

HBI pursues growth with Bloom Vertical

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Postmedia Content Works

Taking strategic risks and reaping unprecedented rewards is certainly not unfamiliar to Heritage Business Interiors Inc.

The president, chief executive officer and founder of the company, Mike Taylor, says his favourite adage is, "If you want something you never had before, you need to do something you have never done before."

HBI has, in part, built its business on this core belief.

"With the downturn in Calgary economy over the last two years, I started to look at what other market opportunities or diversification strategies could provide additional growth to our company," says Taylor.

His investigation led him to "vertical farming," which essentially means building up rather than out.

"In benchmarking what is occurring around the world with vertical farming as it relates to global population growth, high-tech indoor greenhouses, reducing inputs and operating footprints — why not introduce this vertical storage application to the Canadian market?" he asks.

As he considered Calgary



Bloom Vertical, a new venture for Heritage Business Interiors, includes, standing, from left, Allan Hansen and Mike Taylor. Seated, from left, are Angus Taylor and Kam Hammad.

Economic Development's diversification initiative on agri-business, as well as the legalization of cannabis for recreational use slated for July 1, 2018, Taylor launched a company called Bloom Vertical.

"This integrated product approach incorporates vertical shelving, LED grow lighting technologies, drip irrigation and carriage mobilization," says Taylor.

"The return on investment for growers increases many times over by taking this vertical approach. It future-proofs the client's investment."

He is partnering with several other local businesses and experts in this venture

to enter what is predicted to be a multi-million-dollar market. HBI's SWAT brand (storage, walls, access raised flooring and technology) was introduced to the market a few years ago and was very successful at incorporating integrated vertical storage into design.

Some of these storage projects include the Calgary Police Service's property evidence warehouse and the University of Calgary's High-Density Library.

HBI employs a team of 34 people in Calgary, including computer-aided design experts, project managers, installers, move management co-ordinators and customer service representatives.

Theatre Calgary carries bold vision into 50th year

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Theatre Calgary might be in its 50th season, but the company is all about the future with a big, bold, audacious outlook.

With a new artistic director, new board chairwoman and relatively new executive director, fresh perspectives and innovative ideas are not in short supply.

"I have the wonderful responsibility of shepherding a new beginning, and I think Theatre Calgary gives our city an opportunity to express itself creatively to the world," says artistic director Stafford Arima.

The theatre company is going to continue to strive to make theatre accessible, reaching deep to plug future theatre-lovers into the dramatic arts.

"We want to keep the theatre relevant to Calgary right here and right now, while also being champions of the arts and all it has to offer in making a city great," says Colleen Smith, executive director of Theatre Calgary.

During this current season, programming is celebrating the people, artists and city that have made Theatre Calgary southern Alberta's largest



Theatre Calgary's executive director Colleen Smith, left, board chairwoman Margo Randles and artistic director Stafford Arima in the renovated Max Bell Theatre.

and longest-running theatre company.

"We want to be civic leaders and a benefit to our city and a contributor to its reputation and its future, and that means evolving with the city and with the times," says Margo Randles, board chairwoman.

This is one of the reasons accessibility has been and will continue to be a significant priority in Theatre Calgary's 50th season and beyond.

It is partnering with Inside Out Theatre's good host program to present an American Sign Language-in-

terpreted performance and a relaxed performance of *A Christmas Carol*.

Theatre Calgary is also partnering with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship to provide 1,000 tickets to new Canadians in Calgary this season, and has also created the first high school in residence at Theatre Calgary, partnering with Western Canada High School.

"We're very proud of our history, including our success and financial sustainability, but we don't intend to maintain the status quo over the next 50 years," adds Randles.

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