



# McDougall

## ENERGY

# HIGH ENERGY

**Sault College graduate leads one of the best-managed companies in Canada**



**BY MARC CAPANCIONI**

SINCE OPENING ITS DOORS, McDougall Energy Inc. has grown from a small, Thessalon, Ontario-based heating installer to one of the best-managed companies in all of Canada.

Current President Darren McDougall, a Sault College alumni, talked recently on the firm's 67-year journey from humble beginnings to its current status as a major player in the energy sector, with a notable presence across Ontario and regions in British Columbia.

What has been the company's recipe for success? "You can not do it on your own. You have to build a great team and surround yourself with the right people," said Darren, referring to the hundreds of employees who have been a part of the

McDougall team over the years.

Darren's grandparents, Allan and Lucy, began McDougall Fuels back in 1945. At that time, they were the only people on staff, and the company focused primarily on installing heating units in homes and other buildings northeast of Sault Ste. Marie.

By the time Darren's parents, Bryan and Joy, took over the reigns in 1972, the number of workers had increased to five. McDougall Fuel's product offering, along with its service area, had also expanded.

With Darren having taken over in 1987, the company now finds itself in a unique position within the energy sector. Changing its name to McDougall Energy Inc. four years ago, the business

currently focuses on three distinct areas: home heating, oil and propane services; commercial services, including fuel and lubricant delivery, for the forestry, mining, steel and other industries; and retail gas outlets, with McDougall Energy owning and operating 5 Esso stations across Ontario.

As the company has expanded into new locations and service areas, its workforce has grown as well. McDougall Energy currently employs approximately 200 direct and 200 indirect employees, many of whom are graduates from various Sault College programs.

"Expanding to areas across the country has been challenging" admitted Darren, who graduated from the Finance and Sales

Management program at Sault College in 1987. “Whenever you go into a new geographical area, there are a lot of market risks,” the 44-year-old said calmly. But with risk often comes reward. And for McDougall Energy, it has paid off with steady growth, year after year.

This success was recognized in February, when the business was awarded one of Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies for 2011. The national award is sponsored by Deloitte, CIBC, National Post, and Queen’s School of Business. The selection process – which doesn’t specify where a business stands in the rankings, only that it’s among the top 50 – was meant to give kudos to firms that “enacted numerous changes to their operations and demonstrated prowess in the most important facets of business for today’s enterprises.”

With hundreds of companies applying from across the country, Darren was taken aback after learning that McDougall

Energy made the final cut. “It’s quite an honour for the whole team,” he said. “But we come from humble beginnings, and we don’t forget where we came from.”

Originating in the Sault Ste. Marie area, and with its corporate headquarters now at Station Tower on Bay Street in the Sault’s downtown core, the company is heavily involved in the community. Whether it’s volunteering on the local Rotary Club, or donating to important causes like the Sault Area Hospital Foundation, Darren and McDougall Energy have been there to help out.

“It’s important to be involved with the communities you operate in,” he said. “We’re a big believer in that.” With this notion in mind, more recently, Darren has given back to his alma mater, with McDougall Energy donating \$10,000 to Sault College’s Inspiring Growth capital campaign, which aims to raise \$6 million to support campus redevelopment and

student scholarships and bursaries.

“It’s great to see the school growing, and we’re happy and proud to be involved in the process,” said Darren. “I had a great experience during my time at Sault College. It was a great learning environment, and I met a lot of lifelong friends. It was the perfect fit for me.”

In fact, he added, “The skills I learned in the school’s Finance and Sales Management program have helped me excel as an entrepreneur. Sault College taught me the fundamental building blocks of running a business.”

It is apparent that Darren McDougall has taken those fundamental building blocks and gone far with them, growing McDougall Energy Inc. into one of our community’s most successful businesses. More information on McDougall Energy Inc. is available online at the company website, [www.mcdougallcorp.com](http://www.mcdougallcorp.com)

FORGING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS **for**  
**community**  
**good**



BY LIISA ALLEN

For the last 13 years, Shadows of the Mind Film Festival has been entertaining local movie buffs with screenings of small, independent films that highlight mental health, addictions and other social issues. But, for the last two years supporters have been getting a head start on the event by attending the “pre-Shadows of the Mind Film Festival,” a pre-event screening hosted by Sault College’s Child and Youth Worker (CYW) program alumni and Shadows of the Mind Film Festival.

The event, which began in 2011 as a partnership between the two groups, aims to raise money for the CYW program’s annual We All Love Kids (WALK) event, which raises funds for community-based organizations providing services to children.

“I wanted to create an event to raise funds for the CYW annual walk,” said Shelly Nelson Bond, Child and Youth Worker alumna and winner of the 2010 Governor General’s Award. “I also wanted to raise the profile of our program and partner with a respected agency.”

The Festival, which aims to bring “mental health, addictions and social issues to light through the entertainment value of film,” was an ideal collaboration since the CYW students receive training in counselling, psychology and social issues.

“They focus on mental health awareness and that is a part of what we do as well,” said Nelson Bond. “I thought about joining

efforts somehow and came up with the movie night idea.”

The pre-screening, hosted in the college’s Multi Media Centre, is a warm-up to the week-long festival held every February. Admission to the pre-screening is by donation, and in its first two years, the event has raised over \$1,000 towards the CYW program’s annual WALK event. Due to the success of the inaugural event, Shadows moved their 2012 opening night gala to Sault College, where event supporters were treated to a delicious fare prepared by Sault College’s culinary chefs and students.

“We had a wonderful partnership originally with the Child and Youth Worker alumni and this year’s added partnership with Sault College Culinary and Hospitality department,” said Donna Boston, co-director of the Shadows of the Mind Film Festival. “Both years have been quite successful in raising awareness of the child and youth walk and mental health and addictions. We have a good relationship in that we were able to find a fit for both of our mandates. The gala held in the Sault College Gallery was exceptional. The atmosphere, people and food were amazing.”

The event was very successful,” added Nelson Bond. “People have been raving about the food served by the culinary department and liked the venue itself with the spacious theatre seating. I am very happy that the seed of an idea has sprouted into a larger partnership between the College and Shadows.



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