

# Record BUSINESS

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Section E

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Enterprise



PHILIP WALKER, RECORD STAFF

Larry Gabel of G&G Skate Training Centre works with Natalie Buttinger, 17, while Jessica Buttinger, 15 (background, centre), and Lynsey Schill, 18, wait to use the skating treadmill.

## Great strides in summer skate training

By Matt Walcoff, Record staff

**KITCHENER** — It's 20 C with a light breeze and a partly cloudy sky. Perfect weather for ice skating in August.

OK, not outside, not exactly. But the garage door is open at G&G Skate Training Centre in Bridgeport, revealing four young people in hockey skates on a lovely summer day.

The skaters are gathered around what G&G co-owner Larry Gabel calls the only machine of its type in Waterloo Region. It's a huge treadmill said to simulate an ice surface without the long waits and expense for ice time.

When the treadmill is moving at about 20 km/h, users skating in place feel like they're skating down the ice. The width of the treadmill allows users to go through crossover drills, while a flat surface in front lets them practise stickhandling while moving. The treadmill can be raised up to 35 degrees to work on leg strength.

"It's a demanding workout," Gabel says. "They're sweating pretty good when they get off."

### Ice skating in August G&G Skate Training Centre

Address: 19 Shirk Pl., Kitchener  
Web: www.gandgskatetraining.com  
Phone: 519-743-6784

The machine is supposed to correct skaters' strides, since those who skate improperly find themselves slipping away. Users are strapped into safety harnesses to prevent them from doing a George Jetson on the treadmill. Nonetheless, some get so caught up in the realism of the skating that they try to go backwards.

"Every time, you tell the guy, 'Don't let go, because as soon as you do, you're going to fall,'" says Jean-Michel Rizk, the former Kitchener Rangers right wing who now coaches youth hockey. "And every time, they let go and go flying."

Skaters take 15- to 30-second shifts on the machine. With four people taking turns, users get about 12 to 15 minutes on the tread-

mill in a \$25 one-hour session. A video camera films the skaters, allowing Larry, or his wife and fellow trainer, Lori, to point out where they can make improvements.

"It keeps me in good shape and gets me ready for hockey tryouts," says Ryan Zaharie, 13, one of the Gabels' customers. "It's a lot easier than it looks, but it's still a challenge."

Larry Gabel opened the training centre in January after 12 years coaching hockey. He paid more than \$150,000 for the device, one of only about a dozen made in a year by Woodway USA Inc. of Waukesha, Wis.

It was a good investment, he says. Publicized by word of mouth, G&G is now busy mornings, evenings and weekends. Customers include former NHL player Steve Rice and Phoenix Coyotes draft pick Mikkel Boedker, as well as "a Montreal Canadien" Gabel declined to name.

Gabel recently added a skate-sharpening business he co-owns to his building on Shirk Place. He says he hopes to add a second skate-training centre in Cambridge.

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## New ATS chief got 1.07 million stock options in first five months

By Matt Walcoff, Record staff

**CAMBRIDGE** — Anthony Caputo received 1.07 million stock options in his first five months as chief executive of ATS Automation Tooling Systems Inc., the company has revealed in a regulatory filing.

ATS had 77.3 million shares outstanding in July, meaning Caputo received about one stock option for every 72 outstanding shares in the company.

Caputo received the options as part of an inducement to accept the company's employment offer in November, according to a regulatory filing made public last week. He received 640,000 options in November and 426,000 when the company's share price hit a predetermined target in February.

Caputo's contract calls for him to receive another 852,000 options if the share price hits higher thresholds.

No other publicly traded company issued as many stock options to a Waterloo Region-based executive last year, according to research conducted by The Record.

The board members who took over ATS after a successful proxy fight last fall decided to emphasize options in executive compensation because shareholders were demanding action to revive the company's sagging shares, said ATS chair Neil Arnold.

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## Wholesale sales register fifth hike in six months

By Eric Shackleton

**TORONTO** — The Canadian economy appears to be growing, but at a weak pace, after grinding to a halt earlier this year, with recent economic numbers suggesting things might not be as bleak as first thought.

Statistics Canada reported yesterday wholesale sales were

up two per cent to \$45.2 billion in June, the fifth increase in six months. They were up 1.5 per cent in May and 1.6 per cent in April.

Craig Alexander, deputy chief economist at TD Bank Financial Group, called the increase "significant," noting they were still up a "solid" one per cent even after stripping out

price effects.

Economic growth looks likely to come in at about 0.8 per cent on an annualized basis in the second quarter, he added, after contracting slightly during the first quarter.

June's increase was largely a result of higher demand for automotive products, where wholesale sales were up 0.4 per cent,

said Statistics Canada. Sales in the automotive products sector increased 10.6 per cent in June to \$7.8 billion, after declines in five of the previous six months.

Six of the seven wholesale sectors reported higher sales in June, the only decline coming in the "other products" sector.

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