

# Business of the Week

## Easy Lift Doors Ltd.

By Dan Rankin

Our Business of the Week, Easy Lift Doors Ltd., has been the go-to destination for overhead doors for homes, farms, factories and other businesses in the area for over 40 years. The business has been located at 515 James Street South in St. Marys since 1989, the same year current owner/manager Andy Stinnissen took over.

"We manufacture, assemble, service and retail overhead doors and related equipment," he said. "It's very simple to say that, but there's a lot of different variations in there too."

That's because Easy Lift Doors Ltd. works with everything from massive overhead doors measuring 40 feet by 20 feet, that are essentially "moving walls," to single-car garage doors. "There are other door companies who won't touch the stuff that we will do," he said. "We tend to do the largest doors in the industry."

At the other end of the spectrum, Stinnissen said residential garage doors typically measure around nine feet by seven feet, though they tend to be smaller in the city, and a little bigger in the country. "A lot of people on farms who are building new houses right now are going to 10' x 8' doors because they've got bigger pickup trucks with big mirrors on them," he said.

In particular, the industry where big doors are in highest demand right now, he said, is agriculture. "The machines are getting larger," Stinnissen said. "That's really relevant here because we're right in the middle of agricultural territory."



He estimated that they install about "98 percent" of the doors they sell, with a quote usually including the cost of manufacturing, sale and installation of a door. Some customers like installing the door themselves, he said, before noting "it's a disadvantage to do that."

"A lot of the problems that occur with the operation of a garage door, or an overhead door, are based on how it was installed to begin with," he said. "If a customer buys it 'supply-only' and installs it, but has done it slightly incorrectly and the door doesn't run right, it's their responsibility to take care of it, and it's outside of the warranty." While some of their customers come to them because they've heard of them locally, or seen them at a car or home show they've exhibited at, the majority of their customers "have been directed to us by their contractor, or the contractor has brought us to their property to begin with," he said. "We work for contractors at least 50, if not 60 percent of the time. That's who we tend to target. It reduces our need for salespeople. We've nev-

er had a salesperson the whole time I've been here."

A quote from Easy Lift Doors will generally include a "base quote," and then several other options, such as door materials, on top of that, individually priced, he said.

"Aluminium and polycarbonate doors seem to be getting popular now, so we'll give that price to them too, as an option," he said, noting that economical and energy-efficient steel-insulated doors remain their most popular product.

While Easy Lift Doors works with a lot of different suppliers, the Canadian company Richards-Wilcox is who they tend to deal with the most. "They're the biggest Canadian supplier that we deal with and most reliable," he said. "They've been around for 100 years. That really says something, and they're very good to work with."

Stinnissen said that, while some American manufacturing companies are selling their products to Canada at a reduced rate and "eating their profit," because of the low dollar, they're doing so "with the intention of making that back again when they need replacement parts or pieces."

"The freight cost for a replacement section is just astronomical, and then the replacement section is really highly-priced too," he said. "It's a deterrent to actually go with American manufacturers right now for that reason. Stay Canadian."

Easy Lift Doors has a long list of clients for its maintenance service ranging from municipalities and fire

halls to dairy farmers. October-November is their busy season in terms of servicing doors prior to winter, he said. The majority of their business is done within a 50-60 km radius of St. Marys, Stinnissen said, however, the contractors they serve "are going further afield to get projects."

"Last year for example, we did projects north of Orillia, east of Peterborough, Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara, and from Lake Erie to Collingwood," he said. "We have all the freight and service trucks to be able to handle the transportation of that."

They pride themselves on following strict safety precautions no matter the work site. "We have existing contracts with the cities, municipalities, counties, the fire halls around here," he said. "We can't vary our safety policy, so we carry that high rate of safety policy for all the projects that we do."

Finally, Stinnissen noted that from February to May is typically the season in which they're training up their staff, which they do mainly in-house. "We will certify the guys," he said. "We'll get them training and certificates for all the different types of equipment they're working with, all the different types of doors and electrical operators."

"When we hire somebody, it's not for a temporary basis, it's for long-term employment," he said. "That's the aim anyway."

To contact Easy Lift Doors Ltd., visit EasyLiftDoors.com or call 519-349-2355.

# Independent Shorts

- Two films coming to theatres this weekend are the claustrophobic thriller 10 Cloverfield Lane (rated 91 percent on the website Rottentomatoes.com), and the raunchy espionage comedy The Brothers Grimsby (47 percent) starring Sacha Baron Cohen.
- Head over to TownofStMarys.com to check out the many different March Break Activities planned at the Pyramid Centre (skating and swimming), Early Learning Centre (Kids Klub) and St. Marys Public Library (movie viewings, Lego and colouring) next week.
- Lincolns hockey may be wrapped up until next season, but the playoffs go on for the Finnbilt Novice BBs (who play Niagara-On-The-Lake tonight at the Pyramid Centre at 7:00 pm), and the Independent Grocer Atom BBs (who face Collingwood at the PRC tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 pm), who are both in the OMHA finals.
- Or, alternatively, there's some other playoff junior hockey continuing in the area not too far away. The Stratford Cullitons completed a four-game sweep of the Brampton Bombers Wednesday to advance to the second round of their Midwestern Conference playoffs. They'll play either Guelph or Elmira beginning later this month – Elmira leads that series three games to one. In the Junior C SOJHL, the Exeter Hawks open up their league championship series against the Dolphins in Dorchester tonight. The series goes back to Exeter for Game Two tomorrow night.

<b>DVD RENTALS</b> \$3.49 / 2 Days <b>NEW RELEASES WEEKLY!</b>	<b>M&amp;M Variety</b> Movie Rental of the week: <b>The Peanuts Movie</b> <b>G</b>	
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**RDJ BAILEY**  
*Metal Works*  
 — Inc. —  
**RON BAILEY**  
 General Manager  
 Box 310, 75 South Service Road, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B2  
 Tel: 519.349.2130 Fax: 519.349.2626

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