

# Feature Business: Westman Communications

By Wanda Kurchaba



**14,600 Days. 2085 Weeks.**

**480 Months.** Whether you count the days, the weeks or the months, it still equates to 40 fabulous years of providing Westman residents with televised entertainment.

As 2017 marks the ruby anniversary for Westman Communications Group (Westman), they are looking at the success of their past, but also looking ahead to an exciting future.

Westman officially received a broadcast license from the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) on August 8, 1977 and went on the air in Brandon and Carberry in September 1978. They began by providing 12 analog television signals to 4,000 homes.



First office on 9th Street

In comparison, today they have over 20,000 residential customers in 36 communities utilizing cable television, Internet and home phone services, plus they have nearly 2,000 business customers.



**Location, Park & 24th Street**

With technology advancing at a rapid pace, Westman has developed and embraced the changes and they strive to offer the best and latest technologies in order to sustain a robust and reliable network.

“The biggest change in the last 40 years would have to be the use of Internet and streaming of television content online,” said Marketing Team lead Courtney Baxter.

Baxter continued, “TV isn’t just on TV anymore, streaming TV has become equally important and continues to grow as an industry. We’ve had to transition our focus as a company to ensure we have the speeds, network reliability and support to enable content and provide the best viewing experience for both cable TV and Internet streaming users.”

With the recent launch of TiVo, Westman is bridging that gap between online and cable TV content. TiVo enables users to stream content and leverage a unified search engine that maximizes their cable TV subscription. This means that more content is available to customers on all of their preferred devices, including their TV. With TiVo, they can access some of their favourite streaming apps using a single button on their remote and there is no need to switch inputs or toggle devices.

In addition, Westman recently increased the Internet speeds in all of their existing packages, as well as created new packages with higher speeds to further meet the streaming needs of their customers.

As the only locally owned communications provider serving western Manitoba, Westman looks to the next 40 years as they are always investigating new ways to offer more service in more communities. They recently invested over \$5 million to upgrade ten Westman served communities with fibre and broadband technology. This provides customers with the full suite of

services which includes digital cable TV, Internet and home phone both residentially and for businesses. “By the end of this year, we will be fibre connecting another four communities.



**Installing "The Brandon Dish"**

Since last year, we have grown the number of communities with all three lines of business to 22. Our presence in these communities has been well received and we’re pleased to continually offer our customers leading-edge technology for all their communication and entertainment needs,” said Baxter. Westman employs 140 people and is a local co-operative. They also own and operate two local radio stations - 94.7 Star FM and Q Country (880 AM and 91.5 FM), as well as WCGtv, which is a local community programming channel.



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