

Kanata North's telecom heart still beats strong

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© Mark Holleran Kanata North has proven itself much more than a one-trick pony since that telecom bubble of years past. It's thriving in a number of other markets.

John Muise, head of service implementation, SSi Micro. But telecom lives on, forever woven into the

The sector that started it all is making new waves around the globe

Ninety per cent of Canada's industrial telecommunications R&D still takes place in the orbit of Kanata North. Kanata North's collective telecom, wireless and photonics sector leads the way with 8,000 workers and \$1.8 billion in annual revenues.

Kanata North is home to a rich mix of homegrown players with global clout, as well as multinationals drawn here by the depth of the industry eco-system and the level of talent. Names like Ciena, Cisco, Ericsson, Huawei and Nokia live alongside Dragonwave, Edgewater Wireless, Mitel, KodaCloud, SSI Micro and others.

Adversity breeds innovation

Matt Massey, VP Marketing at Edgewater Wireless, is well aware of the rich history that underpins Kanata North's telecom sector. His grandfather worked for the company that started it all – Bell Northern Research. He believes the area's depth of talent gives it the resilience to bounce back from any market cycle.

"People stayed through the downturn," he said. "Bright engineers came up with innovative new ideas and started new companies. Fast forward to today and there are many companies here now that have their tech deployed all over the world. They are dominating emerging markets like India. You just don't know it because it's still the nature of this area for companies to be quiet and humble. We keep our heads down and build great technology."

Edgewater is certainly one of those companies building great tech. It's the only company in the world with a Wi-Fi router that can handle multiple channels through a single radio in order to overcome congestion and interference challenges in heavily trafficked hotspots. And it's recently had the door opened to the \$500-billion U.S. cable industry.

Where technology and public policy meet

SSI Micro hails from Yellowknife, but Kanata North is its ideal second home.

The company is a premier Internet service provider for Canada's North, reaching the most remote communities. Even today, many of these communities still lack cellular service, but SSI will soon change that with the launch of a new 4G-LTE network. The company's Kanata North facility serves as its network operations centre and satellite backhaul teleport, using two Anik satellites to connect northerners to the world's Internet backbone.

From Kanata North, SSI has strategic access to a rich pool of local technical talent and proximity to key partners like Telesat Canada. It's also valuable for the company to have operations near Parliament Hill as it lobbies on vital telecommunications policy issues.

And being embedded in Kanata North's ecosystem is always handy when it's time to go shopping.

"When we have to source customer equipment or network and test equipment, it's all right here," said John Muise, SSI Micro's head of service implementation. "It's so convenient to send our people to vendor meetings because they can often just walk over."

On the cusp of the next big thing

Bernard Herscovici, founder and CEO of KodaCloud (formerly Art2Wave), is a serial entrepreneur whose career began 30 years ago as an engineer at Nortel.

He's seen market cycles come and go – the evolution of the industry from the days when hardware ruled to recent advances like software-defined networking. In his view, the telecom industry is poised for its next big round of expansion and Kanata North is well positioned to benefit.

KodaCloud is ready to claim its piece of this pie, with the first AI (Artificial Intelligence) system that can deliver true "network as a service." It's like having an IT department in the cloud. Because if an AI can drive a car, why can't it also drive a network?

“What we’re seeing now is the early stage of the next huge wave of expansion that will see telecommunications networks driven from systems in the cloud,” Herscovici said. “Many companies and many people here in Kanata North are skilled in the hot technologies of the future such as software-defined networking, SaaS and cloud services. We have no trouble finding the talent we need right here in Kanata North.”

Learn more about Kanata North’s pedigree in telecom, wireless and photonics at www.serioustechliveshere.com (<http://www.serioustechliveshere.com>)

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