

New business start-up for father and son

by Gloria Welton

Glass Doctor PEI was recently opened by **Ryan Roach** and his father **Earl Roach**.

"It took about six months of paper work and taking the right steps to get to this point," says Ryan. "I worked in auto glass repair for a few years and numerous family members encouraged me that it was the right industry to invest in when considering self-employment."

"My father was a machinist for 40 years. Without him, I would not have the skills I have working with my hands. He showed me how to look at something so I could take it apart and put it back together. He is now semi-retired, and helping me out with this new business."

The business offers stone chip repair in automotive glass, windshield replacement, and also replaces and installs glass windows in homes and businesses. "There are a few companies in the glass industry on PEI, but we are the only one doing everything."

Ryan says the decision to go with a franchise was made because insurance companies are beginning to insist on dealing with a franchise with a specific set of rules and standards, not an independent business.

Career path led to self-employment

In high school, Ryan was fascinated with construction. He took the carpentry program and really liked it. "My instructor helped me find a job in the industry."

"I also went to UPEI for two years. I thought I would be a carpenter or an English major! Then I took a different path and took the Holland College Construction Technology and Management program, which was a lot more in line with my skill set."

"Now, as a new business owner, I am using the skills I learned from the Holland College program, managing people, project management, and estimating."

"I went back to the construction industry as a carpenter. At one point, I was laid off due to a shortage of work. I did not want to wait for EI to kick in, so I got a job in a glass shop, and I loved the work."

"My construction skills benefitted me so much in glass work. The skill set is very much the same. That came very easy and I am very fortunate."

"The entrepreneurial side of me comes from my mother's side of the family. There are 11 entrepreneurs in her family, including my mother. They are all role models, and without their support I don't know if I would have considered starting my own business."

"The positive encouragement from my family definitely helped me make the jump to self-employment. It is scary, but I wouldn't want it any other way."

"I knew I wanted to do something on my own, and I didn't know what it was going to be. I am still in my 20s, so I was not worried about taking a pay cut for a year or two."



Ryan Roach and his father Earl Roach are Co-owners of Glass Doctor PEI at the Cornwall Business Park. Ryan says without the help of his whole family, he wouldn't have been able to start his business. "If I ever need anything or have any questions, they are always there to help."

"Any job I have ever had, I always looked for opportunities to work on my own. When I was in the construction industry, I was interested in more than just putting together a house. I was always thinking about the cost of things and the time involved, and doing things more efficiently. I think things through very thoroughly before going ahead."

Training offered by the franchise

"Glass Doctor's head office is based in Waco, Texas. A coach from head office came to PEI to help me set up the business. I also went for training to head office, and to Ontario."

"I was very competent as a technician doing auto glass replacement and replacing thermal windows in houses, but I needed more knowledge of the business side. The training they provided filled the gaps in my knowledge. The support system with Glass Doctor is very deep. If I have any questions, they are there to help."

"Glass installation is a trade on its own, but there is no local training and no apprenticeship opportunities are available."

Future plans

"My shop is the only Glass Doctor on the Island, and I own the rights to operate on PEI."

"My goal is to have a Glass Doctor in each county, and to move to a larger location. We have only been here for two months, and the place is already full."

"As long as you set your mind to what you want, you can make it happen. At one of my jobs, I was told to be a sponge. That was some of the best advice I ever got."

"I read a book called *Rich Dad Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki, who said "don't work for money."

"Work for experience. If you want to be an entrepreneur, it is not about the money; it's about having new experiences and figuring out how to benefit from these experiences."

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/GlassDoctorPEI



Installing solar panels sparks electrical company's need for more staff

by Stacy Dunn

"Solar energy has always been a passion of mine," says **Matt Eye**, Owner/Operator of **MB Eye Electrical**, a 10-year-old Charlottetown company.

"I have seen growth in this aspect of our business in the last six years."

"Our company now has eight employees full-time, year-round. I am looking to add about four more Journeyman Electricians."

efficiencyPEI recently announced a Solar Electric Rebate Program. The incentives are supported by \$2 million in funding from the Government of PEI and the Government of Canada through the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund.

"The week this program was announced, we received almost 80 calls and emails," says Matt. "The inquiries were about installing solar panels in homes, farms, and businesses across PEI."

Starting out and growth

Matt started his business with just himself, an \$800 van, and 500 business cards. "I went door to door advertising my services."

"Typically, summers are busier, but in the last four to five years, it hasn't slowed down season to season."

Qualifications needed

The business offers a wide scope of services, and Matt looks for electricians who have experience with residential and commercial work and who can read blueprints. "I also want to know if they have experience working independently or for somebody else."

Matt says solar energy is an electrical trade that follows the Canadian Electrical Code. "For that reason, I hire only Journeyman Electricians to install solar panels."

"I ask potential employees about customer service, because being able to communicate speaks volumes to me."

Four apprentices currently work with the company. Matt has given tours of project sites to Holland College students.

"I hired one student from the Energy Systems Engineering Technology program after offering a tour. Word of mouth and Facebook have been the best ways to advertise my jobs."

Reice Newson, a graduate of the Energy Systems Engineering Technology program at Holland College, is the Project/Logistics Manager. "After graduating from that program in 2018, I went on to the college's Electromechanical Technology program."

"I am currently working on my Block 1 in Construction Electrical. I also have an associate certification in Solar Photovoltaics with the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners, which offers training and certifications to individuals in the solar industry in North America."

Wages and benefits

"The new efficiencyPEI program and SkillsPEI have been very helpful by allowing me to offer electrician apprentices a decent wage and training opportunities."

For more information about **MB Eye Electrical**, call **902-892-8839** or email matt@mbeyelectrical.com

Visit www.mbeyelectrical.com Follow on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

For information on trades programs at Holland College, visit www.hollandcollege.com/programs

For more information about the Apprenticeship program on PEI, visit www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/workforce-and-advanced-learning/apprenticeship-program

For more information on the **North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)**, visit www.nabcep.org



Reice Newson, left, and Matt Eye of MB Eye Electrical stand next to a model of a solar panel they install in homes.

MB Eye Electrical offers a compensation package of medical and dental benefits and a pension plan to employees who have been with the company for a certain amount of time.