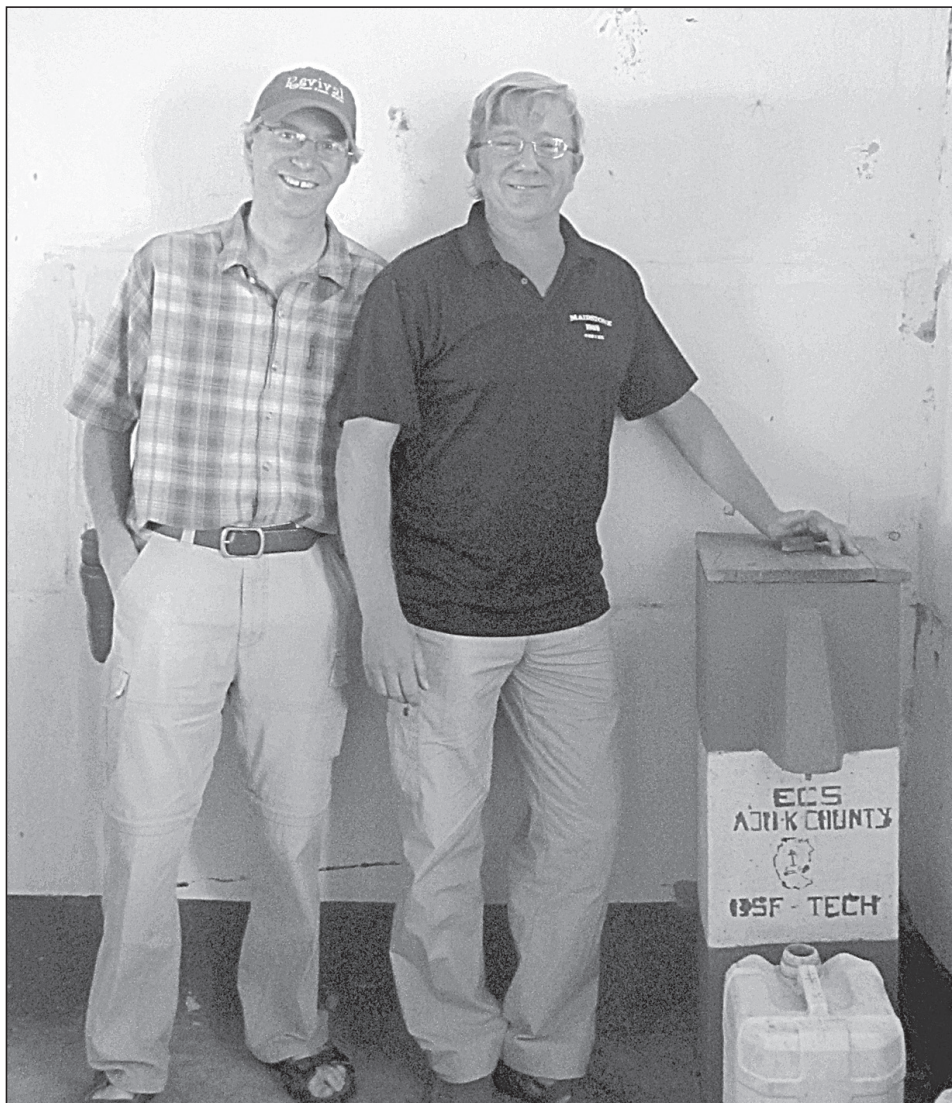


Local company earns B Corporation certification



Submitted Photo

BCORP STATUS — Bruce Taylor, of Enviro-Stewards, and Don Bell, of Fruition, recently visited South Sudan to provide these water filtration units to the local residents. This kind of commitment to social good is one of the key factors that helped Enviro-Stewards earn the B Corporation designation.

Gail Martin
Independent Editor

An Elmira company is one of only 20 companies in Canada that has been certified as a B Corporation.

If you don't know what that means, you're not alone.

B Corporations are a relatively new concept. It is a certification that tells the world that at your business, maximizing profit is not the only bottom line environmental and social concerns are also at the forefront.

At Enviro-Stewards, however, the B Corporation certification is merely a recognition of the way the business has always run, since day one.

Bruce Taylor, founded Enviro-Stewards in 2001, after realizing his career as a chemical engineer would not give him the freedom to pursue the kinds of work he would most like to do.

Taylor was drawn to helping clients reduce their environmental footprint, by developing more efficient processes that would also cost them less.

"It was a source of friction with my existing employer," said Taylor. "That is not the kind of work that leads to a lot of engineering fees."

That, combined with Taylor's frequent leaves of absences to do volunteer work in developing nations, was also becoming a problem.

Taylor decided to take his two passions and turn it into a business.

When he formed Enviro-Stewards, he originally had a choice as to whether to set it up as a non-governmental organization that was

not-for-profit, or a for-profit corporation.

He opted to go the for-profit route, in part because that would make it easier for him to work with prospective clients.

"You wouldn't find a company asking Greenpeace to come in and do an environmental audit," said Taylor. "A for-profit has more credibility (in the business field)."

Even so, Taylor incorporated many of the tenets that are hallmarks of an NGO — donating 10 per cent of profits to charitable organizations, providing a living wage to his employees, and providing volunteer and work projects for his employees.

"Because of this, we get incredibly loyalty from our staff," said Taylor.

In the recent economic downturn, instead of laying off employees, staff took one day a week off, through an employee work-share program.

"Nobody chose to leave," said Taylor.

Recent success stories from Taylor's work includes helping Fruition — a subsidiary of Tim Hortons — reduce its waste by 60 per cent, while at the same time increasing its productivity by 60 per cent.

When Taylor was done working with Fruition, the company was saving approximately \$490,000 per year in energy, water, ingredients, surcharge and landfill fees. It only took a few months for the company to gain back its initial investment of hiring Enviro-Stewards.

As an added bonus, Taylor was able to share about his company's work in South Sudan, bringing water filtration units to the area to help families have clean, healthy water. As a result, Don Bell, the

head of Fruition, came with Taylor on a future trip, donating water filtration units, as well as empty pails and a fruit-drying unit, providing a way for families in the area to preserve fruit, something they couldn't do before.

The way he treats his employees, combined with the heart of Taylor's work — helping corporations find environmental efficiencies that are not only good for the environment, but also good for the bottom line (and staff morale as well) — made the B Corporation designation an easy fit.

Taylor was encouraged to go through the certification process after attending a recent conference.

He had to go through a rigorous list of questions — including questions that highlight the wage gap between the highest-paid and lowest-paid employee — before earning the certification this September. Enviro-Stewards scored a total of 144.4 points out of 200. Only 80 points are needed for the B Corporation certification. In all areas — accountability, employees, consumers, community and the environment, Enviro-Stewards earned the "area of excellence" designation.

For Taylor, though, while the B Corporation designation is a good thing, it doesn't change the way he does business.

For him, it's all about doing work that he loves — and that he can feel good about at the end of the day.

"I tell engineers (I speak to) to have a pre-life crisis," said Taylor. "Don't wait until mid-life to pursue your passion."

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