

SOFTWARE TITANS

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Last week, SEH (South Easthope) Computer Systems Inc. celebrated the move to their new location at 380 Woodstock Street South, Unit 2, in Tavistock with an open house. Having outgrown their original space in a rented house at 87 Woodstock Street South, they now inhabit 5,100 square feet of office space that was completely renovated.

Formerly occupied by D&D Electric Ltd., the building was completely gutted, new floors poured with in-floor heating, high speed network cabling installed, and a layout that provides a comfortable working environment.

SEH Computer Systems Inc. was officially incorporated in 1997 after spending the first eight years of its existence as an in-house software development team within the South Easthope Insurance Company head office in Tavistock. Former SEH Insurance Company manager Ed Pellow hired Mr. Remington in 1989 as one of his computer programmers. He was given the task of coming up with creative ways to implement a data storage and recovery system that the company needed to access client and policy information, statistics and analysis.

What gradually emerged was a complete software package that other companies could acquire for their own needs. These companies were so impressed with the performance, speed and efficiency of the system, word got around, and today, SEH Computer Systems Inc. services sixteen clients from coast to coast.

Out of respect for the parent company, SEH Computer Systems Inc. uses a portion of the compass rose, which points southeast, as their trademark. Company President P. Kevin Remington loves camping and the outdoors, so picking that symbol completes the connection between a new age, computer-based business and the 141-year-old local insurance company that gave the company its start. Their software, marketed under the name "Titan," is an apt name for a hockey town whose minor teams also share that moniker. The brokers and agents portions of the software are called Trail-blazer and Pathfinder, keeping with the pioneering themes admired by the company president. However, with the advancement in technology, internet and Smartphones, these systems are no longer required. Titan now stands on its own with dozens of separate modules available to companies that want to tap into the wealth of information it can process.

Although Mr. Remington has been with SEH Computer Systems Inc. since its inception, it is a relatively young company. In the past few years, there have been many exciting changes in the insurance industry and the company has been changing and growing to meet these new challenges. Through regular consultations with their clients, users give the programmers directions on how to input insurance information and the managers direct the programmers on legislative requirements and statistical requirements.

What has evolved is an unbeatable software package that incorporates policies, premiums, claims, general ledger, investments, imaging, encryption, and many other features. There is no need for extra accounting or reporting packages to be used. SEH Computer Systems Inc. has indeed created the only software that a property and casualty insurance company requires. And

the software is constantly being updated to meet changing needs. The changes in the past few years started with a new direction from management and retooling the developers workstations and tools.

This direction has been aided through Mr. Remington's experience on both sides of the desk. He began as a computer operator at several Kitchener-based insurance companies while attending post-secondary institutions. He worked at Manulife, Equitable Life, and Dominion Life before returning to Manulife as a shift leader. He had attended KCI and Cameron Heights high schools before enrolling in university in Waterloo and Thunder Bay.

He came to Tavistock after reading a 3-line advertisement in the newspaper.

"Twenty-two years later, I'm still here," he said, even though one of the late directors told him he'd probably only be needed a couple of years.

"We run a very lean shop," Mr. Remington stated. Now, with the new facility and a different perspective, SEH Computer Systems Inc. can focus on the research and development their clients require, but can't afford to do on their own. To take the company forward, Mr. Remington has also upgraded his own education by earning his Masters of Science degree through the University of Liverpool in 2006. He also acquired a Masters Certificate in Project Management from the Schulich School of Business, York University, in 2010.

The new facility is also a welcome change for the eight employees who used to share rooms upstairs and downstairs in an older house. They now have their own brightly-lit cubicles or an office. There is a meeting room with projector screen that can accommodate 20 people and a boardroom, receiving area, back-up generators supplying uninterrupted power to the workstations, and an air-conditioned room that houses the company's six computer servers. There is about 7 km of cable throughout the building. The company presently services 16 insurance companies from Calgary, Alberta to St. John's, Newfoundland. They range in size from writing \$1 million to \$30 million in insurance annually.

The company is releasing new products and adding new functionality to its existing ones. "The company is moving ever forward, onward, strong and new," said Mr. Remington, "like the titans of the past."