

# Groundbreaker

The Official Publication of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association

## FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Views, opinions and insights on  
the direction for our country, region,  
province and communities



# Digging Deep

**Steinbach Hydrovac Ltd. finds success, growth in safety, family values and customer service**

**BY HEATHER HUDSON**

**S**teinbach Hydrovac Ltd. is a family-run business that's grown – and succeeded – in its six years of operation.

It began in 2009, when owners Wayne and Leone Isaac, together with their family, moved to the Steinbach area after selling their cattle farm in Pine River, Man. Not wanting to step on toes or compete with established businesses, they noted that no one in the area was hydro excavating. Looking for a new business to get into, and with a strong mechanical background, they decided to test the waters.

Hydrovacating involves locating and safely unearthing buried cables and other utilities with pressurized water. A rotating nozzle cuts through dirt and sucks up the slurry into a debris tank, exposing utilities without damaging them. In the beginning, the Isaacs took on smaller jobs for homeowners fixing wells, drainage problems and installing weeping tiles to keep basements from flooding.

The hydrovac truck is specially designed to use suction to move materials. It's possible to dig anywhere without ruining people's yards. As contractors got to know the Steinbach Hydrovac name, they were called on for work in apartment complexes and then larger contracts, including with Manitoba Hydro. The fast-growing business has evolved into an on-demand, 24-hour service.

## Family business

For the first year, Wayne's oldest son, Dalys, worked alongside him before moving to Arkansas to farm with his wife's family. To help out with the business, Wayne's middle son, Gerrol, then volunteered to leave his mechanics job with John Deere and join the team. Today, he looks after training workers and maintaining the fleet. Two years in, his youngest

Photos courtesy of Steinbach Hydrovac Ltd.  
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“We look for opportunities where there is a need and work together with our clients to help solve their problems.”

– Wayne Isaac, Owner, Steinbach Hydrovac Ltd.



## MEMBER PROFILE

son, Kirby, joined the team and is the dispatch and operations manager. Leone is also involved in the business.

"She's way more organized than me," Wayne explains. "She gets the flow directed right and keeps everything clean and neat. That's quite a job."

Today, Steinbach Hydrovac Ltd. employs 13 people and owns five trucks.

They've branched out to work in the rail industry, with a set of rail wheels on a hydrovac truck. Noticing a need for kosher washing of food-grade oil tanks led to the start of a smaller company, Water X Industries, a mobile rail washing facility, which adds a new dimension to business.

"We have a contract to wash, food-grade canola oil cars using a system we designed and built and is kosher-certified," Wayne says.

Water X also owns a truck-mounted 80 hp steam boiler for larger steam jobs.

"We look for opportunities where there is a need and work together with our clients to help solve their problems," he says.

## Growth in all directions

The Issacs believe the foundation of the company's continued growth lies in the top-notch safety program they've created, with help from the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA), their conscientious and well-trained employees and their care for the equipment they own.

"Safety is a big thing in our company. We also have newer equipment and we maintain it well so that it performs exactly as it needs to. Our workers take responsibility for their trucks and equipment and it shows," Kirby Issac, dispatch and operations manager, explains.



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One of the company's five hydrovac trucks

The family is committed to customer service and known in the industry for their flexibility, safety record and ability to accommodate just about anything on short notice.

Water X has found its own successes by expanding into new directions for the Manitoba market.

"We saw an opportunity to bring industry standards a little higher and introduce some new ideas and equipment that people have been sourcing from other provinces," Kirby says. "We'd like to have that equipment here in Manitoba and we're working toward that."

While Water X is mainly focused on the rail industry right now, he says they'll eventually get a fleet of trucks to get into emergency response.

"The two companies are equally important," he notes. "Steinbach Hydrovac is the anchor and is at a nice size now. The lines of work support each other and combined with a terrific set of employees Water X is a good fit."

## Future is bright

Plans for the future include going paperless with their safety and dispatching programs starting in 2016.

"Everything will be done wirelessly. Our drivers will have everything they need on their tablets," says Kirby.

Efficiency is the main driver behind this initiative. The company expects they'll reduce office time spent on audits and paperwork and dispatching will be more agile and seamless.

"There will be a live feed on our trucks with GPS, so they know exactly where they're going," notes Kirby.

Bigger projects are on the horizon for both Steinbach Hydrovac and Water X.

Opportunities in the oil and gas industry, as pipelines make their way into Manitoba, are high on the list. With a well-maintained fleet of newer trucks, the Issacs are prepared.

"We're focused on the future and staying on the leading edge as far as safety, integrity and customer service. We want our company to be progressive and bring in new ideas to make things more efficient for our customers," Kirby says.

His father agrees.

"We aim to supply service that our customers can rely on," Wayne explains. "When Hydro calls us in the evening with an emergency, our truck is there before theirs is. I can't see that changing anytime soon." 