporate lens colours for any application. To make true safety glasses, third-party tests are done regu-

larly for every frame design to ensure each pair conforms to safety standards. With the introduction of the Nevosa, they have created a pair that checks all the boxes.

Just what makes a pair of safety glasses award winning? The Nevosa has a wraparound style frame with the largest base curve ever molded by Edge Eyewear, which translates to better coverage and no peripheral vision impediment. Then thermoplastic rubber was added to the temple arms to enhance comfort and decrease the chances of the glasses sliding off in hot and humid conditions. To get the perfect fit, an adjustable nose piece was included, as well as permanent gaskets on certain models. All of this was done while keeping the overall weight in mind and the result is a pair of glasses that you barely notice you're wearing. And last but not least, they made sure it retails for an affordable price, because eyes aren't protected if the glasses don't ever make it off the shelf.

"But all the design in the world is worthless without partners like WRLA members that supply the masses," says

Wendi Weaver, Edge Eyewear's national Canada sales manager. "In the first year, we've managed to sell almost 25,000 pairs of the Nevosa and the momentum is still on the rise with recognition like we received at the WRLA Buying Show. With this accolade, our reps now have the power to let more people know about our product. Having the backing of the market means that it's no longer us just saying how cool our glass is, we can actually show that the market agrees. What's more, it makes our efforts on social media more effective."

The personal protective equipment (PPE) industry as a whole doesn't tend to receive a large amount of recognition. Some might say that personal protection has been downright boring in the past. Eye protection in particular is something many see as a necessary evil. Often, once out in the real world with no safety director nearby, many people tend to forget (sometimes on purpose) to wear safety glasses. While working on large projects, it's easier to acknowledge potential dangers and expect something to go wrong, and want to



Liz Kovach, WRLA president (left), and Randy Martin (right) from Timbermart, sponsor of the awards, present the Best New Product award to Wendi Weaver of Edge Eyewear.



protect ourselves accordingly. However, it's those smaller tasks that take little time or don't seem to present huge risk that often don't receive the same amount of caution. To combat this mentality, Edge Eyewear is doing their part to reach all ages and teach them about the importance of using safety eyewear on AND off the job.

"Social media is quickly becoming a huge part of our education strategy as well and with partners like WRLA sharing our content, we can make sure that our message and cause goes much further than we will ever see on our own," says Weaver. "We can't thank WRLA enough for highlighting our achievement. It's been very exhilarating to see the PPE industry take notice and respond so positively to our efforts. This will contribute to our drive to design more innovative eyewear, and ultimately it helps towards our goal of protecting eyesight for more people."

And that's something we can all see eye to eye on.

edgeeyewear.com



In the first year, we've managed to sell almost 25,000 pairs of the Nevosa and the momentum is still on the rise with recognition like we received at the WRLA buying show.

ISLAND PARADISE

INSTONE PRODUCTS WINS BEST BOOTH WITH TIKI HUT DESIGN AND REVOLUTIONARY DECKING

Dustin Wilson

Dealers have a lot of people and products to see at the WRLA buying show, so when InStone Products was planning their 2020 booth, they wanted a fun and inviting way to encourage dealers to spend a little extra time talking to them, especially about their new product, LANAI Premium Plank Decking. Since the LANAI brand is tropical themed, what better way to lure them in than with a tiki-themed booth and drink station? Maybe it was the margaritas talking, but the tiki hut won over the dealers, earning the title of Best Booth.

"The 2020 WRLA buying show was an important one for InStone as we had improvements and additions to our existing lines, as well as the launch of a new decking line," says Dustin Wilson, president of InStone. "We wanted to make sure the booth conveyed the full idea behind LANAI Premium Plank Decking, our newest product, and one that we're extremely excited about."

As one of the most innovative products to enter the decking world in years, the launch of the revolutionary decking really got the attention of attendees. The product offers a groundbreaking set of features that deliver new technology and design that has never been seen before. It's engineered to look natural, stay cool, resist scratches and staining, prevent slipping, not warp or fade, resist mold and insects, and require no maintenance. The narrower, shorter planks have the look of interior hardwood

and boast "no-see" fasteners for a look that is as beautiful as it is practical. Topped off with a limited lifetime warranty, it's obvious that InStone has created a product that is ready to make waves.

"In over two years of development with LANAI, we always kept two main focuses: our dealers and their customers," says Wilson. "For the dealers, we have addressed logistical, storage and display issues that all affect their bottom line. Our four-foot deck planks are shipped, stored and displayed on a 48x48 pallet. For the consumer, we wanted to offer the look of hardwood flooring with the engineered performance of a four-sided capped premium PVC on the market."

For the first time, the InStone booth design was split. One half revealed the new LANAI decking and the other half showcased InStone's most popular product, Quality Stone, as well as its fast-growing brands Hourwall and AS-IS BRAND Wood Walls. While the tiki hut booth was created with the LANAI brand in mind, InStone took the opportunity to also educate dealers on the features of the other lines used in the booth design. Performance enhancements to the popular Quality Stone line, as well as new colour and accessory options, were much talked about. The Hourwall interior cladding line was highlighted for its standard Class-A poly and enhanced ease of install. AS-IS BRAND Wood Walls stood



Top: Liz Kovach, WRLA president (left) and Randy Martin, vice president of procurement for TimberMart, the award sponsor (right) present InStone's Jason Duniec, national sales manager with the Best Booth award. (InStone president, Dustin Wilson, photobombs the moment.)
Bottom: InStone's Best Booth award.

Maybe it was the margaritas talking, but the tiki hut won over the dealers, earning the title of Best Booth.

TOP PHOTO: PHU NGUYEN. BOTTOM: INSTONE PRODUCTS.



Left: Jason Duniec, national sales manager for InStone Products, embraced the tiki hut theme (and the flowing margaritas).

Below: InStone's popular Quality Stone and their newest LANAI product lines created much buzz at the show.



out as it is the only standard Class-A fire-rated wood wall option on the market. This is something that Wilson feels is overlooked and undervalued in this category, as having safe, reliable options for on-trend walls surfaces is becoming increasingly important to educated consumers and WRLA dealers.

"We work hard to create products that are not only game-changing but also environmentally, socially and economically responsible. We are very proud to supply products that are made with and for a purpose," says Wilson.

InStone is a products design and distribution company with a simple goal: to create and deliver innovative, high-quality and very accessible products.

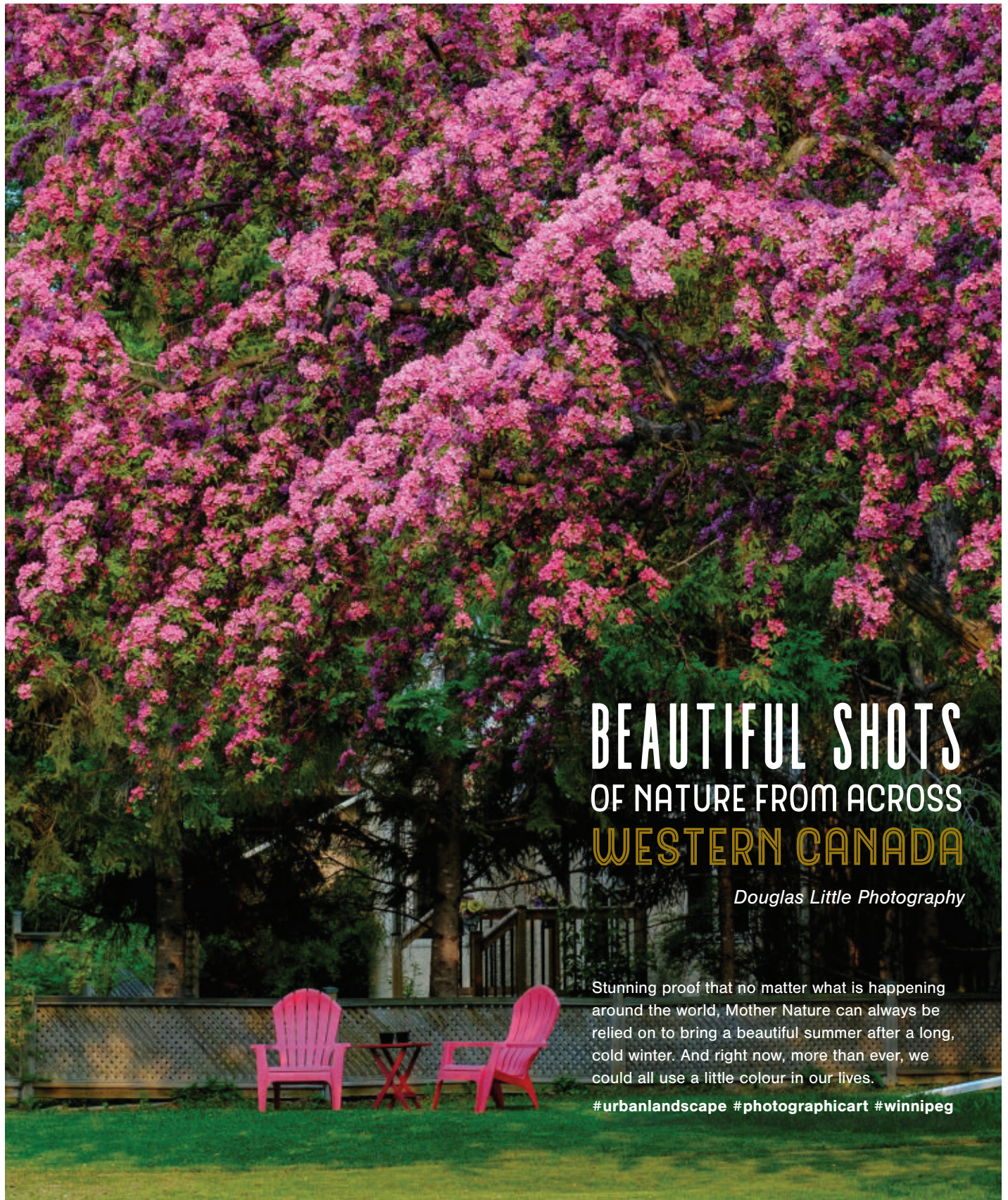
"We've been doing this for the past 15 years, including 13 years with the WRLA. We've been a family-run business since day one with our sales, marketing, admin and support team truly being part of this family. Our collective passion for the industry, our products and our customers continues to grow. We are fortunate to develop products we love, most of which were born from listening to our dealers'

needs and input," says Wilson.

In this increasingly competitive market, InStone is always focused on product improvements and innovation to continue adding value for dealers and their customers.

The 2020 WRLA buying show saw many incredible booths, so being recognized by the industry means a lot to Wilson and the team at InStone. "It further validates our passion for our products and keeps propelling us forward."

instoneproducts.ca



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