eye on innovation

SAULT STE. MARIE **INNOVATION** CENTRE

SSMARt IT Awards 2005

And the winner is....

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre recently launched the first annual SSMARt IT Awards program – and what a success it was! An electric audience that included business professionals, students and supporters, to local media including MCTV, Shaw Cable, Sootoday and LTV News came out to see the SSMARt IT Awards on September 22.

This year, four special individuals of the Algoma Region were recognized for their IT initiatives.

The IT Executive Award of the Year went to Martin Wyant, Manager of Business

"We look forward to celebrating the achievements of Sault Ste. Marie's IT sector each year and growing our annual awards program,"
-Tom Vair

development, PUC Telecom. Mr. Wyant's implementation of leading edge technology - Broadband over Powerline -

illustrates the impressive projects taking place in the area. Broadband over Powerline uses the electrical grid to distribute high-speed Internet to business customers. As the first in Canada to implement a Broadband over Powerline solution, the PUC has received recognition both nationally and internationally.

SubSpace Communications won the "IT Company of the Year" Award for their impressive growth and dedication to community involvement. SubSpace Communications' revenue

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Sault Ste. Marie chosen for GIS Conference!

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) has just received confirmation that the 2006 ESRI Canada Regional User Conference for Northern Ontario will be held in Sault Ste. Marie from May 1st to the 5th. ESRI Canada conferences are designed to bring together senior industry and product managers to communicate the strategic direction of ESRI and its technology as well as business partners and clients to demonstrate the latest ESRI technology and solutions.

Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) develops GIS software that is used by hundreds of thousands of organizations around the world. As the Canadian distributor, ESRI Canada has the expertise and resources to satisfy users in a number of sectors including all levels of government, education, natural resources, public safety and defence, business demographics, telecommunications, healthcare, transportation, and utilities on a local, regional, and national scale. Managers, planners, analysts,

and scientists use GIS technology across all industries and disciplines to analyze geographic information in order to better understand and address real-world problems.

ESRI Canada has decided to use the facilities at Algoma U to host the 2006 conference. The conference will begin with a one day Forestry User Group meeting followed by the main conference and additional days for training and workshops.

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UPCOMING EVENTS
October

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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

- **Oct. 13-15 - FuturePlay Gaming Conference. East Lansing**
- **October 26 - IT Breakfast,** Gran Festa Ristorante, 7:00 am
- **October 28 - TAG Luncheon,** Russ Ramsay Room, City Hall, 12:00 pm
- **November 5 – Computer Programming Competition,** Algoma U

For more information about the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, or any of our events contact:

Sarah Watson
942-7927 x-3122 or
E-mail:
swatson@ssmic.com

Build IT & they will come.
IT for jobs. IT for growth. IT for SSM.

Brian Robbins, Fuel Industries of Ottawa. Their firm specializes in casual games and advergaming.

Sault Ste. Marie's Got Game!

Gaming is one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide. Part of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre's (SSMIC) mandate is to keep current with the evolving IT industry trends, and the Future Play Conference was an open door to view the future of the rapid-growing gaming industry.

"The gaming sector holds a great deal of potential for developers in Sault Ste. Marie," said Jason Villeneuve, Business Development Manager, SSMIC. "The conference identified realistic opportunities for small companies to enter this market."

Algoma U organizes the annual conference and the goal is to "bring together academics, industry, and students to advance game design and technology through peer-reviewed research, creative and experimental game design and development, and formal and informal discussion on academic and industry-related topics."

The tagline for this conference was "What will the next generation think of?" and the three themes were the future of game development, game impacts and applications, and game talent. The three-day conference was a potpourri of industry guru keynotes, paper sessions, workshops and panel presentations.

The workshops and paper sessions sparked hours of discussion and debate over everything from 'Artificial Intelligence' to 'Casual Gaming' to 'Sex and Gender Issues' in gaming.

"The conference allowed us to gain insight into the gaming market, identify project opportunities and establish new contacts with gaming professionals that will help us provide a greater service to gaming start-up businesses in our region," said Tom Vair, Executive Director, SSMIC.

"The casual, online and adver-gaming markets are emerging niches that hold promise for small firms."

Some of the gaming gurus at the conference were: John Buchanen, Electronic Arts; Ernest Adams, Game Design Consultant; Greg Costikyan, CEO, Manifesto Games; Trevor Fencott, President, Groove Games; Chris Hecker, Lead Programmer, Maxis; Brian Robbins, Dir. Online Gaming, Fuel Industries; and Guillaume Provost, Dir. of Dev't, pseudo interactive.

Companies interested in learning more about the gaming sector can contact the SSMIC or read the conference updates at www.ssmic.com.

Chris Hecker, Maxis. He is currently working as Lead Programmer on their next release, Spore.

Awards cont'd...

objectives have been surpassed by over 500% and they are in the process of establishing new branch offices in Northern Ontario. A large accomplishment this year was the successful implementation of a converged voice and data network at Sault College. They are also in the process of rolling out a new high-speed satellite service providing affordable data and voice access to the remote regions of Northern Ontario.

The winner of the IT Student/ Graduate of the Year award, Jake Cormier is not only a Dean's honour list student, but has made a notable impact on his community especially in the area of integrating technology into his community's daily operations. He has held IT-related positions with various companies in the Algoma Region since the age of 14, including: Hilton Web Connection, Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and St. Joseph Island Economic Development Corporation. Most recently, he started his own web-design business, ni4design.ca. Jake is currently enrolled in the Computer Science Program at Algoma University.

The winner of the Best Website Award was straightsmile.ca, a site operated by Dr. Kent Floreani and designed by Lucidia. The site has a great balance of interactive and multimedia content and design. It is functional, entertaining and easy to use. It improves client service and compliments the business in an industry not known for embracing web technology. Some of the unique features of the website include: a fun video clip to help visitors navigate through the site, interactive client log-in, a suggestion box, entertaining video out-takes, vibrant colours.

After the awards presentation the audience was invited to tour the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre's Technology Incubator, enjoy the gourmet fare, mingle, and celebrate.

"We would like to thank all the nominees, our gold sponsor, Algoma U and the silver sponsors, Algoma's Water Tower Inn, RBC and BDC. We look forward to celebrating the achievements of Sault Ste. Marie's IT sector each year and growing our annual awards program," said Tom Vair, Executive Director, SSMIC.

ESRI cont'd...

The SSMIC is also planning a session on GIS and Healthcare to complement the conference. The SSMIC GIS team has successfully completed healthcare related projects. Most health and human service problems facing the world today exist in a geographic context and any analysis must consider that. Understanding issues ranging from medical epidemiology to healthcare access requires a comprehensive understanding of their geography. The SSMIC's GIS team uses the latest GIS software from ESRI to maintain the city of Sault Ste. Marie's and the PUC's information in one of the most comprehensive GIS implementations in Canada.