

WEATHER



TOMORROW
Rain
High 17°C
DETAILS PAGE A13

The Standard



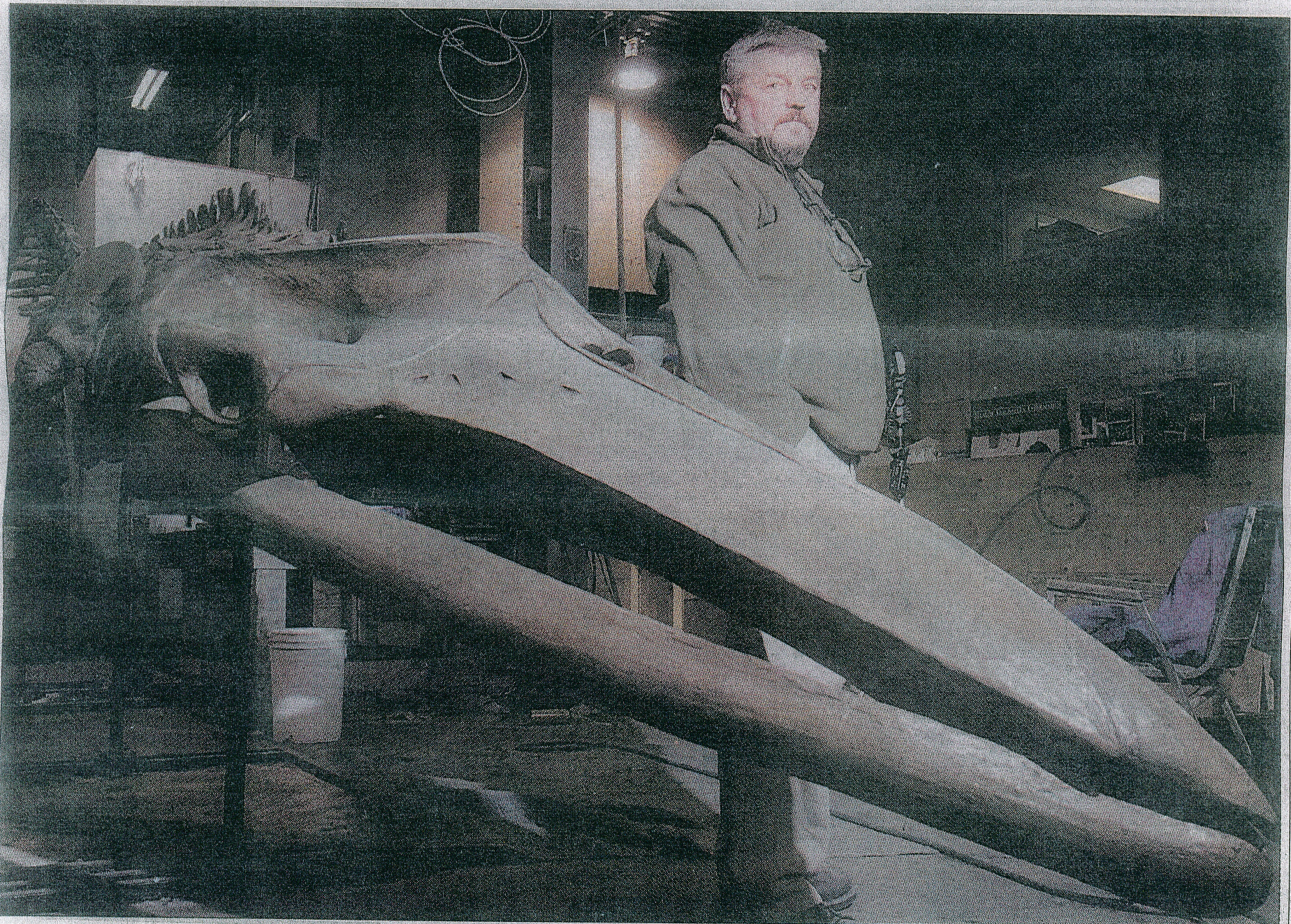
SPORTS St. Catharines pitcher joins Pirates crew. C1

ST. CATHARINES-NIAGARA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2006

9:

In a bustling Beamsville workshop, dinosaurs are anything but extinct



Peter May, owner of Research Casting International Ltd. in Beamsville, stands beside one of his dinosaur recreations. May's company has quickly become the world's No. 1 builder of dinosaur skeletons for museums.

STAFF PHOTO BY JULIE JOCSAK

Where dinosaurs still roam

By DON FRASER
Standard Staff
BEAMSVILLE

It's like saying farewell to an old chum — a prehistoric one, actually.

"Big B," a \$500,000 cast of a T-Rex skeleton, was gingerly being laid out for a transcontinental truck journey.

The 4,500-kilogram bronze beast will soon menace the head office of Google Inc. in Mountain View, Calif.

For Peter May, owner of Research Casting International Ltd.

in Beamsville, these bittersweet adieus are part of doing business as the world's No. 1 builder of dinosaur skeletons for museums.

Big B took a year to piece together on the jammed shop floor of a warehouse in Beamsville's north end.

May, after taking some snapshots to mark Big B's send-off, laughed that there's also some relief when the company's creations finally leave home.

"It's like, 'Thank God, the thing's been kicking around here

for so long,'" he said. "But there is also a sense of accomplishment in what we've done."

Entering Research Casting is a step into a creepy boneyard of dino carcasses at various stages of casting, moulding and assembly.

Workers use rubber moulds of actual fossilized bones that have been provided to them, sometimes through 3-D computer imaging obtained from various sources.

When original bone parts can't be found, the missing pieces are

created using detailed paleontology research as well as educated guesses.

Once completed, the rubber moulds are turned into lightweight, realistic skeleton pieces using materials such as urethane resins.

In the assembly area on this day is a partly assembled corythosaurus — a duck-billed, helmet-headed dinosaur that dined on plants 65 million to 80 million years ago.

Research Casting is changing

the beast's pose from an upright position to a horizontal one, after research showed it's how the beast probably walked.

When they finish the chiropractic treatment, the readjusted bones will be shipped back to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Around the corner is an elaphrosaur skull and the nearly completed skeleton of an extinct "early-modern" whale with flipper bones resembling a land mammal's forearms.

Peter Partington. It had promised tense fight if these heavyweights had Thursday afternoon meets to select

Both Zimmermann had apparent people they had to the contest.

Alas, before this logical mathemat could be put to the man, who served late 1997 to 2003 self from the equa

"My reasons are al," said Zimmermann because I've been that. Also, I'm looking doing some different the future."

One imagines he came as a great reton, and, to a lesser coming St. Cathar an McMullan.

Partington said "question" Zimmermann have been a prominent.

"Debbie's a real with lots of energy ton, who had spent number of days to up his political sup

Please see

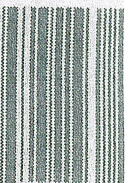
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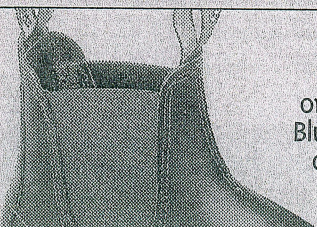
TOMORROW

Niagara Falls near Moccio, the song Celine Dion's A Come, has released instrumental music sure. See Spectru



6 23 730 10

Slush puppy



When the weather bites, pull on faithful, foul-weather friends: Blundstone boots. Salt wipes right off the oiled leather. The grippy soles are molded seamlessly to the uppers for outstanding

the BOOT SHOP

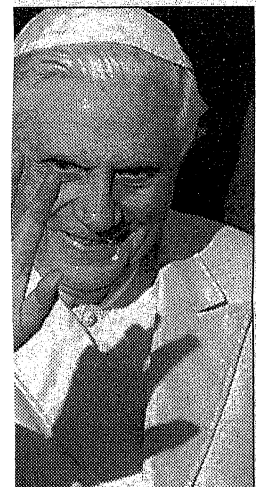
INSIDE

NATIONAL

seen as threat to drinking water source

res of untreated urban
l toxic effluents that
Great Lakes each year
ning a critical ecosys-
plies drinking water to
people, a landmark
released today con-
e A11.

WORLD



**Pope Benedict XVI waves to photo-
graphers during a visit to
Ankara Tuesday.**
AP PHOTO

Turkey calls dialogue with Islam

President Erdogan began his first visit
to the country Tuesday with
a message of dialogue and "brother-
hood between faiths and
of Islamic cleric said at
conference that growing
"incompatibility" hurts all Muslims.

Fraser Said It

"It takes more
than formal pro-
grams alone to en-
courage employ-
ees to report
wrongdoing by col-
leagues."

**Sheila Fraser,
Canada's auditor
general, on federal
whistleblower programs.
See story page A9.**

ENTERTAINMENT

Tuesday
084.
1: 3 4 4.
2: 5 5 5 6.
3: 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18,
27, 31, 33, 35, 46, 47,

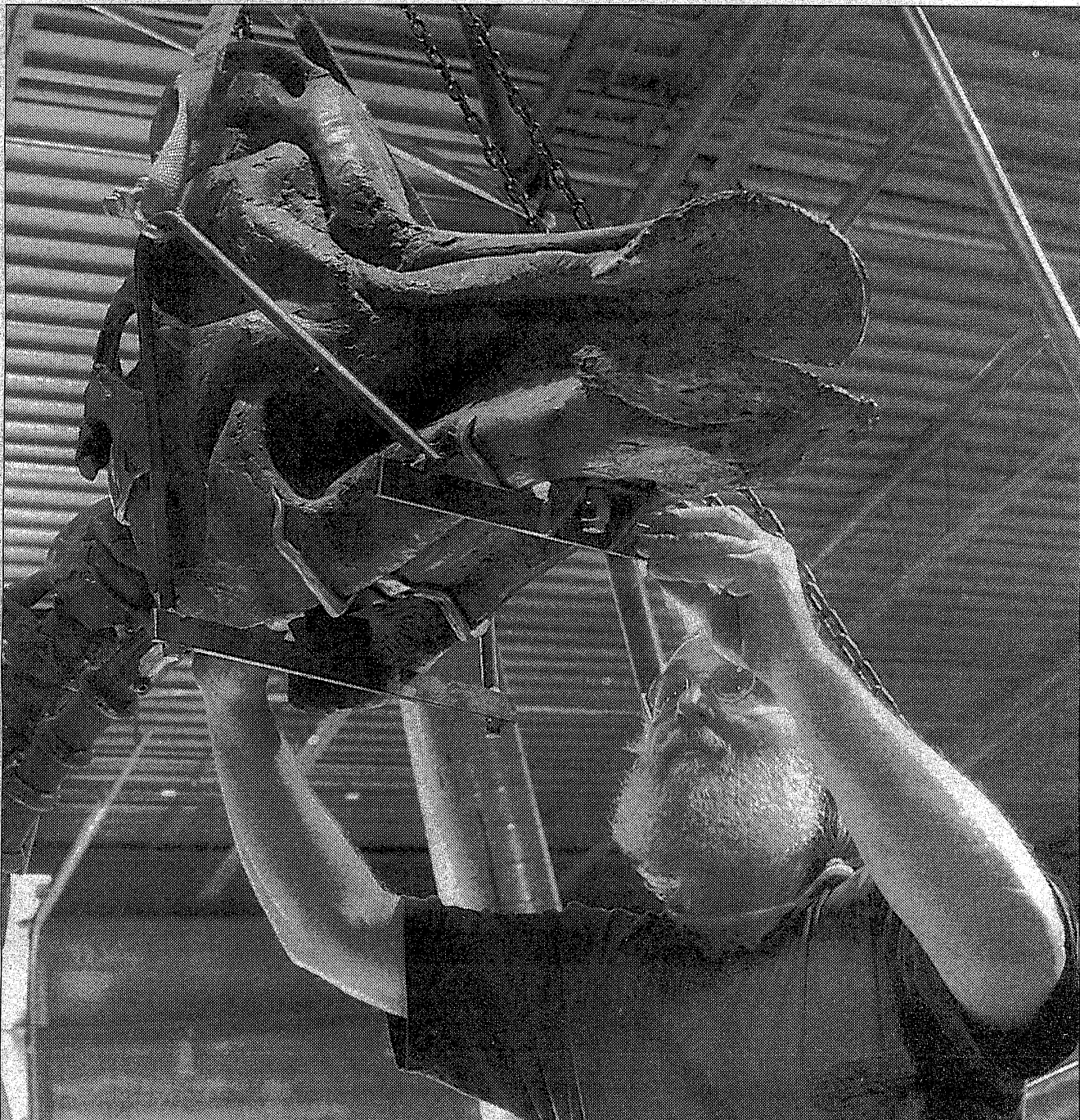
This Day

Nov. 29
John Sydney Melbourne Pozer,
who helped engineer the
Second World War prison camp Stalag
in Prince George, B.C.
Lake, Sask., Pozer was
primarily Metis communi-
ty to war with the Royal
Canadian Mounted and flew 45 mis-
siles as a gunner before being
captured and held for two-and-a-half
years. In 1978, the legislature
of St. John voted to
name the Prince Edward Is-
lands, Canada voted with 32
members in the United Nations
to support the partition of Palestine
into Jewish and Arab states. In
the UN Security Council, led
by the United States, voted 12-2 to
authorize military action if Iraq did
not withdraw its troops from Kuwait
and release all foreign hostages by
Jan. 15.

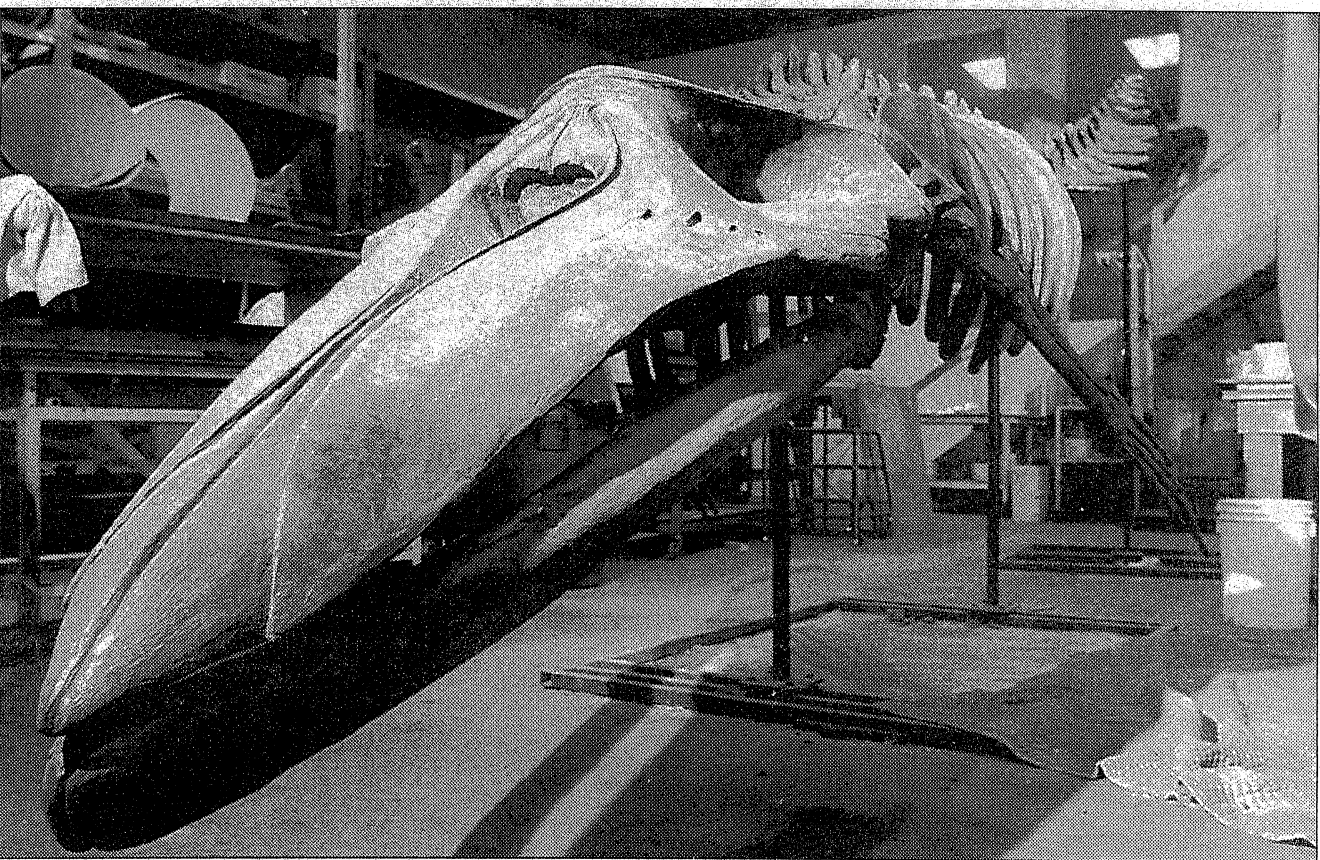
CONTACT US



**Stephen Lee of Research Casting International Ltd. in Beamsville works on a replica of the fossilized remains of the lower jaw bone of a Tyrannosaurus rex for the
Museum of the Rockies in Montana.**
STAFF PHOTOS BY JULIE JOCSAK



Blacksmith Brad Allen works on refurbishing a replica of the skeleton of a corythosaurus for the Royal Ontario Museum.



A replica of the fossilized remains of a whale sits in the work area.

Dinosaurs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

May, 51, said he never planned to build a full-fledged business like this.

As a child in England, he didn't much fancy the ancient giants, nor did he know much about them.

"I moved to Canada when I was eight," said May. "By the time I started school here, I had just never been introduced to dinosaurs."

The dino career started with his training as a sculptor in the fine arts program at the University of Guelph. He graduated in 1977 and moved on to the ROM in Toronto to become a paleontology technician.

About five years later, the dinosaur sites of Alberta beckoned. May found himself doing moulding, casting and field work for the Royal Tyrell Museum of Paleontology in Drumheller, Alta.

Following a return to the ROM, the calls started coming. It meant long evenings doing freelance casts in a garage to fill the orders.

The Oakville resident and father of three decided to leave the institution when those big dino jobs came marching in.

Research Casting was founded in 1987. It moved from Toronto to Oakville, before landing in Beamsville in 1998.

One of the company's most exhilarating jobs came in the early 1990s when it was hired by Steven Spielberg's film company to build alamosaurus and tyrannosaurus skeletons for the rotunda raptor-attack scene in the hit movie Jurassic Park.

That job came after May made a cold call to Spielberg's team after learning about the movie project. It was an exciting gig, but merely a detour for his company.

"Well, we could have gone the other way, but we didn't," said May. "We could have become more of a prop house."

"But we're not a prop house. We don't build things for movies," he said. "Our stuff is made to last ... not to be a fleeting glimpse on a set."

Being successful has meant more than relying on word of mouth, said May. "We've had marketing campaigns, advertise in magazines, go to trade shows, we have web mailouts."

Research Casting's expertise also extends to other areas, although that segment of the business is small.

Its assorted pieces for museums have included dioramas and unusual geological formations — even fibreglass models for a planetarium.

Research Casting's body of work can be seen at prestigious institutions worldwide, including the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa.

Its employees, who number as many as 30, have made a total of about 100 mounted skeleton casts in a business that now pulls in about \$4 million a year in revenue.

"When I started this all up, I was making \$25,000 a year," said May with a smile. "That was 20 years ago; who would have thought this would happen?"

"I really had no plans to build this kind of a company around this."

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