

ACCESS

ALBERTA

April - June 2002

ALDATA Software Management – an Alberta leader in Exports

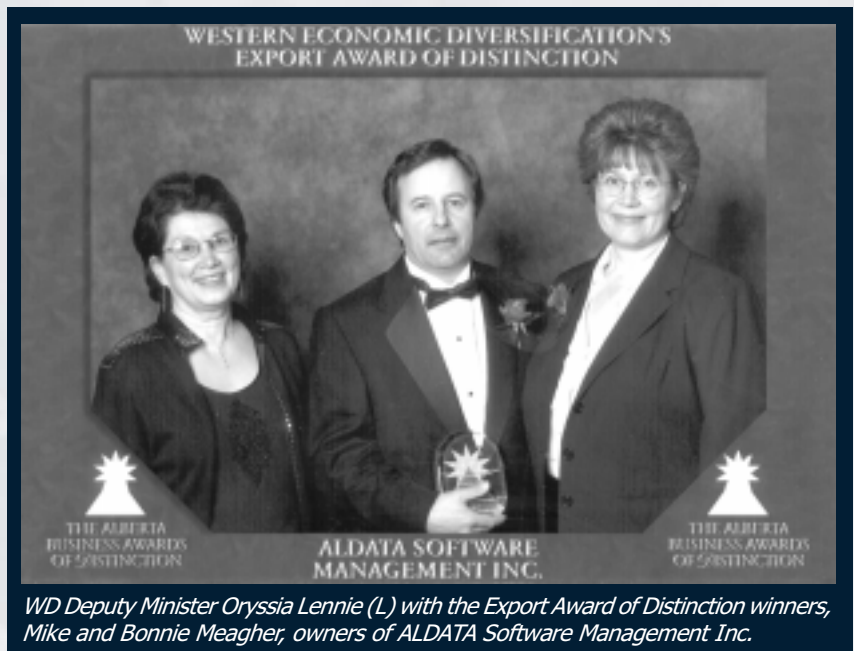
It is that time of year when awards ceremonies fill our television screens to honour those who have achieved greatness in their professions. In Alberta, the **Alberta Business Awards of Distinction** is one such event held each February to recognize excellence in our province's business community.

Hosted by the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, the 2002 awards were held in Calgary on February 28th. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) proudly sponsored the award for the **Export** category. In 2002, the nominees were impressive and judges were hard pressed to determine a clear winner.

If you look at the remarkable list of credentials and accomplishments, however, you would understand why **ALDATA Software Management Inc.** walked away with the award this year.

Incorporated in 1991, ALDATA is a world-leading supplier of software customized for the forest industry. In 1997,

owners Mike and Bonnie Meagher moved the company to Hinton from Grande Prairie and haven't looked back. Mike recognized the growing need for time and cost management tools for the logging business. This led to the development of software solutions and providing the



WD Deputy Minister Oryssia Lennie (L) with the Export Award of Distinction winners, Mike and Bonnie Meagher, owners of ALDATA Software Management Inc.

ACCESS ALBERTA

technical support required to set the company apart from the competition.

One of ALDATA's many products is a wood fibre management system, the *Boss Line*, which is used by some of the top 100 forestry companies from across Canada, the U.S., New Zealand and Australia. The *Boss Line* includes log and wood chip management systems and weigh scale software, and allows a company to collect data and report on the many aspects of wood fibre flow.

A key feature is the ability of the software to seamlessly handle the forest industry's complex contract administration process. Products can be integrated with existing systems or can stand on their own. This means that not only are software packages exported, but technical services as well. On average, a single Yard Boss-Logs system requires 1,800 hours of technical support.

What makes ALDATA such a huge exporting success is the statistics which speak for themselves. In their last fiscal year, the company reported that 91 per cent of their revenue was generated by export sales outside of Alberta. And, since 1998/99 export sales have quadrupled to exceed \$2 million.

The "Made in Alberta" firm boasts a staff of 28 full-time employees (23 live and work in Hinton). ALDATA has been a leader in diversifying the local economy, encouraging spin-off benefits for other businesses in the region and drawing positive attention, both nationally and globally, to the Alberta community.

"The growth of the company over the past several years into the exporting field has had a very positive impact on the West Yellowhead region."

Gerry Repecka, director of economic development for the Town of Hinton, said: "Hinton's economy is heavily reliant on the coal and forest industries. Unfortunately, the community has experienced economic uncertainty in the coal industry. ALDATA has been a tremendous boost to our rural, resource-based economy. I am proud of this local success story. The town's economy has benefited from the entrepreneurial spirit of owners Mike and Bonnie Meagher."

The Meagher's success is also due to help they received from local groups such as the Hinton's economic development office and the **West Yellowhead Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)**. In 1999, the CFDC assisted the company with a loan for their *TAGASIS* product and market development.

"ALDATA signifies the importance of technology-based companies to communities," indicated Jack Lawrence,

ACCESS ALBERTA

executive director of West Yellowhead CFDC. “The growth of the company over the past several years into the exporting field has had a very positive impact on the West Yellowhead region.”

WD also assisted ALDATA through its **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**. Through the program, the company was able to hire three graduates to help improve their software by making it more user-friendly

and expanding the scope of its applications, benefits and exportability.

Western Economic Diversification Canada would like to congratulate ALDATA Software Management on their accomplishments in exporting their products, and also to the other nominees in the Export category – BioWare Corp. of Edmonton and Schreiner Target Services Canada Ltd. of Medicine Hat. ♦

Other Alberta Businesses Nominated for Awards!




WD is pleased to recognize these WD or Western Canada Business Service Network partner clients who were among those nominated for an Alberta Business Award of Distinction.

Agrivalue New Venture Award

- CV Technologies Inc.


e-business Award

- Fabjob.com (company was featured in the October-December 2001 issue of *Access West*) 
- Kinnikinnick Foods Inc.

Eagle Feather Business Award (First Nations-Owned Business)

- Fort McKay Enterprise Ltd. (client of the Fort McMurray Regional Business Development Centre)

Employer of Youth Award

- BioWare Corp. (company was featured in the January-March 2002 issue of *Access West*) 

Marketing Award

- Elite Technical Inc. 

e-Exporting – Global Opportunities are a Click of the Mouse Away

by Laura Gustafson, *The Business Link*

The Internet has opened a world of opportunity for exporting. As Alberta small and medium-sized enterprises enter the global marketplace, they must seriously look at the potential of using the Internet to sell their products and services.

Exporting online or “e-exporting” offers many advantages. It allows businesses to compete globally, reduce costs and develop lasting relationships with their customers.

The Web enables better communication with clients and business partners around the world. Through e-business, products can be sold 24/7, 365 days of the year. Online exporting also provides a business with an extended life cycle for a product, diversification of its potential market and the ability to cost-effectively target distant markets.

Online exporting will not suit every company. An extensive marketing campaign will also need to be implemented to create awareness that the company even exists. Exporters must be cognizant of additional costs associated with shipping goods abroad such as freight charges, insurance and any tariffs or duties payable in the foreign country.

In addition to adhering to Canada’s rules and regulations, companies must also ensure that

they investigate the country into which they’ll be shipping their goods. For example, if a company plans to ship their goods to Australia, an exporter must research Australia’s customs procedures, labelling and/or health standards, regulations and any other laws which apply to “doing business in Australia.”

There is a host of other issues for e-exporters to consider, including how the exporter will receive payment, how to process online returns and manage increased sales volumes.

As Alberta’s primary Canada Business Service Centre, **The Business Link** has a wealth of information and resources on both exporting and e-business. The Business Link is the first stop for Team Canada Inc.’s export information and services in Alberta, and it recently established the **E-Future Centre** to act as a clearinghouse for e-business information and resources to answer clients’ questions. Contact The Business Link at 1-800-272-9675 or visit www.cbcs.org/alberta.

The Business Link is a member of Western Economic Diversification Canada’s network of over 100 partners and a member of the Canada Business Service Centre network which links centres across the country. 🍁

Taking Your Business to a New Level Through Exporting

“This evening I plan on discussing why your company might want to consider exporting, the challenges you will face, and what you need to do to determine if your company is ready to export. We’ll also discuss the 10 steps you need to follow for success when exporting, and where you can look for help when considering exporting,” began Lisa Legault at a recent ***Getting Ready for Export*** seminar held in Fort McMurray.

Legault and other client service officers for Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) partner with members of the Western Canada Business Service Network, the International Trade Centre and Alberta Economic Development to offer the seminars to Alberta businesses that are looking to expand their markets.

Getting Ready for Export seminars help small businesses prepare for entry into international markets. You’ll find out how to evaluate your export potential, prepare export plans and set realistic goals. You’ll look at how to transport your products, handle documentation and enlist the services of customs brokers, freight forwarders and

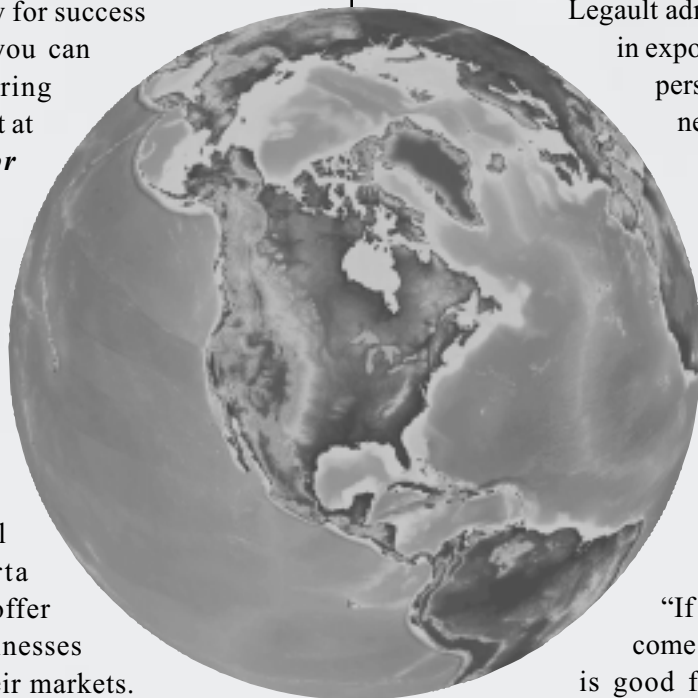
trading houses. And, you’ll look at the bottom line – arranging and securing payment for your products or services.

Legault admitted that becoming successful in export markets will require patience, perseverance and hard work. You’ll need a reliable product or service, with the flexibility to modify your product(s) for the new markets. She also indicated that you shouldn’t forget to research and understand foreign customs and business practices, and ensure your company has sufficient financial and human resources to meet your commitments.

“If you’ve done your research and come to the conclusion that exporting is good for your business, go for it!”

Legault concludes. “There are many organizations that can help you succeed, including WD.”

To find out about *Getting Ready for Export* training sessions and when and where the next seminar is being offered in Alberta, contact WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/events/ab.html. ♦



Nisku Company's A



NAIT graduates, Ray Durell (L) and Rob McDonald (R), were hired with assistance from WD's International Trade Personnel Program.

Established in 1992, **Raydan Manufacturing Inc.** provides the heavy transportation industry with innovative, quality transportation products. As a producer of specialized suspensions and coupling systems, the company designs and manufactures two patented products – *Air Link* and *Easy Slider*. It also operates a heavy-duty truck and trailer service center, with a full complement of journeymen welders, mechanics, engineers and draftsmen.

Raydan's *Air Link* is an award-winning air ride walking beam suspension system designed for use in tandem axle equipment, such as: highway and vocational trucks, truck cranes, military vehicles, fire rescue and other severe service equipment. With only two moving parts, the Air Link offers low maintenance, improved stability and traction, and a smoother ride.

Easy Slider is a sliding kingpin assembly that permits the coupling system on a fully loaded semi-trailer to move without disconnecting the trailer. It allows shifting of loads and adjustment of the truck-trailer length to meet varying conditions, payloads and vehicle length requirements.

The company also specializes in the installation of *Twin Steer Conversions*, an additional steering axle to tandemize the front-end of several service trucks. The completed units allows truckers to improve weight distribution and carry heavier payloads, while maintaining licensing requirements.

Raydan's positive development and growth provided an opportunity to expand into international markets, but required assistance to defray the cost of additional human resources.

Air Ride to Success

With help from Western Economic Diversification Canada's **International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP)**, the company hired two NAIT graduates to allow them to take advantage of new market opportunities.

Ray Durell and Rob McDonald have been instrumental in many aspects of the company's marketing activities, from researching new markets, to designing and developing telemarketing programs, from developing a variety marketing materials, to preparing sales quotes and representing Raydan at trade shows throughout North America.

They have had quite the impact on Raydan's international marketing efforts. Export sales account for approximately 94 per cent of the company's total sales. The company has become a leader exporter, with consistent sales growth averaging 50 per cent over the past three years. While the majority of Raydan's sales are to the U.S., it also has established distributors in Mexico, Australia and New Zealand.

"Ray and Rob introduced fresh ideas and new concepts to our sales department, the results of which are readily apparent," indicated Raydan President, Ray English. "They revitalized our approach to market research, and updated the presentations we use to introduce our products and services."

Raydan considers their employees to be the company's most vital assets. Their diligence, vision and hard work contribute greatly to the company's continuing success, and they will continue to invest in the well-being and training of this dynamic group of individuals.



Raydan Manufacturing's Nisku service shop.

For more information about Raydan Manufacturing's products and services, call (780) 955-2859 or visit their Web site at: www.raydanmfg.com.

For more information about the ITPP or other programs and services offered by WD, contact 1-888-338-WEST (9378). ♦

Does information about government programs and services cost money?

by Shelley Cuthbertson,
Client Service Officer, WD Calgary

I was reading an advertisement in the newspaper about a book that provides information on **all** government grants, and it costs only \$250. Isn't this a good deal, especially if it can find you free money? Maybe, maybe not. Much of the information may not apply to your new or existing business.

New businesses, for instance, will not find any government "grants" to help their business get started. In fact, they will find it very difficult to borrow for working capital without outside security. They will even find it difficult to borrow for fixed assets for new and unproven ventures, especially if they don't have a well-written and documented business plan.

For example, the Canadian Small Business Financing Program, a joint initiative between the Government of Canada and private-sector lenders, will assist companies in the purchasing of assets through a chartered bank, but the financial institutions provide the funds and make the loan decision. There are various micro loans available through several banks and trust companies, but they are "repayable" loans.

While many organizations may offer to sell you a booklet or package of information on government services and programs, the Government of Canada provides the same information for free. Small business owners should understand there are no grants to cover their operating expenses or to assist them in gaining extra financial resources when they are already stretched. Don't be fooled by advertisements and commercials that lead you to believe otherwise.

Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) across Canada can also provide information on programs and services, often in partnership with provincial and municipal governments, from a single window of access. For the CBSC closest to you or to access their on-line information resources, visit www.cbsc.org.

Your Guide to Government of Canada Services and Support for Small Business, for example, is a book produced by the Industry Portfolio Office, and it's free! All you have to do is visit <http://strategis.gc.ca/smeguide> on the

Web. You can also obtain a copy from Western Economic Diversification Canada at 1-888-338-WEST (9378). ♣

While many organizations may offer to sell you a booklet or package of information on government services and programs, the Government of Canada provides the same information for free.