

Modular walls win innovation award



DAVID PARKER
AROUND TOWN

Yesterday morning, **John Read** visited the DIRT Environmental Solutions plant to announce that this year's winner of an innovation award is **Geoff Gosling**, the designer of its Modular Wall Systems. A partner of the company who leads its product development, he will be presented with the \$10,000 award at a gala ceremony in Ottawa on Sept. 17 hosted by Senator **Pamela Wallin**, **Preston Manning** and **Bernard Lord**.

Read is president of the Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation, which is named after the former Alberta premier, and has provided over \$4.2 million in awards in its 29-year history.

Gosling, who is a graduate in sculpture at the Alberta College of Art & Design and also earned a master's degree in environmental design at the University of Calgary, was working at Evans Consoles as director of research and development when he met DIRT founder **Mogens Smed**.

He had long been fascinated with the way in which Lego blocks fit together regardless of the object being constructed. He noted that, "The rigid blocks never changed but they became part of virtually everything they were fitted into," and in this indifference between blocks he created expression in a wall system with elements that are indifferent to the function of a space.

Along with Smed and Evans' software developer **Barrie Loberg** they launched DIRT in 2005 as designers and manufacturers of the pre-manufactured wall system. It is a system that boasts of no construction waste, no dusty renovations, and no drywall and electrical wiring in the landfill.

Gosling's design not only divides space but puts it to work. The walls are capable of housing technology and other products to hang from off the horizontal support in them. Expandable and flexible connections adapt to different building angles and curves, making for fewer parts and pieces and a more efficient use of interior environments.

As part of its environ-

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Stuart Gradon, Calgary Herald

Geoff Gosling of DIRT Environmental Solutions will go to Ottawa next week to accept a \$10,000 award.

mental mandate DIRT uses exclusively non-toxic, water-based finishes which are UV cured.

Modular wall components support infinite variability and can be custom-designed on ICE software that was also created by DIRT. It cancels out the need for paper marketing materials and allows designers to provide drawings in days instead of weeks.

ICE is sold to interior designers and architects and to manufacturers in other fields. The growing demand for sustainability and universality in construction saw the company's annual revenue rise from \$20.5 million in 2006 to \$93 million in 2009.

— **Mark St. Pierre** of Avision Young tells me the book he has written is at the publishers and will be on the stands within about six weeks. "Good As Your Last Deal" gives his insights into the commercial real estate brokerage world, an industry where there is a fair amount of activity again in Calgary today, although he says it is in small pockets.

St. Pierre has certainly had a busy summer having completed some fairly significant deals.

He was charged with subleasing 314,000 square feet in Jamieson Place and within the past eight months has signed tenants for 268,000 square feet, which says a lot for his hard work as well as the attraction of the new 38-storey

tower.

TAQA North was one of the first tenants with over 170,000 square feet in the low rise area of the tower; it needed more space and has taken another 28,189 square feet in the highrise portion.

Export Development Group, represented by **Dale Williams** of Corporate Realty Advisors, will be moving into 7559 square feet on the 24th floor and Persta Resources, represented by **John Savard** of CITI Commercial has taken 8,360 square feet on the 27th floor next to Jennings Capital, which has already moved into its new space.

Only 46,000 square feet remain to be leased and St. Pierre says he expects it to be completed by the end of October.

Jamieson Place is a major assignment but he has also recently negotiated a long-term lease renewal for the U.S. State Department and the United States Consulate to remain in Rocky Mountain Plaza.

NAIOP's annual fall market update breakfast will be held on Thursday, Sept. 16, at the Calgary Petroleum Club. **Tim Sommers** of Cushman Wakefield and **Chris Law** of Colliers International are among the speakers presenting insights into the state of our real estate industry.

DAVID PARKER APPEARS TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 403-830-4622 OR E-MAIL INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA.