

## Solectron becomes Stream International again

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The parent company is HIG Capital, a California company that has a variety of businesses under its worldwide portfolio.

Toni Portmann, the president and chief executive officer of ECE Holdings will also be the president and CEO of Stream International.

Belleville's Kim McCann, director of corporate communications for Stream, said Monday that ECE Holdings is also a technical support and customer service contact centre and the sale is a "good move" for both companies.

"The good thing about the sale is that we are partnered with a company that understands the contact centre business and, together, we will be able to effectively grow both organizations," said McCann, the former site director for Stream in Belleville.

"The strengths of each organization will increase our global presence and our ability to manage our clients' customers effectively."

McCann said Solectron's decision to sell the worldwide call centre operation was strictly a business decision.

"Solectron was restructuring their business to focus on their manufacturing competency and as a result several businesses were no longer deemed critical to that direction and that included Stream International."

Solectron announced last December that Stream International was for sale. In March, the company said an agreement had been reached for the purchase of the call centre operation.

The sale to ECE Holdings was completed April 14 and McCann said

the four former Solectron sites in Canada — Belleville, Chilliwack, B.C., London, Ont. and Cape Breton, N.S. — as well as its operations in the United States, Europe and India will now bear the Stream International trade name.

The existing Solectron signs at the Belleville call centre will soon be changed to Stream International.

"The name Stream International holds is valued in the marketplace," she said. "From a company perspective, the sale certainly bodes well for the future of both companies."

Belleville was the first Canadian location for Stream International and its former president, Scott Murray.

The call centre began serving clients in September of 2000 and, a few months later, moved into the former Zellers and IGA store by Avonlough Road. McCann said the workforce has grown steadily and currently stands at approximately 1,500 agents and managers.

Stream International is a provider of 'customer relationship management' solutions for the world's top technology companies and e-businesses.

The Belleville call centre has five major clients that are manufacturers of computer hardware and software and peripherals like printers as well as Internet service providers. Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard and Dell are believed to be three of these clients.

McCann said "things are going extremely well" at the Belleville call centre.

"There has been some expansion with our existing clients, which has allowed us to continue

to grow," she said.

Four of its five clients have been with the Belleville operation for the past two years; a fifth client was added a year ago.

"Things are quite stable with our clients in the Belleville operation," she said.

But that is a far cry from what is currently happening at the Stream International call centre in Cape Breton, N.S.

The 850 workers in the Cape Breton town of Glace Bay are in jeopardy of losing their jobs after its only client, Microsoft Networks, better known as MSN, will be moving their business out of that town over the next two months.

"It has absolutely nothing to do with the performance of the site," McCann said. "It is a business decision only by the client ... it's the nature of the outsourcing call centre business to have changes with the client happen."

The company is now working hard to find a replacement for that client.

"The 850 employees may be impacted if we can't secure new business over the next two months," she said.

The loss of the federally supported call centre would be a severe blow for the town, which is still reeling from the collapse of the coal industry three years ago.

The Stream site in Glace Bay opened in 2001.

Stream has about 8,000 employees around the world, with nearly half the workforce located at the four call centres in Canada.

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