

DOLLAR
-0.19c
104.98c US

TSX
-242.14
13,692.37

DOW
+0.15
12,807.51

NASDAQ
-22.46
2,841.62

OIL
-\$2.47
\$111.05 US

GOLD
-\$16.70
\$1,540.40 US

Record BUSINESS

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Section E

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Telecom changes predicted

Conservative government expected to open up foreign ownership of Canada's telecom space

By LuAnn LaSalle

MONTREAL — A Conservative majority government will likely mean more foreign ownership in Canada's telecom industry, fostering competition that will ultimately benefit consumers, analysts say.

"With the Conservatives taking a majority in Parliament, we believe they can now push for relaxation of telecom foreign ownership restriction without support from opposition parties," UBS analyst Philip Huang said Tuesday, adding he expects

legislation to be in place by the end of this year.

That means telecom companies like U.S.-based AT&T, France Telecom, Germany's T-Mobile, Japanese telecom giant NTT or Mexico's America Movil potentially could be allowed to set up shop in Canada.

The Conservatives had wanted to loosen foreign ownership rules last year but were unable to go ahead with their plans when they were a minority government.

Huang said he continues to believe foreign players, such as America Movil, may

consider entering Canada. Relaxed rules could open up some big opportunities — Manitoba Telecom, for example, could end up selling its Allstream internet business unit if rules are relaxed.

But any relaxed ownership restrictions put in place by the Tory government will more likely open room for telecom operators with less than 10 per cent market share and would provide them with better access to capital funding, Huang said in a research note.

That would affect newer wireless players currently offering mobile phone services such as Wind Mobile, Mobilicity and Public Mobile.

Telecom analyst Mark Goldberg said

although the Tories haven't laid out their strategy, the move is to keep the industry competitive.

"Some discussion still needs to be had on how you liberalize the rules in a way that brings the most benefit to consumers," said Goldberg of Toronto-area Mark Goldberg & Associates.

If the Conservative government decides to relax restrictions for telecom players with 10 per cent market share, it's not just doing it for the "under dogs," he said.

"This isn't simply helping foreign ownership for Wind and Mobilicity and Public Mobile," Goldberg said.

The Canadian Press

Enterprise



PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF

Derek Lippert, president of Quiet Nature Ltd., and employees (from left) Sarah Waterfield, Kim Lippert and John Paul Bartle, try to minimize the firm's impact on the environment by using battery-powered lawn mowers as well as hand tools.

Landscaping firm quietly shifts

Quiet Nature looks at reducing emissions and cutting carbon footprint

By Rose Simone, Record staff

AYR — Ahhhhh... the peace of an early summer day in Ontario. The sun is shining. The birds are chirping. You decide to relax and read on your patio for a spell.

Then, the lawn care and landscaping crew arrives next door. The roar of gasoline-powered lawn mowers, equipment and trucks sends you scurrying back indoors.

Derek Lippert, who runs Quiet Nature Ltd. in Ayr, would like to change that.

Lippert, 36, started the business in 1999. Originally called Naturally Maintained, he recently rebranded it as Quiet Nature, a landscaping and maintenance business that he hopes will tread more gently on the earth and be a lot quieter.

The business recently bought three mini-trucks that have "amazing" fuel efficiency and might eventually get converted to electric power, Lippert says. Meanwhile, the tools his maintenance crew will use will be battery-powered mowers and hand tools, along with a lot of "people power," to substantially reduce the noise of maintenance.

When Lippert started the business, he focused on restoration projects for municipalities, such as transforming former sewage lagoons into natural areas with plants.

To energize his creative side, he then started designing and installing alternatives to lawns, with a focus on native plants, for people who wanted to turn their yards into ecosystems that don't require constant watering and mowing.

Quiet Nature still does all of that. A crew run by field supervisor John Paul Bartle designs and installs landscape alternatives, which can include simple ground covers and wildflower meadows, as well as designs with water features, rocks and colourful plants.

Recently, Lippert brought his cousin, Kim Lippert, who has a background in lawn and landscape maintenance, into the business. "So now we have a crew dedicated to maintenance and we are able to round out our service offerings," he says.

While the mini-trucks use some fuel, Quiet Nature plans to work with an organization, such as Trees Ontario, which plants trees in the province, to offset the carbon footprint of the fuel use.

The battery powered equipment will be charged on-site using renewable power supplies. "The rest is done with hand tools and people power," says Kim Lippert. "This is

Quiet Nature

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Employees: 6

also about trying to live by our own personal values."

The business, which currently employs six people, is working with Sustainable Waterloo to find every possible way of reducing emissions and its carbon footprint, Derek Lippert says.

Two years ago, the business moved to a four-hectare property in Ayr. Lippert says he plans to turn the land into a demonstration of sustainable landscapes. "We are planning on seeding it with wildflower meadows and trails, gardens and everything sustainable in landscaping."

Lippert says that although he doesn't want to run a huge company, he foresees growth in both the commercial landscaping and the maintenance side of the business.

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building rating system has points for lawn-free landscaping, "so that is creating some work for us," he says. "There are environmental benefits to doing that, but also, over the course of a decade, it can save those customers thousands of dollars on lawn maintenance."

The quieter aspect of the maintenance will be of interest to institutions, such as nursing homes and funeral homes, "where they really don't want any of this noise," he says. Lippert says there was some risk in adding maintenance to the business and rebranding it as Quiet Nature, but with the growing concern about the environment, he thinks this is the way to go.

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Canada's digital footprint falls short

By Rose Simone, Record staff

STRATFORD — Canadians spend more time online than people in any other nation, yet as far as the online world is concerned, Canada barely exists, according to a report from the Stratford Institute for Digital Media.

The report, being unveiled at the Canada 3.0 digital media conference in Stratford today, says Canadians spend an average of 43.5 hours per month online, almost double the world average of 23.1 hours per month.

Yet less than one per cent of Canadian audio visual content is online and less than 13 per cent of Canada's print content is online. That is "totally unacceptable," Ian Wilson, executive director of the Stratford Institute for Digital Media said in an interview.

"We have a whole generation that believes everything of any relevance is online," Wilson said. "Yet what we are best connected to is foreign content."

About 2,000 people, including private industry representatives, innovators, investors, researchers, government officials and students are at the conference and technology showcase, concluding today at the Stratford Rotary Centre.

The report released at the conference addressed the need to develop more high-tech skills in the workforce.

It pulled together various studies to create an index that ranks Canada in relation to other countries in areas such as broadband connectivity, digital content availability, technology innovation and digital access to education, health information and government.

The index shows, for example, that Canada has a high capacity for innovation, and yet, according to a World Economic Forum report, Canada's competitiveness on the global stage dropped to 10th place in 2010 compared to 9th place the previous year.

Wilson said such statistics show that it is time for less talk and more action on the "moon shot goal" established at last year's Canada 3.0 conference.

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Economical challenger challenged

Shareholder-rights firm leading proxy fight gets grilled at information event

By Chuck Howitt, Record staff

WATERLOO — A shareholder rights firm leading a proxy fight to replace the board of directors at the Economical Mutual Insurance Company faced many questions during an information meeting in Waterloo Tuesday night.

About 80 mutual policyholders of Economical showed up to hear why they should vote to oust the board at the company's annual meeting on May 26.

Michael Woolcombe, executive vice-president of VC & Co., the company that has organized the proxy challenge, said Economical's board of directors only decided to demutualize the company after

learning of the challenge by dissident policyholders.

"You need a board you can trust."

Of nine new directors proposed by VC for the board, three attended the meeting.

"Governance and transparency are extraordinarily important things. That's why I am here," Norman Inkster, former commissioner with the RCMP, told the gathering at the Waterloo Inn.

Also outlining their credentials were Kathryn Giffen, a former lawyer in Kitchener and a former president of RBC Life Insurance and Bruce Barraclough, a former partner with Ernst & Young.

Economical took out newspaper ads in the days leading



MATHEW MCCARTHY, RECORD STAFF

Michael Woolcombe, executive vice-president of VC & Co., addresses a meeting of Economical Mutual Insurance policyholders on Tuesday.

up to the VC meeting explaining that it was not a company-sponsored event and that the only gathering that matters is the annual meeting which will be held on May 26.

Responding to a question,

Woolcombe said the formula for allocating funds after demutualization will likely contain fixed and floating components.

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