

# Software company develops mobile App on PEI for PEI

by Gloria Welton

**E**asyPEI Software Inc. has developed a mobile App called EzCity to help new immigrants and tourists search for PEI businesses, community services, and other essential locations.

“Our research tells us when people relocate to another country, finding basic needs such as residences and work is difficult when English is not their first language,” says **Peng Peng**, Operation and Advertisement Manager for EasyPEI Software.

Peng Peng graduated from UPEI and moved to PEI permanently in 2015. She found her present position with help from the **Graduate Mentorship program**. The program is available through SkillsPEI, a division of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

“The Chinese community uses an instant messaging service called WeChat which is effective in helping and supporting each other, but we need help getting to know what is available on PEI. More than 600 people now use our App to help them explore and settle on PEI.”

Peng says they are getting really good feedback on how the App is helping immigrants from countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

“People tell us they are looking for contacts to set up a business on PEI, need a way to locate all the daily needs required to live on PEI, want to know what local businesses have to offer, and need to become more comfortable in their communities.”

EasyPEI Software Inc. staff members, front row left, Peng Peng, Operation and Advertisement Manager, Emily Zhang, Financial Manager. Back row left, Sunny Wang, Software Tester, Tyler Hainer, part-time Software Engineer while completing his studies at UPEI, and Jason Xu, Software Engineer.



**Edward Wang**, a Chinese immigrant, is the President & Founder of the company. He has information technology experience and operated a company in China with friends before moving to PEI. This year, he and his family settled on PEI.

“For the short term, I would like to build a platform to connect the local community and the immigrant community,” says Edward. “For the long-term, I want to build this company, develop more products, and expand to other locations in Canada. Once we prove that the business ideas can work, we will be ready to expand.”

He is very impressed by the skillsets of the UPEI Computer Science students he has hired. “I plan to continue to work with the UPEI Computer Science faculty to offer work placements. The students have very good work qualities and they just need the work experience and guidance that a company like ours can provide.”

He wants to share his knowledge, and has tremendous connections in China, which may also help to bring more companies to PEI.

## About the staff

There are four young employees, all of them are UPEI students. One staff member is a local Canadian student. Two are Software Engineers with an education background in Computer Science.

For more information about **EasyPEI Software Inc.**, call 902-370-2389 or email [pengpeng@easypei.ca](mailto:pengpeng@easypei.ca)

Visit [www.easypei.ca](http://www.easypei.ca)

For more about the **Graduate Mentorship program**, visit [www.skillspei.com](http://www.skillspei.com) and click **Programs for Job Seekers**.



# New website is a one-stop source of PEI residential trades listings and reviews

by Heidi Riley

[www.toolboxexperts.com](http://www.toolboxexperts.com) is a new online directory for residential services such as plumbing, roofing, cleaning, landscaping, and many more. It is the brainchild of life-long friends **Shawn Watts** and **Mark Hodder**.

This website has come at a good time, because housing starts on PEI increased by 16.7 percent in the first six months of 2016 compared to the same period in 2015.

A basic business listing is free, with no obligation. Also available is a premium upgraded listing, where Shawn and Mark work with the service provider to build a full-page profile and add pictures and links to social media accounts. Current premium listing members include Ridgeline Construction, Mallard Painting, Heritage Floors, and Creative Gardening and Landscapes.

## Website features

- Ease-of-use search platform
- A current list of 150 service providers in more than 25 service categories
- All basic listings have the same look and feel, with each containing contact information, area(s) served, company professional credentials, and more.
- Featured Post of the Month where members are profiled through a Q&A article
- A blog with home renovation tips and videos
- Reviews section

Front left, Shawn Watts and Mark Hodder have developed a website to help match people to trades businesses.

The idea for the website was born a few years ago when Shawn’s mother was looking for someone to do a renovation project. “We went online to try to find a website where we could search for independent reviews to help us choose a service provider,” says Shawn. “There was no one-stop online source of PEI residential service providers.”

Shawn, a Senior Analyst with the federal government, took his idea to Mark, a freelance web developer who has been self employed for the past eight years. In 2015, the website was in pilot phase for a year as they researched what users wanted to see in a website. “We came up with an easy-to-use format with a local PEI focus,” says Mark.

Mark and Shawn both work full-time, and devote about 15 to 20 hours a week to this project in their spare time. Mark developed and maintains the website. Shawn reaches out to new and prospective members to be featured on the website, and also undertakes most of the writing for the site.



## Future plans

“We want to encourage as many people as possible to post reviews, because that is what people look for when choosing a business to do work for them,” says Shawn. “We also want to list as many businesses as possible across the Island. Down the road, we plan to include more business categories related to the home, such as insurance providers.”

The Employment Journey Inc. is a monthly publication available to residents and businesses of PEI. The publication is produced by Gloria Welton. Funding for The Employment Journey is provided by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Canada, the Government of Prince Edward Island or the Publication Manager.

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October 2016