

# Access Manitoba

## Women Entrepreneurs Coming Together in Winnipeg

The Manitoba's Women's Enterprise Centre (WEC) is hosting this year, as part of the Women's Enterprise pan-western conference, an International conference for women in business April 24-26, 2000.

The three-day event, entitled **Women in Business Spanning the Globe**, offers a plethora of information and networking opportunities. It will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel and Winnipeg Convention Centre.

As well as promising exciting entertainment, the conference includes a product and service showcase, an Internet café, and 35 workshops featuring business experts in the areas of business growth, technology, human resources, wellness, personal/professional development, finance and marketing.

The conference also features seven inspiring keynote speakers who will ensure the conference is thought-provoking and stimulating from start to finish:

- Nadja Piatka - Risk and Reward,
- Margaret Hope - Build Your Business, Build Your Network,
- Peter Urs Bender - Secrets of Power Presentations,
- Ellie Rubin - Bulldog - Spirit of the New Entrepreneur,

- Nicole Beaudoin - Turnaround,
- Grace White - The Import/Export Challenge, and
- Ann Coombs as the conference's closing keynote speaker - What will we do to be Memorable?

### Other conference highlights include:

- Strategic Coach - How to Avoid the Gap & How the Best get Better.
- The Great Canadian Pajama Party! - A unique networking opportunity.
- Bear Pit (Question and Answer) - A chance to ask the experts any business question you have!
- Internet Café - Stay on-line with your business back home.
- Product and Service Showcase - Explore the products that will help grow your business.
- Winnipeg at Night - Enjoy the sights and sounds of Winnipeg at night.
- A taste of Manitoba Gala Dinner - The grand finale to a wonderful event!

Registration is open to women entrepreneurs, policy makers, business service providers and entrepreneurship educators from around the world. Fees are as follows: Early-bird registration (before Feb. 15, 2000) \$250; regular registration (before March 31, 2000) \$300; and late or on-site registration (after March 31, 2000) \$350.

For more information or to receive a registration brochure, contact Carmen Neufeld of Frontline Associates at (204) 254-2293 or e-mail [carmenn@escape.ca](mailto:carmenn@escape.ca). You can also visit the WEC conference web site at <http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/wec/etemp3.htm>.

# Follow the Yellow Brick Road...

The road may be yellow in Brunkild, Manitoba. But, it's mustard, not gold, that's creating that colour. **Venture Seeds Ltd.** officially opened its new mustard processing plant on January 13, 2000 in this community's, newly renovated, former grain elevator.

Company President René Caners says, Western Economic Diversification's Agriculture Value-Added Loan Fund was the key to opening this custom mustard seed processing plant. Venture Seeds Ltd. took possession of the facility from the Brunkild Coop Elevator Association in August 1999. The elevator was finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the newer, more efficient high throughput-style elevators being built by line companies. It likely would have had to close within the next four or five years. The renovations made by Venture Seeds with Western Economic Diversification's (WD) assistance included the installation of a new scale and a unique processing application. This resulted in the upgrade of the facility's elevator system and will likely add another 20 years to the elevator's life.

Provencher MP David Iftody, on behalf of the Honourable Ron J. Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and Francophonie, attended the official opening. "I am pleased that Venture Seeds will create new market opportunities for Manitoba seed producers and provide jobs in this rural community," said Mr. Iftody. "This initiative also shows how the Government of Canada, through Western Economic Diversification and its loans funds, can assist entrepreneurs to achieve their goals and contribute to the growth of Canada's rural economy."



With the signing of about 200 farmers to plant more than 20,000 hectares of mustard seed in the coming crop year, the Venture Seeds processing plant will create new market opportunities for seed producers and this rural community.

"Manitoba has the potential to greatly expand its mustard seed production and reach new and existing markets," said Mr. Caners. "This custom seed processing facility will not only encourage area producers to consider mustard as an alternative crop, but will help Manitoba compete with other players in the mustard seed market."

Venture Seeds received a \$350,000 repayable loan from the Farm Credit Corporation of Canada under WD's Agricultural Value-Added Loan Fund. WD's Client Services group assisted Venture Seeds to formalize its business plan. Manitoba's Crocus Investment Fund also contributed \$200,000 in loans to the initiative.

# Accessing Education and Technology in Rural Manitoba



Entrepreneurs and adults upgrading their skills in Southeastern Manitoba now have direct access to current technology, training, and business development resources, thanks to the opening of four new **Entrepreneur Technology and Education Centres (ETEC)** in the communities of Vita, South Junction, Sanford and Sainte-Anne.

The first ETEC was launched in November, 1998 in Morris, Manitoba. The four new sites, opened in January, are satellites of this original location. The Morris office is co-located with the Triple R Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) and one of 18 satellite offices of the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC). This collaborative approach ensures staff are well versed in available resources and allows clients to receive better coordinated services.

The ETECs are designed to be flexible in meeting the individual needs of clients. Individuals can visit a centre as their schedule allows and work at their own pace. Qualified instructors are available on site to help guide participants. The centres have convenient hours of operation, staying open late two evenings per week.

The Manitoba Department of Education and Training accredits all ETEC courses. Clients can earn credits toward completing high school and post-secondary education, as

well as apprenticeship certification. Many courses, such as accounting, are available to assist small business operators. There is a strong emphasis on computer related courses. At the ETEC in Sanford, seminars are available for clients to become Microsoft certified. With on line multimedia tutorials available, study options are limitless.

In order to remain competitive and economically viable, rural communities are preparing themselves for a more knowledge-based economy. As technology advances and availability increases, the options for rural residents expand. The world marketplace is shrinking and technology brings information closer to home.

The ETEC initiative is an excellent example of the cooperation and partnership existing between the governments of Canada and Manitoba, providing direct benefits to Manitobans. This initiative arose from needs which communities identified; and, the challenge was met collectively.

The ETECs are a joint venture of the Triple R CFDC, Morris-MacDonald, and Boundary and Sprague School Divisions. Western Economic Diversification contributed \$218,000 to help establish the new sites.

# Lights... Cameras... Action

**QUIET ON THE SET - ROLL CAMERAS.** Winnipeg is the "Hollywood of the Prairies" and now we're open for business year round, thanks to the completion of phase one of **Prairie Production Centre's** state-of-the-art sound and film studio.

This facility, which opened last November, is a 15,000-square-foot, 35-foot-high clear-span sound stage with 3,750 square feet of adjacent production and office space. No longer will film and television producers, filming in Manitoba, be restricted by weather conditions that previously forced them to convert local warehouses into studios. The new Prairie Production Centre has brought together all aspects of film production under one roof and is accessible year round to local, Canadian and foreign production companies.

Phase two of the facility, which is planned to open in September of this year, will house two additional sound stages, post production facilities, additional offices and tenant space for industry related business. When both phases are completed, the 67,000 square foot studio, the first of its kind in Manitoba, will further secure Manitoba's future as a major player in the national and international film and production industry.

The \$7.7 million Centre received a \$1 million contribution from the Canada/Manitoba Economic Development Partnership Agreement. Through March 2002, this agreement will direct \$40 million into strategic projects which will expand the international competitiveness of Manitoba's key growth sectors, commercialize new technologies, assist small- and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs, and enhance the long-term economic self-sustainability of rural and urban communities.

"Manitoba's film and television production industries have grown rapidly over the past few years; but, they require a strong infrastructure on which to expand and develop to their full potential in Manitoba," said Mr. Ron Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and



federal minister responsible for the Agreement. "Projects such as this will create lasting economic benefits for Canada's film industry, and will provide training and employment opportunities, ensuring a skilled labour pool for future productions."

This facility is another important advancement in securing the film industry's future as a major contributor to Manitoba's economy. It's an industry whose numbers and spin-off benefits are impressive - film productions representing over \$17 million were shot here just two years ago; and, that figure jumped to \$51 million by last year. By the end of 2000, benefits projected to be \$100 million. So let's keep the cameras rolling!