

Independent Shorts

- The St. Marys Lincolns "Chase the Ace" jackpot is estimated to be in the \$8,000 range this week. Tickets, which can be purchased at Downtown GM, Dunnys, M&M Variety or Home Hardware, are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Sooner or later there will be a winner, so, don't be left out. If you are not in, you cannot win!
- The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) says between 20 and 50 mm of rain has fallen over the watershed this week, dependent upon location, with generally more rain in the northern portion of the watershed. An additional 5 to 10 mm of rain is possible Thursday or Friday. Most of the snow in the southern portion of the watershed has melted; some snow remains in the northern portion of the watershed.
- "Water levels will begin to peak on Thursday in upstream locations, such as Mitchell, Stratford and Innerkip," explained Mark Helsten, UTRCA Senior Water Resources Engineer. "The crest will move downstream throughout today and the Thames River will peak in Byron early on Friday." "We do not expect serious flooding but low lying areas will be flooded in many areas throughout the watershed, including Harris Park and potentially Gibbons Park, in London," said Helsten. Residents are reminded to use extreme caution near all rivers, streams, ditches and ponds, and keep children and pets away. Ice is unstable and thin, streambanks are slippery and the water is very cold. Seasonal freezing temperatures are forecast to return, but warm temperatures and rain are again possible early next week.

M&M Variety

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Riannas Family Restaurant

Wednesday All you can eat spaghetti
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Sunday

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7 am - 7 pm Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday
7 am - 2 pm Monday, Tuesday, Sunday

Business of the Week

Ulch Transport

By Stewart Grant

Our Business of the Week is Ulch Transport, a family owned and operated transport company located at 100 South Service Road in St. Marys. Ulch Transport is owned by Stonetown Transport Ltd., which in turn is owned by Bob, Debbie, Joe and Yvette Wilhelm.

Bob Wilhelm got started in the transport business following his time working for Richardson Foods in the late 1970s. Wilhelm was overseeing the shipping and receiving for Richardson, and noted that the company was having issues getting product reliably to the St. Marys plant. In 1982, he bought his first truck and began hauling liquid sugar to Richardson Foods. He quickly grew his small company, Stonetown Transport Ltd., to a fleet of four trucks.

In 1987, Stonetown Transport Ltd. expanded through their purchase of Ulch Transport, a Kirkton, ON company formed in 1968 that hauled both freight and livestock. Following deregulation of the industry in 1990, the livestock side of the business was sold off in 1991 as the Wilhelms decided to focus exclusively on freight.

Today, Ulch Transport operates 47 trucks and 105 trailers that travel all over North America, but at some point each week all return home to St. Marys. More than half of Ulch's 60 employees live in St. Marys or just outside of town. Ulch VP Joe Wilhelm (Bob and Debbie's son) has worked in the family business for the last 19 years and has grown up with many of the company's long-time employees, four of which have



PHOTO: Back Row: Ron Annett, Floyd Upshall, Paul Podzadecki, Joe Wilhelm, Steve Blake, Jim Walker, Lynne Darling, Bob Wilhelm Front Row: Mark Hedberg, Tracy Treadway, Marlene Richardson, Judy McKeegan

been with Ulch for over 25 years.

"When you're here, you're part of the family," said Joe. "We care about our drivers, we want them to be healthy, have good benefits, and to achieve a proper home/work life balance. In short, we treat our employees the way we would want to be treated."

Last month, the Independent did a feature story on Ulch's commitment to employee health when they purchased Fitbits for each one of their drivers and office staff to help them focus on their own personal nutrition and fitness. It's just the latest example of how Ulch Transport takes a leadership position in the industry when it comes to investing in new technology to improve health and safety. Ulch's trucks and trailers are all equipped with state-of-the-art management technology. At any time, all company vehicles can be monitored and adjusted by head office using the on-board computers installed in each unit. This

technology has numerous applications including both road safety and product safety.

From a road safety standpoint, the telematics system provides data to head office on hard brakes, hard stops, speed data, and electronic logs that track the number of hours driven per day, so not to exceed the allowable limits.

With much of Ulch's transport being refrigerated food products, monitoring trailer temperatures is of critical concern. Depending on the type of food being delivered, trailer temperatures are set accordingly into the monitoring system, with alarms alerting drivers and office management if those temperatures are deviated from so that immediate corrections occur. From a customer service standpoint, clients are able to login and monitor their shipment from start to finish, providing piece of mind throughout the process.

The closure of the Heinz plant (formerly Richard-

son Foods) in St. Marys certainly had an impact on Ulch, but the company has rolled with the punches.

"Without the Heinz business out of St. Marys, we've taken on new routes. We've been forced to go out and get new customers, which has made us a stronger company. This process has allowed us to be creative and find new business," said Bob.

Presently, Ulch's top customers are Sysco, Kraft Heinz, Perth County Ingredients, Shepherd Gourmet Dairy, Finnie's Distributing, Can-Am Pepper, and L Brands.

"We are always looking for new opportunities," said Bob. "Traditionally we have tried to keep a low profile and haven't really promoted ourselves; we are a good transport company right here in St. Marys."

For more information on Ulch Transport, freight quotes or employment opportunities, contact their office at 519-349-2340 or visit their website at ulchtransport.com.