

Red Ball keeps on rolling

Moncton company continues to grow around province

FREDERICTON - A Moncton-based technology company is proud of its New Brunswick roots, but has its eyes set on the expansion of services it says will help change people's lives.

Red Ball Internet announced its arrival in the Fredericton area yesterday, bringing leading-edge wireless technology to the capital city.

Already operating in the Hub City and Bathurst, CEO Sean Adams says the company is looking to expand its customer list with even more businesses and municipalities.

"We're under no misconceptions that we're any bigger than we are, but we definitely have big ideas and there's no reason we can't do the things we say we're trying to do," he says.

"We try not to think about how big it's going to be, we just try not to limit ourselves either. Our goal isn't necessarily to go out and to capture this market from these big players, it's to go out and provide services that work."

The company is the exclusive Canadian provider of iBurst, billed as the most secure wireless network available. An iBurst tower can provide users within a multi-kilometre radius with fast and secure two-way communication, opening the door to a seemingly endless list of potential uses.

Available in 16 countries around the world and established in Moncton in 2007, Red Ball has now added Fredericton to that list, which Sean says will open the door to homebuilders, car dealers and many other kinds of businesses

"We've not found an industry it doesn't apply to yet," he says.

Also unveiled yesterday was Red Ball's new Trax software, which uses the iBurst networks to offer mobile fleet-management tools to taxi companies, transit systems and others.

The technology could have any number of possible practical uses, but Sean focused on how a bus system like Codiac Transit -- one of Red Ball's current customers -- could benefit.

From the administrator's end, it can provide dynamic information about the bus fleet, including bus locations, if they're running on schedule and even how much time during the day they spent idling.

For passengers, it could mean getting real-time information about routes or when the next bus will arrive, based on their actual location rather than just their scheduled arrival. Available to a home computer or mobile phone, the updates could make the bus a more user-friendly and convenient experience.

The mobile connectivity could also deliver video advertising into buses that is specific to the street or area the bus is travelling.

Red Ball has three main goals for the technology: to save costs for the administrators of the system, to identify efficiencies that can result in environmental benefits and to make public transit more attractive to more people.

"When you provide new technologies, you get new people riding the bus. It's not the original demographics you're already looking at," if transit is made more convenient and user-friendly, he says.

"We're not the biggest company, admittedly. But we're putting in infrastructure, we're gaining new customers, we're trying to do new things, but we also have to think about the future. This is the future."

Blaine Adams, chief executive officer and Sean's father, says the company has come a long way since getting started a few short years ago.

"It's because of the innovation that's in New Brunswick," he says, citing the installation of fibre optics as solidifying the province's place on the map.

"New Brunswick, within Canada, is recognized as a leader in technology and we're proud to be part of that.

He says the home-grown team of 13 employees working at the Moncton headquarters is the key to their growth.

"Without the people and without the team that we have, we wouldn't be here today. We have a small team, but they're very creative, innovative, dedicated people," he says, focusing on the co-operative atmosphere amongst employees.

"It's very much a relaxed environment, but everybody takes their job very seriously"? It allows you to provide excellent customer service, be innovative and creative. Everything we do, we need to be the best for the least amount of cost."

As further proof of the company's success, it recently replaced Tim Hortons as the marquee sponsor at what is now the Red Ball Internet Centre (formerly the Tim Hortons 4 Ice Centre).

"We definitely are thrilled to have our name up there. It's really important for us to be in the community," Sean says.

"We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Moncton, Fredericton, Bathurst and other communities. We know that and it's our responsibility to give back."