

ACCESS

MANITOBA

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TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM – K9 STORM THAT IS!

by Sue Murray

Former Winnipeg Police K9 Officer Jim Slater and his wife, Glori, are truly enthusiastic about the direction their small business has been taking over the last few years. Offering unique canine body armor, **K9 Storm Inc.** has sought out customers beyond the Canadian border and is developing into a successful international venture with clients around the world.

They credit the **Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC)** for a good deal of help with the start-up end of their business. The C/MBSC provided invaluable business information and networking opportunities, according to the Slaters, including market research, export rules and regulations, as well as introductions to commercial contacts.

After more than a decade as a canine officer in Manitoba's capital, Jim recognized a need for better ways of protecting police dogs on the job. Slater set out to design a canine ballistic body armor that provides working police dogs with custom-fitted protection and built-in specialty harnesses.

"In addition to the double panel protection for the chest and heart area, the built-in harnesses are one of the most appealing features," says Jim. "They allow the vests to be used in non-lethal dragline extractions (getting a suspect out of a small hiding place), searches, tracking and rappelling from cliffs or even helicopters."



Police dog wearing K9 Storm vest during a training session.

The patented vests also provide the protection needed in volatile situations where the canine team is in the line of fire or where other weapons are a threat.

According to Jim, the K9 Storm vests are now being used in approximately 40 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces, and are being exported to five other countries.

K9 Storm Inc. is again working with the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre, along with the International Trade Centre, to provide tactical canine protection for handlers in police forces throughout Europe and the global marketplace.♣

BEING PART OF THE BIG PICTURE



Under WD's First Jobs in Science and Technology Program, Minnedosa-based Canadian Photonic Labs was able to hire recent graduate Luke Filipecki to work on its hardware and embedded micro-controller design team.

by Sue Murray

Mark Wahoski is eager to build up his Minnedosa-based imaging systems business to capture more emerging international markets and meet the growing demand at home. But he needed more knowledgeable people on staff to work on developing the new products his clients require.

With help from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Wahoski hired a recent computer engineering graduate for a three-year period under the **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**, giving both his company, **Canadian Photonic Labs**, and the university graduate a much-needed boost in the right direction.

"The First Jobs program is an all round win-win situation," says Wahoski. "Not only does it provide a young person a

'first job' in a chosen career, but the program provides the firm with expertise and ultimately, in the company's case, helps bring a new product to market."

Western Canadian companies with fewer than 250 employees, as well as industry associations or similar business networks, can apply for funding support under the First Jobs program to hire a recent science and technology graduate for one to three years to adopt or develop new technology. WD covers up to a maximum of \$37,500 of a graduate's salary over a three year project.

Wahoski's first experience with the First Jobs program came in 1999 when the company had only two employees. WD support allowed Canadian Photonic Labs to hire a young graduate to develop software for new markets in the research, educational and scientific sectors. That software engineer is now a full-time employee, and the company has grown to 10 full-time and five part-time positions.

The company continues to break new ground developing laser-based imaging systems for an elite group of customers, pushing their technology to the forefront. And growth continues to be explosive. Revenues in the year 2000 were up 500% over 1999, while the year 2001 continues to set sales records over last year.

The company boasts 80 to 90 per cent of sales heading for the export market, largely in the U.S. The firm also has sales representatives in Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, China, Israel, France, Australia and India.

With a second graduate working with Canadian Photonic Labs' hardware and embedded micro-controller design team, the company president foresees more fruitful technological developments for his company. As a forward thinking businessman, Wahoski has a vision for his company: to become one of the world's premier imaging companies. ♣

ON THE ROAD – BRINGING SERVICE TO YOUR DOORSTEP

by Sue Murray

The last thing residents of the Sandy Bay Indian Reserve expected to see driving into their community this summer was a bright white pickup truck making its way carefully down the dirt road, hauling a long trailer emblazoned with the **Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC)** logo.

Curtis Colon, coordinator of the C/MBSC's Aboriginal Business Network, got the wheels in motion – literally – and arranged to bring the services of the C/MBSC to their doorsteps after the **Dakota-Ojibway Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)** had shown an interest.

“The community didn't think we'd actually show up,” says Colon. “They were amazed that we drove all the way up there. The mobile regional office – the truck – allows us to reach so many more people across Manitoba who are interested in starting up their own small business.”

Colon and his colleague, Jason Lacasse, made the 200 kilometre journey to present a small business development seminar to an audience of 18–35 year olds. Lacasse indicated the presentation was well received and many participants were surprised at the range of information available through the C/MBSC. Many also commented about how easy it is to get a wealth of useful information through the C/MBSC and its one-stop-shop concept.

Much like its 22 office-based counterparts located across the province, the mobile service center provides a whole range of free business information for those starting up or operating



Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre mobile unit delivers business information to clients in rural communities.

a small business – from which forms and licenses are required to operate your business, to how to export your product.

According to Colon, the C/MBSC is now planning a trip to Thompson to present a hands-on approach of teaching youth how to develop a business plan. The presentation will involve high school students working in groups to develop a business idea and plan, which will then be presented to all participants at the end of the exercise.

This practical approach is aimed at giving young people a taste of the business world, and to spark an interest to further explore a career in the business field.

Both the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre and the Dakota-Ojibway CFDC operate through a partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada. ♦

Manitoba

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK EVENTS – *October 22 - 27, 2001*

Watch for these events taking place during Small Business Week. For more information about the events, contact WD at (204) 983-0697 or toll-free at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).

October 2	Successful Business Luncheon - Manitoba Quality Network (QNET)
October 16	Quality Month Gala Dinner (QNET)
October 20	Small Business Week opening event in Manitoba
October 22	WD Seminar: Service - Moment by Moment - Part 1 (tentative)
October 24	WD Seminar: Selling to the Federal Government (tentative)
October 24	Smart Awards Banquet (Young Entrepreneur Award winners to be recognized) held at the Fort Garry Hotel in the Provencher Room.
October 25	WD Seminar - Business Planning
October 25	Business Development Bank of Canada, Winnipeg Branch, reception 4:00-7:00 p.m. (by invitation)
October 31	Portals to the Future... Open Doors to Success Conference (QNET)

Also:

- The Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC) will be holding seminars on Starting a Small Business, Finding a Business Opportunity, Developing a Business Plan, and others.
- Through its Aboriginal Business Services Network, C/MBSC will be holding a Youth Entrepreneurship event in Thompson.
- Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines will be holding a Youth Entrepreneurship event and a marketing network seminar.

Frequently asked business questions:

1. How do I start a business?
2. Which license or permits do I need for my business?
3. What funding is available to help me start my business?
4. Where do I find suppliers?
5. How do I export?

Find out the answers to your business questions or request information from Western Economic Diversification Canada or the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre on-line at: <http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/webcomments/questions.asp> or <http://www.cbsc.org/manitoba/index.cfm?name=mailus>.

Or you can contact us at:

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