

Business Profile

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Newsletter of the Business License Program of the City of Saskatoon



A PDF version of this publication is available online at www.saskatoon.ca/go/businesslicense.

If you would like us to email it to you, contact business.license@saskatoon.ca.

Inside this issue:

The Beginning of 100 Years of Business.....	2
Early Industry Ideas	3
Saskatoon's Business Licensing Evolution	3
A 100-Year Tradition: Great Western Furniture Company	4
More Great Saskatoon Traditions ..	4
Evolution of Saskatoon Shopping	5
Future Business Waves	6
High "Light" Technology.....	6
More Home Based Businesses....	6
The Power of Networking	7
Still Need to Know More?.....	8
Brewing Up Business.....	8

The City of Saskatoon will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2006. In honour of our centenary, the City of Saskatoon's Business License Program is dedicating this *Business Profile* to the commemoration of the past 100 years of business in Saskatoon.

Since 1906, the City of Saskatoon has grown from a population of 4,000 to over 206,000 residents. Today, Saskatoon boasts over 7,258 licensed businesses operating within city limits. From its agricultural roots to the development of high-tech industries, the type and number of businesses have changed dramatically over the years. This edition of *Business Profile* will reflect on the evolution of our business community, honour some of Saskatoon's long-standing businesses and institutions, and highlight new business developments, including our high-profile technology sector. 



Looking north along 2nd Avenue: top, early 1900s (photo #LH84141 courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room), and bottom, 2005 (photo courtesy of the City of Saskatoon).



Saskatoon has come a long way since its incorporation almost 100 years ago. Let's make this the best centennial celebration year ever!

For more information about Saskatoon's centennial celebrations, visit the website:

www.saskatoon100.ca

The Beginning of 100 Years of Business

Saskatoon was incorporated as a City in 1906, amalgamating the villages of Saskatoon, Nutana, and Riversdale. Figure 1 compares the original boundaries to today's civic boundaries.

In 1906, the City was thriving, largely due to the strength of the agricultural sector. Evidence of this came in 1909 when Saskatoon was selected as the site for the University of Saskatchewan, which had been established by the Legislature in 1907. From the beginning, the Board of Governors wanted the university to offer special instruction in agriculture—a perfect fit for Saskatoon.

The land set aside for the university extended past the 1906 charter boundaries. However, with the fast growth of the city, it was only five years after incorporation when the boundaries of Saskatoon were extended beyond the university.

Although Saskatoon has grown into a large urban centre, Saskatoon's economy continues to be deeply rooted in the agricultural sector and many businesses continue to support this industry.

Table 1 offers a glimpse of business activities in 1906 compared to 2005. 📊



Figure 1: Saskatoon City Limits—Then (1906) and Now (2005)

Table 1: Comparison of Business Activities from 1906 and 2005

Business Type	1906	2005
Chartered Banks	6	52
Hotels	8	25
Blacksmiths	10	0
Furniture Stores	2	48
Restaurants	8	438
Livery and Feed Stables	5	0
Contractors	25	770
Physicians/Physician Offices	6	93
Hardware Stores	7	64
Dentists/Dentist Offices	3	77
Bakeries	2	10
Barbers/Hair Salons	6	200
Veterinary Surgeons/Veterinary Offices	2	12
Grain Elevators	3	2
Computer Related Businesses	0	232

Source: Henderson's Saskatoon Directory

Did you know?

- Saskatoon's first daily paper, the *Phoenix*, converted from a weekly to a daily the same year Saskatoon incorporated. Before then, residents had to rely on Winnipeg and Vancouver newspapers to keep up with current affairs. The news was always a day behind because of the distance the papers were transported.
- If you opened a second hand store in 1914 you had to provide a bond of \$400 to ensure that good order and rule was kept in your shop—this meant no gambling was allowed.
- Other types of businesses that were required to provide a bond when applying for a business license were detective agencies (\$100), electricians (\$300), house movers (\$350), and pawnbrokers (\$500).

Early Industrial Ideas

In 1912, an industrial city was proposed for the area where Silverwood Heights exists today. It was called “Factoria” and the plan, developed and promoted by Robert E. Glass, was implemented sufficiently for several businesses to begin operations. They included a hotel, restaurant, flour mill, farm implement company, bottling works, brick company, and saw mill.

The dream of Factoria—promoted as a “magic city”—was never fully realized due to several factors. The City would not provide electricity to Factoria and the financial stress of trying to implement this infrastructure took its toll on the developers. The depression then set in and World War I soon followed.

Other “satellite” towns had also been planned for Saskatoon. Lots were even sold for a subdivision called “Mackenzie,” however, the plan never came to fruition and speculators and real estate connoisseurs were never able to cash in.

Before 1930, industrial areas were often located adjacent to residential areas that are near railway lines. This proximity made it convenient for people to walk to work, while businesses could have easy access to the railways. However, this has resulted in some land use conflicts.

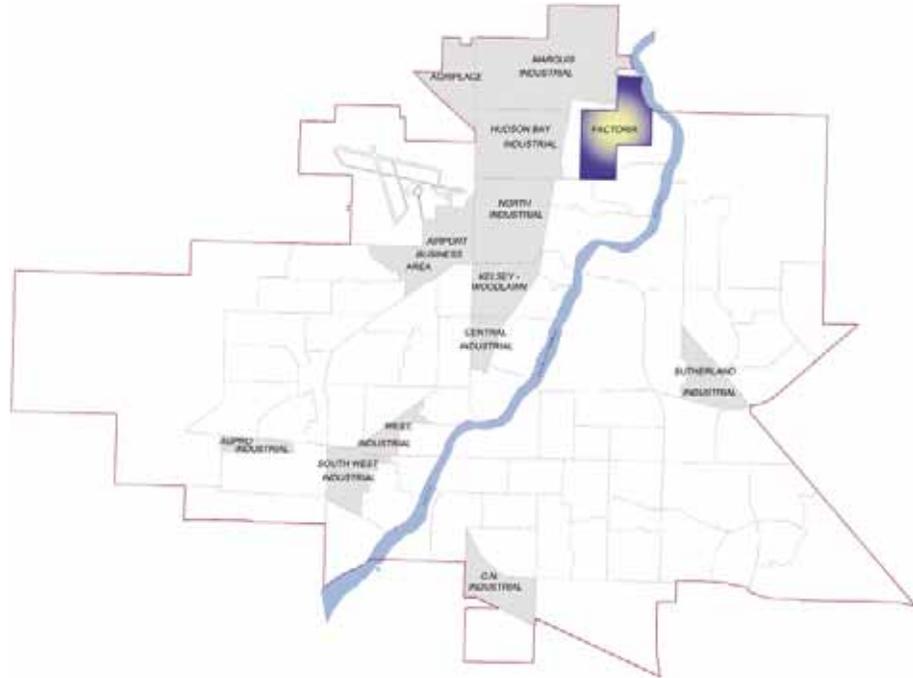


Figure 2: Industrial Areas in 2005 and the Former Factoria Industrial Site, now Silverwood Heights.

Today’s industrial areas are specifically dedicated to industrial uses. This helps to separate incompatible uses and minimize the potential for land use conflicts.

Figure 2 highlights the current industrial areas for the city of Saskatoon as well as the proposed Factoria Industrial subdivision from 1912.



Factoria ads (above) featured in the *Saskatoon Phoenix* in early 1913.

Saskatoon’s Business Licensing Evolution

The current business license bylaw varies significantly from the licensing bylaws of the past 100 years. Originally, the cost of a business license varied according to the type of business. The business license bylaw from 1914 contained over 70 different types of businesses and their related fees. Later, the license fee was calculated according to the floor area and collected as a business tax.

The present system of standard fees was implemented in the mid-90s. The current Business Licence Bylaw distinguishes between 12 different areas of business, and the license fees have remained unchanged since 1997.

Did you know?

- In 1914, the business licensing inspector would only grant a license if the applicant had a good reputation.
- The first zoning bylaw, approved in 1930, separated the city into seven districts. Currently, Saskatoon has 42. Business licensing ensures consistency between land uses and building regulations within these districts.

A One-Hundred-Year Tradition: Great Western Furniture Company



Great Western Furniture Company, located next to J.H.C. Willoughby on 21st Street East, in the early 1900s. Photo #PH200214051 courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.



Great Western Furniture Company, 2005—a self proclaimed “Mom and Pop shop.” Photo courtesy of the City of Saskatoon.

As we celebrate Saskatoon’s 100th birthday in 2006, let us commemorate some of the amazing companies who have contributed to our city’s history over the past 100 years.

One of those companies, a year older than Saskatoon, is the Great Western Furniture Company located at 417–20th Street West.

This furniture store was originally purchased by Drinkle and Nelson in 1905. In the early years, it was primarily housed at locations within the Central Business District; many may remember its location in the old Bowman Brothers building at 234–20th Street East. It was

Did you know?

- The Great Western Furniture Company was the first in Saskatoon to offer its customers “two years to pay,” a marketing technique used by many furniture stores today.
- The Great Western Furniture Company was the first furniture store in Saskatoon to employ interior decorators.

in this building in February 1971 that a fire destroyed the store.

After the fire, the store was relocated to Hi-Grade Furniture, Great Western Furniture’s daughter company, where it remains today. Mary Kohanski and her husband Walter were both employees of the store at the time; Mary recalls her starting wage in the 1950s was 75 cents an hour. Mary and Walter bought the business in 1972.

The company’s current location was once referred to as “Furniture Row,” because there were five furniture stores within three blocks.

“People came to 20th street to buy furniture,” says Mary. 🍀

More Great Saskatoon Traditions

There are a number of important businesses that have been around for almost all of Saskatoon’s 100-year history. *Business Profile* would like to recognize some of these historic institutions.

Early’s Farm and Garden Centre Inc.

Founded in 1907 by S.A. Early, it was originally called S.A. Early and Co. and evolved into Early’s Farm and Garden Centre.

Saskatoon Business College

This college opened in June 1907. There were 25 students enrolled in the first year, currently there is an enrolment of 200.

Butler Byers Insurance

This family-run business started in 1907. Four generations have been involved in the company over the last 98 years.

The Senator Hotel (Flanagan Hotel)

Built in 1907–08, the Senator Hotel was originally called the Flanagan Hotel. The name was changed in 1940.

Butler Byers ad (right) from the *Saskatoon the Beautiful: Celebrating its Diamond Jubilee* book published in 1966 by Western Canada Publishers Ltd.

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J. M. BYERS 1907-1966 W. I. BYERS

Evolution of Saskatoon Shopping

The first shopping centre in Saskatoon was the Churchill Shopping Centre at Clarence Avenue and Taylor Street. It opened in 1957 and featured a grocery store, hardware store, children's and ladies' clothing store, drug store, coffee shop, and more. The Grosvenor Park Shopping Centre opened soon after and, in the early 1970s, the Cumberland Shopping Centre and Westgate Plaza were developed. These shopping centres were referred to as "strip malls" and they continue to provide one-stop shopping in these neighbourhoods today.

Saskatoon's first enclosed shopping mall was Market Mall, which opened in 1966. At the time, the *StarPhoenix* promoted the mall's ability to "guarantee shoppers protection from Saskatchewan weather the year round as they wander from store to store."

It was the opening of Saskatoon's second enclosed mall, however, that proved to be an historic event for the City. The dream of the Midtown Plaza emerged in 1963 when CN Railway relocated their station and facilities from the downtown area to make way

for new development. The clearing was not a small feat—miles of tracks, several older structures and a pedestrian overpass were all removed. The day before the official opening of the Plaza in 1970, the CN placed a half page ad in the *StarPhoenix* to express that, "CN is proud of Midtown Plaza and of its role in making it happen. Saskatoon is one of many Canadian cities where CN urban development has helped turn an old downtown into a new one."

Saskatoon's newest shopping evolution, Preston Crossing, is a large-format retail development that opened in 2002. The development features over 300,000 square feet of retail space.

Retail outlets may be getting larger and their offerings more diverse, however, they continue to serve many of the same shopping needs. In fact, the new mega-retailers often try to meet all of a shopper's needs under one roof. 🌿



Preston Crossing (above), a large-format retail development opened in 2002.

The Churchill Shopping Centre (right), opened in 1957, was Saskatoon's first shopping centre.



Landa Auto Body Works Ltd.

Originally started as a blacksmith shop in 1908, Landa Auto Body has evolved over the years and now specializes in auto body repair.

Other notable businesses

- Coad's Drug Store, 1910
- Saskatoon Funeral Company, 1910
- Caswell's, 1911
- Barry Hotel, 1913
- Arthur Rose Cleaners, 1913
- City Carpet Cleaning, 1914



Landa Auto Body has gone from producing buggies and wagons to specializing in auto body repair. Photo left (#QC3732), circa 1966, courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room. In 2005, Landa Auto Body is still operating from its original location on Avenue C. Photo right courtesy of the City of Saskatoon.

Future Business Waves

6

In 1926, the *Daily Star* commented on Saskatoon's agrarian roots: "Practically all industries located in Saskatoon are related to or dependent upon agriculture, consequently the industrial development of the province is largely a reflux on our agricultural development."

Although this passage still rings true today, Saskatoon has adopted a wider frame of reference. The Saskatchewan Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA) reports that Saskatoon has 30 percent of the nation's agricultural biotechnology industry and boasts more than 30 biotechnology firms.

Saskatoon, now referred to as Canada's "Science City," has established major research and technologically advanced facilities that put it on the map as a highly competitive economic centre.

Also, with the advancement of technology, businesses are afforded greater flexibility in terms of where they can locate. An increase in home based businesses attests to this fact. 🍃

More Home Based Businesses

One major change in the way entrepreneurs do business in Saskatoon can be seen through the rise in home based business license applications through the Business License Program. This is a current trend prevalent throughout many communities across Canada.

Cindy LaBrash, a long-time Saskatoon resident, and her business partner, Michelle Androsoff, operate a home based special events planning business called Events in 'Toon.

"The reason I chose to start my own home based business in Saskatoon is because I had an interest in event planning," says LeBrash. "So, it seemed logical to start and work my way up. Plus, my business is a 'soft service' that does not require a public place to work out of.

"The greatest benefit of operating a business out of my home is the flexibility I enjoy. The encouragement I would give to Saskatoon residents who are contemplating opening their own home based businesses is that owning your own business gives you a sense of accomplishment, and its enjoyable being able to make your own decisions." 🍃

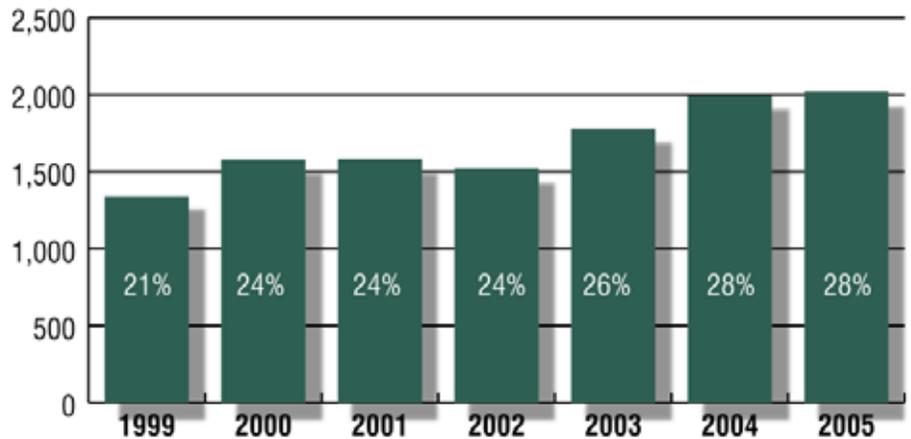


Figure 3: Total Home Based Businesses, 1999–2005. Percentage of total licensed businesses indicated.

High "Light" Technology

Saskatoon's newest business wave has come from one of Saskatoon's oldest, most revered institutions—the University of Saskatchewan. Established in 1907, this prominent facility fosters the growth and advancement of Saskatoon's high-tech sector.

One of Saskatoon's newest amenities is the Canadian Light Source (CLS), a national synchrotron facility located on the University of Saskatchewan campus. Officially opened in October 2004, the synchrotron is the first of its kind in Canada. It allows scientists to research matter at a microscopic size.

According to sources at the CLS, initial research will focus on the following areas: biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and medicine; mining, natural resources, and the environment; and advanced materials, information technologies, and micro systems.

Economic spin-off will result from thousands of researchers and companies coming not only

from other parts of Canada, but from all over the world to use the Saskatoon facility every year. The first company to sign a contract with the CLS is Synodon Inc. of Edmonton. They are a remote sensing company that will be using the synchrotron to help refine their airborne sensor system, called realSens, which detects leaks in natural gas pipelines. The company already has a working lab model and, with the research being done at the CLS, they hope to have the actual working device operational in the summer of 2006.

According to the co-owner of Synodon, Doug Miller, whose office is located at Innovation Place, the contract signed with the CLS is open ended, with hope that research in their area of expertise can continue in the future. Doug says, it's important for companies like his to take advantage of the opportunities occurring in Saskatoon—if they are not aggressive in using the infrastructure at Innovation Place, someone else will be.



The Power of Networking

Another leader in generating economic spin-off for Saskatoon is the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), the University of Saskatchewan's internationally renowned research facility.

A major expansion of the VIDO facility, completed in August 2003, included the construction of a three-storey laboratory complex featuring a series of open concept laboratories, offices, and meeting and conference areas. The \$14.9M project was designed to support VIDO's research into new and emerging infectious diseases and the measures to counteract these diseases for both humans and animals. An additional \$4M was spent on world-class equipment and support technologies.

Originally developed as a research facility to study veterinary infectious diseases, VIDO has evolved to include the study of human diseases. This was a natural progression as 50 percent of all human diseases and 79 percent of new or re-emerging diseases have a link to animals.

To assist in both animal and human health research on current and emerging infectious diseases, VIDO is collaborating with the College of Medicine and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine to develop the International Vaccine Centre (Inter-Vac). When it is completed in 2009, this state-of-the-art bio-containment facility will be one of the largest vaccine research laboratories in North America.

Over the years, VIDO has developed an international reputation that has allowed it to create long-term relationships with other organizations. According to the director, Lorne Babiuk, a synergy of compatibility and need allows VIDO to assist other companies to emerge in or relocate to Saskatoon. One such company is Inimex Pharmaceutical.

Inimex set up its veterinary branch, Inimex Veterinary Research, in Saskatoon in order to collaborate with VIDO. Using technology to stimulate the innate immune system, Inimex is developing innovative veterinary medicines to overcome drug resistance resulting from the overuse of antibiotics.

According to Babiuk, the claim that Saskatoon is a "Science City" is a reality. "The size of the city compared to the number of science-based companies is phenomenal, and the linkages between them are remarkable."

In order for expansion of the high-tech sector to continue in Saskatoon, Babiuk says it is important to ensure investment and collaboration continue to be encouraged.

Because it is located on the U of S campus in Saskatoon, VIDO benefits from the best of both worlds—industry and academia. In the end, Babiuk says success comes from "what you make of the opportunities." And Saskatoon has a lot of them. 

VIDO image courtesy of the Facilities Management Division at the University of Saskatchewan.



Still Need to Know More?

If you would like more information about some of the stories featured in this centennial edition of *Business Profile*, you may want to begin with the following resources:

- **The City of Saskatoon Archives** preserves, maintains, and provides access to the historical records of the City of Saskatoon and its predecessor bodies, as well as to the records of significant individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Reference inquiries are welcome in person (Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm), by phone (306-975-7811), email (Jeff.O'Brien@saskatoon.ca), or mail (88–24th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0K4). For more information, see their website at www.saskatoon.ca/org/clerks_office/archives/archives.asp.
- **The Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room** has an extensive collection of photographs, clippings, and other materials about Saskatoon. They are located at 311–3rd Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J6. Phone 306-975-7558, email lhstaff@publib.saskatoon.sk.ca, or go to their website www.saskatoonlibrary.ca/html/morrison_lhr.html.
- **The Saskatoon StarPhoenix**, 204–5th Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK S7K 2P1, phone 306-657-6336.
- **The Canadian Light Source (CLS)**, Canada's national facility for synchrotron research (www.lightsource.ca).

Brewing Up Business

- Saskatoon's first brewery was the Hoeschen-Wenzler Brewing Company built on the riverbank in 1907–08. It was bought by the Saskatoon Brewing Company in 1914. They survived a nationwide prohibition in 1915 by brewing non-alcoholic beer (Canuck Beer). After prohibition was over, the taps were opened and foam six to seven feet high was said to have flowed down to the river. The company was sold to Labatt Breweries in 1960.
- In 1968, the first drive-in beer take out was opened in Saskatoon. The Saskatoon Hotel on First Avenue South created this first-of-a-kind service that allowed people to “drive up to a special wicket . . . sign the slip and exchange their money for beer, all without leaving the car.” Drive-in beer take out facilities in Saskatoon today—zero.



The Saskatoon Brewing Company (photo #A1652), circa late-1930s, courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.

- The first bar in Saskatoon to allow female patrons was the Sutherland Hotel in 1960, followed by the Yale and Barry Hotels. These establishments were referred to either as mixed pubs or mixed beverage rooms. Saskatoon establishments allowing “companionable drinking partners” today—all of them!
- In 1914, no owner, keeper, or driver of any cab could take passengers who were “of notoriously bad character.”

Happy Birthday Saskatoon

Congratulations to ALL of the businesses that have helped to make Saskatoon what it is today!



- **The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO)** www.vido.org.
- For more information about Saskatoon's centennial celebrations, visit the centennial website: www.saskatoon100.ca
- *Riversdale Businesses: An Historical Sampler* by Arlean McPherson. This research report was prepared for the Heritage Consultant at the City of Saskatoon and published by the City in 1992. It is available at the Saskatoon Public Library.
- *Saskatoon, The Growth of a City* (1974) by William P. Delainey & William A.S. Sarjeant with technical assistance from Wilbur Lepp. It is available at the Saskatoon Public Library.
- *Saskatoon, Hub City of the West: An Illustrated History* (1983) by Gail McConnell. It is available at the Saskatoon Public Library.
- **The Henderson Directories.**

Thank You

The Business License Section would like to extend our appreciation to Lorne Babiuk, Mary Kohanski, Doug Miller, Cindy LaBrash, Jeff O'Brien, and the staff at the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room for their assistance in the development of this special publication.