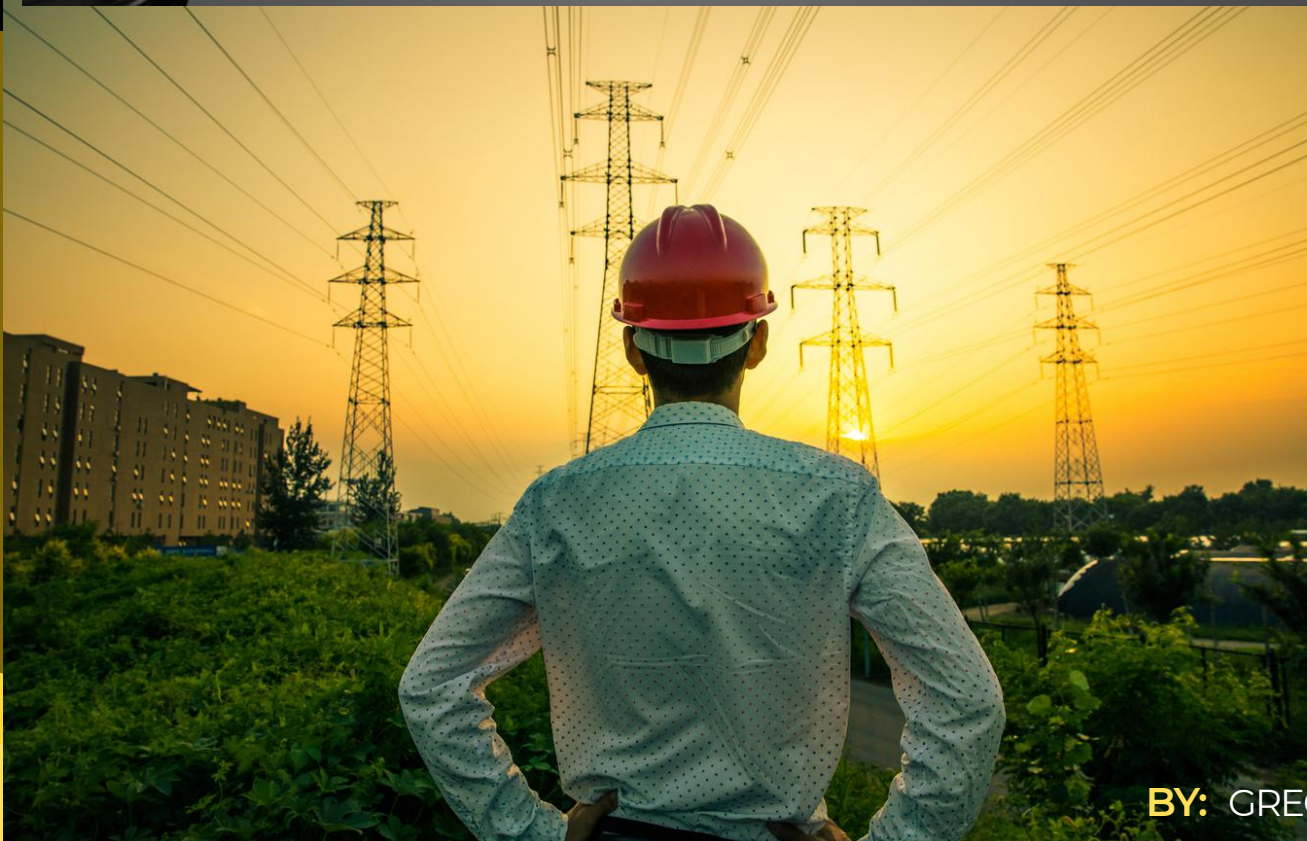
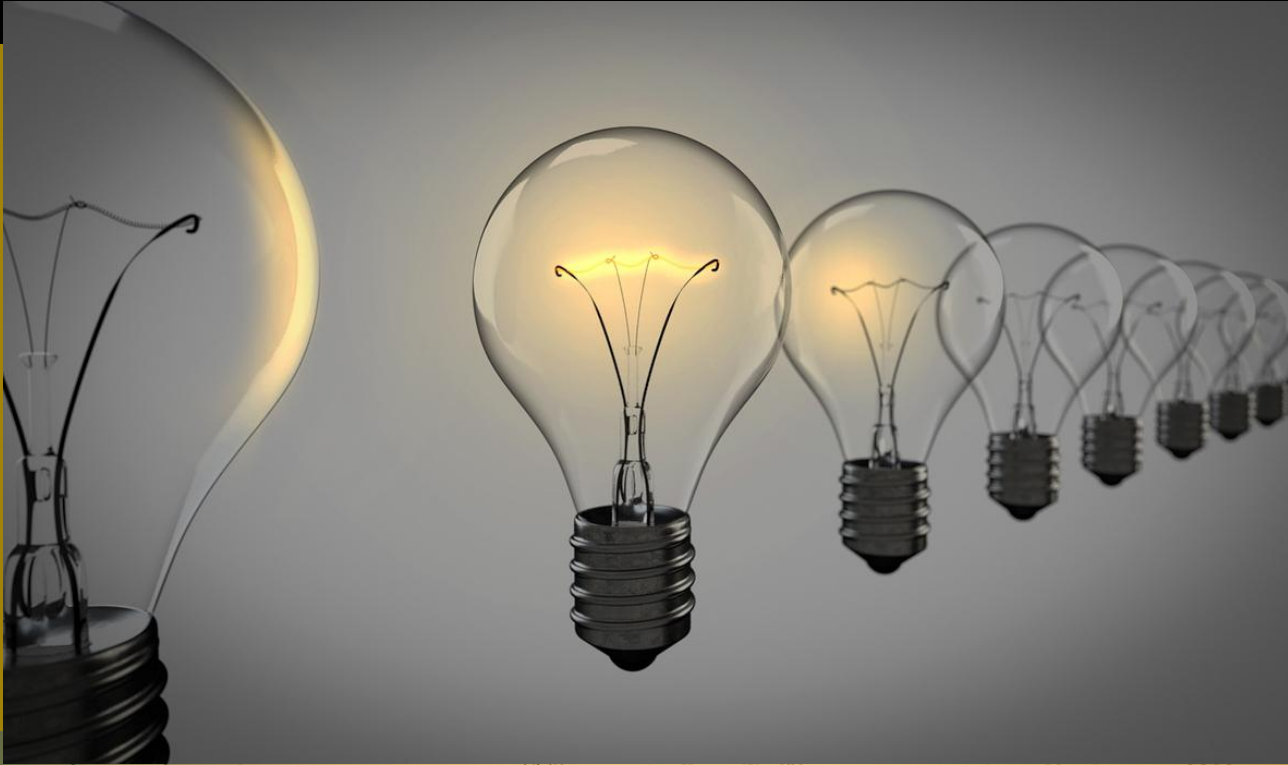




POWERING THE PRAIRIES:

An Interview with
Justin Lawrence
From Jim's Electric



BY: GREG AKESON



POWERING THE PRAIRIES

“There are a lot of gears in the machine when it comes to commercial projects, lots of planning, coordinating, and managing.”

— Justin Lawrence

HISTORY

Jim's Electric was founded in 2006 by Jim Lawrence who, since the 1980s, had been a co-owner of another electrical company. Jim's son, Justin, started working for the old company as a teenager and after high school continued working there for a few years before deciding it was time for a change. He attended college in his early 20s where he studied art and design. After college he moved to Vancouver, but unable to make a sufficient living from his studies, he became an electrician and moved back to help run the family business with his brother, Chris.

CLOSE-KNIT ENVIRONMENT

Being a family business employing approximately 28 people, it is a close-knit environment. There is no cold, corporate feel to the structure of the business and as such, collaboration between owners as well as employees is openly encouraged; this brings strength to the business. Serving the cities of Medicine Hat and Brooks, the advantages of working in smaller communities, as opposed to larger urban areas such as Edmonton, are many. The competition is not as fierce in smaller communities and generally contractors know each other personally. Customers also have personal connections with the various contractors in a small community, so they feel more comfortable dealing with them.



COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

The majority of Jim's Electric's business is with commercial and residential projects. They have good relationships with local contractors as well as some from Calgary, Edmonton, and other provinces. Ryan Foster, who is another commercial estimator as well as a great electrician and project manager, works with Justin on the commercial side of the business, while Justin's brother, Chris, and Al Martens work with the residential side of the business. On the commercial side, Justin explains that "you're dealing with big developers, large general contractors, architects, and building owners. There are a lot of gears in the machine when it comes to commercial projects, lots of planning, coordinating, and managing." On the residential side, Jim's team is highly regarded for their self-sufficiency and requires minimal supervision. As for agricultural and industrial projects, Jim's handles mostly service calls for industrial projects and the occasional greenhouse for agricultural projects.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

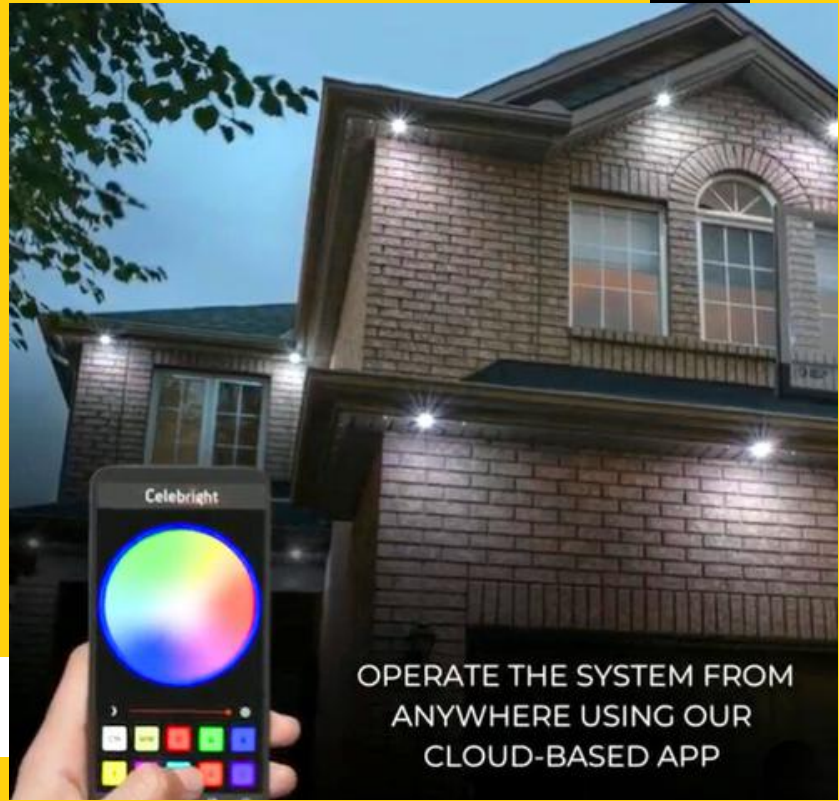
As the Health and Safety Administrator for Jim's Electric, Justin is aware of the high level of risk that comes with working in the electrical trade. He explains: "Our danger is one that you can't see. You can't see it until something is seriously wrong. There are a lot of policies and procedures in place to maintain our safe work environment." Safety starts with job orientation and going over safe work practices and safe job procedures. Safety is also an important part of pre-startup meetings, going over site-specific hazards for a particular project with the staff, who will be leading the various jobs and making sure staff have the proper PPE for the project. Justin also emphasizes the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act in that workers have the right to know all hazards and risks that will be present on a job site, the right to participate in all H&S aspects within the company, and everyone has the right to refuse unsafe work. At Jim's Electric, safety is of paramount importance.



NOTABLE & NEW PROJECTS

Some notable projects for Jim's Electric include working on Medicine Hat College's Health, Wellness and Athletics expansion. Justin is most excited about a possible upcoming project near the Medicine Hat Regional Airport where a new hotel, gas bar, shopping center, and restaurants could be built.

Jim's is a proponent of the Canadian-made Celebright system of permanent outdoor lighting. The system is fully adjustable and programmable; it can be manufactured to match the colour of surrounding architecture and can be adjusted to any colour or any brightness desired by the user. The system can also be controlled by a smartphone app from anywhere in the world.



WORKING CLOSELY WITH LOCAL CONTRACTORS

Jim's Electric works closely with local contractors: Rick Wahl of Wahl Construction, Tyson Erb from Erb Construction, and Scott Wilson from TBC General Contracting to name a few.

Their suppliers include EECOL, Guillevin International Inc., Bartle & Gibson, Westburne, and City Electric Supply. These suppliers do an outstanding job compiling material bids for Jim's Electric.



KEY TO THEIR SUCCESS

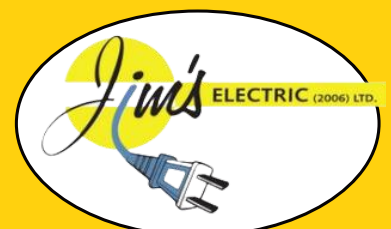
The key to their success is twofold: their incredible staff, and their transparency and honesty with customers and employees alike. It is important to be open and honest with everyone. Having an open-door policy with employees allows them to talk, to vent, to bring attention to issues and suggest ways in which management can improve. A Part of attaining success as a business is in maintaining an open line of communication between all stakeholders.



EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Most recently, Jim's Electric has embraced the future and has gone digital with all business-related functions now having been made accessible with an app. Timesheets, safety forms, manuals, etc., are now available in an easy to access format. Justin sees a bright future ahead for the company with an increased staff complement and an expanded service area.

**For more information on Jim's Electric,
visit <https://jimselectric.ca/>**





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