

ACCESS WEST

SPRING 2009

Federal-provincial
agreements to invest
\$200 million in
western economy

**Infrastructure spending
to strengthen communities
and stimulate the economy**

New centre to bring
nanotechnology
products to
world markets



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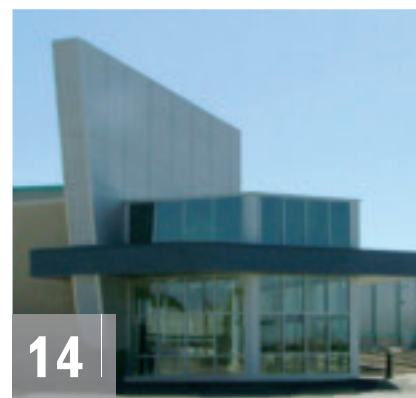
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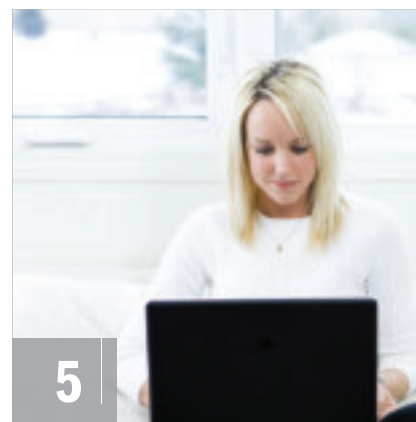
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BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY & COMPETITIVENESS	4
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	9
FEATURE	14
TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION	16
RESEARCH	22
TRADE & INVESTMENT	23
RETROSPECTIVE	24



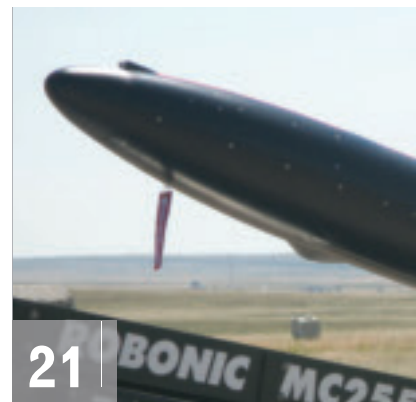
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5



13



21

MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE LYNNE YELICH

MY FIRST FEW MONTHS AS MINISTER of State for Western Economic Diversification (WD) have deepened my understanding of the West and increased my pride in the strength of western Canadians.

I have seen, first hand, how western ingenuity and determination are transforming the economic landscape in every corner of the region. Anyone who believes the western Canadian economy is still limited to grain fields, oil wells and forests is seriously underestimating the depth and breadth of economic activity taking place across the West today.

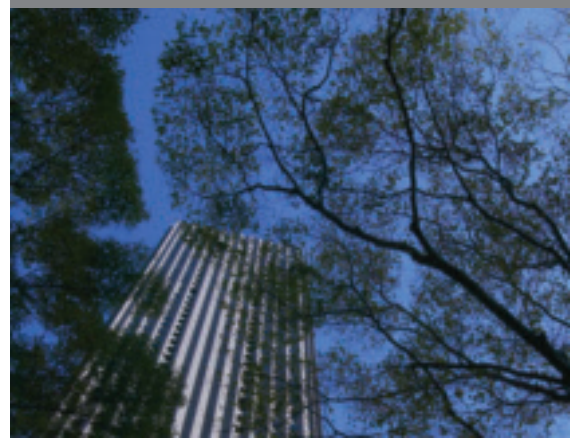
From adding value in traditional industries to creating entirely new industries founded on technological breakthroughs, western Canadians are building an innovative and resilient economy that will serve the region well through this period of global economic turmoil. And WD is right there, working with westerners to support and enhance the region's growing strengths.

We are excited to share with you, in this issue of Access West, how WD is achieving its vision to be leaders in creating a more diversified western Canadian economy that has strong, competitive and innovative businesses and communities. Whether it's skills training in Manitoba, northern development in Saskatchewan, innovation in Alberta or rural diversification in British Columbia, Western Economic Diversification Canada is contributing to initiatives that are building a stronger economic future for the West, and for western Canadians.



*The Honourable Lynne Yelich
Minister of State for
Western Economic Diversification*

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS TO INVEST \$200 MILLION IN WESTERN ECONOMY

The government is working to secure the country's long-term growth and prosperity

IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES, WHEN CANADA IS THREATENED BY A STRUGGLING world economy, it is essential that governments work together to secure the country's long-term growth and prosperity.

Early in 2009, the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, met with her provincial counterparts to sign a new series of Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs). The four-year agreements will allocate \$25 million in funding for each of the western provinces, matched by the provincial governments for a total investment of \$200 million in the western Canadian economy.

"Western Economic Partnership Agreements are a win-win and will stimulate the economy in Western Canada, which is essential to increasing the competitiveness of the West," said Minister of State Yelich at the signing ceremony in Saskatchewan. "Today's investment will help Canada meet the challenges of today and build a dynamic western Canadian economy that will create opportunities for families and communities."

WEPAs are multi-year federal-provincial funding commitments to strengthen economic activity and improve quality of life in western Canadian communities. By combining government resources, the agreements allow significant investments to be made in support of projects that contribute to the achievement of federal and provincial priorities, creating new opportunities and better jobs for Canadians, today and in the future.

The agreements support numerous initiatives that grow and diversify the western economy at a time when families and communities are facing serious challenges and uncertainty due to the global economic slowdown.

The renewed agreements demonstrate WD's ongoing commitment to work with the western provincial governments to help families and communities bridge the gap between downturn and recovery, foster innovation and build a stronger economy. [AW](#)

Priorities for the WEPA agreements signed in 2009 include:

- Supporting the creation and growth of research and development, with a focus on getting new products, technologies and services out to market;
- Supporting trade and investment;
- Enhancing business productivity and competitiveness; and
- Increasing Value-added production in traditional industries.

Minister Yelich and Minister Stewart shake hands after signature of agreements.
(Directly behind Minister Yelich is University of Saskatchewan Vice President of Finance and Resources, Dr. Richard Florizone and MP Robert Clarke)

Minister Yelich speaking at the official signing of the Western Economic Partnership Agreement in Manitoba.





FORUM FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS EXPANDS SUCCESS OF B.C. BUSINESSES

E-series trains women looking to take their young, high-growth businesses to the next level

CYBELE NEGRIS AND HER COMMITTEE had the incredibly difficult task of choosing just 15 out of 200 applicants to participate in the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE) e-series program that began in January 2009.

It's not a decision Negris would make lightly. Not only is this successful entrepreneur a member of the FWE Board, she was also one of the first women to graduate from the program in 2003.

E-series provides training sessions for women looking to take their young, high-growth businesses to the next level. Each year, a small number of women are selected to participate in the program, which offers weekly sessions taught by business leaders and industry experts on topics such as marketing, sales, financing, legal issues, pitching for investors, cross border issues, public relations and human resources.

"It's a huge commitment of time, but the knowledge and the networking made a huge difference to me and my business," says Negris.

Negris is a partner in webnames.ca, the original Canadian domain registrar. The company hosts thousands of websites and manages domain portfolios for many of Canada's Fortune 500, including Air Canada, CanWest Global and Pharmasave.

Such accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. Negris has earned a spot in PROFIT magazine's Canada's Top Women Entrepreneurs every year since 2004.

Many other women have benefitted as well. Michelle Kelsey of Vancouver knew her business, Nannies On Call, was on track to expand but it took a bit of networking with other women entrepreneurs to give her the confidence to really kick-start the process.

On the advice of a friend, Kelsey registered for e-series and, within a year of her graduation in 2006, she had bought out a competitor in Whistler. Since then, she has also opened an office in Calgary, and her staff has tripled from three to nine.

In addition to e-series, FWE sponsors a mentorship program, hosts twice-yearly roundtables on specific topics and offers one-year student internships for up to five young women entrepreneurs. In late 2007, WD invested \$100,000 to help FWE continue delivering its programs for the next two years.

Executive Director Jill Earthy says that, over the years, FWE members have founded more than 500 companies, created hundreds of jobs and built a growing business community of women entrepreneurs, corporate executives, professional advisors and investors.

"Partnering with WD enables us to provide additional resources and even more value to our members," she says. [AW](#)

CONNECTING B.C.'S RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS IN WESTERN Canada's rural communities often have difficulty getting the support needed to succeed. While a wealth of seminars, conferences and other resources are available in major centres, entrepreneurs from smaller communities need to travel in order to access these opportunities.

A new videoconferencing network, completed in October 2008, is making it easier for British Columbia's rural residents to get the assistance they need to start or grow their small businesses. Coordinated by Community Futures British Columbia, the network includes all 35 B.C. Community Futures locations and the Women's Enterprise Centre, located in Kelowna.

The network allows users to participate in seminars, obtain advice and receive business information through real-time, interactive videoconferences hosted by their local office. Not only does the network improve access to training and business development, it also saves time and money, because participants don't have to leave their home communities.

"The benefits of videoconferencing were seen immediately," said Richard Joyce, Chair of Community Futures British Columbia. "In the first quarter of operations 51 training events were delivered via videoconferencing to more than 250 people. The system was also used by four small businesses to conduct job interviews and CF members benefited from the interactive dissemination of information from government leaders and policy makers."

To subsidize the operational costs of the network, Community Futures makes unused videoconferencing time slots available for a fee to other agencies and service groups.

WD has invested nearly \$1.1 million to establish videoconferencing networks in each of the four western provinces. The original 83 sites funded by WD have since increased to more than 150 locations in communities across the West. The expanding network is believed to be the largest such network in North America. [AW](#)

Need access to videoconferencing facilities?

Small agencies and service groups that need access to videoconferencing facilities can book time for a nominal fee through Community Futures British Columbia. In October 2008 Community Futures British Columbia's new videoconferencing network became operational. To subsidize its operational costs, Community Futures makes unused videoconferencing time slots available for a fee to other agencies and service groups. For more information, please contact your local community futures organization at:

<http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/>

British Columbia Community Futures organizations use their new videoconferencing equipment.



MANITOBA FILM INDUSTRY SHINES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MANITOBA'S FILM INDUSTRY IS ROLLING. A MADE-IN-MANITOBA TELEVISION movie, *The Capture of the Green River Killer*, was named one of the top TV shows of 2008 by Variety, the entertainment industry's leading news source. And *My Winnipeg* not only made a Time.com list of 2008's top 10 movies, it also won the Rogers Best Canadian Film Award from the Toronto Film Critics Association.

Those achievements are just the latest for the province's film industry, which has experienced solid growth over the past decade. Since 1997, film and television production has increased by nearly 250 per cent in Manitoba. Last year, the value of Manitoba productions rose to \$122 million, more than 50 per cent higher than the previous year.

According to Neila Benson, Executive Director of Film Training Manitoba, one reason for the industry's growth is the depth of talent found in the province. "The availability of creative and technical skills not only provides an essential foundation for high-quality local productions, they're also a major drawing-card that attracts foreign productions to Manitoba."

"The availability of creative and technical skills not only provides an essential foundation for high-quality local productions, they're also a major drawing-card that attracts foreign productions to Manitoba."

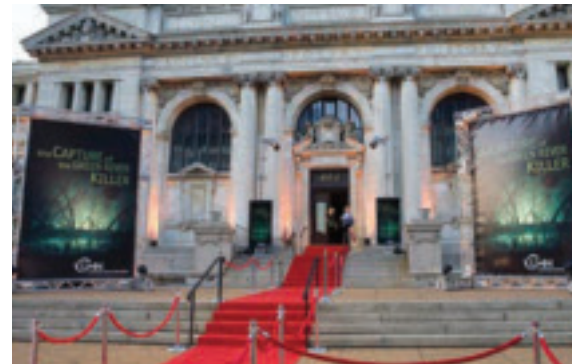
- Neila Benson, Executive Director of Film Training Manitoba

Film Training Manitoba (FTM) helps upgrade the skills of people already working in the industry, as well as offering entry-level training for those just starting out. Working closely with the film industry, FTM identifies the areas of greatest need, and offers practical, skill-based training to address labour gaps. The organization also partners with local production companies to offer on-the-job experience on film sets, and in production offices and other active film environments.

With a primary focus on the people who work behind the scenes, film crews offer a vast range of opportunities, including assistant directors, camera operators, grips, props, electricians, locations and costume design.

Like most industries, film is changing rapidly, making it essential that crew members keep abreast of new technologies. A \$108,000 investment from WD in 2008 enabled FTM to purchase advanced high definition (HD) equipment – including cameras and projectors, multi-media/computer equipment and lighting – that will allow them to offer training in digital film production.

Benson says, "The rapid evolution of technology in film-making is creating new positions on set and changing aspects of existing positions, such as lighting and camera positions. By making it possible for FTM to train the province's crew members in new technologies, WD's investment will ensure Manitoba's film industry continues to grow and succeed." [AW](#)



The made for TV movie "The Capture of the Green River Killer" was made in Manitoba and listed by Variety as one of the top TV shows of 2008.

The cast of the Canadian hit TV series "Falcon Beach" which is filmed in Manitoba.
Photo Credit: Rebecca Sandulak



Film training now available on-line

WD's investment in Film Training Manitoba (FTM) is helping to expand training opportunities across the province. An upgraded website has enabled FTM to venture into distance learning. In August it launched six on-line programs that provide rural and northern Manitobans with access to film training 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without having to leave home.

HELPING SASKATCHEWAN BUSINESSES STEP INTO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPRESENTS an important growth opportunity for businesses of all sizes, but accessing foreign markets can be a difficult. Recent data from Statistics Canada show that Saskatchewan is leading the nation in export growth, with a 36.3 per cent increase in exports from March 2007 to March 2008.

Some of that success can be attributed to the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP) – an industry-led organization established by the Province of Saskatchewan that introduced a program that makes it easier and more affordable for exporters and trade development organizations to do business with foreign distributors, importers and agents.

The program, which received \$187,000 from WD, attracted incoming buyers from 23 different countries, with the top three markets being the United States, Australia and Russia. In all, 95 companies confirmed business with new suppliers.

Participating western Canadian firms reported new exports of \$27.6 million and repeat exports of \$217.8 million. Saskatchewan-based exporters accounted for nearly 50 per cent of those totals.

The Western Canada Incoming Buyers Program, which concluded in September 2007, attracted qualified international buyers by providing partial reimbursement of travel and language interpretation costs – enabling western Canadian companies to conduct international business without having to leave the country. In return, foreign buyers received exposure to industries with high export potential. [AW](#)

NEW VENTURE CAPITAL FUND FOR WESTERNERS

ACCESS TO CAPITAL IS FREQUENTLY an obstacle for early-stage companies trying to develop and commercialize innovative new products or services. Now, a major new venture capital fund is providing western companies with the investments they need to grow and succeed.

iNovia Capital Inc., one of the few major private venture fund managers operating in Alberta, recently

iNovia began actively reviewing western Canadian opportunities in 2008 and, early this year, announced its first equity investment – Calgary-based information and communications technology firm, Tynt Multimedia. Tynt is an innovative early-stage company that has developed a custom web browser plug-in communications platform.

The company has entered into a series of strategic relationships with key

“With this investment, Western Economic Diversification Canada is directly supporting Western Canada’s emerging entrepreneurs and is helping ensure that our brightest minds are put to work building our future economy rather than drained to more established markets.”

- Shawn Abbott, Partner at iNovia Capital

raised \$107 million for a new fund that will help entrepreneurs and innovators build successful companies in the information technology, life sciences and cleantech sectors. With a \$5 million contribution from WD’s Loan and Investment Program, the fund will invest at least \$25 million in western Canadian innovations.

“Access to seed capital and strategic networking are essential ingredients for the development of successful technology based companies,” said Shawn Abbott, Partner at iNovia Capital. “With this investment, Western Economic Diversification Canada is directly supporting Western Canada’s emerging entrepreneurs and is helping ensure that our brightest minds are put to work building our future economy rather than drained to more established markets.”

Alberta technology commercialization partners – including TEC Edmonton, Calgary Technologies Inc. and the Alberta Research Council – that collectively undertake nearly a billion dollars of research and development activity each year. These relationships provide deep industry knowledge and insight, and will enable the fund to identify technologies with a high potential in the marketplace.

iNovia anticipates making numerous investments under the program throughout 2009. The fund typically provides an initial investment between \$500,000 and \$2 million, and up to \$7 million over the life of a company. [AW](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES AND STIMULATE THE ECONOMY

CANADA'S STRENGTHS ARE A FUNCTION OF THE STRENGTHS OF ITS COMMUNITIES and, in an increasingly globalized and competitive world, modern infrastructure is crucial to building healthy Canadian communities and a strong Canadian economy.

Strategic infrastructure investments provide communities with reliable roads; safe drinking water; improved community facilities; and strengthen the economy by facilitating the efficient transportation of goods and services, and enhancing business and trade opportunities.

The Government of Canada's \$33 billion Building Canada Fund represents our on-going commitment to addressing the long-term infrastructure needs of Canadian communities and stimulating the Canadian economy.

In fact, with the continued volatility of economies across the world, the Government of Canada, in Budget 2009, announced that it is accelerating and expanding infrastructure investments by \$12 billion over the next two years.

The additional investment will enable communities to upgrade infrastructure and provide timely economic stimulus by creating construction, engineering and manufacturing jobs across Canada, and generating significant economic spinoff activity. The investments will also help Canada emerge from this economic crisis with a more modern and greener infrastructure that is the foundation of long-term economic growth.

Budget 2009 also identified the new Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RINC) program that will earmark \$500 million over two years to support construction of new community recreational facilities and upgrades to existing facilities.

WD'S ROLE

The Building Canada Fund's Communities Component is being delivered by WD in the West and will see the federal and provincial governments each contribute \$359.5 million toward smaller-scale projects in communities with less than 100,000 residents. With municipal contributions, almost \$1.1 billion will be invested in essential improvements to local infrastructure.

In fact, the shovels are already in the ground. In January and February 2009, WD announced more than \$281 million in federal-provincial investments towards 109 municipal infrastructure projects in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan through Building Canada Fund - Communities Component (BCF-CC).

Future projects under BCF-CC will be announced in the coming months as they are approved. [AW](#)

Building Strong Communities

The Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), the forerunner to the Building Canada Fund, committed \$829 million towards 593 projects in Western Canada. Through the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, WD funded projects that:

- improved roads, water and wastewater infrastructure,
- invested in recreational, tourism and cultural facilities, and
- increased broadband connectivity in communities across the West.

Moreover, 80 per cent of MRIF funding was dedicated to rural communities with a population of 250,000 and a minimum of 55 per cent of projects target "green infrastructure."

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CANADA'S PEACE OFFICERS

WHEN FOUR YOUNG MOUNTIES were killed in an ambush near Mayerthorpe in March 2005, the community was determined to build a positive legacy from the largest single-day loss in the RCMP's 136-year history.

The town created Fallen Four Memorial Park, a permanent monument honouring all Canadian peace officers who have lost their lives keeping our communities safe. Featuring life size bronze statues positioned at the four points of a compass, the park symbolizes the RCMP's presence in all parts of Canada.

The park also includes a Visitor Information Centre, with a gift shop, tourist information and public meeting room. A small museum houses the thousands of cards, letters and other expressions of condolence that were sent to the local RCMP detachment and the community after the tragedy.

The Visitor Information Centre at Fallen Four Memorial Park is one of more than 590 western Canadian projects that received funding from the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund. [AW](#)



Opening ceremonies at the Mayerthorpe Fallen Four Memorial Park, July 4, 2008.

RECYCLING TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOMES

SASKATOON'S HABITAT FOR
HUMANITY RESTORE HAS A
NEW HOME IN RIVERSDALE.

IN MARCH 2008, WD INVESTED \$940,000 for Saskatoon's Habitat for Humanity ReStore to renovate a former curling rink, creating a larger retail facility for one of the city's largest recycling organizations.

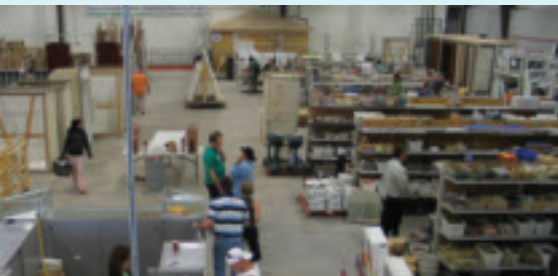
The new facility, which opened in fall 2008, has triple the amount of storage and administration space as the original facility and is expected to increase sales of recycled building materials.

Habitat ReStore accepts donations of recovered and surplus building materials - such as doors, windows, lumber, cabinets, and plumbing and electrical fixtures - and sells them, providing homeowners with low cost building materials while diverting waste from Saskatoon's landfill.

Between 1996 and 2007, Habitat ReStore diverted an average of about 150 tonnes of waste from landfill each year, a number that is expected to grow to 700 tonnes a year with the new facility. It is projected that an additional 100 tonnes of waste will be diverted from the Saskatoon landfill this year alone.

Profits from the ReStore's operations are used to build affordable homes for low income working families. Since the Saskatoon chapter was established in 1991, the organization has built 37 homes; their 38th house is expected to be ready for tenants by April 2009. [AW](#)

First shopping day at the new
Habitat for Humanity ReStore.



CREATING LASTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN RURAL ALBERTA

ALBERTA'S COMMUNITY FUTURES (CF) ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A PROUD 20-year history of contributing to the economic strength of the province's rural communities. With 27 offices across the province, CFs are resident in the communities they serve, giving them first-hand knowledge of unique local challenges and opportunities.

Announced in March 2008 as a three-year \$4.5 million program, the Rural Diversification Initiative (RDI) provides Alberta CFs with an important new tool to effect significant economic change. RDI is designed to create long-term economic growth by supporting major rural diversification projects that bring benefits to entire communities or industries.

RDI focuses on projects that result in significant economic development and diversification, such as adding value to traditional industries, developing new markets, enhancing industry productivity, and promoting new technologies, products and services.

The program is also designed to encourage regional collaboration. To qualify for funding, CFs must demonstrate that at least 40 per cent of a project's budget comes from other (non-RDI) sources. Eligible projects are identified by CF offices working with the local business and community partners. To date, the RDI program has approved more than \$816,000 in funding towards projects across Alberta.

CFs, funded by WD, are non-profit organizations guided by a volunteer board of directors and staffed with business professionals. Together, CF staff and community volunteers are actively engaged in helping to develop and implement community-based economic development and diversification strategies.

SUPPORTING SOUTH EAST ALBERTA'S TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

In September 2008, RDI invested more than \$150,000 towards the implementation of the South East Alberta Technology Strategy.

The goal is to implement a community developed strategy that will increase capacity and growth in the technology sector in South East Alberta. Led by Community Futures Entre-Corp, the Strategy brings technology-based businesses and Medicine Hat College together to address the growing demand for skilled workers and leverages business opportunities in the technology sector.

While implementation of this strategy has just begun, the early results are positive:

- Community Futures Entre-Corp has had the opportunity to provide on-to-one support to several technology clients;
- Medicine Hat College has established a Technology Co-op Program; and
- Community Futures Entre-Corp has been designated an approved service provider for the Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's Innovation Voucher Pilot Program. [AW](#)

HELPING B.C. COMMUNITIES IDENTIFY NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

WITH TWO-THIRDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA BLANKETED BY FOREST, IT'S NO surprise that the forestry industry is critical to the provincial economy, accounting for seven per cent of employment and 15 per cent of all economic activity. But that mainstay has been threatened by the largest mountain pine beetle infestation in North American history. The outbreak has already destroyed about half of B.C.'s mature pine trees, and devastated the economies of many forestry-dependent communities.

The Government of Canada is responding with the Mountain Pine Beetle Program, led by Natural Resources Canada. Launched in 2007, the program committed \$200 million to control the spread of the mountain pine beetle, recover economic value from destroyed timber and protect against wildfires.

The Community Economic Diversification Initiative (CEDI) is a key component of the program. The two-year initiative, delivered by WD, is investing more than \$33 million to support economic growth, job creation and sustainability of adversely-affected communities. In addition, WD invested more than \$18 million to expand airports in Kelowna, Kamloops and Prince George, increasing economic opportunities in the regions they serve.

More than 140 projects will be funded under CEDI to help communities take advantage of new opportunities to diversify their economies. From expanding tourism and finding new uses for damaged wood to increasing access to training, CEDI is increasing the long-term viability of communities across B.C. [AW](#)



SUCCESS STORIES

Member of Parliament Ron Cannan (left) demonstrates the new wood-pallet making equipment under the watchful eye of SBC Firemaster's Paul Adams (right). WD funding of \$93,000 enabled SBC Firemaster Ltd. to purchase the equipment in order to start the production of wood pallets using beetle damaged lumber sawn by the Upper Similkameen Indian Band.



The Honourable Jay Hill (left), Member of Parliament for Prince George-Peace River, examines a piece of beetle-crete with the University of North British Columbia's (UNBC) Director of Communications, Robert Van Adrichem. The WD investment of \$154,674 will help the University of Northern British Columbia conduct market research to help commercialize Mountain Pine Beetle Wood Concrete Products. The product is an innovative material, made by mixing cement with water and aggregate. This new environmentally friendly product provides a significant value-added alternative to pulp, and is a highly attractive and unique alternative building product.



St. Joseph Museum is a reconstructed pioneer village featuring 16 restored buildings and over 20 vintage tractors. The village offers visitors a unique opportunity to see firsthand how the early pioneer farmers lived and worked more than 100 years ago. Photo courtesy of CDEM.

TOURISM INITIATIVES PROMOTE WESTERN CANADIAN DESTINATIONS

Provincial tourism councils to coordinate
international marketing strategy

WHILE SINGING FROM THE SAME songbook ensures unison, the magic of harmony comes from the strategic blending of many voices. Similarly, WD's recent \$5 million investment in a pan-west international marketing campaign will have all four provinces working together to promote Western Canada as a tourist destination. But the magic behind the four-part harmony will be each province's individual appeal.

The Tourism Alliance of Western Canada, a consortium of the provincial tourism councils – Tourism British Columbia, Travel Alberta, Tourism Saskatchewan and Travel Manitoba – will oversee a unified campaign designed to showcase the breadth of tourism opportunities across the West. The campaign will focus on key target markets across the United States, Europe and Asia.

The timing of this initiative also means the campaign can capitalize on increasing international attention as the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver draw nearer. By creating international awareness of the “rest of the West” there is potential to build long-term benefits through extended or repeat visits.

Announced in May 2008, the project will enhance international competitiveness by reinforcing collaboration among the West's tourism sector stakeholders.

This is good news for the more than 200,000 small- and medium-sized businesses involved in tourism across the West, many of which are located in rural communities. By working together to promote the West as a single destination with endless possibilities, the campaign will contribute to economic prosperity in western communities of every size.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EN ACTION

WD also provided a recent investment of nearly \$800,000 to the Corridor touristique francophone de l'Ouest (CTFO), or Western Francophone Tourism Corridor, a pan-west alliance that promotes Western Canada as a destination for French-speaking tourists. The new funding will be used to expand their reach in national and international markets.

Since 2003, the organization has worked to increase awareness of Western Canada's many Francophone communities as a tourism destination for Quebecers.

Quebec responded. Recently CTFO concluded two successful marketing initiatives, including media tours of the four western provinces and the production and distribution of promotional brochures which were used in several tourism trade shows. The result has been more than 9,000 requests for information and an estimated economic spin-off of almost \$4 million from an original investment of about \$1 million.

Now they plan to build on that success by creating updated marketing tools, organizing promotional tours with national and international French media, and strengthening partnerships with and between industry stakeholders.

The partners of the CTFO are the provincial Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) – la Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, le Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan and le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba.

The four FEDOs, which became part of WD's Business Service Network in 2001, enhance the vitality of Western Canada's minority language communities and assist in their economic development – an objective that this initiative will contribute to. [AW](#)

BUILDING MANITOBA'S ECONOMIC CAPACITY

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES to stimulating economic growth is ensuring that Canadian businesses have access to skilled workers. To address skilled labour shortages, WD works with universities and other post-secondary academic institutions, research institutes, industry associations and other not-for-profit organizations to provide opportunities for skills training and upgrading. Over the past two years, WD has invested in a number of initiatives to maintain and grow Manitoba's local labour pool.



Red River College's mobile training facilities bring trades training to rural and northern Manitoba communities. Photo credit: Red River College.

GOING PLACES WITH MOBILE TRAINING LABS

In May 2008, WD invested \$3.12 million towards the development of two Mobile Training Labs at Red River College. The project will help expand Manitoba's trades training capacity by bringing trades training to rural and northern Manitoba communities and linking training opportunities to other community-based projects and emerging industries.

Each lab is self-contained in a 53-foot trailer that transforms into a 950 square-foot training facility, providing rural Manitoba and Aboriginal communities access to trades training. Through this project, the Department is helping address the need for highly qualified skilled workers in areas such as automotive service technician, carpentry, electrical, machining, pipefitting, plumbing, welding, and industrial mechanics.

ABORIGINAL TRAINING PROGRAM FILLS GAP

The Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development has responded to Manitoba's labour market shortages by expanding their training facilities at the Neeginan Institute of Applied Technology (NIAT). In February 2007, WD invested more than \$320,000 to equip Neeginan's expanded training facilities with appropriate equipment for welding, carpentry, and aerospace maintenance training.

To date, Neeginan has graduated 104 trades-people and places approximately 50 students with cutting-edge jobs in the aerospace sector per year. In fact, the Institute's welding program has become nationally certified and is training two shifts of welding students per day.

Moving into the future, the Institute will continue to provide Manitobans with trades training and foster strong partnerships with Manitoba businesses.

INCREASING KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

In a bid to facilitate industry-based training programs, increase productivity and global competitiveness, the Manitoba Sector Training Network turned to WD for assistance.

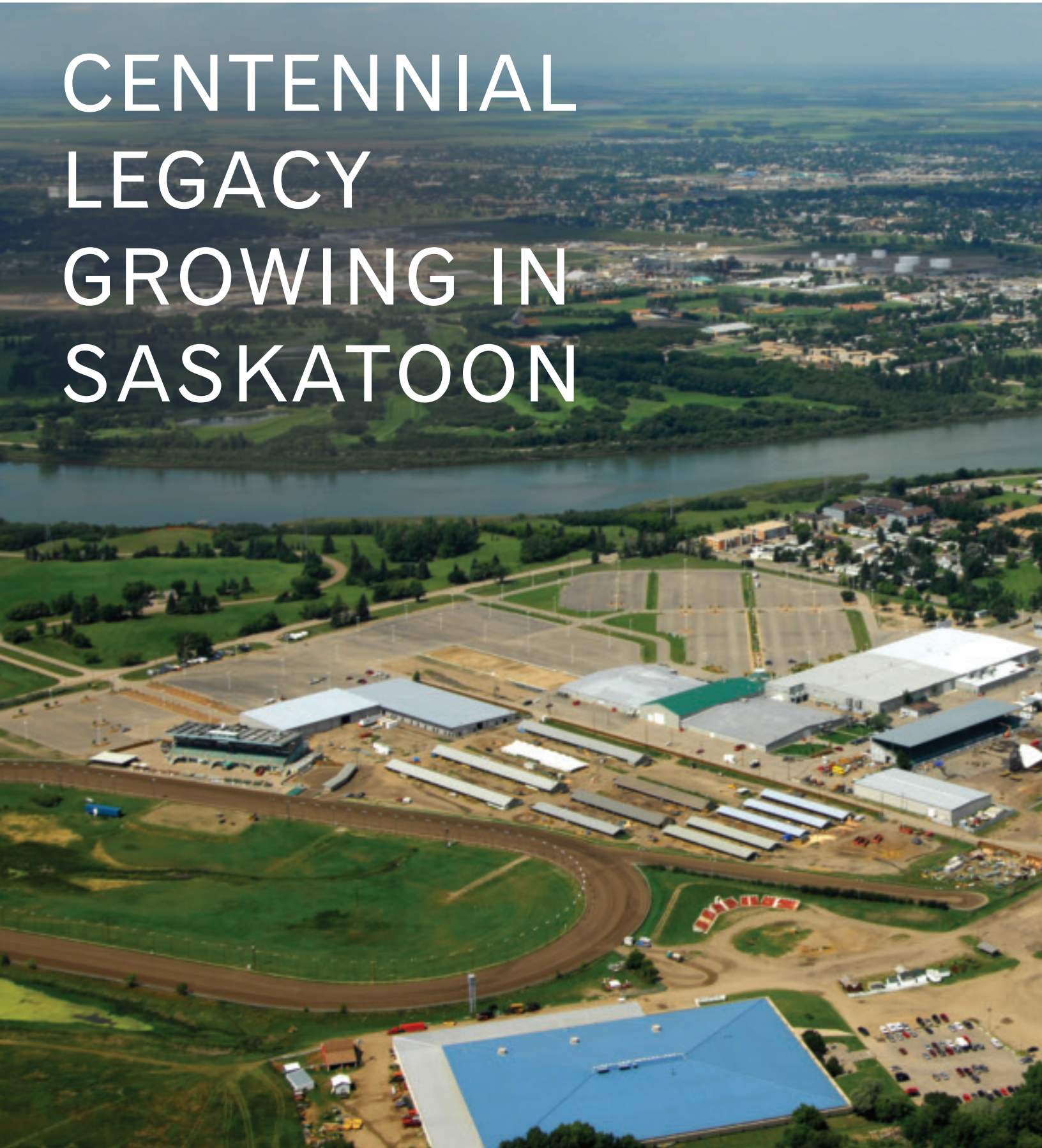
In June 2008, WD invested \$970,000 towards the development of the Sector Council Centre and Training Facility, which serves as a training and business networking facility for sector associations serving industry in Manitoba.

The Centre will fill this gap by pooling resources and sharing the cost of training, providing a competitive advantage to Manitoba business as the province's 16 Sector Councils have limited resources to offer individual training for their members.

To date, the first training groups have moved into the facility and the Manitoba Sector Training Network is completing equipment installation and construction of the Centre's training rooms.

Canada's prosperity depends not just on meeting the challenges of today, but on building the dynamic economy that will create opportunities and better jobs for Canadians in the future. WD is helping to build this economy through a variety of projects that give Manitobans the skills they need to promote productivity and economic development. [AW](#)

CENTENNIAL LEGACY GROWING IN SASKATOON





Left: Aerial photograph of PrairieLand Park.
Photo credit: PrairieLand Park.

Top: New entrance of PrairieLand Park facility
Photo credit: PrairieLand Park.

Middle: Minister Yelich touring the expanded PrairieLand Park facility

Bottom: PrairieLand Park hosts a crop production show.
Photo credit: PrairieLand Park



FOUNDED IN 1886, PRAIRIELAND PARK IS SASKATOON'S OLDEST CORPORATION, and it continues to play a vital role in the life of the city. PrairieLand hosts the Saskatoon Exhibition every August, and has always been a popular venue for local and regional events. But two recent expansions are now helping the 136-acre facility attract larger events, bringing economic benefits that extend well beyond the park's boundaries.

In 2006, PrairieLand received \$4 million in funding from Canada Celebrates Saskatchewan, a Government of Canada initiative to commemorate Saskatchewan's 100th birthday. The initiative invested \$36.8 million in more than 710 capital projects, benefitting almost every Saskatchewan community and creating a lasting legacy of the province's centennial. The investment in PrairieLand Park helped increase exhibition space by 50,000 square feet. With more than 200,000 square feet, the park now offers Saskatchewan's largest all-under-one-roof trade exposition space.

When Lynne Yelich, now Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, attended the grand opening of the PrairieLand Park expansion in March 2007, she said, "Standing here today, I can see how versatile this space will be and how many different types of events will be hosted here. Saskatoon and the surrounding area will be able to take advantage of the facility's increased capacity, accessing a wider range and broader scope of events."

That prediction was right on the money. In 2007, PrairieLand hosted the SKILLS Canada Competition, the first time it has been held in Saskatchewan. The event raised the profile of the park, opening up more opportunities to bid on future major events.

Many of those bids were successful. In June 2008, the Federated Cooperatives Marketing Expo brought 3,600 delegates to Saskatoon. And that September, 3,200 people came to the city for the annual USA-Canada Lions Leadership Forum.

"To say that this project greatly exceeded expectations would be an understatement. The new facility has propelled PrairieLand Park onto the national stage," said Mark Regier, CEO of Saskatoon PrairieLand Park Corporation. "Seven new major trade shows, bringing thousands of people to Saskatoon, now take place in our newly expanded facilities. As a showcase for business, education, culture and entertainment, this expansion provides PrairieLand Park with endless opportunities for future growth and development."

Despite their growing success, PrairieLand Park had even bigger plans – the addition of a 20,000 square foot agricultural centre. In 2008, WD invested \$2.4 million in the project with the Province of Saskatchewan and the City of Saskatoon also contributing.

The latest expansion provides dedicated livestock and related tradeshow space, increasing the Park's capacity to host simultaneous events and creating opportunities to host equine events, cattle shows, stock dog demonstrations and industry trade shows.

The expansions have not only created the equivalent of eight full-time positions, events held at the park increase business for numerous local hotels, restaurants and retail operations. PrairieLand Park now hosts more than 320 events each year, attracting 1.6 million people and creating an estimated economic impact of more than \$100 million annually. [AW](#)

BUILDING ECONOMIC STRENGTH THROUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WITH CURRENT GLOBAL ECONOMIC slowdown, advances in science and technology are essential to strengthening Canadian competitiveness and building a dynamic economy that will create new opportunities and better jobs for Canadians in the future.

The Government of Canada's Science and Technology Strategy identifies research and development as key to strengthening Canada's economy and encouraging innovation.

The Government of Canada is supporting Canadian researchers and innovators by investing in new world-class research facilities. Budget 2009 committed more than \$3.8 billion for knowledge infrastructure.

Over the previous three federal budgets, the Government of Canada has made a significant commitment to equipping Canadian laboratories and investing in Canadian innovators. As a result, the federal government now provides \$10.2 billion in annual, direct funding to science and technology.

Last year, WD invested \$127.5 million in 86 projects that support innovation in Western Canada and closely link to the Government of Canada's Science and Technology Strategy. These projects are designed to strengthen infrastructure at our universities and research centres; increase the take-up of new technologies; develop technology skills; support research and development; and increase innovation. [AW](#)

BCIT TO EXPAND RESEARCH INTO ENERGY EFFICIENT GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs reduce greenhouse gases by saving energy year round

FROM THE AIR, MAJOR CITIES OFTEN LOOK LIKE MASSIVE GREY SCARS CUT OUT of the surrounding greenery. But, in cities like Vancouver, that is beginning to change. Green roofs—engineered roofing systems incorporating vegetation—are adding welcome spots of green, enlivening the sterility of the urban environment.

The British Columbia Institute of Technology's (BCIT) Centre for the Advancement of Green Roof Technology is a major reason for the growing acceptance of green roofs. The centre has been contributing to the body of research on green roof technologies since 2003.

In May 2008, BCIT received \$500,000 from WD to expand the Centre's applied research and demonstrations of green roof technologies to various climatic zones and to living wall technologies. Canada's diverse climate provides the perfect environment to test and improve the development of these technologies, which will support the continued development of the sustainable building technologies sector in B.C.

"This support from Western Economic Diversification will help move our green roof research forward in new and exciting ways," said Don Wright, President of BCIT. "At BCIT, our applied research activities directly involve industry so that we can work together to bring solutions to business. This funding and the support of our industry partners will help bring new ideas to architecture, design, construction and more."

The concept of green roofs is far from new. In Newfoundland, reconstructions of Norse sod houses dating from 1000 A.D. have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, commemorating the earliest known European settlement in North America at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Today, the technology is becoming increasingly popular for its many benefits. By protecting the building from the summer sun and insulating the structure against winter cold, green roofs reduce greenhouse gases by saving energy year round. The rooftop green spaces also provide a welcome habitat for wildlife in urban areas and can be used to create recreational spaces, or even vegetable gardens. [AW](#)

BCIT's Green Roof Research Facility. Photo credit: BCIT.



NEW FACILITY TO TEST ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND VEHICLES

WESTEST, a non-profit industrial testing facility

WHEN COMPANIES LIKE MOTOR Coach Industries, North America's largest manufacturer of inter-city buses, designed a new highway coach, they turned to Western Canada Testing, Inc. (WESTEST) in Portage La Prairie. Soon, companies like Motor Coach Industries and other will have access to an expanded suite of services.

WESTEST is expanding its capabilities to test vehicles that use alternate fuels. The new Alternative Fuel and Vehicle Performance Testing Facility, made possible by a WD investment of nearly \$1.7 million in 2008, will enable it to test new and existing transportation technologies.

"The Government of Canada's support comes at a critical time for our sector," said David Gullacher, CEO of WESTEST. "This region of the West enjoys a leading role in the manufacture of inter-city and transit coaches, as well as emergency and recreation vehicles. We are now on the threshold of the alternate fuels era, and this facility will be instrumental in getting our designs right for the production of world-class vehicles with alternate fuel capabilities."

Harvey Chorney, Vice-President of Manitoba Operations agreed, noting that the state-of-the-art testing facility will strengthen Western Canada's vehicle manufacturing sector by contributing to the validation and development of Canada's bio-fuels and bio-fibres value chain.

The new environment-controlled lab will allow WESTEST to carry out performance and durability testing at early stages in the research and development cycle, speeding up commercialization and providing competitive advantages for western companies and original equipment manufacturers. The facility will also enable WESTEST to develop their alternative fuel evaluation capacity, particularly in the area of bio-diesel research.

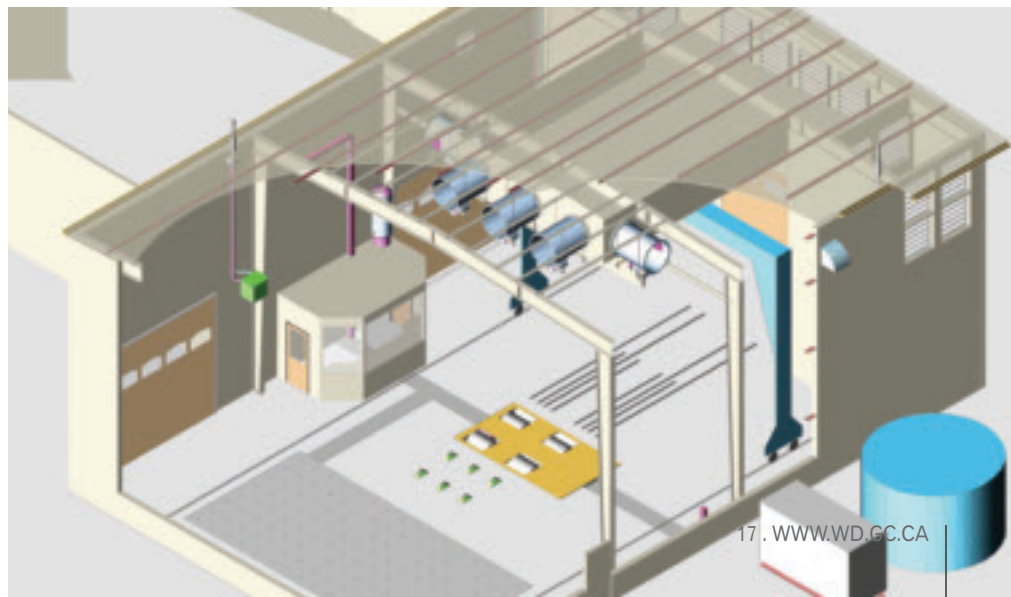
WESTEST, a non-profit industrial testing facility, provides sophisticated physical testing and product performance evaluation services for the transportation, mining, machine, equipment and packaging manufacturing industry. [AW](#)

WD and Environmental Technologies

WD supports a wide range of initiatives that strengthen Western Canada's environmental technology sector. In 2008/2009, WD invested:

- \$1 million towards Saskatchewan's Petroleum Technology Research Centre to research and develop new technologies that will enhance oil recovery.
- \$3 million for the University of Lethbridge acquire of leading-edge research equipment for the Alberta Water and Environmental Sciences Building.
- \$1.2 million for FPIInnovations towards the commercialization of biomass gasification technology.

Artist rendering of WESTEST's new Vehicle Performance Facility, which will include a 600 hp chassis dynamometer and 900 hp engine dynamometer.



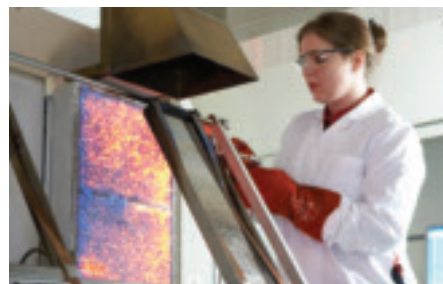
THE FUTURE OF FOOD

Functional foods and nutraceuticals are big business

WESTERN CANADA'S EMERGENCE AS A WORLD LEADER IN NUTRACEUTICALS represents new opportunities to add value to agricultural products such as oats, barley, flax, canola, corn and soy, it also has the potential to reduce health care costs and improve human health.

Functional foods and nutraceuticals are big business, and they're getting bigger every year. According to BCC Research, the global market for nutraceuticals was valued at \$117.3 billion in 2007, and it is expected to approach \$177 billion by 2013.

Much of that growth can be attributed to an increased awareness of the role diet plays in diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Increasingly, consumers are looking beyond basic nutrition to the disease prevention and health-enhancing compounds contained in many foods.



A researcher at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals works with a flame tester.



A researcher at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals works in a dust booth.

PRAIRIE PLANTS HOLD THE PROMISE OF BETTER HEALTH

Over the past two years, scientists at the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals (RCFFN) in Winnipeg have learned a great deal about the plants of Western Canada. Research undertaken by the centre has confirmed that many native plants have significant health benefits.

Now Dr. Peter Jones, Director of RCFFN, says it's time to move on to the next stage. Describing commercialization as the centre's new mantra, he said, "We've been doing lots of ivory tower research, but now we've got to get into the translation of that research into products that you and I can use to benefit our health and will also serve (as a boost) for small and medium enterprises in Manitoba and for producers."

Working with industry partner Wildly Canadian, products developed at the Richardson Centre will begin moving into the marketplace this year. For example, Aboriginal cultures have used teas made from birch tree "chaga" to treat digestive disorders for hundreds of years. Noting the historical use of the plant, Dr. Curtis Rempel of the RCFFN has experimented with various combinations that is more appealing to modern consumers.

Rempel is proud of what has already been accomplished, but emphasizes there is more territory to explore and much bigger benefits that could accrue. He thinks chaga could be beneficial for people suffering from inflammation and RCFFN's research is looking for ways to isolate and purify the compounds responsible for the beneficial effect.

Another project currently underway at RCFFN is studying a peptide derived from peas that is thought to block the main factor responsible for high blood pressure. The novel protein has shown great promise in early testing and, if human trials confirm the effect, the five million Canadians who suffer from hypertension may eventually be able to control their blood pressure with nutraceuticals rather than drugs.

The Richardson Centre, located in Smartpark at the University of Manitoba, has received \$10 million in funding from WD since 2006. The centre houses about 100 scientists, representing disciplines such as agriculture, food sciences, human ecology, medicine and pharmacy. [AW](#)

Life sciences in Manitoba

Manitoba's strength in nutraceuticals and functional foods is part of the province's growing strength in life sciences. The sector – which includes research and development organizations, service firms and more than 40 private companies – employs about 4,200 people.

Other complementary capabilities within Manitoba's life sciences sector include advanced expertise in the development of cereal and oilseed crop varieties and cereal genomics, especially concentrated at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Agriculture, the Cereal Research Centre, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.



As part of the study, CCARM delivers products containing flaxseed to study participants. Photo by Bill Peters.

FLAX ... GOOD FOR YOU AND THE ECONOMY

Dedicated to understanding the health-value of nutraceuticals, functional foods and natural health products, the Canadian Centre for Agrifood Research in Health and Medicine (CCARM) focuses much of its research on the benefits of crops grown in Western Canada. Currently, CCARM undertaking several projects, including the health benefits of flaxseed.

Located in Winnipeg, the centre is a unique partnership between St. Boniface General Hospital, the University of Manitoba, and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. Since 2005, WD has invested \$3.3 million in CCARM through the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement and, in July 2008 provided \$800,000 to create two new laboratories and purchase research equipment.

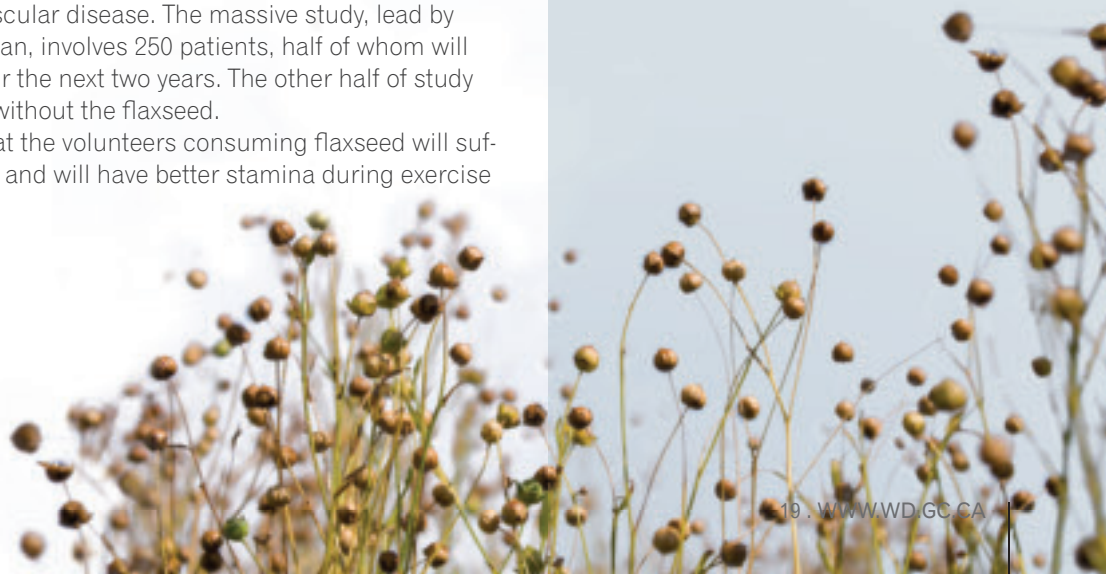
"These labs will hold clinical trial research activities and also provide a shared lab where CCARM researchers can collaborate in a more efficient, economical and productive fashion than was previously possible. This allows us to advance our research into nutraceuticals and functional foods in a manner that has not been attempted anywhere else in the world," said Dr. Grant Pierce, Executive Director of Research, St. Boniface General Hospital.

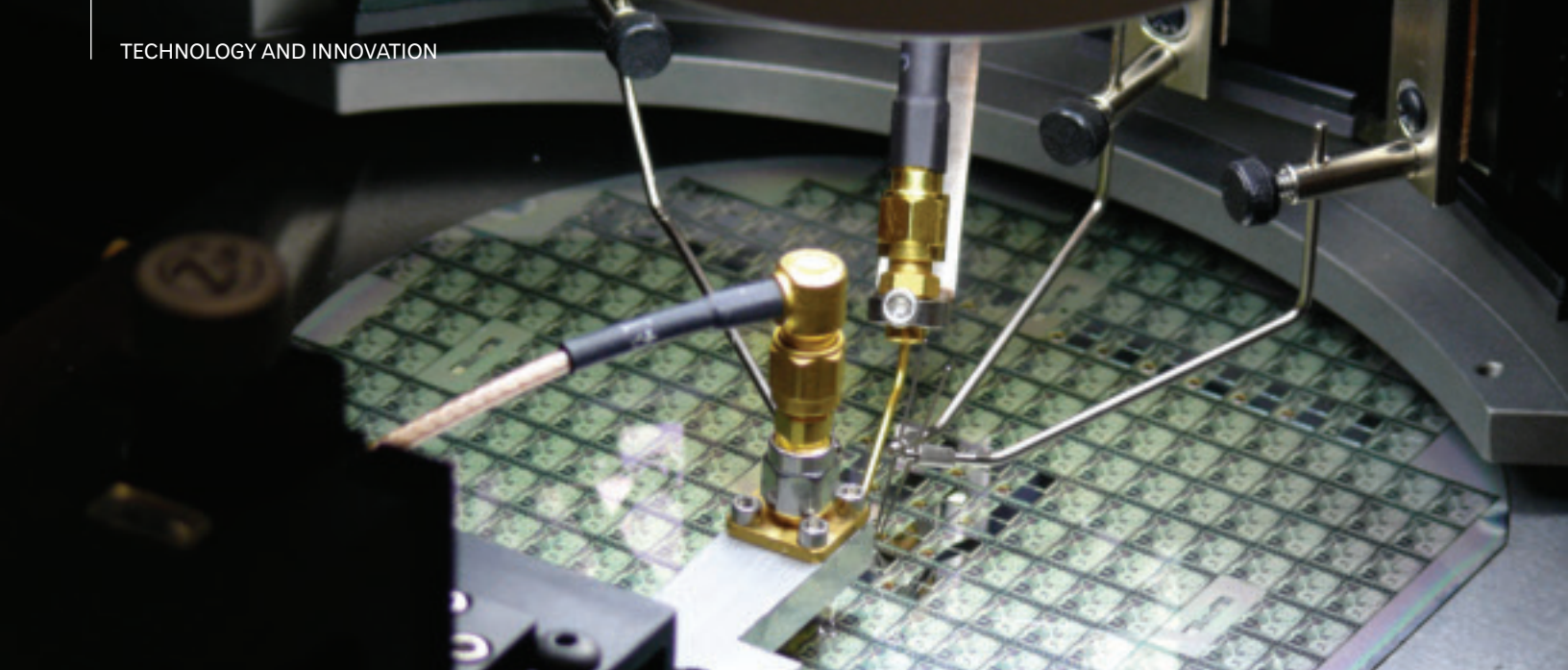
In October 2008, CCARM began a major study investigating the influence of a flaxseed-enriched diet on cardiovascular disease. The massive study, lead by Dr. Grant Pierce and Dr. Randy Guzman, involves 250 patients, half of whom will eat foods containing flax every day for the next two years. The other half of study participants will eat the same foods without the flaxseed.

The research team hypothesizes that the volunteers consuming flaxseed will suffer from fewer heart health problems and will have better stamina during exercise than the control group. [AW](#)

The Benefits of Flaxseed

Flaxseed contains a very high level of Omega-3 fatty acids, which have been found to be beneficial to human health. And because Canada produces about 40 per cent of the world's flax supply, Canadian agricultural producers could experience major economic benefits as more is learned about how flax can most effectively be used as part of a healthy diet.





A demonstration of virtual probe chip testing technology developed by Scanimetrix, one the ACAMP client companies.
Photo credit: Government of Alberta

NEW CENTRE TO BRING NANOTECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS TO WORLD MARKETS

MICROSYSTEMS AND NANOTECHNOLOGY (MNT) may not be household words yet, but the technology is expected to have major scientific and economic impacts in the future. Alberta, with the fastest growing nanotechnology sector in Canada, is well-positioned to capitalize on this burgeoning sector.

The Alberta Centre for Advanced MNT Products (ACAMP), is a new business and technical services provider with the goal of building world-class capability for business development, product development, and the packaging and assembly of micro- and nano-scale technology devices, turning them into market-ready products and applications.

"It's incredible the number of emerging technology companies in Alberta with the potential to develop exciting new consumer products for world-wide markets," said Ken Brizel, CEO of ACAMP. "Alberta is a prime location for world-class research, and ACAMP can provide the means to turn research into viable products. In fact, we are already helping our clients produce marketable products to compete globally."

In August 2008, WD provided \$3.5 million to ACAMP for the purchase and installation of specialized equipment, and, to date, has invested more than \$13.5 million to strengthen nanotechnology research and commercialization in Alberta.

"Alberta is a prime location for world-class research, and ACAMP can provide the means to turn research into viable products." - Ken Brizel, CEO of ACAMP

ACAMP will work closely with other organizations in the Alberta nanotechnology sector – including the National Institute for Nanotechnology, the University of Alberta, and the University of Calgary's Advanced Microsystems Integration Facility – to help customers commercialize MNT devices by providing marketing, product development, packaging and assembly services.

What is nanotechnology?

Nano comes from the Greek word for "tiny" and, as a prefix, means a billionth. So, a nanometer is a billionth of a meter. To suggest how small that is, a single sheet of paper is about 100,000 nanometers thick.

Scientists have only scratched the surface of the technology's potential. With applications that could include tiny molecular robots that swim through the bloodstream and fight disease, substances that digest toxic waste, and superstrong ultralight materials that could greatly extend the boundaries of space flight, nanotechnology has the potential to change our lives and the world itself.

In February 2009, the centre began holding quarterly sessions, inviting researchers and companies to pitch their business cases. Proponents who are able to convince ACAMP's Executive Board of the value of their proposals can receive a grant for up to \$25,000 in business services.

The Province of Alberta is aiming to capture two per cent of the global market by 2020, which would generate an estimated \$20 billion of new economic activity. [AW](#)



A high performance launcher used for evaluating new aerial technologies on display at the Canadian Centre for Unmanned Vehicle Systems in Medicine Hat, AB.

GENOMICS RESEARCH TO SUPPORT GROWING SHELLFISH INDUSTRY

THANKS TO A NEW SHELLFISH Genomics Laboratory at Vancouver Island University's Centre for Shellfish Research, the \$6 million in lost product that B.C. aquaculture companies experienced in 2007 will be minimized in the future.

A WD investment of \$400,000 will help the Centre develop diagnostic tools to monitor the health of shellfish to create a clearer understanding of how different kinds of shellfish respond to biological and environmental stress factors such as water temperature, salinity, oxygen levels and pollutants. In turn, that understanding will help B.C.'s coastal communities take advantage of the growing international market for shellfish by building a more successful and sustainable aquaculture industry.

Aquaculture operations are an increasingly important component of British Columbia's \$198 million shellfish industry. In 2007, shellfish farmers accounted for nearly 20 per cent of total production. By 2030, that number is expected to exceed 50 per cent.

"Most people have heard the expression 'happy as a clam', but the truth is we do not have any tools to determine if a clam is happy (healthy)," said Dr. Helen Gurney-Smith, who leads the University's shellfish genomics research program. "Genomic science can provide the necessary tools". [AW](#)

UNMANNED VEHICLES TAKE OFF WITH NEW AERIAL LAUNCHER

IF YOU THINK ABOUT INDUSTRIES IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA, AGRICULTURE, tourism, and oil and gas are likely to spring to mind. But if you look up, you'll find an entirely different industry that is becoming a big part of the regional economy – unmanned vehicle systems (UVS).

Central to this growing sector is Canadian Forces Base Suffield near Medicine Hat. The base houses one of seven Defence Research Development Canada (DRDC) research centres and world-class testing facilities for ground and airborne unmanned vehicles. DRDC, an agency of the Department of National Defence, is an acknowledged leader in robotics and unmanned vehicles.

U.K.-based Meggitt Defence Systems, which specializes in aerospace equipment, high performance sensors, defence training and combat systems, also has offices in Medicine Hat.

Most recently the city has become home to the Canadian Centre for Unmanned Vehicle Systems (CCUVS). Created in 2006, the Centre is a not-for-profit organization that aims to become the design, development, testing, evaluation and commercialization hub for Canada's UVS industry.

In July 2008, WD helped further that goal by providing \$900,000 for the purchase of a Finnish-manufactured high-performance Robonics MC2555LLR launcher to test and evaluate unmanned aerial vehicles. The service, which is the first of its kind in Canada, is expected to improve competitiveness and productivity by providing a cost-effective way for Canadian and international companies to develop and test new technologies.

The launcher, which will be located and operated primarily at the Experimental Proving Grounds of Canadian Forces Base Suffield, will help solidify CCUVS's growing reputation. Last year, Israel Aerospace Industries and MacDonald Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. used CCUVS's facilities to test the Heron UAV system. According to the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, the test set a new precedent for operating a large unmanned vehicle in Canadian airspace. The first Heron was delivered to the Canadian Air Force in October 2008, and will be used by Canadian forces in Afghanistan. [AW](#)

What is an Unmanned Vehicle System (UVS)?

Unmanned Vehicle Systems are uninhabited, unpowered, remotely controlled vehicles that can be equipped to perform a variety of tasks. Besides military applications, unmanned aerial vehicle systems are used in natural resource mapping, meteorology, agriculture, policing and security.





SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Canada's Global Commerce Strategy

The federal government is investing \$50 million a year through a comprehensive plan that will:

- improve Canada's competitive position by facilitating the exchange of investment capital, innovation and talent between Canada and the rest of the world,
- connect businesses to global markets by re-aligning and equipping Canada's international network to provide services that meet the needs of modern, internationally-engaged firms, and
- strengthen access to global markets and networks through a renewed international negotiations agenda.

In 2008, the Global Commerce Strategy made significant progress in securing access to Latin American markets with the signing of Free Trade Agreements with Columbia and Peru. A series of memorandums of understanding were also completed with Chile that will increase cooperation in areas including investment and science and technology.

WD UNDERTAKES AND SUPPORTS RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES THAT link to the Government of Canada's commitment to enhancing international trade and investment. By investing in research that focuses on the unique economic opportunities in each western region, the department is well-positioned to make strategic investments that maximize the trade and investment benefits for western Canadian economy.

A new research study, prepared by North West International Ltd., suggests there are important opportunities for Western Canada to enhance bilateral trade and investment with the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region.

The study, *Western Canada and Latin America: Existing and Potential Commercial Relationships*, found that increased economic growth and stability, and improved social conditions, are making many countries in the LAC region more attractive for international involvement. In particular, Chile and Brazil were identified as promising markets for western Canadian businesses in a wide range of industry sectors.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

Although western Canadian trade with LAC is currently dominated by agricultural commodities, new opportunities are emerging. Advancements in Latin America's mining and energy sectors are creating demand for western Canadian expertise in advanced oil and gas recovery technologies, equipment and support services. And, as environmental awareness in the region grows, the West's strength in environmental technologies such as fuel cells and biofuels is of increasing interest. Additional opportunities exist in a variety of science and technology sectors including aerospace, aquaculture, ocean technologies, geomatics and vaccines.

Canada is working diligently to strengthen trade with Latin American countries through Government of Canada's Global Commerce Strategy (see sidebar). The Latin America and Caribbean region is one of the priority markets for the Strategy, which is helping Canadian businesses capitalize on new market opportunities around the world. The region is also a priority for WD, which works to enhance the participation of western Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises in key export markets. [AW](#)

Western Canada and Latin America: Existing and Potential Commercial Relationships, and other WD-supported economic research, can be accessed from the WD website at www.wd.gc.ca/eng/56.asp.

ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT

WD PROMOTES EXPORT AS A MEANS OF GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION FOR small- and medium-enterprises (SMEs) and delivers, directly or through other organizations, skill development and export readiness services to SMEs that are looking to export.

With exports accounting for almost 40 per cent of economic activity and linked to a quarter of all Canadian jobs, international trade is a critical foundation of Canada's economy. As a result, Trade and Investment (TI) has become one of WD's top priorities.

WD's Trade and Investment Framework guides the department's activities in this area, as part of a coordinated national trade agenda working to improve international competitiveness and strengthen trade and economic corridors of importance to the West. As well, WD's TI activities complement the priorities of the Government of Canada's Global Commerce Strategy and Science and Technology Strategy.

CREATING INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Export markets are important to business growth and success, and WD works to increase export opportunities in key North American, Asian and Latin American markets. The department also supports the international market penetration of western Canadian technologies, services and value-added products. Through activities that market western Canadian exports and promote the region as a prime location for investment, WD focuses international attention on western capabilities, expertise and potential.

WD also plays an important role in supporting skill development and export readiness services for small- and medium-enterprises (SMEs) to boost their presence in international markets.

ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

In 2008 for example, WD, with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the western provinces, hosted a Technology Capabilities Study Tour to explore opportunities for increasing trade and investment in new and emerging sectors of the western Canadian economy.

Trade commissioners and science and technology officers from Canadian Posts in North Asia came to Western Canada, touring about two dozen cutting-edge facilities to learn more about the West's growing capabilities in the Information and Communication Technology, Environment and Natural Resources Technologies, Life Sciences and Biotechnology, and Aerospace and Defence sectors.

In 2004, a similar tour was held for Canadian consular staff posted in the U.S. Since then, WD has continued to pursue opportunities that emerged from that tour. To date, WD has undertaken about 75 trade and investment projects, including a supplier development mission to help western Canadian companies sell their products to the U.S. Department of Defense and a trade mission to California that brought together venture capitalists, business leaders and Canadian expatriates to expand investment in western Canadian technologies. [AW](#)

Encouraging International Trade

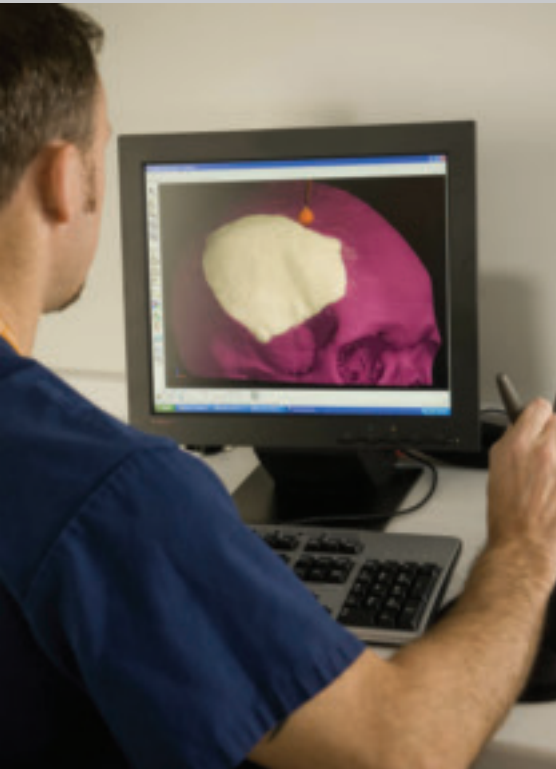
Trade advisory services are provided by WD's Canada Business service centres in all four western provinces and in 2007/08 WD funding helped to establish Small Business BC's TradeStart program. Since its inception in September 2007, TradeStart has assisted 25 B.C. small businesses become export ready and 200 companies have participated in export preparedness initiatives.



STRENGTHENING TRADE ROUTES

The department also works to enhance trade routes between North America, Asia-Pacific and Western Canada. For example, the Port Alberta initiative, a project aimed at establishing Edmonton region as a major inland port.





The Institute for Reconstructive Sciences in Medicine (iRSM) in Edmonton, AB, is an internationally recognized leader in the complex area of osseointegration (bone) implanted devices for prosthetic replacement of skull and facial defects resulting from cancer, trauma and congenital conditions. Photo credit: iRSM.

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ALBERTA PUTS A NEW FACE ON SURGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

WHEN CANCER, INJURY OR CONGENITAL DISEASE CREATES MAJOR PHYSICAL defects, reconstruction can be a long and difficult process for patients, particularly when the defects are in highly-visible areas of the head and neck.

Fortunately, there have been enormous strides in medical reconstructive sciences over the past two decades, many of them made in Alberta. The province has become an acknowledged world leader in the field, thanks to the shared vision of Dr. John Wolfaardt and Dr. Gordon Wilkes.

"At the time the options for facial reconstruction were limited. It was frustrating for the patients and for us. Patients who had lost significant parts of their faces had to endure the daily cumbersome and painful procedure of gluing facial prostheses onto their sensitive skin," Dr. Wolfaardt says. "We knew something really different was needed."

In 1993, the pair founded the Craniofacial Osseointegration and Maxillofacial Prosthetic Rehabilitation Unit, now known as the Institute for Reconstructive Sciences in Medicine (iRSM) at Edmonton's Misericordia Hospital. Since then, research and development undertaken at iRSM have furthered knowledge of surgical techniques, prosthetic therapy, and behavioral and functional outcomes, helping patients across Canada and around the world.

The innovative, multi-disciplinary iRSM team combines expertise in diverse disciplines including surgery, medicine, dentistry, rehabilitation medicine, engineering and computing science. As a result, many of iRSM's patients no longer have to glue prostheses to their faces. Instead, biomechanical implants, such as hearing devices, can be permanently anchored to the bone.

A WD investment of nearly \$1 million helped to construct and equip the Medical Modeling Research Laboratory (MMRL), the first lab of its kind in Canada. The MMRL enables surgeons to create a three-dimensional virtual and physical model of a patient's head and neck, which leads to better outcomes for patients, time and cost savings in the operating room, and improved teaching and information sharing capabilities.

In 2006, WD invested \$975,000 in a second project that will enable trial testing of the Implant Manager software, a dental implant management system created by iRSM's surgical research team and Redengine Inc., an Alberta-based software development company. Implant Manager enables clinicians to view three-dimensional images of implants prior to surgery, and acts as an effective tool in educating patients and their families about the procedures.

The development, demonstration and testing phases included piloting the technology at 10 sites in six countries. Implant Manager has attracted international attention and commercialization opportunities are now being explored.

In 2008, Drs. Wolfaardt and Wilkes received the ASTech Foundation Special Award. The ASTech Awards celebrate and promote the achievements of Alberta's scientific and technological communities in order to inspire future innovation and leadership in the province. [AW](#)