

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
FASTEST GROWING
innovative companies
2019



PBN FASTEST GROWING COMPANIES 2019 P. 6



PBN innovative companies 2019 P. 24

Presenting Sponsor

Partner Sponsors



CONGRATULATIONS

2019 Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies



The future **LOOKS BRIGHT** for Rhode Island and Bristol County businesses

CBIZ & MHM is here to help you make the most of the opportunities in front of you. From tax planning to accounting and transaction advisory, we have the expertise you can rely on to navigate your changing environment and achieve your growth objectives.



Accounting | Tax | Advisory

Put one of the nation's top 10 accounting providers to work for you.

401.626.3200 | www.cbiz.com/newengland

Accounting & Auditing* | Tax Services | Accounting Advisory Services |
Cybersecurity & Data Privacy | SOC & Compliance Reporting |
Transaction Advisory | Valuation Services | Retirement & Benefit Plan Services

*MHM (Mayer Hoffman McCann P.C.) is an independent CPA firm that provides audit, review, and attest services, and works closely with CBIZ, a business consulting, tax, and financial services provider.

Success a result of good choices

THERE ARE MANY PATHS to business success, and each of our fastest-growing companies has found its own.



Take Swoogo, the leader in the \$250,000 to \$5 million category. Company founder Leonora Valvo saw that event-planning software was far

behind the times, and based on previous jobs she knew how to fill that niche. A lawsuit by its main competitor – which Valvo had worked for – slowed Swoogo down, but did not stop it from capturing market share, which led to growth of nearly 450% from 2016 to 2018.

NFI Corp. already had a strong presence in high-performance, printed graphics when it opened a New Bedford manufacturing facility. The company has continued to grow, 162.8% from 2016 to 2018 by innovation in product performance and finding new markets.

Case Snow Management Inc. continues to grow – this time 111.7% – by paying attention to its clients' needs and developing solutions that fit the problems.

Shawmut Design and Construction grows – 64.3% in the defined period – by making sure its

employees are engaged, which is made easier because it is entirely employee-owned. And while this aspect of the company certainly boosts interest in its financial performance, perhaps more important to the company culture is that it is “designed to empower our people to do their best,” said local management.

All these winners have lessons for enterprises of any size. You just have to pick the one (or two) that best fit your goals.

One thing we have learned over the years is the support that the region's business community gives to its peers – and even competitors. This year, again, the support of sponsors makes the Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies program work. This year, once again, CBIZ & MHM is our presenting sponsor, while partner sponsors are Cox Business, Gallo|Thomas Insurance and Partridge Snow and Hahn LLP.

Mark S. Murphy
Editor

INDEX

FASTEST GROWING COMPANIES

innovative companies

AQUANIS INC.	26
AVAILABLE STAFFING NETWORK LLC	17
BANKNEWPORT	9
BAYCOAST BANK	8
BELGRAVIA IMPORTS	17
BUILDING ENCLOSURE SCIENCE	22
CASE SNOW MANAGEMENT INC.	12
CHARTWISE MEDICAL SYSTEMS INC.	17
CREATIVE CONNERS INC.	25
FEAST & FETTLE INC.	21
GEM PLUMBING AND HEATING SERVICES LLC	14
GERBS ALLERGY FRIENDLY FOODS	28
IGUS INC.	9
INSPIRE ENVIRONMENTAL	26
INTEGRATED MEDIA GROUP LLC	22
JOHN MATOUK & CO.	13
LAFRANCE HOSPITALITY CORP.	14
LUNIMOUS CREATIVE AGENCY	21
NAVIGANT CREDIT UNION	8
NFI CORP.	16
ORIGINAL BRADFORD SOAP WORKS INC.	29
PARSONSKELLOGG LLC	13
POWERDOCKS LLC	30
PRO-CHANGE BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS INC.	28
PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY	25
RHODE ISLAND INFRASTRUCTURE BANK	27
R.I. ELDER INFO	31
SENSATA TECHNOLOGIES	31
SHAWMUT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION	6
STEEER ENGINEERING INC.	24
SWOOGO	20
THE GARY BALLETO FOUNDATION	30
TRIBALVISION LLC	17
VERTIKAL6	29

To our members and the people of Rhode Island:

Thank you

for helping us become one of
PBN's 2019 Fastest Growing Companies

Navigant
CREDIT UNION

navigantcu.org
401.233.4700

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
FASTEST GROWING
companies 2019 winner

Federally insured by NCUA

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
FASTEST GROWING
innovative companies
2019

SPONSOR MESSAGES

PRESENTING SPONSOR



Congratulations to the 2019 Fastest-Growing & Innovative Companies honorees! We are inspired by your stories of growth and innovation. Your success plays a large role in driving the Rhode Island business environment toward sustained economic improvement and vitality, and we are honored to recognize and celebrate your achievements.

From tax planning to accounting and transaction advisory services, CBIZ & MHM has the expertise you can rely on to navigate your changing environment and achieve your growth objectives.

PARTNER SPONSORS



Cox Business congratulates all the businesses being honored at the PBN's Fastest Growing and Innovative Companies event. Cox Business is honored to be the Internet, voice, video, or premise based security provider for many of these companies and we look forward to tailoring a solution to meet your needs.



Gallo|Thomas is proud to sponsor the 2019 Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies Awards. We congratulate the outstanding group of 2019 honorees and salute your unique attributes and business acumen. Gallo|Thomas is passionate about serving our clients, our employees, and our local community - and delighted to share this special evening with the companies and individuals honored this year.



Partridge Snow & Hahn is pleased to recognize the winners of the Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies Awards. We are proud to call Rhode Island home, and honored to be surrounded by companies that show the dedication, vision and commitment needed to keep Rhode Island in the spotlight for innovation. Congratulations!



THE EXPERIENCE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR™

CONGRATULATIONS TO PBN'S FASTEST GROWING & INNOVATIVE COMPANIES!

Living life in the fast lane is hard. We get it. We also understand how important it is to have lawyers on your team who are always one step ahead. You need lawyers who operate like true business partners; lawyers who work hard to get things done. We can help. Call the lawyers at Partridge Snow & Hahn.

Find the experience you're looking for at psh.com.

**PARTRIDGE
SNOW &
HAHN** LLP

BOSTON | PROVIDENCE | SOUTHCOAST 401-861-8200

Energized by innovative projects

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer



ACCORDING TO PLAN: From left, Assistant Project Manager Taylor Huntly, Superintendent Marty Mendonca, Senior Project Manager Chi Yik and Manager of Project Administration Sharon Barbary unfurl blueprints in the Providence office of Shawmut Design and Construction.
PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

– they allow us to attract and maintain the best people in our industry, which in turn allows us to create world-class experiences for our clients, which in turn makes our clients come back for more.”

Current projects include the completion of a new residence hall at Rhode Island School of Design’s North Hall. Designed by award-winning architect Nader Tehrani, a RISD graduate, and his firm NADAAA, the 43,500-square-foot residence hall can house 153 students on six floors. As part of a larger quad enhancement project, it will feature amenities such as workrooms, bike storage, shared kitchens and an outdoor terrace. The phased renovations of Homer and Nickerson residence halls are next.

In addition to collaborating with partner Brown University and completing more than 200 projects with the school, Shawmut recently completed an all-new Engineering Research Center, a three-story, 80,000-square-foot research building for specialized research facilities for photonics, nanomaterials and environmental science. The design’s goal is to expand research in renewable energy, advanced materials and other areas. Additionally, Shawmut completed renovations to Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. The company is now working on an innovative transformation of the Performing Arts Center for Brown.

Looking toward the future, Shawmut seeks to continue to excel. “There’s one thing that stands out as a goal, and that is to continue making lasting impacts on both our clients and the communities and industry in which we work,” Simoneau said. “For us, that means partnering with our clients to deliver truly exceptional projects, in the community it means partnering to make a difference, and within the industry it means making waves of progress – both in the workplace and within the industry itself.” ■

‘As [a] 100% employee-owned company ... everyone here takes pride in being part of a talent-driven ... organization.’

RON SIMONEAU,
Shawmut Design and Construction vice president

ALTHOUGH EMPLOYEE-OWNED national construction management firm **Shawmut Design and Construction** has offices in Boston, Chicago, New York, Miami, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, its Providence location is just as mighty. Named a fastest-growing company by PBN in 2017 as well as 2019, the company continues to grow exponentially, while maintaining safety, sustainability and philanthropy as top priorities.

Shawmut’s Rhode Island office opened in 1999, and it is celebrating its 20th anniversary. The company has come a long way in the past two decades. It has achieved substantial financial and physical growth, reporting more than \$100 million in revenue annually and retaining more than 100 employees. “In fact, Shawmut Rhode Island reported more than \$169 million in revenue in 2018 alone – showcasing the firm’s incredible presence in the state,” said Ron Simoneau, Shawmut vice president.

Recent clients include prominent organizations such as Rhode Island School of Design, Brown University, Roger Williams University and Providence College. “Shawmut’s employees are energized at bringing our world-class client experience to market,” Simoneau said. “Shawmut has played a critical part in Providence’s I-195 redevelopment, where the firm recently completed the Wexford Innovation Center, now called Point225, and River House apartments – transforming the former Jewelry District into an all-new and vibrant Innovation and Design District.”

Some factors that have attributed to Shawmut’s growth are its employees, culture, leadership and approach. “At Shawmut, we build for the best – our employees

deliver the most complex projects for the region’s most elite brands and institutions. So, our culture is designed to empower our people to do their best. As [a] 100% employee-owned company, our people are the owners. That means everyone here takes pride in being part of a talent-driven and leading-edge organization focused on delivering excellent client service – which ultimately serves our clients with the absolute best experience,” said Simoneau.

Shawmut provides top-of-the-industry benefits, including 100% company-paid health insurance, stock ownership plan, paid family leave and Shawmut Flex, a unique program that allows the employee to work on their own terms. “Collectively, these factors make Shawmut a great place to work for and with

1



SHAWMUT

CEO (or equivalent):
Les Hiscoe

2018 Revenue:
\$169,800,000

2016 Revenue:
103,375,698

Revenue growth:
64.3%



Cox Business is proud to sponsor the 2019 Providence Business News' Fastest Growing and Innovative Companies.

www.CoxBusiness.com

2019 PBN

Innovative Company Award Winner

Defining the Future with:

- Less Water
- Less Packaging
- Lower Carbon Footprint
- Clean Ingredient Lists

Bar Soap to Solid Personal Care



BRADFORD

Branch openings extend BayCoast's footprint

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer

2 BAYCOAST BANK is one of the fastest-growing financial institutions of its kind in southern New England because its reach, which extends across two states, has grown larger.

Last year, Swansea-based BayCoast boasted a total of 18 locations in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. This year, it opened two more. “We added two branches so far in 2019, Berkley [in Massachusetts] in February and Cranston in March,” said Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Nicole M. Almeida. “The bank is expanding into new markets all the time, whether it be a full-service branch or a loan production office.”

The payoff for the expansion shows in the bank’s metrics between June 2018 and June 2019: Total assets increased 13.4%, total net loans grew 16.1%, core deposits climbed 9.4%.

Future plans include opening a new branch in Foxborough, Mass., by the end of the year, she said. “We also opened a new loan office in [Plymouth, Mass.] earlier this summer,” she said. “We have over 450 employees now across the organization, which encompasses BayCoast Bank, BayCoast Mortgage Co., BayCoast Financial Services, Partners Insurance Group, Plimoth Investment Advisors and Priority Funding.” ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Nicholas M. Christ

2018 Revenue:
\$86,110,000

2016 Revenue:
\$62,219,000

Revenue growth:
38.4%

Navigant spreads its roots in R.I.

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer

3 NAVIGANT CREDIT UNION is one of the fastest-growing companies in Rhode Island partly because of its physical expansion across the state.

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Lisa Dandeneau notes that as a result of the Smithfield-based credit union’s strategy to span Rhode Island, it now has 18 branches from Woonsocket to Narragansett.

And that expansion shows in the credit union’s metrics, she said. Navigant has posted impressive three-year annual growth rates in numerous categories. Deposits have risen by 12.6%, loans by 13.6%, net income by 19.9% and number of employees by 9.1%. Navigant remains one of the top two credit unions in the state in terms of total assets, which came in at \$2.3 billion as of June.

Dandeneau credits the efforts of “a disciplined focus strategy and our employees’ dedication to execute that strategy. Our employees understand our mission, our values and they are passionate about doing the right things for our members,” she said. “Our branch expansion and lending strategies have been a very important part of our growth. We are now the leading mortgage lender in Rhode Island.” ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Gary E. Furtado,
CEO and president

2018 Revenue:
\$94,166,012

2016 Revenue:
\$68,831,840

Revenue growth:
36.8%



GEM™

PLUMBING • HEATING
COOLING • ELECTRIC

*Congratulations to our fellow
PBN Fastest Growing & Innovative
Companies!*

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
FASTEST GROWING
companies 2019 winner

PROUDLY PROVIDING HOME, COMMERCIAL,
MECHANICAL & NEW CONSTRUCTION SERVICES!

877.902.1000  AskGem.com

Expansion, acquisitions ensure lasting success

BY KIMBERLEY EDGAR | Contributing Writer

4 **BANKNEWPORT** MARKED its bicentennial this year, sailing to success like never before. That's largely thanks to its knowledgeable, can-do-minded crew committed to customers and community, according to Gregory Derderian, executive vice president, chief financial officer and director of strategic analysis.

He also credited increased brand awareness that – buoyed by successes nearer the bank's headquarters in Newport – stretches south along the Eastern Seaboard to Florida.

"We do have a lot of snowbirds who like to sail," Derderian said.

In 2018, BankNewport expanded into Providence, opening two new branches in the capital city, giving the bank 17 branches in Rhode Island. Another branch is on deck for Johnston this November. Aside from new construction, the bank renovated the Stone Bridge branch in Tiverton last fall and launched new personal-teller technology.

And this spring, BankNewport and subsidiary OceanPoint Insurance made more moves to allow them to thrive over the long-term: In May, they acquired Maryland-based marine-financing company JustBoatLoans by Vertisol Inc. and Paquin Insurance Agency, of Tiverton.

"We're building our legacy for the next 200 years," Derderian said. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Sandra J. Pattie,
CEO and president

2018 Revenue:
\$85,631,551

2016 Revenue:
\$66,528,437

Revenue growth:
28.7%

Bearings maker is a smooth operator

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer

5 **IGUS INC.** HAS more than earned the right to brag about being one of the fastest-growing manufacturing companies in Rhode Island.

The manufacturer of engineered plastics for more than 50 years has seen its sales rise by \$14.3 million between 2017 and 2018 and by \$27.6 million since 2016.

Its business is centered around four main product lines for a variety of industries that focus on the idea of "motion plastics," including its trademarked iglide self-lubricating bearings and DryLin linear bearings and guides.

Igus spokesperson Kayla Abbate said it is the DryLin product line that has expanded the most in recent years because of its unique fit in the industries it serves.

But the greater credit for the company's growth goes to the efforts of its workforce, she said. "In the last five years we have added two levels to our outside sales force to make sure while we are growing, we are adding support for everyone as well," she said. "Each year we add 10-15 new outside salespeople with the hopes that they will go out and discover new business and new markets while keeping our existing customers happy." ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Rick Abbate,
president,
North America

2018 Revenue:
\$133,739,076

2016 Revenue:
\$106,127,373

Revenue growth:
26%



FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$75 MILLION AND ABOVE

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2019 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2018 revenue 2016 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1	Shawmut Design and Construction shawmut.com Les Hiscoe, CEO	3 Davol Square, Suite A275 Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 752-6500	\$169,800,000 \$103,375,698 November	64.3% \$66,424,302	Construction
2	BayCoast Bank baycoastbank.com Nicholas M. Christ, CEO	330 Swansea Mall Drive Swansea, Mass. 02777 (888) 678-7641	\$86,110,000 \$62,219,000 December	38.4% \$23,891,000	Financial services
3	Navigant Credit Union navigantcu.org Gary E. Furtado, CEO and president	1005 Douglas Pike Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 233-4700	\$94,166,012 \$68,831,840 December	36.8% \$25,334,172	Financial services
4	BankNewport banknewport.com Sandra J. Pattie	10 Washington Square Newport, R.I. 02840 (401) 846-3400	\$85,631,551 \$66,528,437 December	28.7% \$19,103,114	Financial services
5	Igus Inc. igus.com Rick Abbate, president, North America	257 Ferris Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02916 (401) 438-2200	\$133,739,076 \$106,127,373 December	26.0% \$27,611,703	Manufacturing
6	Carousel Industries of North America Inc. carouselindustries.com Jeff Gardner, CEO	659 South County Trail Exeter, R.I. 02822 (800) 401-0760	\$535,000,000 \$425,302,792 December	25.8% \$109,697,208	IT services
7	Arden Building Cos. LLC ardeneng.com Robert M. Bolton, CEO	505 Narragansett Park Drive Pawtucket, R.I. 02861 (401) 727-3500	\$168,000,000 \$136,000,000 December	23.5% \$32,000,000	Construction
8	Blount Fine Foods Corp. blountfinefoods.com Todd Blount, president	630 Carrant Road Fall River, Mass. 02720 (774) 888-1300	\$360,754,834 \$293,036,957 September	23.1% \$67,717,877	Manufacturing
9	Dimeo Construction Company dimeo.com Bradford S. Dimeo, president	75 Chapman St. Providence, R.I. 02905 (401) 781-9800	\$540,919,773 \$446,700,000 June	21.1% \$94,219,773	Construction
10	Gilbane Inc. gilbaneco.com Thomas F. Gilbane, CEO and chairman	7 Jackson Walkway Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 456-5800	\$5,834,000,000 \$4,874,000,000 December	19.7% \$960,000,000	Construction and real estate development
11	Bristol County Savings Bank bristolcountysavings.com Patrick J. Murray	35 Broadway Taunton, Mass. 02780 (508) 824-6626	\$95,877,000 \$80,363,000 October	19.3% \$15,514,000	Financial services
12	Thielsch Engineering Inc. thielsch.com Thomas E. Lent	195 Frances Ave. Cranston, R.I. 02910 (401) 467-6454	\$176,138,000 \$156,400,000 December	12.6% \$19,738,000	Engineering
13	Lifespan Corp. lifespan.org Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, president and CEO	167 Point St. Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 444-4000	\$2,290,391,000 \$2,054,066,000 September	11.5% \$236,325,000	Health care
14	Woodard & Curran woodardcurran.com Douglas McKeown, CEO	33 Broad St., Floor 7 Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 273-1007	\$224,194,723 \$205,487,646 December	9.1% \$18,707,077	Engineering, science and operations
15	Ocean State Job Lot oceanstatejoblot.com Marc Perlman, CEO and principal owner; Alan Perlman, principal owner; Steve Aronow, principal owner	375 Commerce Park Road North Kingstown, R.I. 02852 (401) 295-2672	\$685,000,000 \$634,000,000 December	8.0% \$51,000,000	Retail

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1** Blount Fine Foods Corp.
- 2** Carousel Industries of North America Inc.
- 3** Navigant Credit Union
- 4** The Town Dock
- 5** Woodard & Curran

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

NEED A COPY?
To purchase a copy of this list, call (401) 273-2201 or visit PBN.com/lists.html for more information.

WANT TO JOIN?
For more information about participating in PBN's Top Lists, or to make additions or corrections, call (401) 680-4838 or write to Research@PBN.com.

FOOTNOTE
① Lifespan Corp. includes Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital, Newport Hospital, Rhode Island Hospital/Hasbro Children's Hospital and The Miriam Hospital.

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN UPCOMING EVENTS

CONNECT TO OUR BUSINESS NETWORK

88% of PBN readers influence the purchasing decisions of their company*
*CVC Audit, Dec. 2017

- 1. APPLY.
- 2. SPONSOR.
- 3. ATTEND.

OVER 4400 AREA BUSINESS EXECUTIVES ATTENDED PBN EVENTS IN 2018

REGISTER NOW

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN SUMMIT

CYBERSECURITY

Learn how to protect your company

OCT. 11TH 8:30-11:30AM | CROWNE PLAZA

REGISTER NOW

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN SUMMIT

HEALTH CARE

FALL 2019

Hear the latest on this ongoing topic.

OCT. 30TH 8:30-11:30AM | CROWNE PLAZA

WINNERS ANNOUNCED 9/27



PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

2019 AWARDS

We're honoring the best of the best!

NOV. 7TH 5:30-8PM | CROWNE PLAZA

APPLY NOW



PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN SUMMIT

& AWARDS PROGRAM

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

DEC. 5TH 8:30-11:30AM | CROWNE PLAZA

RESERVE NOW

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN BOOK OF LISTS 2020

One Investment Delivers All Year Long

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

401.680.4800 | Advertising@PBN.com

REACH THE PEOPLE THAT COUNT.

Case taking industry by storm

BY PAUL E. KANDARIAN | Contributing Writer



PLANNING AHEAD: Nate Fiske, right, Case Snow Management Inc. regional director of operations, and shop foreman Ken Maynard equip one of the company's trucks with a tablet loaded with Case's management software. PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

and industrial parks, using what Brown-Ayers said is “the largest snow and ice fleet in the country, in terms of equipment.”

A challenge of continuing growth, she said, is “making sure we grow at a rate to maintain our service delivery standards, making sure we continue to put our customers first.”

One more recent area of growth: Expanding into a landscaping division in the last two years.

“A lot of clients on the snow side expressed an interest in bundling snow-removal services and landscaping,” Brown-Ayers said.

One consistency of winter weather is its inconsistency, with record snowfalls one year and a drought of white the year after. Case Snow Management factored that into its business model, she said.

“We have one contract arrangement that’s ‘per push,’ charging a customer per snow event,” she said. “And we also have seasonal flat-rate contracts, looking at the 30-year history of snow in whatever area the customer is in, and coming up with an average rate and charging for that.”

It’s a double-edged snow shovel, she said, in that “when there’s less snow than average, we get the same amount, but if there’s a lot more snow than expected, we get the same amount. But it generally balances out.”

To factor the forecast into the mix, Case uses New Jersey-based WeatherWorks, with dozens of meteorologists providing the company with constant weather updates.

“Last winter, there wasn’t much snow, which was good for everyone – but us,” Brown-Ayers said. “This year, the forecast is for a lot more snow, a more traditional amount.” ■

WHEN WINTER HITS and the snowflakes fly, many people see a whole lot of misery. But to the folks at **Case Snow Management Inc.** in North Attleborough, those flakes may as well be dollar signs.

Case, founded in 2009, has seen steady growth, from nothing at the start to \$43 million in 2018. What started out as a small local snow-and-ice management company has mushroomed to virtually all of the northern states, where winter is anything but manageable for most. Case operates from Alaska to North Carolina and everywhere in between, primarily using gear from heavy-equipment supplier Caterpillar.

Case has been named to Inc. magazine’s Top 5000 every year since 2014. In its 2018 listing, Inc. noted that Case had a three-year growth rate of 255%. That growth has earned Case consistent, year-after-year top-five rankings for the Top 100 Snow and Ice Management Companies in North America in SNOW Magazine, a publication of the Accredited Snow Management Association.

Case utilizes hundreds of sub-contractors, which they call “partners,” across the country, with Case-branded trucks and field Case employees to provide support and backup to their partners wherever they may be, said Holly Brown-Ayers, Case’s marketing manager.

“One thing that’s really helped growth is we’ve honed our customized technology platform to manage all our services in real time, which allows us to see it on GPS and through on-board photography,” Brown-Ayers said. “As the work is being done, we can see it here,

using our customized Case app. We are really devoted to data analytics.”

Case Snow Management has its roots in the J.E. Case Cos., started in 1951, which over the years evolved to include waste disposal and recycling. After successfully growing the snow and ice division of his father’s company, Jason Case, grandson of the J.E. Case founder, started his snow management company in 2009.

“Being so embedded in the snow industry, it was a natural evolution to go national,” Brown-Ayers said about the decision to spread the company’s reach far beyond the Northeast. “Talking to clients on the national level that we’ve dealt with in their local locations, we felt we could address their pain points with our hybrid model.”

Case specializes in commercial properties large and small, such as strip retail centers, stores and office buildings, regional malls, large shopping centers, and office

‘Being so embedded in the snow industry, it was a natural evolution to go national.’

HOLLY BROWN-AYERS,
Case Snow Management Inc. marketing manager

1



CEO (or equivalent):
Jason Case

2018 Revenue:
\$42,241,933

2016 Revenue:
\$19,955,219

Revenue growth:
111.7%

Making a mark in promotional products

BY KIMBERLEY EDGAR | Contributing Writer

2 **BUYING ANOTHER BUSINESS** and the building next door has helped promotional-products provider **ParsonsKellogg LLC** remain in a high-growth pattern.

“There’s plenty to talk about,” said President Thomas P. Kellogg III. “In 2019, we’ve been investing in ourselves to grow.”

For starters, ParsonsKellogg acquired New England’s oldest Nike team dealer, Worcester, Mass.-based Kangaroo Crossing. The company also bought a building neighboring its East Providence headquarters, more than doubling its space to 51,000 square feet.

Likewise, ParsonsKellogg expanded from about 60 to 89 employees to better serve clients such as Citizens Bank, the Boston Beer Co. and several professional sports teams with custom-decorated lifestyle and sports gear from brands such as Nike, Patagonia and Yeti.

And ParsonsKellogg increased its e-commerce footprint, launching three websites.

The company continued rolling out its on-site experiential gift-giving venture, 24 On Tour, which tailors services such as websites and in-person giveaways to support clients at their corporate events.

And ParsonsKellogg’s massive technology overhaul streamlined three incompatible platforms under one Microsoft product. That move is paying dividends.

“We’re more efficient, we’re faster and we’re getting better data,” Kellogg said. ■



PARSONSKELLOGG

CEO (or equivalent):
Thomas P. Kellogg III, president

2018 Revenue:
\$49,795,017

2016 Revenue:
\$27,144,540

Revenue growth:
83.4%

Luxury linens made close to home

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer

3 **JOHN MATOUK & CO.** achieved success by keeping much of its production in the region. The 90-year-old luxury linen manufacturer makes about half of its products at its Fall River facility.

“We manufacture [locally] not because we think it’s the right thing to do, although we do,” said CEO George Matouk Jr. “The real reason is because it gives us a competitive advantage over the other players competing with strictly import models.”

Producing and importing an item from overseas can take 12 to 16 weeks, Matouk said. John Matouk & Co. can make new products daily while offering customers more options for customization.

Diversifying its distribution has also been key. Ten years ago, independent retail stores comprised 70% of the company’s sales. Today, Matouk employs a multichannel distribution strategy, selling to independent retailers, Bloomingdale’s, interior designers, hotels and through its own e-commerce site and the websites of department stores such as Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom.

“We wanted to be responsive to the world we live in now where the consumer is in charge,” Matouk said. “The points of distribution are figuring out how to make the best presentation to that consumer.” ■



CEO (or equivalent):
George Matouk Jr.

2018 Revenue:
\$37,942,000

2016 Revenue:
\$29,325,000

Revenue growth:
29.4%

We’re proud to be named one of the
2019 Fastest Growing Companies

Congratulations to all honorees!



Member FDIC

Family is crucial in making Gem shine

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

4 **GEM PLUMBING AND HEATING SERVICES LLC**'s last 70 years of success has been built through family teamwork and community outreach, delivering quality service via 250 employees staffing 165 trucks.

Pitching in to make the company succeed and grow has been a given for founders Larry Sr. and Gloria Gemma and their nine children, said Larry Gemma, co-president of the company.

"As a family, we all work together, to this day," Gemma said.

Each sibling handles a certain aspect of the company they've adopted as their expertise, an approach that has helped Gem grow into one of the largest service companies in the United States.

Recently, much of the company's growth has been through geographical expansion, Gemma said. Recent expansion includes a Connecticut office, focused on heating, ventilating and air conditioning and big commercial projects, and two offices in Massachusetts opened this year, in Walpole and Wakefield, focused on light commercial construction.

"That market, lately, has just been crazy," Gemma said.

The company has ambitions as a national service firm, Gemma said, a goal it has begun working toward with its recent partnership with a Pennsylvania company. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Eddy Gemma,
Larry Gemma and
Leonard Gemma,
presidents

2018 Revenue:
\$46,006,511

2016 Revenue:
\$36,276,796

Revenue growth:
26.8%

Hotel developer looks to build on opportunities

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

5 **LAFRANCE HOSPITALITY CORP.** began building a hotel, TownePlace Suites Marriott, near White's of Westport in Massachusetts this summer, the latest in a growing hotel portfolio in New England and Florida.

The construction followed additions to the Westport, Mass.-based company's hotel properties, including a Holiday Inn Express in Middletown in 2018, a Residence Inn in North Conway, N.H., in 2017 and Fairfield Inn & Suites in Plymouth, N.H., and Courtyard by Marriott Boston in Littleton, Mass., both in 2016.

The quick addition of properties to the company's lineup is a result of the Lafrance Hospitality's ambitious, shrewd eye on promising properties, said Cameron Camara, Lafrance communications and marketing specialist.

"We're trying to be the first person to that opportunity" when a promising piece of real estate is on the market, Camara said.

Making the properties in its constellation shine like stars is a big part of expansion plans, he said. The new properties are meticulously managed for success with the help of about 705 employees, whom Camara described as dedicated, efficient people.

"That also helped us a lot," Camara said. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Richard Lafrance

2018 Revenue:
\$62,559,578

2016 Revenue:
\$50,165,176

Revenue growth:
24.7%

Driving the *future* through *innovation*.

Sensata Technologies congratulates all recipients of the 2019 Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies of the Year Awards.

Rhode Island, you're a real one.

Swoogo is powered by farm stands, sailing breaks, and a whole lot of Dunkin coffee. Thanks for helping us stay awesome, RI.

Build registration pages. Design event websites. Create event apps. Collect registrant data. Kick back. Have enough mental space to remember all your kids' names for once. **Life's easy over here.**

swoogo.com

FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$25 MILLION TO \$75 MILLION

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2019 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2018 revenue 2016 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1	Case Snow Management Inc. casesnow.com Jason Case	356 John Dietsch Blvd. North Attleborough, Mass. 02763 (508) 837-3110	\$42,241,933 \$19,955,219 June	111.7% \$22,286,714	Snow and ice management
2	ParsonsKellogg LLC parsonskellogg.com Thomas P. Kellogg III, president	2290 Pawtucket Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 438-0650	\$49,795,017 \$27,144,540 December	83.4% \$22,650,477	Sports marketing and premium co-branded merchandise
3	John Matouk & Co. matouk.com George Matouk Jr., CEO	925 Airport Road Fall River, Mass. 02720 (508) 997-3444	\$37,942,000 \$29,325,000 December	29.4% \$8,617,000	Manufacturing
4	Gem Plumbing & Heating Services LLC askgem.com Eddy Gemma; Larry Gemma; Leonard Gemma, presidents	1 Wellington Road Lincoln, R.I. 02864 (401) 867-5309	\$46,006,511 \$36,276,796 December	26.8% \$9,729,715	Plumbing and repair services
5	Lafrance Hospitality Corp. lafrancehospitality.com Richard Lafrance, CEO	P.O. Box 248 Westport, Mass. 02790 (508) 676-7888	\$62,559,578 \$50,165,176 December	24.7% \$12,394,402	Hospitality
6	HopeHealth hopehealthco.org Diana Franchitto	1085 North Main St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 415-4200	\$62,914,005 ^① \$52,556,512 ^① September	19.7% \$10,357,493	Health care
7	Altus Dental Insurance Co. altusdental.com Joseph R. Perroni	10 Charles St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 457-7200	\$67,092,000 \$58,856,000 December	14.0% \$8,236,000	Insurance
8	Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd. ^② kahnlitwin.com Alan H. Litwin	951 North Main St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 274-2001	\$49,500,000 \$44,300,000 December	11.7% \$5,200,000	Financial services

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1 E.W. Burman Inc.
- 2 ParsonsKellogg LLC
- 3 Case Snow Management Inc.
- 4 Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc.
- 5 Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd.

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

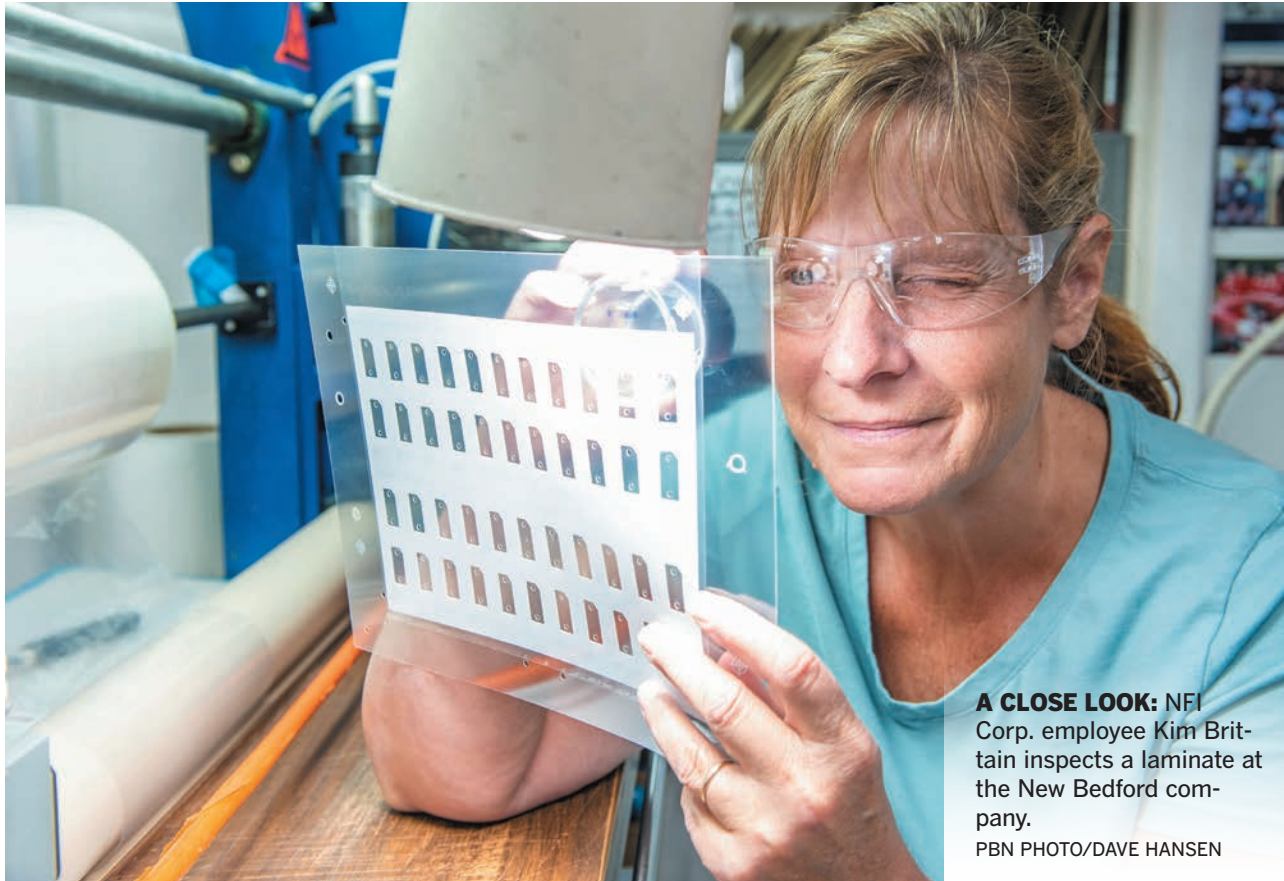
NEED A COPY?
To purchase a copy of this list, call (401) 273-2201 or visit PBN.com/lists.html for more information.

WANT TO JOIN?
For more information about participating in PBN's Top Lists, or to make additions or corrections, call (401) 680-4838 or write to Research@PBN.com.

FOOTNOTES
① Reflects revenue for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care and HopeHealth Visiting Nurse.
② Also known as KLR.

At NFI, a laser focus on graphics

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer



A CLOSE LOOK: NFI Corp. employee Kim Britain inspects a laminate at the New Bedford company.
PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

school graduates to choose from among three corridors, the three paths to a future in the industry: engineering/design, production management and business management. This program is one element of company culture that truly stands the test of time – by being presented with a number of potential career modules, novice employees can experience various aspects of a manufacturing business that will enable them in the future to understand why and how decisions they make in upcoming years affect their peers and customers.

“The message we are delivering to young people beginning their careers and educational path is that there is more going on behind the scenes in manufacturing companies than they realize. We want to make them aware of marketing and sales opportunities and how the latest business-to-business strategies and use of technology attracts new customers. We also want our next generation of workers to watch our designers and engineers create innovative projects and to see firsthand exactly how the production staff works its magic,” Thouveny said.

Future goals for NFI include continuing to build the company as a solutions-driven organization that is up to date in new technologies for production within digital printing, while staying true to its core values of innovation, sustainability, respect, collaboration, service and quality, and safety in everything NFI staff members do.

1



CEO (or equivalent):
Renaud Megard,
owner and CEO

2018 Revenue:
\$14,482,646

2016 Revenue:
\$5,511,868

Revenue growth:
162.8%

WHILE NFI CORP'S ORIGINS can be traced back to the United Kingdom, the company arrived in the United States in the 1970s and has become a global leader in manufacturing custom, high-performance and superior-quality printed graphics.

Founded in 1975, the company began as a sales office for a small manufacturing company on the Isle of Wight in England. As its customer base grew, NFI launched manufacturing operations across the Atlantic Ocean, in New Bedford. In 1988, the U.S. location started operating on its own, independent of the U.K. company, with Donald Rudnick as president, and sole employee. NFI Corp. has expanded considerably in the past 30 years, and now serves the industrial manufacturing, medical, government/military, professional services, transportation, communications and distribution industries, and has clients throughout the U.S. and internationally.

Services performed by NFI – previously known as Nameplates For Industry – include printing on plastic, digital printing and flexographic printing. The company also produces custom, high-performing graphic solutions, which include serial number labels, long-lasting barcode labels, domed labels, asset tags, tamper-proof labels, metal nameplates, and electrical membrane switches. NFI's plastic labels and decals are its primary sellers.

The New Bedford company's growth has been recognized nationally. The company experienced a 167.7% increase in revenue from 2017 to 2018. With its recent growth, NFI was ranked No. 2,442

on the Inc. 5000 list this year. NFI has won numerous awards, including the Specialty Graphic Imaging Association Award of Excellence for Highest Achievement, the SGIA Award of Distinction for Exemplary Quality, and the SGIA Award of Merit for Outstanding Performance.

Key factors that have contributed to NFI's growth and success include its staff and commitment to value.

“With our respected and experienced employees, we deliver unparalleled value, exceptional customer service and innovative solutions with absolute dedication to safety,” said Beatrice Thouveny, NFI marketing director.

NFI staff members pride themselves on being on the leading edge of innovation and technological advances, while remaining committed to exceptional customer service, safety and the environment. The company's graphics professionals regularly attend trainings on lean manufacturing, “green” practices in the workplace, and safety and health.

The main challenge NFI has faced in recent years is continuing to find the right people for its team. To assist with recruitment, the company established a new program called “Corridor to College.”

Corridor to College is a focused-future program that allows high

‘We also want our next generation of workers to watch our designers and engineers create innovative projects and to see firsthand exactly how the production staff works its magic.’

BEATRICE THOUVENY,
NFI marketing director

Satisfied clients make marketing easy

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

2 **ASK TRIBALVISION LLC** Managing Partner Chris Ciunci about the force behind the company's fifth consecutive year among the area's fastest-growing companies, and he'll tell you it's the clients.

"We have happy clients. Then that really takes care of a lot of the growth," Ciunci said of the marketing outsourcing firm.

Those happy clients are the best advertising because they refer new business to TribalVision through word-of-mouth.

Also, he said, "I like to say we eat our own cooking."

That means the firm applies the same tactics for itself that it uses for clients, he said.

Another element of TribalVision's success is a focus on results. More specifically, business leads. Businesses want tangible results when they invest their marketing budgets with a firm, Ciunci said. TribalVision cares about lead generation, he said, which is what increasing numbers of businesses want for their marketing dollars.

TribalVision's regular inclusion among the Best Places to Work by Providence Business News doesn't hurt.

"We really are very proud of the fact that we have a very smart, engaged team that is focused on marketing," Ciunci said. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Chris Ciunci, founder and managing partner

2018 Revenue:
\$6,981,492

2016 Revenue:
\$4,497,983

Revenue growth:
55.2%

For food importer, a natural focus

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer

3 **MIDDLETOWN-BASED Belgravia Imports Inc.** embraced organic food before it was the "in" thing to eat – all the way back in 1987, when the company was founded.

The gourmet food and beverage importer's continued emphasis on all-natural products is helping it grow today as consumers become more environmentally and health-conscious.

"We've made a conscious effort to partner with brands that are environmentally friendly and on the premium side of things," said CEO Mark Travers. "Delivering a product that is responsible and attractive to today's consumer has really helped us in the last three to five years."

Belgravia imports everything from fair trade-certified chocolate to sustainable coffee and mocktails, selling to retailers, food-service companies and e-commerce sites throughout North America. One of its most popular products is Maldon Sea Salt, an artisanal salt produced in the United Kingdom.

The company also attributes its strong growth trajectory to its low staff turnover. Many of Belgravia's 11 employees have worked there upward of five years.

"Having that institutional knowledge is key," said co-owner Alexander Gee, whose mother and stepfather started the company 32 years ago. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Mark Travers

2018 Revenue:
\$6,336,794

2016 Revenue:
\$4,119,380

Revenue growth:
53.8%

A staffing agency built on trust

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

4 **THE CONTINUING GROWTH** of **Available Staffing Network LLC** owes itself to the experience founder and President Danilo Reyes has carefully imparted to his recruiters.

"I have dedicated my time to train my recruiters. Before opening my own business, I was a recruiter for 15 years," Reyes said. Consequently, his recruiters make strong decisions selecting candidates.

That informed guidance focuses on making life easier for human resource managers, Reyes said. Available Staffing Network's clients trust the process and judgment, reducing the time it takes to deploy employees.

"In the beginning we did not have that trust because we have a lot of competition; this is no longer an issue; ASN is becoming the go-to for staffing in Rhode Island," Reyes said.

Available Staffing handles permanent placements, temporary to permanent, and temporary assignments. The company has the advantage in lean times, since employers seek temporary help when economic times are hard, he said.

"Work-life balance is so important for a CEO that wears many hats. I would not be successful without the support of my wife and my children," Reyes said. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Danilo Reyes, founder and president

2018 Revenue:
\$5,877,340

2016 Revenue:
\$4,031,590

Revenue growth:
45.8%

Providing hospitals with a powerful tool

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

5 **SINCE IMPLEMENTING** its innovative, computer-assisted clinical documentation software for its first customer nearly 10 years ago, **ChartWise Medical Systems Inc.** has not looked back.

The company, which has experienced an overall 20% revenue growth in a three-year span, has helped more than 100 clients bridge the tricky documentation process between doctors and billing departments.

In addition to rolling out natural language processing-driven workflows this year, ChartWise introduced new features and functionality to the market that have enabled hospital revenue cycle departments to not only increase efficiency but also improve the overall quality of documentation.

"We continue to innovate, providing new tools and features to our customer base which are not available from our competition," said Mary Cooper, Chartwise chief operating officer and chief financial officer.

"This innovation and our superior customer-service team have enabled us to close deals with increasingly larger hospitals, while keeping our own customer retention at extremely high levels," she said. ■



CEO (or equivalent):
Steven Mason

2018 Revenue:
6,840,577

2016 Revenue:
5,639,593

Revenue growth:
21.3%

FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$5 MILLION TO \$25 MILLION

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2019 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2018 revenue 2016 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1	NFI Corp. nficorp.com Renaud Megard, owner and CEO	213 Theodore Rice Blvd. New Bedford, Mass. 02745 (508) 998-9021	\$14,482,646 \$5,511,868 December	162.8% \$8,970,778	Manufacturing
2	TribalVision LLC tribalvision.com Chris Ciunci, founder and managing partner	2346 Post Road Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 272-1300	\$6,981,492 \$4,497,983 December	55.2% \$2,483,509	Marketing and public relations
3	Belgravia Imports Inc. belgraviainports.com Mark Travers, CEO	88 Silva Lane Middletown, R.I. 02842 (401) 683-3323	\$6,336,794 \$4,119,380 December	53.8% \$2,217,414	Food and beverage imports
4	Available Staffing Network LLC availablestaffingnetwork.com Danilo Reyes, founder and president	500 Broad St. Providence, R.I. 02907 (401) 274-9300	\$5,877,340 \$4,031,590 December	45.8% \$1,845,750	Staffing services
5	ChartWise Medical Systems Inc. chartwisemed.com Steven Mason	1174 Kingstown Road, No. 201 South Kingstown, R.I. 02879 (888) 493-4502	\$6,840,577 \$5,639,593 December	21.3% \$1,200,984	Software development
6	Automated Business Solutions absne.com Alan P. Albergaria, co-founder and president	415 Kilvert St. Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 732-3000	\$12,651,216 \$10,854,345 December	16.6% \$1,796,871	Office sales and services
7	(add)ventures addventures.com Stephen M. Rosa	20 Risho Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 453-4748	\$15,000,000 \$13,000,000 December	15.4% \$2,000,000	Marketing and advertising
8	Professional Planning Group ppgadvisors.com Malcolm Makin	9 Granite St. Westerly, R.I. 02891 (401) 596-2800	\$7,346,147 \$6,437,075 December	14.1% \$909,072	Financial services
9	Envision Technology Advisors LLC envisionsuccess.net Todd S. Knapp, founder and CEO	999 Main St., Suite 715 Pawtucket, R.I. 02860 (401) 272-6688	\$13,500,000 \$12,200,000 December	10.7% \$1,300,000	Business and IT consulting
10	Russell Morin Catering & Events morins.com Russell Morin Jr., CEO	95 Frank Mossberg Drive Attleboro, Mass. 02703 (508) 226-6600	\$15,800,000 \$14,700,000 December	7.5% \$1,100,000	Restaurant/catering

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1 **ADI Energy**
- 2 **Luca + Danni Inc.**
- 3 **TribalVision LLC**
- 4 **ChartWise Medical Systems Inc.**
- 5 **Automated Business Solutions**

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

NEED A COPY?
To purchase a copy of this list, call (401) 273-2201 or visit PBN.com/lists.html for more information.

WANT TO JOIN?
For more information about participating in PBN's Top Lists, or to make additions or corrections, call (401) 680-4838 or write to Research@PBN.com.

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN

BOOK *of* LISTS

2020

The Book of Lists is the single most comprehensive resource on businesses in RI and southeastern Massachusetts.

.....
63%

of readers keep it for a year or more

73.5%

of readers refer to it throughout the year

39%

of readers keep it for years to come
.....

Reserve your space today for a premium position.

Connecting you to the RI business community

.....
One Investment Delivers All Year Long

Advertise in the #1 publication decision-makers refer to throughout the year.

Contact your account manager or email Advertising @PBN.com or 401-680-4800

Filling a gap in the meetings market

BY PAUL E. KANDARIAN | Contributing Writer



SELF HELP: Swoogo CEO Leonora Valvo has built a subscription-based event-marketing software company with her business partner Tim Cummins, without the help of venture capital.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

pany. We didn't rest on our laurels. The way we charge customers is different than the rest of the industry; we make our subscriptions prepaid so we operate on customer revenue. It's just thinking differently."

The biggest challenge to Swoogo's growth had been a lawsuit filed by a main competitor – for whom she and Cummins had worked – with pockets deep enough to slow them down, Valvo said.

"But we overcame that by being right and honest," she said. "It was expensive, but that was our main challenge. It slowed us down, which it was intended to do. But it didn't stop us."

Swoogo has grown its clients list, which has included Domino's, Expedia, The New York Times and E-Trade. The company will continue "to grow manageably, not putting undo strain on our team," Valvo said.

And her team of 23 employees spread around the world has stayed with Swoogo, she said, in part because the company offers 100% health insurance coverage for solo policyholders.

"I'm a people-first business leader," she explained. "If you get the right people who see and share your vision and values, they'll care about your customers. I feel very grateful I'm able to find the sort of people who share my vision and are extremely loyal and talented."

SWOOGO IS A RHODE ISLAND-BASED event-marketing software company that creates programs for businesses that speed up and streamline registration workflows for conferences and large meetings.

And **Swoogo** has done well since its founding in 2015, with more than a \$1.6 million increase in annual sales from 2016 to 2018.

Leonora Valvo, of Warren, launched the virtual company with Tim Cummins, who worked for her in her last business venture. Valvo has started many companies in her 35-year career, including launching software firms in the last 15 years. In one case, she started a company raising \$15 million in series A and series B venture capital.

For Swoogo, she did things radically different: No venture capital.

"We are completely customer-revenue funded," Valvo said of the subscription-based software service with annually billed rates ranging from \$6,600 to \$24,000 (and more for larger users). "That's unusual, and so is the fact we're profitable without venture capital; most companies run unprofitably for years using venture capital."

Also unusual, Valvo said, is the fact that it's "very, very rare to find a singular solo female founder of a tech firm."

As to Swoogo's rapid growth in such a short period of time, Valvo said it's due to "business experience, a unicorn product developer, a stellar reputation in our industry and filling a gap in the market."

Valvo said she and Cummins have brought their own "super-powers" to bear in their early

years of Swoogo.

She has a knack for "taking a product and bringing it to market, building a company around a product, building teams, channels," she said. "I have a lot of experience having done it successfully for years."

Cummins has the skills to take "a business concept and what we're trying to accomplish and turning it into code. He brought that experience from our past company," she said.

Valvo also brings a reputation of customer service from the past companies she's built, adding that "reputation stays with you. We never oversell, for example, which is common in tech. Our sales team doesn't say 'yes' to something we can't do. We don't do that; we deliver on our promises."

Swoogo also fills a gap in software event planning, she said. "One benefit of competing with my old company is we can see where the tech is getting old, where the opportunity is. My industry really grew up in 2006, event tech wasn't even a category then. It was a nascent industry."

With Swoogo, "We said, 'What's missing?' and knew what the pain points for our customers were from working at our past com-

'I feel very grateful I'm able to find the sort of people who share my vision and are extremely loyal and talented.'

LEONORA VALVO, Swoogo founder and CEO

1

Swoogo

CEO (or equivalent):

Leonora Valvo, founder and CEO

2018 Revenue:
\$2,024,618

2016 Revenue:
\$370,461

Revenue growth:
446.5%

Firm's creativity earns attention

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

2 **THE LUMINOUS CREATIVE AGENCY** has been growing steadily under the experienced watch of co-founders Bryan Roberts and Ryan Buttie since opening in 2011.

The company, which has worked with more than 150 clients, including state agencies, nonprofits, health care providers, tourism agencies and entertainment firms on more than 300 projects, anticipates a 33% growth in revenue this year over 2018.

Luminous recently worked with HealthSource RI to develop creative content for its 2018 open-enrollment campaign. The effort – which included billboards, radio spots, and online and social media ads – was a hit, as HealthSource RI experienced an 11% growth in enrollment, bucking a trend of declining enrollments in health insurance exchanges nationally.

The agency also developed a campaign to raise awareness of Keno for the R.I. Lottery that boosted sales.

“Our team is passionate about video production and the connection that it can make to an audience,” Buttie said. “The ability to help our clients spread the word of the great work they are doing to their audience and see them grow is priceless. Constantly improving and innovating with our team is what we live for.” ■

LUMINOUS
CREATIVE AGENCY

CEO (or equivalent):

Ryan Buttie and Bryan Roberts, founders

2018 Revenue:

\$535,485

2016 Revenue:

\$98,253

Revenue growth:

445%

Delivery service caters to gourmets

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

3 **SINCE FOUNDING** gourmet-food-delivery service **Feast & Fettle Inc.** three years ago, executive chef Maggie Mulvena and her team have been driven by two goals: to prove that meal delivery can be profitable and to be the very best there is in the industry.

After experiencing rapid growth in its first two years fueled primarily via word of mouth, the company is expecting revenue to double this year over last and has surpassed the \$1 million mark in cumulative earnings.

In addition to building out a commercial kitchen in East Providence and unveiling a new website, Feast & Fettle purchased refrigerated delivery vans needed for an expansion into Massachusetts.

“We go above and beyond for our members and really try to push the limits on what a meal-delivery service can be,” said CEO Carlos Ventura. “We ensure that every single member in a household is catered to. Most importantly, we care deeply about our members and put the utmost care in every dish we prepare. We understand that dinner time is a very personal experience and building trust in our members' household is key.” ■

FEAST & FETTLE
CHEF PREPARED MEALS. DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR.

CEO (or equivalent):

Carlos Ventura

2018 Revenue:

\$442,071

2016 Revenue:

\$98,157

Revenue growth:

350.4%

MATOUK

Matouk congratulates our region's most innovative and successful companies.

And we urge all businesses, large and small, to join together in an effort to make our country and our planet healthier, safer, and more sustainable for the generations who come after us.

RHODE ISLAND INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

2019 FINANCIAL SERVICES INNOVATOR

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS innovative companies 2019 winner

Investing in Rhode Island's infrastructure, economy and environment

Marketing success with integrated plan

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

4 **INTEGRATED MEDIA GROUP LLC** co-founder Gil Lantini says most other marketing agencies focus primarily on developing leads for their customers, while Integrated Media has a more comprehensive approach.

“We’re much more integrated into the fabric of the business,” Lantini said. Going that distance for their clients is paying off. Integrated Media now boasts 28 employees in its relatively new Cranston office, following an expansion from Johnston in 2018. The group also established offices in Boston and New York since launching in 2015.

The firm extends services into qualifying leads, paving the way to turn them into sales. “We’re able to align sales and marketing teams much more effectively” than the competition, Lantini said.

Integrated Media’s specialists, copywriters and designers, for instance, are also kept on the same page regarding their part of each client’s strategy, Lantini said.

“This really helped us work together and leverage results for our clients,” he said.

Another growth advantage lies in the company’s willingness to work with all client sizes and types.

“This really helped us grow because we’re able to work with essentially anybody out there,” Lantini said. ■



CEO (or equivalent): Gil Lantini and Ralph Coppolino, co-founders

2018 Revenue: \$1,702,345

2016 Revenue: \$573,649

Revenue growth: 196.8%

A business built on solid foundation

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer

5 **SIX YEARS AGO**, **Building Enclosure Science LLC** was a two-man business operating out of a basement bedroom. Chief Operating Officer Charles Antone’s desk was a piece of plywood. Today, it’s a 22-person firm managing up to 180 projects at a time.

The company is “in the business of helping buildings be better,” said Antone. That means working with building owners to increase the durability, sustainability and efficiency of their buildings, both for rehabilitations and new construction projects.

Clients include the Rhode Island School of Design, Johnson & Wales University, Partners HealthCare, Brown University and more. Northeastern University recently awarded the company a contract to oversee the roofs of all its facilities – more than 4 million square feet of space.

Antone attributes the company’s success to its investment in people. He and co-founder Michael Kenney recently made seven employees minority shareholders. “If you take someone who is a superstar in their own right and give them an actual piece of the company and involve them in strategic decisions, when they go out and interact with clients and other potential employees, they’re acting like a fully vested owner,” Antone said. “It’s completely supercharged the company.” ■



CEO (or equivalent): Michael E. Kenney, co-founder, co-owner and president; Charles Antone, co-founder and chief operating officer

2018 Revenue: \$2,704,369

2016 Revenue: \$949,399

Revenue growth: 184.9%



Get Social

Join our conversation on social media and become an integral part of the news process. Talk to us, recommend us, tell us what we’ve missed and tell us what you think.

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
PBN

JUST RIGHT® BANKING SINCE 1851.

BayCoast Bank is a community bank dedicated to serving the people and businesses of southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island for another 168 years. Just Right® banking for all your need including mortgages, investments, insurance and much more.

BayCoast BANK.
Just right.
BayCoastBank.com | 508-678-7641

Member FDIC Insurance and Investment Products: Are Not Bank Guaranteed, Are Not FDIC or DIF Insured, May Lose Value

FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$250,000 TO \$5 MILLION

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2019 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2018 revenue 2016 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1	Swoogo swoogo.com Leonora Valvo, founder and CEO	4 Calder Drive Warren, R.I. 02885 (203) 685-5354	\$2,024,618 \$370,461 December	446.5% \$1,654,157	Software development
2	Luminous Creative Agency luminous.agency Ryan Buttie; Bryan Roberts, founders	220 South Main St. Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 234-9407	\$535,485 \$98,253 December	445.0% \$437,232	Advertising
3	Feast & Fettle Inc. feastandfettle.com Carlos Ventura, CEO; Maggie Mulvena, founder and executive chef; Nicole Oliveira, founder and general manager	881 Waterman Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 753-2572	\$442,071 \$98,157 December	350.4% \$343,914	Meal-delivery service
4	Integrated Media Group growwithimg.com Gil Lantini; Ralph Coppolino, co-founders	1145 Reservoir Ave., Suite 300 Cranston, R.I. 02920 (401) 300-9921	\$1,702,345 \$573,649 December	196.8% \$1,128,696	Digital marketing
5	Building Enclosure Science LLC buildinges.com Michael E. Kenney, co-founder, co-owner and president; Charles Antone, co-founder and chief operating officer	859 North Main St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 413-0068	\$2,704,369 \$949,399 December	184.9% \$1,754,969	Engineering
6	Logicomm Inc. logicomm-inc.com Jim Van, partner; Peter Petrovich, director of security	111 Irving Ave. Providence, R.I. 02906 (401) 369-8730	\$2,390,000 \$1,056,800 December	126.2% \$1,333,200	IT services and support
7	Gerbs Pumpkin Seeds Co. mygerbs.com Sennen G. Conte, owner and CFO	92 Allendale Ave. Johnston, R.I. 02919 (401) 231-5181	\$4,563,193 \$2,184,128 December	108.9% \$2,379,065	Food manufacturing
8	The Capital Good Fund capitalgoodfund.org Andrew V. Posner, founder and CEO	22 A St. Providence, R.I. 02907 (866) 584-3651	\$2,551,843 \$1,233,699 December	106.8% \$1,318,144	Financial services
9	DiStefano Brothers Construction Inc. dbcric.com Peter DiStefano, owner	433 Main St. South Kingstown, R.I. 02879 (401) 783-1030	\$4,900,000 \$2,600,000 December	88.5% \$2,300,000	Residential remodeling
10	5kMedia 5kMedia.com Russell Reis, owner	1246 Ten Rod Road Exeter, R.I. 02822 (800) 268-8336	\$375,000 \$200,000 December	87.5% \$175,000	Web development and marketing
11	Steere Engineering Inc. steereengineering.com Patricia D. Steere, owner and president	2350 Post Road, Suite 100 Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 773-7880	\$4,638,959 \$2,798,733 December	65.8% \$1,840,226	Engineering
12	AQUASGROUP aquas-group.com Nicholas Paolo Jr., president	830 Waterman Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 437-8612	\$4,300,000 \$2,700,000 December	59.3% \$1,600,000	Manufacturing
13	Xzito Creative Solutions LLC xzito.com Jeshua Zapata, president; Jairo Gomez; Juan Gomez, managing partners	2820 Hartford Ave. Johnston, R.I. 02919 (401) 709-4342	\$1,500,000 \$952,000 December	57.6% \$548,000	Marketing and technology
14	IT Support RI itsupportri.com Paul Riendeau, CEO	70 Woodland Road North Smithfield, R.I. 02896 (401) 522-5200	\$2,275,554 \$1,495,000 December	52.2% \$780,554	IT and cybersecurity services
15	Creative Conners Inc. creativeconners.com Gareth Conner, president	84 Cutler St., Unit 7 Warren, R.I. 02885 (401) 289-2942	\$3,041,942 \$2,161,623 December	40.7% \$880,319	Manufacturing
16	Leadership Rhode Island leadershipri.org Mike Ritz, executive director	1570 Westminster St. Providence, R.I. 02909 (401) 273-1574	\$870,583 \$638,985 December	36.2% \$231,598	Statewide leadership nonprofit
17	East Coast Technology Group ectne.com Steven J. Gietz, president	1300 Highland Corporate Drive, Suite 203 Cumberland, R.I. 02864 (401) 464-9005	\$2,850,000 \$2,100,000 December	35.7% \$750,000	IT and cybersecurity services
18	Coutu Bros. Moving & Storage coutumovers.com Robert S. Romano, president	2 Greco Lane Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 739-7788	\$851,296 \$656,538 December	29.7% \$194,758	Moving and storage
19	Global RFID Systems North America LLC globalrfidsys.com John W. Larned, founder, CEO and president	1004 Boston Neck Road, Suite 7 Narragansett, R.I. 02882 (401) 783-3836	\$2,000,000 \$1,600,000 December	25.0% \$400,000	Design/systems integration
20	Bryant Associates Inc. bryant- engrs.com Jeffrey C. Bryant, CEO	640 George Washington Highway Lincoln, R.I. 02865 (401) 722-7660	\$1,547,541 \$1,276,699 December	21.2% \$270,842	Construction
21	PMC Media Group pmcmidiagroup.com Darren Jodoin, president	694 Main St. East Greenwich, R.I. 02818 (401) 667-7777	\$1,900,000 \$1,600,000 December	18.8% \$300,000	Marketing and advertising
22	Brave River Solutions Inc. braveriver.com Jim McAssey, president	875 Centerville Road, Suite 9 Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 828-6611	\$3,825,300 \$3,315,000 December	15.4% \$510,300	IT and cybersecurity services
23	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island bigsri.org Katje Nadine Afonseca, executive director	1540 Pontiac Ave. Cranston, R.I. 02920 (401) 921-2434	\$3,592,848 \$3,264,063 December	10.1% \$328,785	Nonprofit mentoring organization

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1 **Building Enclosure Science LLC**
- 2 **Available Staffing Network LLC**
- 3 **J&B Communications**
- 4 **Best Practice Energy LLC**
- 5 **SecurityRI.com**

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

NEED A COPY?
To purchase a copy of this list, call (401) 273-2201 or visit PBN.com/lists.html for more information.

WANT TO JOIN?
For more information about participating in PBN's Top Lists, or to make additions or corrections, call (401) 680-4838 or write to Research@PBN.com.

Displaying ingenuity in virtual reality

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

STEERE ENGINEERING INC. has a way to manage bridges via 3D virtual reality. Before stepping foot on the span, they can teleport there and see it in real time, with data on its known defects, inspection reports and more.

The technology started at Steere in 2012 but has advanced over time, with the Warwick firm advancing its applications right along with it, said President Patricia Steere.

Steere's son Thomas, a specialist in 3D computer-aided design, developed a way to make the technology user-friendly for client agencies. A gamer, he used the 3D-VR technology and saw its potential in civil engineering. "He's kind of brought along the discussion of, 'What else can we do with it?' in constantly learning and researching what's available," said Steere.

Three years ago, the firm started looking into "intelligent" models – adding data – and showed it to Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority officials, who liked what they saw. The 3D-VR technology was used for a model of Mount Hope Bridge, which the bridge authority oversees. The

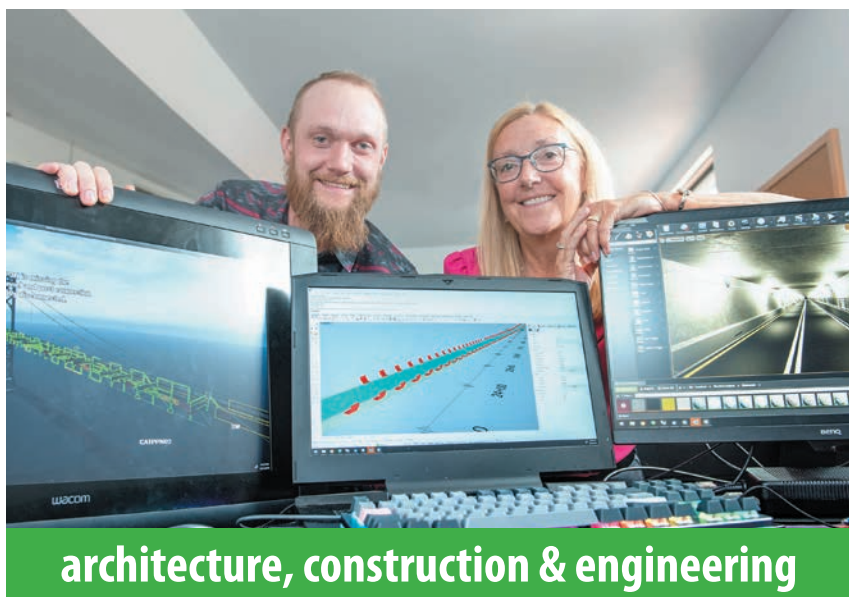
Mass. Department of Transportation is also using it for a model of the Sumner Tunnel in Boston.

Using the data to track patterns in bridge maintenance brings with it time- and money-saving potential. Steere said it shows bridges in a new way, with their issues, such as corrosion, more front and center. "Rather than keep repairing certain areas, we can consider what we can do from a management standpoint to not need these repairs," she said.

Valuable in traffic-diversion planning for bridgework, there are features showing the span in various lighting and weather conditions.

Smart modeling is a bridge-maintenance safety tool as well, said Steere. "They can see where it is, what kind of space they have to work within and what they are working on," she said.

Steere Engineering showcased the service at the International Bridge Tunnel and Turnpike Association's Maintenance and Roadway Operations Workshop in Norfolk, Va., in June. Its goal is to introduce the technology to public agencies nationwide. ■



architecture, construction & engineering

'They can see where it is, what kind of space they have to work within and what they are working on.'

PATRICIA STEERE,
Steere Engineering Inc.
president



A MODEL COMPANY: Thomas Steere, a 3D computer-aided design specialist, left, and his mother, Patricia Steere, president of Steere Engineering Inc., display a virtual-reality rendering of the Mount Hope Bridge, and a computer-aided design model of the Sumner Tunnel in Boston, in the firm's Warwick office.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

Stay informed with breaking business news and up to date coverage

DELIVERING BUSINESS FOR OVER 30 YEARS

- 52 weeks of the award-winning print edition
- Daily e-newsletters with the top business stories and original content
- Total access to all stories on PBN.com and to PBN archives
- The Book of Lists – an invaluable B2B Resource Guide



Subscribe today

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS



855-813-5805 WWW.PBN.COM

A moving experience behind the scenes

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO, having seen the limitations of existing solutions, theater tech Gareth Conner developed his own idea – an affordable and modular motion control system for live theater that would bring the scenery automation and computer-controlled mechanical effects typically seen only in large-scale, big-budget shows to regional theaters and universities.

Conner tested his first prototype scenery motion controller at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts in 2003. A year later, he founded **Creative Conners Inc.**, unveiling his innovative Stagehand motion controller and Spikemark software to the entertainment industry.

Since then? Well, let's just say that Conner and his idea have made it ... in a big way.

By 2015, Creative Conners products were in use in more than 50% of the regional and community theaters across the U.S. and this year – the company's 15th – revenue is expected to reach \$5 million.

"Creative Conners provides a system of scenic automation that is affordable and approachable," Conner said. "In the past

two years, we have released more than eight new products – hoists, winches, motion controllers, turntable system, and others, added more than two dozen features to our software platform, and added eight new staff members."

This summer, in addition to creating custom-designed scenic rotators to help the Theater Calgary in Alberta, Canada, upgrade its annual Christmas production, Creative Conners also completed a \$500,000 project for the Marriott Theater in Lincolnshire, Ill., replacing its obsolete stage lift system, as well as its outdated hoists with Creative Conners' new Spotline Mini hoist.

"When you boil down what Creative Conners provides, it's tools for artists to make art," Conner said. "The tools we manufacture help directors, designers and actors tell stories that are engaging and meaningful. Our scenic automation products unleash a new and powerful way to add motion and energy to stage productions. We do the work we do because an artist needs a paintbrush and the audience needs a story." ■



arts & entertainment

'We do the work we do because an artist needs a paintbrush and the audience needs a story.'

GARETH CONNER,
Creative Conners Inc.
founder and president



SETTING THE STAGE: Gareth Conner, left, founder and president of Creative Conners Inc., talks with automation technician Josh Stoller about a product Stoller is working on. It's a Spotline Practical hoist used in theatrical shows.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

Writing the book on learning lounges

BY JANINE WEISMAN | Contributing Writer

IT STARTED WITH a few couches, some lamps and a commitment to not look like a formal classroom. But first-time visitors to the original Learning Lounge at the **Providence Public Library** needed directions to find the pass-through area on the fifth floor of the library's 1900 building facing Washington Street.

They found it and they kept coming back – to learn how to set up an email account; create a resume; prepare for tests such as the GED; to improve language skills; receive help with a job search. All with the help of an experienced professional.

"It was so popular that other libraries asked us to help them create learning lounges in their libraries," said Marketing and Communications Director Tonia Mason.

Other libraries have since created these free, walk-in learning lounges.

Developing digital-literacy initiatives such as the Learning Lounge and sharing them with other libraries is a key focus for the downtown Providence library, as it positions itself as a champion

of democratized education. About 75% of the participants in the library's workforce-education programming are residents of low- to moderate-income households. Half are unemployed.

About 1,500 individuals participated in the Technology Career Pathway Program in the fiscal year that ended June 30. The partnership with Roger Williams University offers career-building programs for English-language learners, GED students, underemployed and unemployed individuals and corrections inmates nearing release. Programs include 10-week Rhode Coders classes in web-development programming and JavaScript. An eight-week Data Navigators course provides a foundation in data analytics and visualization and the opportunity to receive college credit at RWU. High school students can also receive academic credit.

"Right now, we're living with over 100 people on our Rhode Coders wait list and 100 people on our Data Navigators wait list and that's without any marketing," Director of Education Karisa Tashjian said. ■



education

'Other libraries asked us to help them create learning lounges in their libraries.'

TONIA MASON,
Providence Public Library
marketing and communications director



COMPUTER CLASS: Instructor Betty Tavares, left, gives a helping hand to student Lily Minaeliam during an adult digital-literacy workshop at Providence Public Library.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

Blade design could reshape wind industry

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

EAST GREENWICH-BASED Aquanis Inc. is a wind-energy startup with ideas to make this power sector more palatable in terms of cost, which is a barrier to its growth.

Founder and CEO Neal E. Fine said that wind energy represents immense opportunity. “If we put wind turbines on the two U.S. coasts, they’d supply twice our national power needs. It’s too costly now. We’re trying to use technology to reduce that cost,” he said.

Aquanis – which includes Chief Technology Officer John A. Cooney and Senior Mechanical Engineer Chris Szlatenyi – has two innovations in early research and development.

The first would make wind turbines better at withstanding things such as wind shear with load-control systems on their blades. Where the innovation has a larger impact, it also requires more work: the path to commercialization involves manufacturers introducing new components into their turbine-building processes.

“The trends have been to grow these turbines larger” to address aerodynamic issues, Fine said. “The industry has stalled as they

can’t grow any larger. The answer is clear: smarter blades that react to changes in the wind.”

Aquanis is negotiating with a manufacturer. He said the load-control system would meet a potential global market of more than \$1 billion a year.

Aquanis’ other innovation targets a potential global market of about \$50 million annually: A blade coating that will help protect wind turbines against lightning strikes, boosting the electricity field and promoting flashover. Lightning energy would repel down the turbine blade and won’t cause puncture damage, for which repairs require costly downtime, Fine said.

In July, Aquanis received a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to develop the lightning-damage mitigation blade coating.

Aquanis envisions having both innovations on every wind-energy turbine in the next decade.

“We believe in leaving the Earth habitable for our descendants,” said Fine. “Wind energy and solar energy are good contributors to that.” ■



energy

‘We believe in leaving the Earth habitable for our descendants. Wind energy and solar energy are good contributors to that.’

NEAL E. FINE,
Aquanis Inc. founder
and CEO



EFFICIENCY EXPERTS: Aquanis Inc. CEO Neal E. Fine, right, Chief Technology Officer John A. Cooney, center, and Senior Mechanical Engineer Christopher Szlatenyi are working on turbine blade designs that would make them more efficient.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

Painting a detailed picture of the seafloor

BY GARY RUFF | Contributing Writer

FEW PEOPLE EVER SEE the ocean bottom, but plenty of businesses and government agencies need to know what’s going on there.

INSPIRE Environmental uses sophisticated camera technology and innovative visualization software to analyze and explain the seafloor environment for wind- and petroleum-energy companies, seafood producers, environmental regulators and a host of other public, nonprofit and corporate clients.

The Newport-based company was founded five years ago by scientists Drew Carey and Joe Germano. Its staff of more than 20 includes several specialists in the biology, chemistry and geology of the seafloor.

INSPIRE uses a wedge-shaped profile camera, with a clear faceplate on one side, that can penetrate 21 centimeters into the seafloor and produce “ant-farm” images of the sand or silt and the life within it. Experts analyze the photos and technicians produce maps and graphics that help clients understand the findings.

“The technique that we use allows us to see an integrated picture of the seafloor that includes

both a geological understanding and a biological understanding,” Carey said. “Since most of the activity in the ocean affects the bottom, it’s important to be able to see how that responds to any change.”

The information is essential to clients who want to place a cable or pipeline, deposit or clean up dredged material or waste, construct a wind farm or explore for oil.

“There’s a tremendous amount of science behind it – a lot of quantitative data, a lot of details – but fundamentally we’ve figured out a way to bring our imagery into a map. It just blows people away,” Carey said.

One of INSPIRE’s major clients is Orsted, the wind-energy company that acquired Deepwater Wind and its turbines off Block Island in 2018.

“Very early in the Block Island project, we helped [Deepwater Wind] with the location of the cable and the location of the wind farm,” Carey said. Orsted has seven projects in the works in the United States and INSPIRE is involved in all of them. ■



environment

‘We’ve figured out a way to bring our imagery into a map. It just blows people away.’

DREW CAREY,
INSPIRE Environmental
CEO



FLOOR PLANS: INSPIRE Environmental CEO Drew Carey, left, talks with Ben Taylor, a geographic information system specialist, at their Newport office. The company gathers imagery and data about the seafloor. Taylor creates visual representations of that information.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

Greater good is this bank's priority

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

IT TAKES a long-term vision to shake things up to improve results.

Growth at **Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank** has been the result of institutional change in the way it does business and, more fundamentally, the way it views its role in the community.

With a mission to foster investment in the state's infrastructure that helps the environment and boosts jobs and the economy via bonds, loans, grants and other means, the quasi-public state entity was doing well. But there was room to make a wider impact, said CEO and Executive Director Jeffrey Diehl.

The problem?

"We were just expecting customers to figure out how to use us," Diehl said.

It's an approach that changed about four years ago. The 30-year-old bank went from being a program-centric organization to customer-centric, expanded its mandate to include energy and brownfield-remediation projects and changed its name from the Clean Water Finance Agency.

Since its revamping, Rhode

Island Infrastructure Bank has increased its local infrastructure investments by 30% compared with its previous 25 years. About two-thirds of that was private-sector capital. Its clean-energy programs have saved more than \$75 million in costs.

The bank's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, for example, got Warren a below-market interest-rate loan for a \$20 million upgrade to its wastewater facility, reducing nitrogen discharge into the Warren River. Work is underway. Overall, the bank has made loans of \$1.5 billion, including \$40.8 million in 2017.

And sometimes, Diehl said, it's a simple matter of having working capital. The bank's Stormwater Accelerator Program gets money to municipalities to jump-start green projects, projects that are later reimbursed through grant funding.

"There is more impact" with the more comprehensive, holistic approach, said Diehl. "We are putting people to work in construction and engineering, creating or supporting more jobs and getting these projects done quicker." ■



financial services

'We are putting people to work in construction and engineering, creating or supporting more jobs and getting these projects done quicker.'

JEFFREY DIEHL,

Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank CEO and executive director



RHODE ISLAND
INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

LENDING A HAND: Staff members at Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank gather to discuss agency business. From left is Business Development Analyst Graeme Ownjazayeri, CEO and Executive Director Jeffrey Diehl, Chief Operating Officer David Birkins and Senior Business Development Analyst Sydney Usatine.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN E-Newsletters

RESERVE YOUR SPACE NOW
on one of our highly-read daily e-newsletters



MORNING CALL:

Monday - Friday delivered at 6 am. Summarizing major business items of the day.



DAILY EDITION:

Monday - Friday delivered at 2 pm. Content straight from the PBN newsroom featuring the day's top business news.

PLUS
Ask about our industry-specific newsletters sent Monday through Thursday.

Contact us today for details: **401.680.4800** or **Advertising@pbn.com**

Allergy-safe food making a difference

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

WITH A HISTORY of food allergies impacting their family growing up, Sennen Conte and his brother Galen decided to take action by diving into the research surrounding the prevalence of food allergies across the United States.

Discovering a very limited number of options available for families in the snack-food market and believing they could do better, the Contes founded **Gerbs Allergy Friendly Foods** in 2006 based upon a mission to provide delicious foods and support to families affected by food allergies.

Gerbs, with a non-GMO, vegan, kosher, and top-14 food allergy-free product line, has grown from a small operation offering two lines of in-shell whole pumpkin seeds sold primarily in local independent grocery stores, to an e-commerce giant with more than 300 products – including bagel chip snacks, gluten-free flour, coffee, dark chocolate, dried fruit, grains, granola, oats, rice, salad mixes, seasonings, seed meals, seed mixes, seeds, and healthy snacks – available in 22 select gourmet categories.

With two young boys of his own at home, Sennen said his work at Gerbs is personally meaningful.

“It’s truly humbling to speak with a mother who is crying, thanking us for offering safe foods,” Sennen said. “Stories of kids being able to sit in the dugout of a Little League game for the first time eating safe sunflower seeds; a teacher having a parent provide our snacks for the entire classroom so their child doesn’t have to be alienated at snack time. We make a difference, and it’s this service to these children and their families that drives us to be an extension of that security a parent provides.”

After extensive recipe and shelf-life testing, Johnston-based Gerbs launched four lines of gourmet allergy-safe salted and sweet pumpkin and sunflower butters last spring. The company, which recently entered into a vendor program with Amazon.com Inc. that ties into overall monthly and quarterly sales on the Amazon platform, is hoping to gain organic certification and invest in new equipment in the coming year. ■



food, beverage & agriculture

‘We make a difference, and it’s this service to these children and their families that drives us.’

SENEN CONTE,
Gerbs Allergy Friendly Foods co-owner and chief financial officer



DEDICATED DUO: Brothers Galen, left, and Sennen Conte display bags of the whole pumpkin seeds that are part of the product line offered by Gerbs Allergy Friendly Foods. The Contes are co-owners of the business.

PBN PHOTO/TRACY JENKINS

Empowering people to optimize well-being

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

SINCE ITS FOUNDING in 1997 by behavior-change science pioneer James Prochaska, **Pro-Change Behavior Systems Inc.** has worked diligently to empower people to experience life-changing behavioral breakthroughs.

The company has grown from just three employees to a team of 15 and has received more than \$20 million in federally funded research grants. In addition, Pro-Change has twice earned certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance for its Health Risk Intervention and Self-Management Tools.

“Pro-Change continually strives to raise the bar on the application of behavior-change science,” said Kerry Evers, co-CEO and co-president, who has a doctorate in experimental psychology. “We challenge ourselves to delve into new content areas, leverage new technologies and content-delivery channels, weave in additional communication frameworks, and partner with collaborators with complementary expertise to advance the evidence and address unmet needs.”

The Lupus Foundation of America, via a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, recently awarded Pro-Change a grant to develop an innovative self-management program for adults dealing with lupus. The company just completed research and development of an interactive, online self-management program that delivers tailored behavior-change messaging to promote key behaviors associated with successful lupus self-management and patient activation.

In addition, Pro-Change successfully collaborated with the Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative in Rhode Island on HealthCoach for Me, which has made evidence-based behavior-change tools available to both patients and clinicians at six practices throughout the state.

“Everyone has struggled with a behavior change – for themselves, a loved one, a friend, or their organization,” said Sara Johnson, co-CEO and co-president who has a doctorate in clinical psychology. “We leverage insights from decades of applying behavior change science to assist individuals and organizations on their journeys to optimizing well-being.” ■



health & wellness

‘We leverage insights from decades of applying behavior-change science to assist individuals and organizations.’

SARA JOHNSON,
Pro-Change Behavior Systems Inc. co-CEO and co-president



RUNNING THE NUMBERS: Pro-Change Behavior Systems Inc. co-CEO and co-President Kerry Evers, center, reviews the clinically validated results on behavior change with Dave Armitage, left, vice president of business management and development, and Deborah Van Marter, director of client relations.

PBN PHOTO/TRACY JENKINS

Vertikal6 puts own stamp on an industry

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer

WHEN CEO RICK NORBERG re-named and rebranded his information technology consulting firm to become **Vertikal6** back in 2016, it set the tone for a new way of looking at IT services.

“It used to be companies [such as] ours were help desks,” Norberg said. “But now we bring that to the next level. We find the business value in the technology companies buy and enable [businesses] and nonprofits to use their technology better. And, it’s about data. We want to bring the industry toward asking, ‘What can I do with my data that makes it, and me, more valuable?’ It’s a digital transformation.”

A prime example is the Warwick-based company’s Elevated Strategy Platform – or ESP – program, developed and launched this year to provide companies with a “health check” of their information technology practices and strategies for the future.

“It’s really evolved over the years and was the brainchild of our [chief operating officer], Harry Curran, and the account team,” said Norberg.

The ESP proprietary software examines more than 160 questions within six IT areas and generates a strategy report for a company’s IT strengths and risks. Vertikal6 uses these reports to develop a plan to align strategic and technology goals, showing companies where they are following best practices, where they fall short, and recommendations to mitigate each identified risk, said Norberg.

ESP can help develop a three-year IT budget and move the company forward over time. For instance, if a company has a customer-service challenge, ESP can determine a customer relationship management software to augment the plan.

“There was a void in the market when it came to tools that help drive IT success,” said Norberg. “Our software aligns all IT information and insights in one place to proactively track, manage and forecast IT budgets, all from one system. We are taking years of best practices and infusing them into ESP.” ■



IT services

‘Our software aligns all IT information and insights in one place to proactively track, manage and forecast IT budgets, all from one system.’

RICK NORBERG,
Vertikal6 CEO



MEETING OF MINDS: Vertikal6 CEO Rick Norberg, right, with applications developer James Green and senior consultant Meredith Carroll.
PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

Personal care pushed to new levels

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer

ORIGINAL BRADFORD SOAP WORKS INC. has built a reputation as a developer and manufacturer of innovative personal-care cleansing products, from facial cleansers and moisturizers in stick form to the world’s first soap strips for razors, but most of its products end up carrying other company labels.

Bradford has developed 20 such products in the past two years, said CEO and President Stuart R. Benton. The company’s current focus, he said, is creating all-natural personal-care products that require little or no water to be used, that lower the carbon footprint and that don’t require preservatives to remain fresh and usable for a long period of time.

In other words, products made for consumers on the go. “People lead active lives now,” Vice President of Marketing Deborah McDonough said. “They need personal-care products they can easily take with them. We’re always assessing the market and changing what we do. Innovation drives us.”

Benton proudly notes as an example the “Rub Me the Right Way Anti-Chafing Stick” that Brad-

ford developed for “Queen V,” a personal-care product line created entirely by and for women in 2018. The product won the Independent Cosmetic Manufacturers and Distributors Indie Beauty Innovators Award for 2019.

Another recent example is the company’s work with the Rainforest Alliance on sourcing 100% palm oil from the Middle East for a body lotion that won a 2018 Sustainable Standard Setter award from the alliance in 2018.

McDonough said Bradford has been an innovative company for 143 years. “It’s part of our DNA,” she said. “We’ve formulated products for a who’s who of the personal-care industry – including Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive, SC Johnson and many more. Several brands have won awards for the products that they helped develop, even though you won’t see Bradford’s name on the box.”

Bradford is known around the world for its unique soap products, Benton said. “It’s not only about bars of soap,” he added. “It’s about a new category of cleansing.” ■



manufacturing

‘We’re always assessing the market and changing what we do.’

Innovation drives us.’

DEBORAH MCDONOUGH,
Original Bradford Soap Works Inc. vice president of marketing



FORMULA FOR SUCCESS: Kaylee Miller, a chemist for the Original Bradford Soap Works Inc., works on a research and development project in the company lab in West Warwick. Bradford executives say the company thrives because of its drive to develop new products.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

PowerDocks taps into sustainability needs

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

CREATING AN INNOVATIVE product is one thing. But PowerDocks LLC is riding its products' momentum to fuel a whole industry within an industry that is sustainable, to boot. PowerDocks' expansion has been guided by market demand.

The marine-engineering company makes floating docks, moorings and customized platforms powered by solar energy, where boats can recharge without constraints of the traditional power grid. The company's Blue Isles product line also has docking stations for recharging robotic devices and buoys that can monitor water quality as well.

Incorporated in 2016, the company began in the recreational boating market, but has not stayed there.

"Anything in the aquatic space requires power," said Anthony Baro, managing partner. He co-founded the company with Chris Fagan, who like Baro, had a background in solar power. Both saw the idea of autonomous, floating power platforms as a win for consumers and the environment.

Just as renewable sources are used to power automobiles, Baro

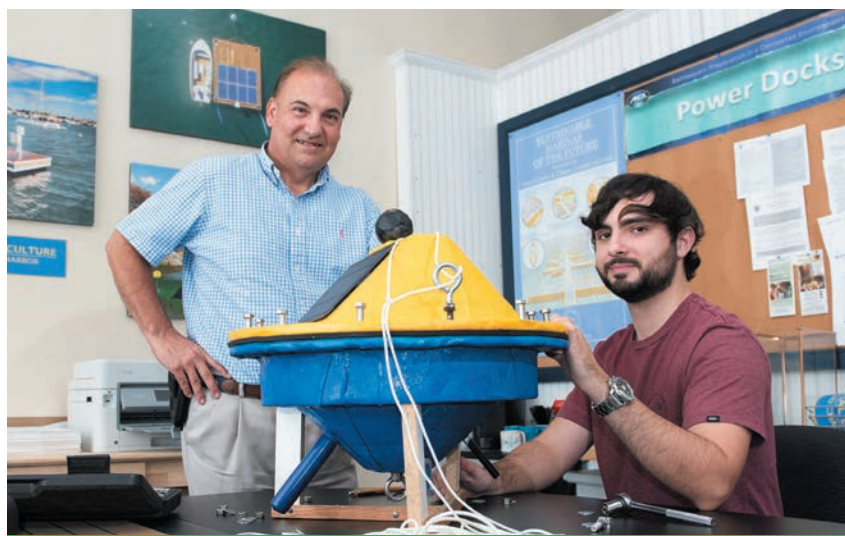
said, they will soon power aquatic equipment, with the shift felt in markets such as aquaculture, defense and marina design.

PowerDocks wasn't too far into introducing its product in the recreational boating market before it was approached by the U.S. Navy for possible defense uses, said Baro.

Further expansion came through engagement with folks in the aquaculture industry looking to secure areas where they were growing mussels or fish, he said. Now these farmers, instead of taking water samples to an onshore facility, can check water quality remotely. When their seafood products are sold, there is a Blue Isles-certified report on production conditions, such as oxygen levels, under which they were grown.

Last year, PowerDocks joined forces with dotOcean NV, of Belgium, to commercialize autonomous marine-navigation systems.

"We are at 25% revenue growth over last year. We see that exponentially increasing with the adoption of the blue economy," said Baro, who also plans to hire more employees in 2020. ■



maritime

'We are at 25% revenue growth over last year. We see that exponentially increasing with the adoption of the blue economy.'

ANTHONY BARO,
PowerDocks LLC
managing partner



WATER FEATURE: PowerDocks Managing Partner Anthony Baro, left, is with mechanical engineer Dan Servant at the company's Fall River facility. Servant is working on a prototype remote monitoring buoy that can gather and transmit aquaculture data to shore.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

A crucial source of strength

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

A BOXER SINCE childhood, Gary "Tiger" Balletto knows a thing or two about fighting. But, perhaps, his biggest battle has taken place after he left the ring.

Following a successful career in which he captured three world titles, Balletto retired from the sport in 2006, turning his attention to his real estate and construction businesses.

In 2013, while training to compete on "American Ninja Warrior," everything changed. Balletto sustained massive injuries after falling from a training bar in his backyard. The injuries, which nearly killed him, left him a quadriplegic.

"After going to rehab and being discharged, I learned that I didn't have a place to go to exercise with my new disabilities," Balletto said. "I knew very quickly I wanted to change that. Learning that there are approximately 20,000 people in our state living with some form of paralysis, I wanted to help others get healthier, stronger, and to live and maintain their best life."

That dream became a reality in 2017 when The Gary Balletto Foundation was created with a mis-

sion to help those with spinal cord injuries. Balletto had a vision of opening an affordable fitness facility for those with paralysis.

That new facility, located at the Cranston YMCA, has expanded greatly in the past two years adding more equipment and transforming into a comprehensive adaptive fitness space. In July, the facility opened to the public and today already has 40 members who pay just the cost of a YMCA membership.

"My eyes are constantly watering as members tell me this is the first time they have stood up in years, or that this is the first time they have moved certain muscles in their body they haven't been able to before," said Balletto, who would like to create facilities across the country. "The members tell me how strong they feel, how empowered it makes them feel to have use of this adaptive equipment that allows their paralyzed muscles to be awakened, stimulated, vibrated, in ways that weren't possible without this gym. That, to me, makes everything worth it." ■



nonprofits

'The members tell me how strong they feel, how empowered it makes them feel to have use of this adaptive equipment.'

GARY "TIGER" BALLETTTO,
The Gary Balletto
Foundation founder



PERFECT VISION: After a backyard accident left him a quadriplegic, former boxer Gary Balletto was determined to help others suffering from paralysis to get healthier and stronger.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

An online pioneer for elder care help

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer

A **WEBITE LISTING** medical-care resources is not an innovation. But **R.I. Elder Info**, an online resource for where family members and professional caregivers in Rhode Island can find community-based services for their elderly loved ones or clients, is unique.

Executive Director Deborah Burton said that in 2018, as the owner of a private senior care consulting firm, she found many people applying for community-based services were waiting a long time for such help. So she held listening sessions around the state and learned what she said other organizations and the state were learning – those seeking resources needed more information outlining what’s available.

She paid for a web developer to build a website to provide that information, she said. The result has been a large quantity of traffic and awards.

Under the then-parent company Aging Easily, RIElderInfo.com won the 2018 Social Enterprise Greenhouse award from the Health & Wellness Accelerator Program. It’s also been named one of the “50 on Fire” by the Rhode Island Inno media company, endorsed by the

New England QIN-QIO Patient and Family Advisory Council for content and ease of navigation, and added to the Senior Agenda Coalition’s Resources for Aging & Caregiving in the Community.

Burton said in the last 30 days alone, RIElderInfo.com has clocked 3,000 views from visitors who are staying two minutes or more on the site. Over the past year, the site has drawn 24,000 views.

“And that’s above industry-standard,” she proudly noted.

RIElderInfo.com provides caregivers with the peace of mind that they can access information they can trust, she noted. From a business perspective, employees can spend less work time and less health-compromising stress surfing the web for services for their senior loved ones.

Her future goals include more of her own community outreach and expanding the website to stretch nationwide. “Nationwide, people find it hard to [get] the right community-based senior care services,” she said. “And it doesn’t have to be that way.” ■



social services

‘Nationwide, people find it hard to [get] the right community-based senior care services. And it doesn’t have to be that way.’

DEBORAH BURTON,
R.I. Elder Info executive director



PLEASING PROGRESS: R.I. Elder Info Executive Director Deborah Burton, standing at center, discusses the website with, standing at left, R.I. Elder Info board members Leigh Anne Cappello and Gerry LePage and, sitting from left, board members Laurie G. Mantz, Meg Wirth, Sal Sauco and David England.
PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

Sensata is positioned to capitalize on change

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer

SENSATA TECHNOLOGIES INC. in Attleboro knows how to change with the times.

Starting as a jewelry metal supplier more than 100 years ago, the company now makes 47,000 products in the automobile, aircraft and space industries. Next up: the future.

In 2018, the global leader of sensing and electrical services formed Sensata Ventures – a sort of internal startup to focus on new opportunities.

“The pace of change, and the way technology accelerates that change, drives us to be quicker and faster,” said Alexia Taxiarchos, senior director of global communications.

As a result of the work so far, Sensata Ventures filed seven patent applications and developed battery-management systems in which sensors monitor, report and regulate on battery systems used in today’s and tomorrow’s engine technology.

“The need for cleaner and more-efficient products and increasing demand for more-electrified products, within and beyond automotive, are fundamentally

changing the way that people will move and engage with technology,” Taxiarchos said.

She said as the world moves from the traditional internal combustion engine to electrified engines “the safety paradigm changes drastically.” Batteries have intense burning capacity and battery-management systems can make sure the batteries are operating correctly in applications such as industrial equipment and electrical bikes.

An agreement signed in 2019 with S Volt Energy Technology Co., part of the Great Wall Motors company in China, will continue to develop and commercialize wireless battery-management system technology for the next three years, and in the long term, wireless systems could be a \$2.5 billion market opportunity for Sensata. The company plans to hire more than 100 people for Sensata Ventures, adding to Sensata’s 20,000 employees globally.

“We know how to have foresight and leverage our engineering to deliver services to customers before they even know they need it,” said Taxiarchos. ■



technology

‘We know how to have foresight and leverage our engineering to deliver services to customers before they even know they need it.’

ALEXIA TAXIARCHOS,
Sensata Technologies Inc. senior director of global communications



UP-CLOSE LOOK: From left, Sensata Technologies Inc. design engineer Jonas Bautista, General Manager Andrew Forti and Engineering Director Frank Sienkiewicz discuss wireless sensors.
PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

GALLO | THOMAS INSURANCE

No one likes to hear from their insurance broker. Except our clients.

When you are an integral part of their advisory team, a trusted partner with more answers than questions. When you are a collaborator, a strategic counselor with more solutions than problems. When you deliver competitive rates from the top-rated carriers. When you bring real value to the relationship – clients are glad to hear from you. That's the Gallo|Thomas difference.

gallothomas.com | 401-732-9100

COMMERCIAL INSURANCE | EMPLOYEE BENEFITS | PERSONAL INSURANCE | SURETY BONDING



125 Metro Center Boulevard, Suite 3001, Warwick, RI 02886
14 Woodruff Avenue, Narragansett, RI 02882
401 Arnold Road, Coventry, RI 02816
Headquartered in Rhode Island; serving all of New England.