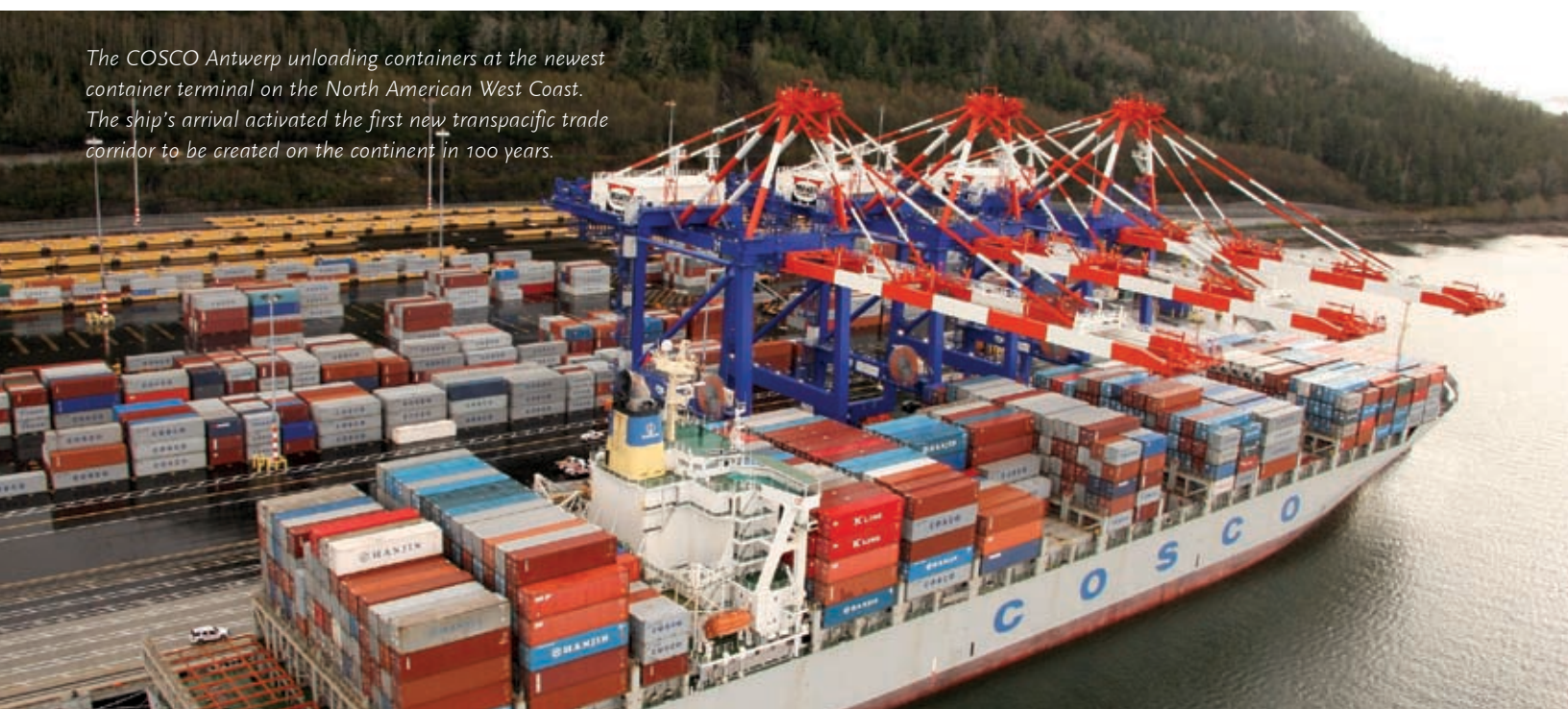




# Access West

*The COSCO Antwerp unloading containers at the newest container terminal on the North American West Coast. The ship's arrival activated the first new transpacific trade corridor to be created on the continent in 100 years.*



## B.C. Port opens to global opportunities

by Jillian Glover

When the Prince Rupert Port Authority celebrated the opening of its Fairview Terminal, Western Canada and the community of Prince Rupert opened up to a world of new opportunities.

The Fairview Terminal at Prince Rupert's Port is being hailed as the biggest thing

to hit northwest B.C. since the Grand Trunk Pacific railway first reached the West Coast. Trumpeted as an "express trade corridor," the new terminal shaves more than two days from shipping times between Asia and North America.

This increased capacity will strengthen

Canada's position as a fast, efficient, secure and reliable Gateway – one that satisfies the demands of Asian shippers who are looking to build commercial bridges to North America.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



# Access West

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## A stronger West

### Message from the Honourable Rona Ambrose

Natural resources laid the economic foundation of the West and continue to be a mainstay today. However, as fluctuating world markets and natural challenges like the mountain pine beetle infestation occur, creating a strong, diverse economy becomes more important than ever.

Ports strengthen the western economy, helping our businesses and commodities compete internationally. Creating global business opportunities and markets leads to jobs.

That's why WD is partnering in the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative, as well as supporting key port infrastructure improvements and marketing projects – activities that ensure that the region is a strong link in the nation's network of trade and transportation infrastructure.

In line with the national science and technology strategy, *Mobilizing Science & Technology to Canada's Advantage*, we're also keeping the economy strong by investing in cutting-edge industries, such

as nanotechnology, biotechnology and environmental technologies.

With small business growth in the West continuing to outpace that of the rest of the country, the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well. WD continues to support this valuable source of prosperity by investing in programs that encourage trade and investment, and through its Western Canada Business Service Network.

Last year, one of WD's network members, the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan, celebrated 60 years of francophone economic development – a proud history that I am pleased to acknowledge.

Without question, a thriving economy is essential to maintaining our nation's competitiveness and long-term prosperity. My department is actively contributing to a stronger West in a stronger Canada.

*The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P.  
President of the Queen's Privy Council  
for Canada,  
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and  
Minister of Western Economic  
Diversification*

## Editor's Note

### Going Green?

Concern for our environment is reshaping the western economy by driving the development of green technology and clean industrial practices. It's also affecting how we communicate with you.

If you want to minimize paper waste and receive Access West in an electronic format only, email us at access.west@wd.gc.ca and we'll add you to our electronic distribution.



# New centre fast-tracks medical research

By Karl Yeh

The new Centre for Drug Research and Development (CDRD), based at the University of British Columbia, is helping to bring early stage medical research to the marketplace. The Centre provides research and development infrastructure to help health scientists collaborate, refine their discoveries and advance them to commercial use.

British Columbia is home to a wealth of world-leading medical research. In 2003, it was researchers at B.C.'s Genome Sciences Centre, led by Dr. Marco Marra, who were first in the world to crack the genetic code of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) coronavirus, a major breakthrough necessary for the development of reliable diagnostic tests and, eventually, treatments for the deadly virus.

To ensure discoveries such as this bring significant social, economic and health benefits to the public, pure research



*Minister Rona Ambrose watches cancer researcher Sandi Dunn at the Centre for Drug Research and Development in Vancouver.*

needs to be turned into tangible products and services. With WD funding, the CDRD is establishing laboratories and acquiring new equipment that enable it to do just that.

## Tackling the “commercialization gap”

Due to a lack of expertise and resources in early stage development, many research ideas are not able to progress to clinical trials or gain the financial backing to move forward.

The CDRD offers a unique hybrid model made up of two separate bodies that, together, enable drug research and commercialization. Its academic research arm, the Drug Research Institute, enables B.C. researchers to focus and amplify their drug discovery and development efforts. Meanwhile, DDI Drug Development Inc., a private company, facilitates the commercialization of drug therapies by providing capital and expertise to develop products for license or sale to industry.

The Centre is a collaborative operation that enables academia, government and the private sector to capitalize on

therapeutic drug research conducted at B.C. universities. The facility also trains highly qualified researchers in specialized fields to coordinate drug development research and commercialization efforts, creating a virtual network to support researchers across the province.

“The Centre for Drug Research and Development is establishing multiple state-of-the-art labs that will serve researchers and trainees across B.C.,” said Natalie Dakers, Chief Executive Officer for the CDRD. “This facility reinforces Canada’s commitment to bridging the commercialization gap between research and the successful development of new medicine.”

For more information on the Centre for Drug Research and Development, visit: [www.cdrd.ca](http://www.cdrd.ca) ■



*CDRD CEO Natalie Dakers has been a part of the biotech industry, on both the business and academic fronts, for nearly two decades. She helped found the CDRD in 2005 to find ways to increase investment in drug development.*

**“THE CENTRE REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE EVOLUTION OF B.C.’S LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY. WE WANT TO BRIDGE THE COMMERCIALIZATION GAP BETWEEN PROMISING MEDICAL DISCOVERIES AND COMMERCIALIZATION. THE CENTRE WILL ENABLE US TO ATTRACT AND KEEP INVESTORS FOR OUR SPIN-OFFS.”**

**- NATALIE DAKERS, CEO, CDRD**



# Plant company incubator grows Prairie Carnation potential

by Heather Waldern Hinds

How does a six-person research team accomplish the work of 30 in just 1,100 square feet? By establishing a laboratory at the National Research Council Plant Biotechnology Institute's (PBI) Industry Partnership Facility (IPF) in Saskatoon.

Calgary-based Saponin Inc. is developing the Prairie Carnation – or *Saponaria vaccaria*, from the soapwort, or pink family – as a new industrial and personal-care crop for western Canadian agricultural producers by using the expertise and equipment at the IPF.

"We have a company that has about 10 employees which can function like a 30-person company," says Paul Arnison, Saponin President and Chief Science Officer. "The NRC is enabling a very small company to do sophisticated research and product development that it couldn't do alone or afford alone."

The company wants to produce and process the Prairie Carnation's fine-grained starch for the cosmetic industry and sell its soap-like biochemicals,

called saponins, for industrial, and in the future, medical use.

Working with NRC's saponin expert, Dr. John Balsevich, and using the facility's highly-specialized equipment, Saponin isolated the plant's biochemicals and developed a proprietary seed fractionation process to solve the challenging problem of recovering the plant kingdom's smallest-grained starch.

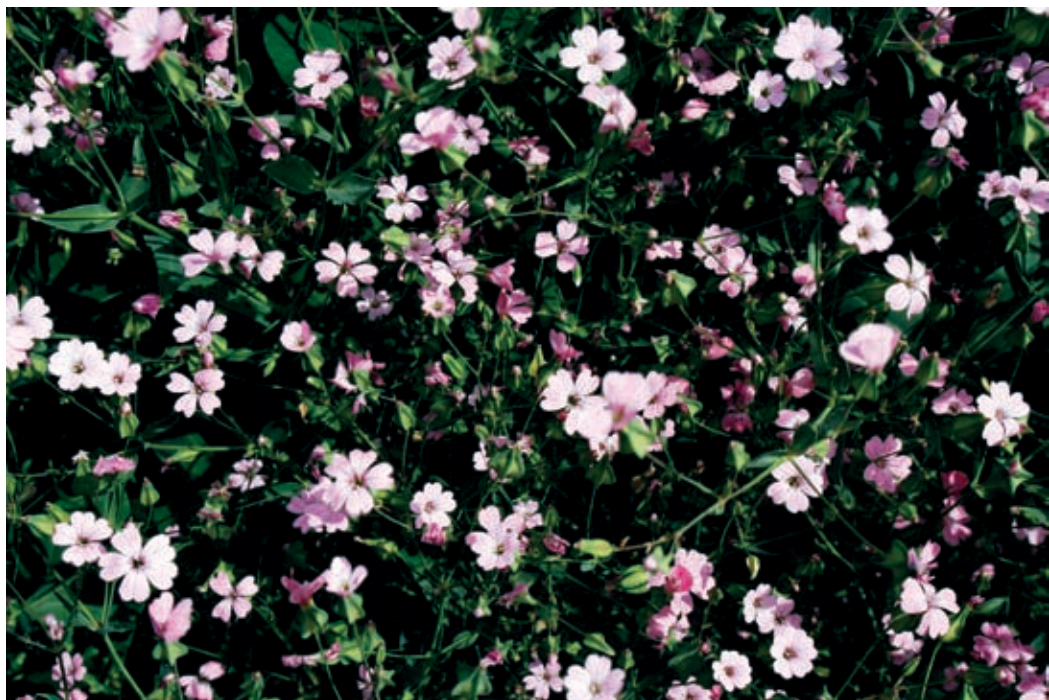
"We also benefit at the wider level from the access to people at the University [of Saskatchewan] because of their past and current association with NRC," explains Arnison. "There is nowhere equivalent to PBI in terms of what they can provide and what can be done here."

The IPF is the only incubator in North America dedicated to plant biotechnology companies. WD provided \$3.2 million in capital funding for the facility, which focuses on incubating technology and research, and promoting

the emergence of new businesses. Companies have access to expertise such as DNA sequencing as well as equipment worth many millions of dollars.

NRC Plant Biotechnology Institute's Head of Business Development, Royal Hinther says the IPF provides the "horsepower," traction and credibility that the early stage companies need to be taken seriously. "They have a much easier time attracting investments and multinationals. Three of the companies in the incubator have partnerships with multinationals."

Ultimately, Saponin wants to set up a processing facility in Saskatchewan or Alberta. If it succeeds and the crop receives regulatory approval, agricultural producers, the agricultural processing sector and, more indirectly, Saskatchewan's drug-manufacturing sector – which is virtually unknown – will all benefit. ■



*Prairie Carnations (shown above) contain biochemicals, or saponins, that have potential applications in the industrial and medical fields.*



# Students and industry benefit from chemistry Centre of Excellence

by Lee Gregg

Dr. Michael Freund, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Manitoba (UofM), arrived from the California Institute of Technology's Beckman Institute in 2002, ready to prepare students for careers in pharmacy, microbiology and disease diagnosis. What he wasn't prepared for was the teaching lab.

"Pieces of equipment were over 50 years old," explained Dr. Freund. "There was no modern equipment or equipment representative of what students would be expected to use in industry."

Taking a proactive approach, Dr. Freund teamed up with colleagues Dr. Feiyue Wang and Dr. Hélène Perreault and spent two years developing proposals to secure funding for new equipment.

With support from heavy hitters like Cangene, the National Microbiology Lab, the Institute for Biodiagnostics and Standard Aero, the team approached WD to assist with the funding necessary to bring the chemistry lab into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

WD provided \$555,000 to develop the Manitoba Chemical Analysis Laboratory. Partnering with laboratory equipment manufacturer Varian, the UofM negotiated a large price reduction for equipment, extended warranties, on-site training, and 40 per cent discounts for consumables such as lamps and test tubes.

With 40 to 45 per cent of chemistry professionals in Manitoba's life sciences clusters nearing retirement age,



*Dr. Michael Freund explains how the inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometer (ICP-OES) is used to identify and quantify the elements of a substance. The instrument is important in a wide range of areas, from environmental monitoring to identifying ores in mining to characterizing the makeup of oil seed crops.*

Dr. Freund sees the UofM as a key player in training students to ensure growth in Manitoba's knowledge-based economy. The chemistry facility plans to double the number of graduates within two years to help meet the increasing needs of industry.

"We can teach the theory, but industry hires chemistry and biochemistry graduates expecting them to be educated on modern equipment," said Dr. Freund. "If students are being trained on old technology, they are not competitive when they enter the workforce."

An advisory board and a management board, which include representatives from the UofM departments of Chemistry, Environment and Geography, as well as representatives from industry and government, oversee the new facility. The management board guides the operation of the facility and ensures it is responsive to the needs of industry in sectors ranging from the life sciences to manufacturing and energy.

For information on the UofM's Department of Chemistry, visit <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/science/chemistry>. ■



# Tiny technology packs massive potential

In keeping with Canada's new national science and technology strategy, WD's \$3.8 million investment in the Innovation Centre at the National Institute for Nanotechnology (NINT) ensures this world-class Centre will maintain its role as a leader in the burgeoning global nanotechnology

market – expected to be worth \$1.5 trillion by 2015.

NINT, located on the University of Alberta campus, is an example of WD's strategic support of pre-commercialization activities to develop knowledge-based R&D and promote business clusters outside the traditional,

resource-based sectors in Western Canada.

"The Government of Canada recognizes the tremendous potential of nanotechnology to diversify the economy, create new jobs and improve Western Canada's standard of living," said Rahim Jaffer, MP for Edmonton–Strathcona, at the opening of the Innovation Centre last fall.

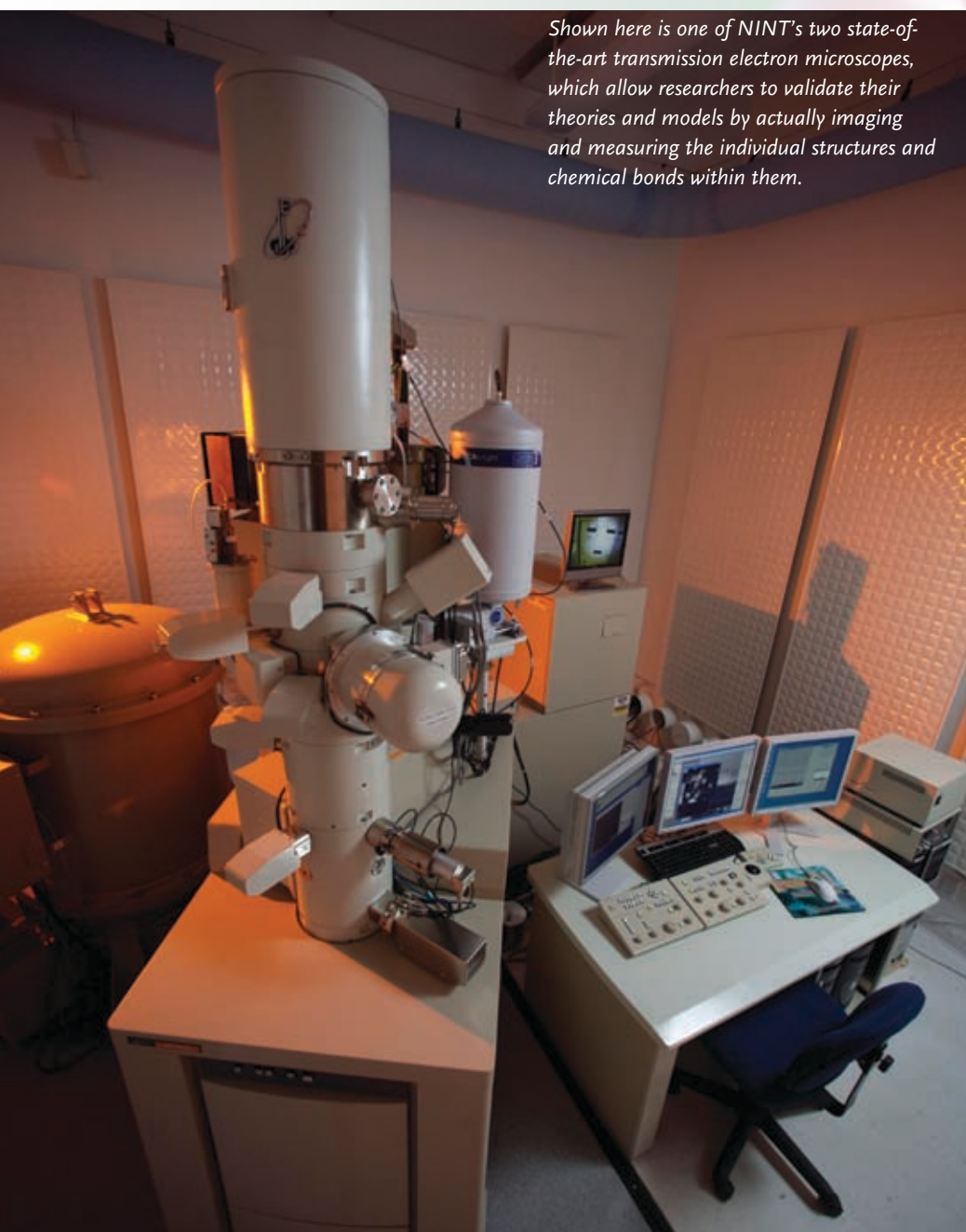
"Nanotechnology is set to transform the way we live. This is a flagship facility that positions Alberta's nanotech industries for success in the global marketplace by providing a competitive advantage in commercializing new technologies and products," said Mr. Jaffer.

These big possibilities are a product of the smallest possible research. Nanotechnology broadly refers to the field of applied science and technology concerning matter on the atomic and molecular scale, normally 1 to 100 nanometers, and the use of devices within that size range. To put the scale into perspective, a nanometer is one billionth of a metre. Highly multidisciplinary, nanotechnology draws from such fields as applied physics, materials science, device physics, supramolecular chemistry, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, and electrical engineering.

NINT's 20,000 square-metre building is one of the world's most technologically advanced research facilities.

Its objective is to help Canadian companies exploit the as-yet unlimited potential of nanotechnology and to foster an Edmonton-area cluster of companies that make use of this cutting-edge technology.

*Shown here is one of NINT's two state-of-the-art transmission electron microscopes, which allow researchers to validate their theories and models by actually imaging and measuring the individual structures and chemical bonds within them.*





The NINT Innovation Centre occupies the fourth floor of the NINT building on the University of Alberta campus. It consists of 15 rental units of combined office and laboratory space for start-up and existing companies as well as industrial collaborators that all benefit from the close proximity to the high concentration of nanotechnology expertise at NINT and across the university campus.

## Mobilizing Science & Technology

This cutting-edge collaboration and others like it are at the heart of the new national science and technology strategy, *Mobilizing Science & Technology to Canada's Advantage*.

At the announcement of the strategy last spring, Prime Minister Stephen Harper emphasized a renewed commitment to strengthening Canada's economy by "tapping into and marrying entrepreneurial energy to scientific and technological expertise," making it easier for businesses to create and commercialize new products and services.

WD continues to support strategic partnerships like NINT that can give western Canadian technology businesses a competitive edge. NINT is a partnership between the National Research Council and the University of Alberta, and is jointly funded by the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta and the university.

Partnerships like this, among government, academia and business, are instrumental in supporting the exploration of the frontiers of science and, in this case, commercializing nanotechnology for the benefit of the world. ■

# ASTech Awards honour Alberta's tech visionaries

In October 2007, Extreme Engineering, a Calgary-based company that has become an acknowledged world leader in acoustic telemetry technology, received the Award for Outstanding Commercial Achievement in Alberta Science and Technology. The award, which targets corporations having gross sales less than \$25 million per year, is sponsored by WD, and is one of a dozen awards presented during the annual Alberta Science & Technology (ASTech) Foundation Awards Gala.

Project neuroArm, a WD-funded initiative, won the ASTech Award for Outstanding Leadership in Alberta Technology.

"This award greatly increases the potential for successful commercialization and global impact," said Dr. Garnette Sutherland, Project neuroArm lead and University of Calgary professor of neurosurgery. Recognized for his cutting-edge work, Dr. Sutherland

also formally acknowledged WD's investment as being an important catalyst in Project neuroArm's success.

During the event's opening address, WD Minister Rona Ambrose said Alberta innovators play a vital role in contributing to Canada's economic prosperity and quality of life.

"Canada has a proud history of scientific and technological excellence. Partnerships enable us to assist visionaries, such as tonight's honourees, to transform their dreams into reality," she said. "Tonight, we see evidence that our future will be even brighter."

Each year, the ASTech Awards recognize the best and brightest talents in science and technology. Winners are selected from nominations made by an independent panel of judges composed of professionals from the advanced technology, research and business communities. ■



Alberta Science Fair winner, Emily Cooley, receives award from Doug Horner, Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology; Minister Ambrose; Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta; Larry Stone, President of the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta; and John McLeod, President of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta at the ASTech Awards Gala.



# New green facilities showcase B.C. focus on sustainability

by Tom Wakefield and Karl Yeh

*In recent years, Canadians have experienced record-breaking hot summers and powerful storms. Growing awareness of climate change and how it is affecting everyday lives is driving more Canadians and people worldwide to seek alternative solutions to reduce energy consumption and their ecological footprint.*

The world is looking to technological advances to address the challenges ahead, and Western Canada is leading the way with the development and incorporation of environmental technologies, particularly sustainable building technologies such as solar water tubes, green roofs and low-flow faucets.

In British Columbia, two new facilities are being created to help drive adoption of sustainable technologies and to bring these advances to new markets.

## New Centre for Interactive Research a living lab for green technology

With the help of WD funding, a state-of-the-art Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) will enable researchers to pioneer new forms of urban building technologies and move them to the global marketplace.

“The Centre will be the most innovative, high-performance green building in

North America,” said UBC professor John Robinson, Director of the CIRS program. “This living laboratory will showcase leading-edge research and sustainable design, products, systems and decision-making.”

Slated to open in 2009, the Centre will be an environmentally friendly facility that demonstrates the latest in sustainable building practices and alternative energy, such as extensive day lighting to reduce electricity use and solar energy for power. More than a research facility, the Centre will also reach out to the community and help people learn about sustainability and how it applies to their daily lives.

CIRS is a unique partnership between the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Expanding partnerships will be a primary focus for CIRS, in particular establishing new links among researchers, practitioners and consumers. These partnerships will identify and nurture emerging western Canadian building technologies, helping them springboard into the marketplace.

For more information about the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability, visit: [www.cirs.ubc.ca](http://www.cirs.ubc.ca).



*Architectural rendering of the CIRS building at the Great Northern Way Campus, Vancouver.*



## Energy House shows Canadians how to reduce ecological footprint

Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek, B.C., wants to show Canadians how they can reduce their impact on the environment. With \$150,000 from WD, they've developed an Energy House, the first of its kind in the province.

Scheduled to open in early 2008, Energy House is part demonstration project and part training facility that will display to Canadians everyday household alternative energy solutions.

Powered by a combination of solar panels and wind turbines, Energy House will showcase cutting-edge technology based on four types of renewable energy: solar electricity and heat as well as geothermal and wind power.

At the same time, future alternative energy maintenance workers and installers will get their career start within the 3,500 square foot facility. Energy House will serve as a training centre for students in the trades and students taking university-transfer science courses, as well as tradespeople looking to enhance their skill sets.

"Northern Lights College is playing a key role informing Canadians young and old about the benefits of renewable energy," said Howard Mayer, Dean of the Business, Industry and Contract Training Division at NLC. "We're hoping Energy House can educate and inspire people to make lasting changes that will benefit the environment."

For more information about Energy House, visit [www.nlc.bc.ca](http://www.nlc.bc.ca). ■

## Capitalizing on climate change solutions

Accelerating the adoption of new, environment-friendly technologies goes to the core of WD's objective to create a stronger, more diversified West and a better Canada.

A new three-year initiative in Calgary led by Climate Change Central (C3) EnviroTech Solutions will be a catalyst in bringing environmental industry participants together to leverage existing and new funding sources, and give a boost to the entrepreneurs and small firms who want to commercialize and market new environmental technologies.

On behalf of Minister Ambrose, Calgary-Centre MP Lee Richardson recently announced \$2 million from WD towards a \$6-million C3 project, noting that it is through ventures like C3's new Technology Solutions Hub that WD is helping to expand the western economy beyond its traditional dependence on natural resources.

"We are creating new ways to improve our environment while triggering economic growth in the region," he said.

Climate Change Central is a public-private-partnership mandated to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening Alberta's economy and long-term competitiveness. Simon Knight, CEO of C3 EnviroTech Solutions,

**"WE ARE CREATING NEW  
WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR  
ENVIRONMENT WHILE  
TRIGGERING ECONOMIC  
GROWTH IN THE REGION."**



*Lee Richardson, MP, Calgary Centre and Simon Knight, CEO, C3 EnviroTech Solutions, at the Calgary launch of C3's Technology Solutions Hub.*

says that by providing the critical technology evaluation that can accelerate product development, the Technology Solutions Hub is a key element in commercializing green building and renewable energy technology.

"Through this project, we will help businesses access capital in the pilot and demonstration phases of product development," says Knight. "We will also help them access local, national and international markets that address Canada's environmental challenges, including those associated with Alberta's energy sector."

WD's investment supports the Government of Canada's commitment to invest in research, development and technology commercialization; support small- and medium-sized enterprises; and promote a diversified and expanded business sector.

For more information on C3 EnviroTech Solutions, visit: [www.tech-hub.ca](http://www.tech-hub.ca) ■



CONTINUED FROM COVER

# Port opening marks new era

by Jillian Glover

A new era in B.C. shipping arrived with the grand opening of the container terminal last September. The historic event garnered international headlines and drew an audience of thousands – including senior government dignitaries, business leaders and First Nations Chiefs from around the world.

“The Prince Rupert Port expansion will change the economic landscape of this region and our nation as we build stronger trade connections between Canada and Asia,” said WD Minister Rona Ambrose.

The \$170 million terminal project has been funded by five partners: \$30 million from the Government of Canada through WD; \$60 million from Maher Terminals including three super-post panamax cranes; \$30 million from the Province of British Columbia; \$25 million from CN Rail towards the terminal’s rail-related infrastructure; and \$25 million from the Prince Rupert Port Authority.

“We often say that Prince Rupert has been waiting 100 years for this day,” said Don

Krusel, CEO of the Prince Rupert Port Authority at the terminal opening.

The vision of building Prince Rupert as an express trade corridor to Asia was something proposed in the early 1900s by railway tycoon Charles Melville Hays, who chose it as the destination for his Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, a continent-spanning line that would compete with the Canadian Pacific Railway for the lucrative Asian silk trade. But when Mr. Hays perished on the Titanic, the dream ended with him.

The intervening 100 years have witnessed rapid growth in many parts of Asia, increased global competitiveness, expanded world energy demands and changing dynamics in the Canadian economy. Combined, these elements are the driving force behind the formation of new partnerships that are helping bring Hays’ vision of Western Canada and Prince Rupert as the nation’s “Gateway to Asia,” to life.

Since 1987, WD has worked with the Province of British Columbia and more recently, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to position Canada to

## The Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative

is a set of integrated investment and policy measures focused on stimulating increased trade with the Asia-Pacific Region. Its mission is to strengthen Canada’s competitive position in international commerce.

WD is making important contributions to Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative. Recently it launched a new report by the Asia Pacific Foundation that details how Canadian companies are successfully doing business with Asia.

*Leading the Way* provides an analysis of 15 Canadian companies, large and small, with successful business strategies focused on Asia. They represent a growing number of Canadian firms that are actively developing new approaches to doing business with Asia. Individual reports and detailed analysis of each of the companies are available at: [www.asiapacificgateway.net](http://www.asiapacificgateway.net)

capitalize on emerging opportunities in the Asia Pacific Rim.

In addition to funding the Prince Rupert Port expansion, WD is contributing to Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative by consulting broadly with stakeholders across Canada and providing strategic advice on how best to leverage economic opportunity from this major investment. ■

*The arrival of three super-post panamax container cranes at the Fairview terminal marked the new Prince Rupert terminal officially open for business.*





# Expanding horizons for Canada's only Arctic port

by Lee Gregg

Canada's only deep-water Arctic seaport is bustling with activity. Long touted as the most economical entryway for shipping goods to and from the prairies to markets in Europe, Russia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, Churchill marked several milestones over the past year that are helping to cement its emerging position as an economic thoroughway for Western Canada.

"The Churchill Port had a banner year in 2007," said Bill Drew, Executive Director, Churchill Gateway Development Corporation. "The port recorded near record grain shipments with over 620,000 metric tonnes of grain shipped and the first ever shipment of grain from Churchill to Halifax took place using an Arctic supply vessel."

WD and the Province of Manitoba are looking to further develop the Port as a North American hub. The two partnered to jointly invest \$4.2 million over a six-year period in the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation (CGDC). The funding is being used to develop a market research and initiative plan.

"The funding we received has allowed us to market the port and increase business through the port," said Drew. "We have been able to identify



*The Russian Vessel Kapitan Sviridov docks at the Port of Churchill. Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland have expressed interest in future trade through the Churchill Port.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF HUDSON BAY PORT COMPANY

potential commodities and associated international buyers and suppliers, and match these with potential Canadian industries."

The plan is building on the Port's recent successes, most notably the arrival of an inbound container ship from Russia, which unloaded a shipment of fertilizer bound for western Canadian markets. The Kapitan Sviridov, owned by the Murmansk Shipping Company, was chartered by the Farmers of North America and Acron, the Russian producer of the fertilizer. The ship was then reloaded with 20,000 tonnes of Canadian wheat destined for Italian markets.

This was the Port's first shipment from Russia and an important step in establishing an *Arctic Bridge* between Churchill and Murmansk, Russia.

## Upgrades Planned

Plans are now underway to upgrade the port's facilities and the rail line linking Churchill with Winnipeg. This will lead to increased trade and a stronger mid-continent trade corridor – a corridor connecting Canada to the U.S. and Mexico, with Churchill as the northern hub. ■

## The Port of Churchill

- provides vessels with much **shorter routes** to overseas markets,
- is **less time-consuming** to navigate than the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River ports, and
- is **less expensive** in terms of handling and transportation costs.



# Multimillion-dollar federal programs addressing the mountain pine beetle epidemic

by Tom Wakefield

In January 2007, the Government of Canada launched the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program (MBP),

## What is a mountain pine beetle?

They are the size of a grain of rice and have a voracious appetite for pine. Individually their impact is minute, but in swarms, they overpower a tree's natural defence. They chew their way inside a tree, leaving behind a toxic blue fungus that blocks water and nutrient movement, and leaves the tree defenceless. Eggs laid within the tree give birth to new larvae, which continue feeding on the tree. Once mature, the insect leaves the dead tree, flying to find their next meal.

Normally these insects play an important role in the life of a forest; they attack old or weakened trees, speeding the development of a younger forest. But in epidemic proportions, their effects are profound. By the end of 2008, it is estimated that 50 per cent of British Columbia's mature pine forests will be destroyed as a result of the insect. By 2013, that figure could rise to 80 per cent. ■



led by Natural Resources Canada. The program commits \$400 million over the next two years for measures that address both the short-term and long-term impacts of the beetle infestation.

Currently, Canada is battling the largest mountain pine beetle outbreak in North American history and the economic impacts will be substantial – in the billions of dollars. Communities and their economies will change, and not just in B.C. The mountain pine beetle is spreading, moving its way east to Alberta and potentially to Canada's northern boreal forest.

The MPB is supporting efforts to control the spread of the beetle, recover as much economic value as possible from destroyed timber, and protect forests and communities from the risk of wildfire.

Along with Transport Canada, WD is a strong partner in the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program. Besides managing the Community Economic Diversification Initiative, WD has provided nearly \$20 million to support airport improvement projects in Prince George, Kamloops and Kelowna. The improvements will expand tourism opportunities within the regions



*Red-coloured needles indicate a forest affected by the mountain pine beetle.*

PHOTO CREDIT: NRCAN

served by these airports, while helping local businesses access the global marketplace.

"Communities are feeling the impact of the beetle infestation today, and they will feel it for years to come," says Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources Canada. "Our Mountain Pine Beetle Program is helping communities address short-term needs, such as fire protection, and we're also helping them address the long-term impacts by investing in efforts to broaden the economic foundations of communities."

For more information about the Federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program, visit [www.nrcan.gc.ca](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca) ■

## forest. forward.

moving beyond the pine beetle



## CEDI: helping hard-hit communities overcome the mountain pine beetle

by Tom Wakefield

To help Mackenzie, a B.C. community dependent on forestry jobs, and other communities in the Cariboo Region of B.C. adversely affected by the mountain pine beetle epidemic, \$370,000 was provided to the College of New Caledonia to purchase mobile training equipment.

The project was funded through the Community Economic Diversification Initiative (CEDI), which is part of the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program.

This investment means that for the first time, residents in the region will have local access to training programs for high-demand skills such as welding. Residents will be able to develop the skills they need for jobs in the construction and metalwork industries right in their community.

"There is a shortage of skilled workers of all kinds across the province," says Mayor Killam. "Being able to address some of our specific labour demands right here in the community gives us a competitive edge in both recruiting and retaining Mackenzie workers."

WD helped develop CEDI, recognizing that a vast number of small B.C. communities have economies fuelled by the forest industry. Through CEDI, WD will invest over \$33 million in projects that support economic growth, job creation and the future sustainability of communities hurt by the infestation.

WD manages CEDI, and has solicited Expressions of Interest for funding from community leaders and other key stakeholders from the most at-risk B.C. communities, including numerous First Nations communities.

To be eligible, projects under the program must target four key areas: community capacity building; economic diversification; value-added forestry; and economic infrastructure. All projects are to be completed by March 31, 2009.

For more information about the Community Economic Diversification Initiative, visit [www.wd.gc.ca/9622\\_ENG\\_ASP.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/9622_ENG_ASP.asp) ■

*Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources, stands in front of a locally manufactured mountain pine beetle wood podium to announce the \$33 million Community Economic Diversification Initiative at the Prince George Railway and Forestry Museum.*



## Mackenzie: Battling the beetle

The town of Mackenzie, British Columbia, has a proud history. Its name derives from Alexander Mackenzie, the first explorer to cross North America, who in 1793 struck camp where the town is now located.

Sitting at the southern end of Williston Lake – the largest man-made reservoir in North America – Mackenzie was born out of a booming pulp and lumber industry in the 1960s.

Now with a population of 4,500, forestry remains the town's most important economic driver.

It's for this very reason that the future of Mackenzie is in jeopardy.

"We are one of the most forestry dependent communities in the province and have already started to feel the impact of the mountain pine beetle with mill curtailments and the loss of jobs," says Mayor Stephanie Killam.

Many communities across B.C.'s Interior are facing a similar fate. Due to the mountain pine beetle infestation, these communities are being forced to seek other economic mainstays.

"Diversifying the economy has always been a top priority in our community," notes the Mayor. "But there is no magic bullet for diversification. It takes time." ■



# Addressing the challenges of urbanization

*With 80 per cent of Canadians living in urban communities, Canada is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. Migration from rural to urban areas is making our cities dynamic places of economic growth, but is also leading to a host of challenges for many rural areas as they struggle with the loss of population and economic opportunity.*

*Governments and communities are challenged to work together to find ways to respond to these pressures.*

During the 2007 Alberta Community Futures (CF) Symposium held in Calgary

in September, The Globe and Mail political columnist, John Ibbitson, told participants that Canada's urbanization trends are creating increased tension between growing cities and rural decline. He said that the national challenge is to ensure that urban areas do not flourish at the expense of the vitality of rural communities.

Rural diversification is one of WD's key priorities in 2008-09 and it believes Community Futures organizations are ideally positioned to generate viable solutions to the challenges.

## WD's 2008-2009 Priorities

- Technology Commercialization
- Trade & Investment
- Business Productivity & Competitiveness
- Rural Diversification
- Management Excellence

## CFs respond effectively to rural challenges

Speaking at an awards gala that was part of the ambitious, three-day learning symposium organized to cultivate leaders of Alberta's CF network, MP Lee Richardson acknowledged the importance of CF's community-based approach in strengthening the economic viability of the West's rural communities.

"Your local networking is vital to success where it matters – on the ground, in the communities," said Richardson.

## Collaborative planning key to success

Community Futures leaders will achieve even greater success if they:

- work together
- identify meaningful goals, strategies and performance indicators, and
- set priorities that effectively respond to shared community issues.

That's what workshop facilitator Glenn Tecker told Alberta's CF leaders during an intense planning session at the symposium, which focused on learning and the economic potential of collaboration.

The event, which attracted the participation of more than

200 key leaders from Alberta's 27 Community Futures offices and WD representatives, sought to enhance cooperation and align priorities among CF network members. It also enabled them to share best practices and develop the framework for a clear, common and actionable strategy for 2008-09.

Doug Maley, WD's Assistant Deputy Minister for Alberta, told participants that WD is keen to support projects that align with WD's priorities, including those that add value to traditional sectors such as agriculture, forestry and mining.

Conference participants said they were anxious to return to their communities and build on the ideas generated in the planning sessions and further engage their community representatives in what had been started. ■

**Community  
Futures**





## Three Alberta Community Futures projects recognized with Minister's Award

Several unique projects initiated by Community Futures in Alberta were recognized with WD's Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation at the 2007 Community Futures of Alberta Symposium.

Three Alberta CF organizations – Community Futures Lakeland, Entre-Corp and East Central – took the bronze for their collaborative Defence Industry Development project to match local suppliers with procurement opportunities at Canadian Forces Bases Suffield, Wainwright and Cold Lake. The silver went to Community Futures Entre-Corp for their City Centre Business Investment Program – a loan program that leveraged funds for downtown Medicine Hat businesses to undertake necessary building upgrades.

Top honours went to the Corporate Education Network project, a partnership involving the governments of Canada and Alberta, Palliser Economic Partnership, Medicine Hat College and Community Futures Entre-Corp that launched a community website – [www.cenetnetwork.ca](http://www.cenetnetwork.ca) – designed to provide a “one-stop-shop” to help businesses and individuals in South East Alberta with their job training needs. ■



*Left to Right: Bill Hogan, Manager, CF Visions North; Paul Trottier, Chair, CF Visions North; David James, acting Assistant Deputy Minister, WD Saskatchewan.*

## Women's business program garners Minister's Award

*by Jean Collins*

The Community Futures (CF) Partners of Saskatchewan presented CF Visions North and its manager, Bill Hogan, with the 2007 WD Minister's Award of Excellence and Innovation for an innovative new program it developed and implemented that is equipping women with the confidence and know-how to enter the job market or create their own. The unique entrepreneurship program targets the residents of the La Ronge women's shelter.

In its first year, the three-month program offered business preparatory courses in marketing, finance and business law. In year two, the program grew to nine months and 10 courses

ranging from basic math, writing and life skills to entrepreneurial classes in business planning to better meet participants' needs.

After completing the program, two participants began exploring the feasibility of establishing their own arts and crafts business and are now considering a co-operative approach to a beadwork venture. Another participant observed that while she may not start her own business, she'd gained the self-confidence to apply for jobs she'd never considered before.

“If the program changes one woman's life, then it's as successful as any loan,” says Hogan. “This (program) is a legacy for their children and their future.” ■

*Left to right: Sean Blewett, General Manager, CF Entre-Corp; Rick Derbyshire, Chair, CF Entre-Corp; Louise Connolly, Board Chair, CF Alberta; MP Lee Richardson, Calgary Centre.*





# Banff Venture Forum a serious opportunity for angels and entrepreneurs

With an annual growth rate of about 10 per cent, the Banff Venture Forum has seen over \$280 million in investment or merger and acquisition funds raised by participants in its nine-year history. At the latest Forum, 45 companies presented before 36 investors in separate Information Technology and Energy Technology streams. Held annually, the Forum focuses on areas outside of traditional natural resource sectors.

The Banff Venture Forum is where Western Canada's most innovative and promising technology entrepreneurs come to present their ideas to some of the most influential angel investors and venture capital organizations across Canada and around the world. One of North America's premier technology investment forums, it enables innovators to connect with investors and attract the capital they need to grow their businesses.

Nationally and internationally competitive, high-growth and high-tech companies help diversify the economy. Recognizing the critical role these businesses play, WD has facilitated their growth, innovation and competitiveness by sponsoring the Forum since 2001. In a program message to its 200 attendees, WD Minister Rona Ambrose highlighted that, "Our most important role is to ensure a competitive marketplace that enables the private sector to compete worldwide on the basis of its innovative products, services and technologies."

It's no surprise that early and growth-stage companies covet the opportunity to present at the conference. With its unique business networking format and access to serious, pre-qualified investors from Canada, the United States and Europe, the objective is access to capital.

Participating investors are typically either Angel investors – affluent individuals

**"OUR MOST IMPORTANT ROLE IS TO ENSURE A COMPETITIVE MARKETPLACE THAT ENABLES THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO COMPETE WORLDWIDE ON THE BASIS OF ITS INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES."**

using their own money for business start-up or growth – or Venture Capital investors – professional, hired investors managing a pool of investments from investment banks, other financial institutions and wealthy individuals – who bring both management expertise and capital investment in exchange for an equity interest in a company.

These influential investors are exposed to the high-calibre investment opportunities that exist in Alberta and throughout the West. For early stage technology entrepreneurs, that level of exposure is a step towards fulfilling their potential to take their ideas from the lab to the market.

Poised to celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2008, the Banff Venture Forum is expected to continue to play a vital role in the growth and facilitation of its participants' successes. This is good news for WD, for entrepreneurs, for investors and Canadians alike. ■

*Joint panelists participating in "Meet the Investors – The Current Investment Landscape" session at the 2007 Banff Venture Forum.*





## nextrade™ encourages exporters by offering peace of mind

by Jean Collins

What a difference a year makes. Empire Welding & Machining in North Battleford, Saskatchewan has expanded its sales and exports to such an extent that it requires a second shift to maximize the capacity of its manufacturing shop.

How does a company achieve this type of growth? Joseph Esquirol, president

*Machinery developed by Empire Welding & Machining Ltd. has found markets as far away as Australia with the help of nextrade™.*

and general manager of Empire Welding & Machining Ltd., used the customized financing services of nextrade™ finance. According to Esquirol, “nextrade™ finance was a real saviour.”

Through several transactions over the last two years, Esquirol has accessed nextrade™ credit financing services for a total of \$1.3 million. Exporters can manage their cash flow, says Esquirol, because “nextrade™ finance does all the legwork and nurtures growth (of export firms) by providing loans on either end of the deal.”



“nextrade™ finance has loaned Saskatchewan exporters more than \$10 million and is focused on supporting the growth of its clients,” says nextrade™ executive director Glen Millard. “With recent growth in the capital pool, we are now able to keep pace with the demand.” WD invested \$525,125 in the capital pool.

For more information, visit [www.nextrade.ca](http://www.nextrade.ca). ■

## Trade service links small businesses to global markets

by Jillian Glover

Western Canada was built with the pioneering spirit of entrepreneurs. Today, the same pioneering spirit that built the West is driving entrepreneurs to look beyond geographic borders to forge new opportunities.

To help guide the way, Small Business BC recently launched the

*TradeStart* program, a service that provides resources to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in British Columbia prepare to enter international markets. By phone, web and in person, *TradeStart* offers information, referrals, seminars, specialized tools, and individual coaching to enable SMEs to expand their markets and strengthen their competitiveness.

With \$246,000 from WD, Small Business BC is working with network partners, community organizations and other orders of government to deliver this program. To ensure consistency, maximize shared resources and share best practices, trade services will be offered at varying degrees by all Canada

Business service centres in Western Canada.

“Small Business BC is very pleased to see B.C.’s export sector receiving support for its growing contribution to the economy,” said Tara Gilbert, CEO of Small Business BC. “B.C. has a vibrant small business sector that is responsible for over one-third of all B.C. exports. This is an amazing statistic considering only 1.5 per cent of the province’s small businesses are involved in export.”

*TradeStart* serves importers as well as exporters, offering information on such topics as productivity enhancement, expansion of trade markets and competitive strategies for success in the global market. ■



## Manitoba's *Acces Direct* Promotions wins micro-company award

by David Meister

Micro-company *Acces Direct Promotions* won big accolades recently when it was named winner of the *Lauriers de la PME* 2007 award in the micro-companies category.

Company owner Michèle Lécuyer-Hutton likened the awards ceremony, a gala event that was held in Ottawa in November 2007, to the Academy Awards and says she was stunned to hear her name read out.

Every two years, RDÉE Canada, the national francophone economic development network, hosts the *Lauriers de la PME* competition highlighting the importance of francophone businesses outside of Quebec to the Canadian economy.

*Michèle Lécuyer-Hutton is all smiles as she shows off her Lauriers de la PME 2007 Micro-Company award and her "lucky coin."*

PHOTO BY DANIEL ELBAZE



The experience has been good for Winnipeg-based *Acces Direct Promotions*, a promotional products business. As a result of her win, Lécuyer-Hutton was featured in various francophone media in Manitoba and in a documentary about the *Lauriers de la PME* 2007 award winners.

Lécuyer-Hutton started *Acces Direct Promotions* in 2001 to help Manitoba's francophone community, in her words, "market with product." She received assistance from the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM), who helped with business planning and arranging a mentor for her first year in business.

The company's client base has since expanded beyond the francophone community, with Lécuyer-Hutton visiting clients personally to develop relationships, rather than having them come to her. She delivers all products in person in order to see her clients' initial reaction to their promotional pieces.

Word-of-mouth is *Acces Direct Promotions'* best form of advertising with Lécuyer-Hutton's volunteer work in the community opening many doors and providing her with the chance to give something back.



*Acces Direct Promotions owner Lécuyer-Hutton in front of what she fondly calls her "primary office."*

Lécuyer-Hutton's advice for someone starting out?

"Get a mentor and research how different organizations can help you, such as CDEM and the Women's Enterprise Initiative," she says. "There is a lot of help out there. I see so many people who just want the business loan, but there is a lot of good advice that people can use too."

Lécuyer-Hutton will continue growing her business and hopes to be able to help another Manitoba company win the next *Lauriers de la PME* award. Neither of these should be a problem considering her current success and continued involvement in the St. Boniface Chamber of Commerce; the Women Business Owners of Winnipeg; Francofunds; and Pluri-Elles, a non-profit organization that provides women with the tools to meet their personal and professional goals.

For more information on *Acces Direct Promotions*, visit [www.acces-direct.com](http://www.acces-direct.com) ■



# Fransaskois economic development organization celebrates 60 years



by Charles Dumont

With 60 years of providing economic development services to Fransaskois entrepreneurs under its belt, the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS) has much to celebrate.

Since its start in 1947, the CCS has been a driving force behind economic development in Saskatchewan's francophone community. With a

A member of **Les Cireux d'Semelles**, a traditional French folk ensemble, musician Justin Bell speaks with enthusiasm of the service and expertise he and his band received through the CCS.

Les Cireux d'Semelles received funding from the CCS to finance their debut album in 2006. Since then, the group has gone on to form its own independent record label to showcase and promote other francophone artists across the province.

"The CCS not only secures financing, it also enables the creation of partnerships and the sharing of our culture in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada," said Bell. "It's important to have this type of organization to protect artists and culture, especially in the case of minorities that have difficulty self-financing or in starting a new business or a project on their own."

strong history rooted in encouraging cooperative businesses – from credit unions and farming co-ops to cooperative stores, daycares and publishing houses – the CCS has long promoted the value of cooperation and the importance of a solid economic base.

WD has worked with the CCS for the past nine years. Ongoing support from the Department is enabling the CCS to answer the needs and challenges of the francophone business community in urban and rural Saskatchewan.

"Since working with WD, we've definitely evolved as an organization and now offer more programs and services to the Fransaskois community," said Robert Therrien, Executive Director of the CCS.

With a main office in Regina and branch offices in Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Ponteix, the CCS reach is expansive, serving francophone businesses as far away as La Ronge in northern

Saskatchewan. The organization offers training, access to capital, information services, networking and marketing advice.

"The 60th anniversary of the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan is an opportunity to demonstrate the vitality and viability of French economic development in Saskatchewan," added Therrien. "From the very beginning, the importance of a strong economy has been a priority of the Franco-Saskatchewanian community and I believe that the CCS has answered this call."

The CCS is part of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network. The network consists of several integrated organizations that provide entrepreneurs with the financing and business expertise they need to start a business or make it grow.

To learn more about Le Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan, visit [www.ccs-sk.ca](http://www.ccs-sk.ca) or call 1-800-670-0879. ■

*Saskatchewan francophone folk band Les Cireux d'Semelles*



# RETROSPECTIVE

2007 marked WD's twentieth year of building a stronger, more prosperous West. This milestone made us think back to our early investments and their impact on the economy – and the people – of the West. Here's one investment we made in 1990 that has transformed Southport, Manitoba, from a former military training base to a first-class aviation-training destination.

## Sixty-seven years of flight training in Southport

By Lee Gregg

*A \$16.8 million investment in 1989 enabled Kelowna Flightcraft Ltd. to win a \$1.77-billion, 22-year military contract in 2005.*

The Second World War was a major turning point in Canadian history, transforming a largely agrarian country to an industrial nation producing aircraft, ships, weapons, vehicles, and raw materials.

A good part of this transformation was the result of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which saw thousands of pilots, navigators, and other aircrew from around the world trained in Canada. Royal Canadian Air Force Station Portage La Prairie (Manitoba) was one of 107 schools established across Canada as this country's major contribution to Allied air support during World War II.

With the 1989 announcement that Canadian Forces Base Portage-la-Prairie would close, the town and surrounding communities rallied together to keep their aviation history alive, and protect the 750 direct jobs and \$30 million

in annual military expenditures that contributed to the Portage and district economies.

Southport Aerospace Centre Inc., a non-profit organization, was established to develop and market the former base into an aerospace training centre for both military and commercial flight training, as well as aircraft repairs, maintenance, and other commercial and industrial uses.



*Southport Aerospace Centre. 2008 marks 67 years of continuous flight training in the community. Southport remains one of a few North American industrial locations to maintain its own airport.*

For the project to be viable, Southport required significant funding as the base made the transition from military to commercial management. Lacking the critical mass of tenants and activities to contribute to infrastructure and operating costs, Southport approached WD for assistance.

"WD worked closely with Southport in the early stages by providing financial support," said Barry Feller, CEO of Southport. "This partnership enabled us to establish the dynamic community we see today."

WD provided \$16.8 million to upgrade air traffic control equipment, airfield lighting, student facilities, and other infrastructure. Today the former base is home to the Canada Wings Aviation Training Centre, a consortium of civilian contractors led by Kelowna Flightcraft Ltd. who work with Canadian military personnel providing flight training, and advanced multi-engine and helicopter pilot training.

In 2005, a \$1.77 billion, 22-year military contract was granted to Kelowna Flightcraft, with Canada Wings providing the training. Southport expects to create over 2,000 jobs over the next five years.

For information, visit [www.southport.mb.ca](http://www.southport.mb.ca). ■

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