

Regional Group: Three Generations of City Building



Regional Group groundbreaking for The River Terraces at Greystone Village. From Left: David Kardish, Sr. VP, Regional Group; Dave Wallace, COO, Regional Group; Len Potechin, chairman, Regional Group; Ottawa Mayor, Jim Watson; Steve Gordon, president & CEO, Regional Group.

Mr. Ottawa

Prominently displayed on the wall at the entrance to the Regional Group executive offices is a recent newspaper article. The story features a photograph of Regional founder Len Potechin, fresh from the ice, wearing hockey gloves and holding a stick at age 90! "Mr. Ottawa," an affectionate term often used by the press when referring to Potechin, is one that he's earned from years of community service, social involvement, philanthropy and real estate industry leadership. His legacy, the family- owned firm he founded in 1958 as Regional Realty, is alive and well, having steadily grown and evolved into the Ottawa real estate powerhouse Regional Group of today. Potechin wasn't always focused on business; to the contrary, his early years were filled with ideas of a career in hockey. Only when his father told him that "he would sit shiva" if Len didn't drop his professional hockey aspirations and get a real career did he turn his energy into a new love.

Len's foray into real estate investing began in 1951, when as a restaurant business employee, he and his new bride, Mary, were unable to find a place to live in the then strapped rental housing supply of Ottawa. He decided to bite the bullet and he and his family put together their first investment - a six-unit apartment building. A month later, it was sold with an \$8,000 profit and a continuing contract to manage in place. This set the hook for what was to become a lifelong passion for real estate.

The company's love of Ottawa and pride in Canada's capital is a central theme in everything it does. For three generations and 60 years, Regional Group has served its clients, investors and the communities of the nation's capital. The legacy of this multi-generational longevity has continued with the leadership of Potechin's son-in-law Steve Gordon, yielding an extraordinary network of enduring relationships and an intimate knowledge of every square inch of capital region real estate. As a result, Regional Group has solidified its reputation as one of Canada's premier real estate companies, and the firm of choice for companies and real estate investors seeking Ottawa expertise.

Regional Group today

Taking the helm of Regional in 1984, CEO Steve Gordon has created the firm that Ottawa knows today, diversifying the business mix and attracting new capital from both family offices and outside institutions, enabling the company to steadily build its asset base and to acquire and develop land. Today, the firm has a \$2-billion pipeline of commercial, mixed-use and residential projects in various stages of development, as well as asset and property management, project management, valuations and appraisals, and home building. Regional manages more than two million square feet of commercial and office space and over 2,000 residential units. The company's eQ Homes division is an innovator and industry leader, having been the first builder in Ottawa to introduce smart home technology in every home it builds - once again taking a nod from Potechin's initial investment of bringing the first real estate-purposed mainframe computer to Canada. Steady growth and smart, strategic diversification in its core real estate business by second-generation CEO Steve Gordon have made it one of Ottawa's most trusted advisers and recognized developers. "We have an extraordinary group of very talented, intelligent people, and we are all so proud of their teamwork and accomplishments," said Gordon.

Len still maintains an office at Regional, acting as ambassador, mentor and coach. He regularly makes the rounds to chat with employees and the third generation of family, now growing into the business. Gen 3 and the rest of the team are learning the ropes from the master, who sparingly offers wisdom in small doses at just the right time. "Len is amazing and a real asset," said Regional COO Dave Wallace. "He regularly asks if we need his help getting a deal done or if there's anything he can do to help us advance the business. We often find ourselves taking him up on it and letting him make things happen!"

Beneath all lies land

Land and land development have been the foundational elements of the company's success. Through

the years, Regional has helped to mould and shape the Ottawa-Gatineau landscape with visionary legacy developments of commercial, retail and residential property. Today, Regional has ongoing development projects on both sides of the Ottawa River. The company has been a passionate champion for new urbanism and the development of collaborative, master-planned communities that are both livable and sustainable. Regional's philosophy of smart development was a standard practice long before the industry coined the phrase.

eQuinelle in Kemptville, eQ Homes' maiden development, was awarded the 2016 GOHBA Community of the Year. This one-of-a-kind 450-acre master-planned community focuses on offering a complete lifestyle. Surrounded by natural beauty, with close proximity to downtown Kemptville, the eQuinelle community features a championship golf course, a spectacular 20,000-sq.-ft. Residents Club - complete with two restaurants, exercise facilities, yoga and art studios, a health and wellness centre, golf clubhouse and pool. When complete, the development will have 1,000 homes offering a complete range of housing options from single-family bungalows to condominiums.



Greystone Village's Grand Allée

The 26-acre riverfront community of Greystone Village in Old Ottawa East exemplifies Regional's visionary development thinking. The highly successful, mixed-use LEED ND infill community is an industry-leading

model of stakeholder engagement and collaboration with the community during planning. "By saving the Deschatelets monastery building in the centre of the development, we retained the character and essence of a culturally significant heritage site," said David Kordish, VP Development. "Deschatelets will be the nucleus for a whole host of community services and uses, and the entire city will benefit. We will actually have people moving into homes this year." Kordish will be among them and is proud to be one of Greystone's first homeowners.

On the other side of Ottawa, in Barrhaven, Regional has developed the prestige corporate campus of Citigate. Covering 170 acres and strategically located at the intersection of major 400-series highways, Citigate dominates the area. Development of the site is well under way and will ultimately be home to the corporate offices of several local and national companies, including the Tomlinson Group of Companies. A trinity of three hotels will be built, presenting travellers with an option to stay en route to the capital or adjacent to their business destination. A network of trails and parkettes add interesting texture and depth to the landscape, presenting opportunities for fresh air and relaxation.

Vision, purpose and values

Anyone who has ever met Regional CEO Steve Gordon knows, he has a twinkle in his eye and exudes positivity. When asked about Regional's ambitions, he said, "We spent a lot of time with our whole management team and distilled our vision into a simple concept that the entire company could grasp and remember. We asked ourselves, what is our vision, what do we want to be the biggest, the most profitable, the richest? We said, no. What we want to be are the most trusted advisers and creators of opportunity and value in real estate. That is our vision. And, why do we exist? What is our purpose? The reason we exist is creating opportunity and value in real estate for all our stakeholders! Those themes have served us well for six decades and we are going to stick with them. After all, we're a young company and we're just getting started!"

For more information call 613-706- 1663 or visit <http://regionalgroup.com>

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