

**ElginCounty**  
Progressive by Nature

**E-NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2017**

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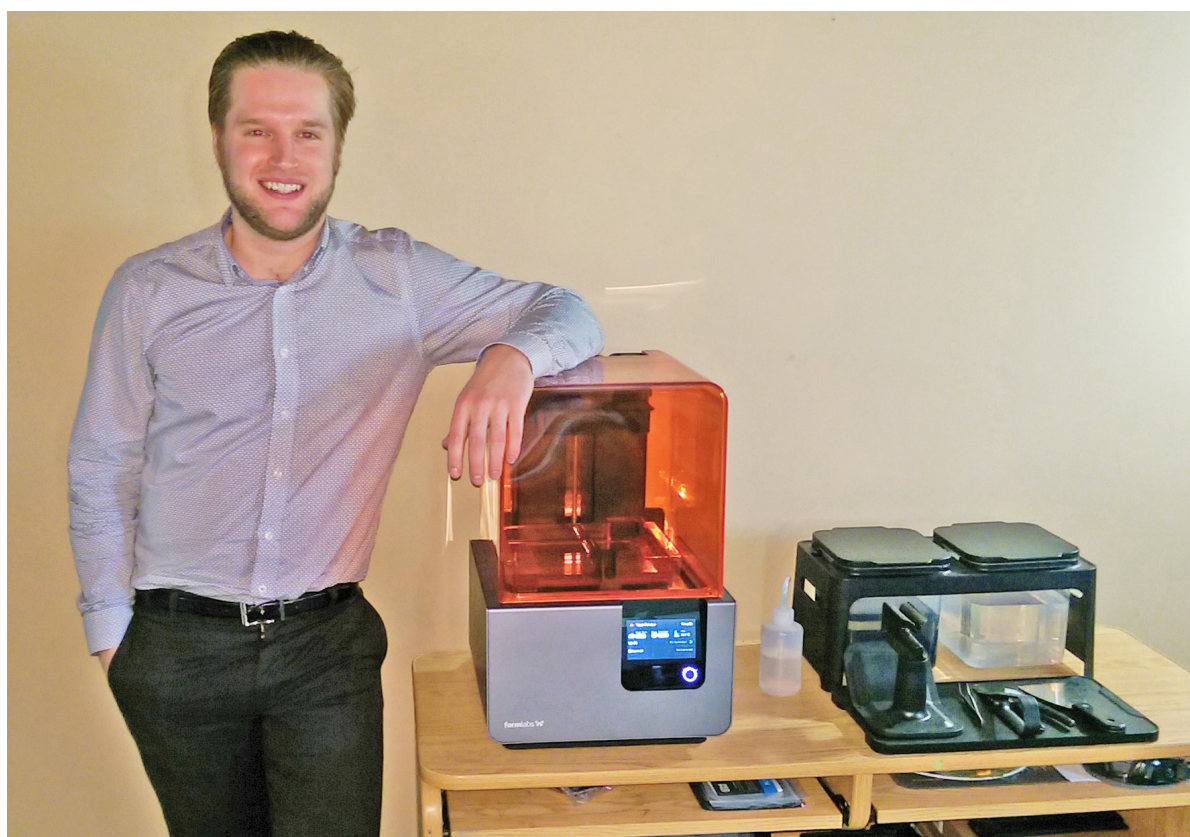
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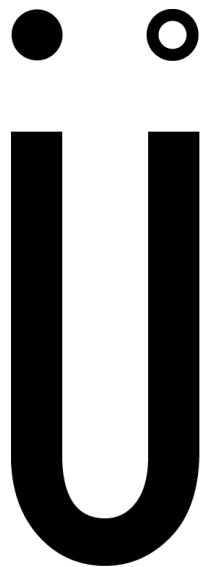
## Business Profile

### **Astute Studios - Turning Ideas Into Physical Reality**



Curtis van Kasteren has always had a natural curiosity about how the world around him works. From a young age he was fascinated with the inner workings of everyday items and would take them apart to fix them or use their parts to

build other, better things. It was this curiosity that encouraged him to pursue an education in industrial design. After graduation he could have easily moved to Vancouver or Toronto where the services of an Industrial Designer



# ASTUTE STUDIOS

are in high demand; however, he chose to stay in Elgin County where he saw a gap that he could fill. There are very few industrial designers in the area and Curtis knew that there was a need out there for his services.

Curtis is the owner/operator of Astute Studios, a product design studio that guides clients from the initial design phase of a product through to the completion of a working prototype. The process begins when a client meets with Curtis for a consultation to discuss an idea he/she wants developed. He then takes the client through every aspect of the product design process from draft sketching and settling on a concept design to 3D modelling and finally a working prototype. Once the prototype is perfected, he can also guide the customer through the correct manufacturing process to get the product produced.

Curtis uses an industrial grade 3D printer to create models and working prototypes. These prototypes are as close as the client can get to the final product without investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in tooling and injection modelling. 3D printing models are a great way to test out whether a product will work as it can be sent back for multiple adjustments at a relatively low cost. It is also a much quicker process than the traditional modelling methods.

"The reiteration cycle is very quick," says Curtis. "It can be as short as a day whereas in the past it could take over a month to get a revised prototype."

In addition to industrial prototypes, Astute Studios also offers replacement part printing. When a machine or an appliance breaks down, the problem often stems from a simple broken part. Sometimes, particularly in the case of an older machine or appliance, the replacement part is no longer available. Instead of replacing the entire machine, Astute Studios can reverse engineer and 3D print a replica of the original part, thus greatly extending the lifecycle of the machine and cutting costs for the business. As long as the part is plastic and under 7 x 7 x 9 inches in size Astute Studios can recreate it.

3D printing is also ideal for custom jobs. Astute Studios offers a variety of custom design services. For example, Curtis has worked with clients to design custom accessories for their vehicles including shifter knobs, dials, hood ornaments, and light covers. He has even 3D printed replacement parts for vintage vehicles that are no longer commercially available for purchase. Astute Studios has recently begun to expand into custom event decorations for weddings, anniversaries and birthday parties and is open to creating just about any plastic item a customer could want.

Curtis assures potential clients that they don't need to have any design experience - all they need is an idea. If you can dream it, Astute Studios can turn it into a reality.

For more information about Astute Studios contact Curtis at [www.astutedesignstudios.com](http://www.astutedesignstudios.com).





Visit Elgin County's museums as they celebrate  
Canada 150 with the theme of transportation.

*Present this passport and enter  
to win at each site.*

*Elgin County 150*

**PASSPORT**



### Backus-Page House Museum

*Transportation Between Lake Erie and the Thames River* MAY 2 - OCTOBER 9  
29424 Lakeview Line, Wallacetown | 519.762.3072 | backuspagehouse.ca

place  
stamp  
here

### Port Burwell Marine Museum

*The Meeting Place of Water, Road and Rail* OPENS MAY 18  
20 Pitt Street, Port Burwell | 519.866.5521 | bayham.on.ca

place  
stamp  
here

### Gay Lea Dairy Heritage Museum

*The Milk Run: Moving Elgin's Milk* OPENS MAY 27  
48075 Jamestown Line R.R. #2, Aylmer | 1.888.773.2955 | dairyheritagemuseum.ca

place  
stamp  
here

### Elgin County Museum

*Ships and Sails, Roads and Rails: Travel in the Confederation Era* OPENS MAY 27  
4th Floor, Elgin County Admin. Bldg., 450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas  
519.631.1460 x 160 | elgincounty.ca/museum

place  
stamp  
here

### The Arts and Cookery Bank

*Rails to the West* OPENS JUNE 1  
242 Graham Road, West Lorne | 519.768.9986 | theartsandcookerybank.com

place  
stamp  
here

### Elgin County Archives

*Railway Stations of Elgin County* OPENS JUNE 1  
Elgin County Admin. Bldg., 450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas | 519.631.1460 x 154 | elgincounty.ca/archives

place  
stamp  
here

### Elgin County Railway Museum

*Railway to Confederation* OPENS JUNE 1  
225 Wellington Street, St. Thomas | 519.637.6284 | ecrm5700.org

place  
stamp  
here

### Ye Olde Forge and Anvil Museum

*The Village Blacksmith* OPENS JUNE 1  
46316 Sparta Line, Sparta | 519.775.2292 | tcg@execulink.com

place  
stamp  
here

### Edison Museum of Vienna

*Plank Road: Travel through Bayham* OPENS JUNE 3  
Bayham's Family Table | 6209 Plank Road, Vienna | 519.773.8798 | FB Bayham Historical Society

place  
stamp  
here

### Aylmer - Malahide Museum & Archives

*Transforming a Town: The Introduction of the Railway to Aylmer and Malahide*  
JUNE 26 - AUGUST 25  
14 East Street, Aylmer | 519.773.9723 | aylmermuseum.com

place  
stamp  
here

### St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre

*By Water* OPENS JULY 8  
301 Talbot Street, St. Thomas | 519.631.4040 | stepac.ca

place  
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## Results of the EmployerOne Survey



### *Your Workforce. Our Future.*

The results of the annual EmployerOne Survey are in and 64% of employers who responded say that they plan to hire in the coming months. Of those hires, over 1,000 are full-time positions and around 450 are part-time.

This year, 368 businesses in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford responded to the survey conducted by the Elgin, Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board. The survey is used to identify hiring patterns, challenges, concerns and successes in the current workforce.

See below for a brief summary of the survey's findings and visit [www.worktrends.ca](http://www.worktrends.ca) for the full report.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- 64% of respondents plan to hire staff this year, 1,045 full-time, 465 part-time, 222 contract and 1,193 seasonal jobs.
- Occupations in education, law, social, community and government services, sales and

service, and manufacturing and utilities are in great demand.

- Top five in-demand job skills in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford in 2017 are: customer service, teamwork/interpersonal, work ethic, dependability, and self-motivation/the ability to work with little or no direction. (A majority of those being "soft skills").
- Top three reasons respondents are looking to hire this year, include: expansion; fill vacancy/ replacement and seasonal.
- 46% of respondents had difficult time filling positions in 2016. Large and medium sized businesses had the most difficulty in finding talent. The top three reasons being: not enough applicants, lack of qualifications (education level/ credentials) and lack of work experience.
- A majority of respondents indicated college diploma as the minimum preferred level of education for many positions. A high school diploma is acceptable for service and production workers and apprenticeships.

## Workshops and Courses for Small Business Owners



The Elgin/St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) has recently introduced several new workshops to help small businesses grow and thrive. For a full list of workshops and courses and their descriptions visit:

<http://www.sbecinnovation.ca/events/>.

### **Bookkeeping 101**

Understanding bookkeeping can be a challenge, even with a bookkeeper and accountant. “Bookkeeping 101” will provide attendees with the ins & outs and the dos and don’ts of bookkeeping for small business owners.

### **Develop Your Business Identity**

Business owners need a strategy that will enable them to understand the value that they bring to the market, and to ultimately target an audience of buyers that will need and buy their products and services. A unique business identity is the key to building a business strategy. This targeted workshop will take businesses through the elements of why and how to build a business identity. They will come away knowing what makes up their business identity, what a brand is, and how to develop their brand strategy to attract potential customers.

### **Introduction to Digital Marketing**

This 4 part workshop will teach participants how to plan for and successfully choose the right DIY website tool, how to create a website using this tool, how to market the website once created, and how to analyze and optimize the website.

### **Relationships & Sales in Small Business**

In today’s marketplace of internet sales and seemingly infinite options, understanding how to effectively sell a product or service is not only important, it’s essential. Whether selling Business to Business or Business to Customer, the ability to connect with people, provide an experience, and suggest an effective solution will be what sets a business apart from the competition. This course will provide ideas on how to be a successful salesperson and inspire you to take action to improve your sales results through customer service.

### **Business Model Canvas**

In this 2 hour workshop SBEC will walk you through the 9 building blocks of the Business Model Canvas. These 9 categories represent the four major aspects of a business: customers, offer, infrastructure, and financial viability. The Business Model Canvas is a strategic management and entrepreneurial tool that allows you to describe, design, challenge, invent, and pivot your business model. It is a visual, dynamic, action focused and activity driven tool which is valuable to business owners.



## Plowing Match Scholarship Accepting Applications



Are you a resident of Elgin County or St. Thomas and studying in a post-secondary institution in Canada in a discipline related to agriculture? You may be eligible for the International Plowing Match Legacy Agricultural Scholarship.

The scholarship awards \$2,500 per year to one female and one male each who are already attending a college or university in Canada to study in an agriculturally-related program. Examples of such programs include agricultural sciences, agri-business, agri-tourism, nutrition, earth sciences and food sciences. The scholarship is provided as a result of the generous support of legacy funds from the 2010 International Plowing Match hosted in Elgin County.

The application form and eligibility criteria are available for download at [www.elgincounty.ca/ipmscholarship](http://www.elgincounty.ca/ipmscholarship)

**The Scholarship Deadline is June 1, 2017**