

# SUCCESS STORY: CONESTOGA MEAT PACKERS

## ABOUT CONESTOGA MEATS

A mainstay in Waterloo Region for almost 40 years, pork producer Conestoga Meat Packers has certainly come a long way since its humble beginnings.

Established in 1982, the once small, family-owned business became fully farmer-owned in 2001. Soon after, Conestoga Meats increased production by 100 per cent.

By 2014, the company had become the second-largest pork processor in Ontario.

Today, Conestoga Meats has almost 1,000 employees and exports to approximately 30 countries annually, with significant growth expected in the near future, according to President Arnold Drung.



## “GROWING UP” IN (AND WITH) THE REGION

Conestoga Meats operates across two locations: its processing plant in Breslau and a distribution centre in Cambridge.

Drung, who has been with the company for more than a decade, believes the region is a perfect location for many reasons.

“First, we’re close to the farming community from which all our livestock comes,” he says. “Second, we’re close to a major transportation corridor—Highway 401—as well as rail connections. And third, we’re close to a fantastic supply of ongoing production labour.”

Having lived and worked in Waterloo Region all his life, Drung has seen parallels in the evolution of both Conestoga Meats and the local business community.

“The character of the region is very entrepreneurial, innovative and enterprising—you see a real can-do attitude across all cities in the region,” he says. “As a result, I’ve seen it grow beyond being a major manufacturing centre to becoming a successful business centre for so many other diverse industries.”

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### A SOLID, SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Drung credits Woolwich Township, the Region of Waterloo and Waterloo EDC in facilitating Conestoga Meats' continuous growth.

"We've been able to draw our workforce from surrounding areas, with a lot of support from local government," he says. "They even helped us push through zone change work that had to be done, to make it easier for us to undergo expansion."



More recently, Waterloo EDC assisted Conestoga Meats with the company's newest expansion program.

"Waterloo EDC has worked closely with the provincial government, helping steer our company in the right direction, and making some representations on our behalf," says Drung. "Ultimately, they were able to help us in our efforts to secure a substantial government grant, which we will use to build a new slaughter facility and grow our cutting and de-boning facility."

Such support will enable Conestoga Meats to double the size of its business.

### WELCOMING AND COOPERATIVE FOR NEW BUSINESSES

According to Drung, businesses considering settling in the region can rest assured they will be welcomed and supported by all.

"On the business side, there's a high degree of cooperation between all sorts of institutions here," he says.

"So whether you find out about Waterloo through one of the Township websites, or the city, or Waterloo EDC, there really is no bad way to come in: every point of entry into the region is a good point of entry."

It all comes down to the welcoming atmosphere that characterizes the region.

"This community has many fantastic things going for it—a great infrastructure, an excellent workforce, and fantastic world-class educational institutions...and they're all working together so virtually any business can get started," says Drung.

"Moreover, it's a great place for employees to live and to raise families."



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