

ACCESS

ALBERTA

January - March 2003

Trades Help Unearth Talents of Aboriginal Youth

by Carmen Carvajal

“Think Trades” as a source of meaningful job opportunities is the message that the **Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP)** is sending to schools and employment centres in Alberta.

The AAAP project is a five-year community-based employment support program designed to boost the number of Aboriginal people registering and completing apprenticeship programs in the province. Officially launched in September 2002, it involves three pilot locations in the Fort McMurray, Edmonton and High Level regions.

The goal is to make Aboriginal people (including First Nations, Métis and Inuit) and industry representatives more aware of the mutual benefits apprenticeship programs offer – increased sources of skilled labour and more employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

“This project is an excellent example of innovation and collaboration,” says Stephen Owen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development). “Its uniqueness is that it links the large developments taking place in Alberta and the very real labour shortage in the trades, with the need to address the relatively low participation rate of Aboriginal people in the labour market.”

The AAAP is supported by financial and in-kind contributions from Aboriginal organizations, industry partners, Western Economic

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by Chris Foster

The Business Link Business Service Centre



E-business, e-procurement, e-marketing, B2B. If you're pondering what these and other "e-terms" may mean to your business, **The Business Link's E-Future Centre** will help you make sense of it all.

For over six years now, The Business Link has served as Alberta's most comprehensive business information source for entrepreneurs. With services including a 1-800 business information line, walk-in business information centre, award-winning library and a

resource-packed Web site, The Business Link provides tens of thousands of businesses with timely and accurate information.

Recognizing the challenges many businesses face as they use technology in their day-to-day operations, The Business Link established its E-Future Centre to help entrepreneurs find the information, contacts and

advice they need to make more informed e-business decisions.

"We encourage small business owners to learn how e-business can reduce costs, improve productivity and increase sales," remarks E-Future Centre Coordinator Trevor Poapst. He emphasizes that this will be the last generation to question the importance and relevance of e-business.

Your first stop for free information — the E-Future Centre.

In addition to its Edmonton location, The Business Link has set up 11 **Mini E-Future Centres** in established business centres throughout the province. These centers are connected and serving their local business community, and are well stocked with both electronic and print e-business resources to help clients better understand the role of e-business in their organizations.

Lisa Feist, Business Coordinator for Entre-Corp Business Development Centre in Medicine Hat, is happy to help her clients "connect the dots" when it comes to e-business issues. "Entrepreneurs are continually seeking pertinent economical information on trends and forecasts in this changing economy," she reports. "The availability of the E-Future Centre is an important contributor to this research process."

Her colleague at the Lethbridge & District Community Futures

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Development Corporation agrees that this new service has an important role to play. Executive Director Ed Fetting comments, "Small business in southern Alberta is recognizing the benefits of using the Internet and e-commerce. Our Mini E-Future Centre is providing entrepreneurs with the information and contacts they need."

In addition to the Medicine Hat and Lethbridge Mini E-Future Centres, sites have also been established in Barrhead, Calgary, Grande Prairie, High Level, High River, Lloydminster, Red Deer, Two Hills and Westlock.

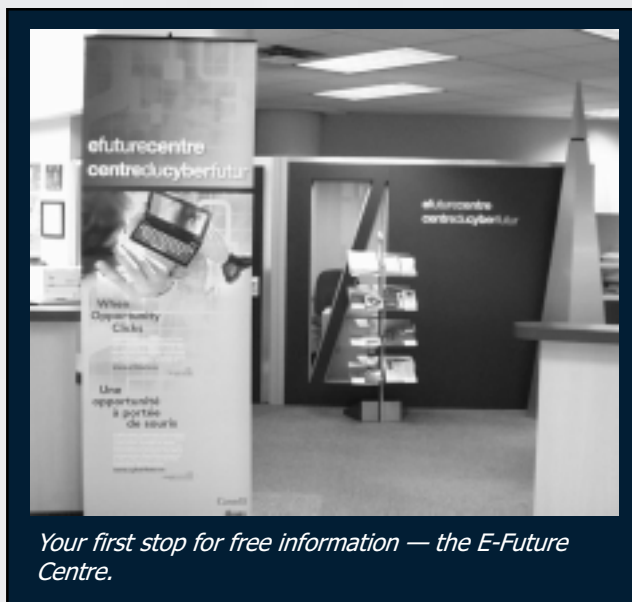
With the evolution of the province-wide SuperNet initiative, more and more Albertans will have improved access to the Internet in the next few years. This reinforces the need for Alberta's small business community to consider using technology – or to better utilize technology – to gain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Combine these resources with the range of services available through the federal government's *Connecting Canadians* program which aims to make Canada the most connected country in the world, and you have an invaluable business resources at your fingertips.

It's all about being connected – to information, to technology, to business and to your customers — it's all

about opportunity. And it all *clicks* with the services of the E-Future Centre and the 11 Mini E-Future Centre sites across the province.

The E-Future Centre is an initiative of The Business Link Business Service Centre, Western Economic Diversification Canada, Industry



Your first stop for free information — the E-Future Centre.

Canada, Alberta Innovation and Science, and Alberta Economic Development, with the support of Redengine Inc.

To contact The Business Link's E-Future Centre, or to find the Mini E-Future Centre site nearest you, visit: www.e-future.ca/about/mini_efuture.asp.♣

e-Daycare Allows Parents to Track

by Shawna Bourke
Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association



Debra Paufler, owner of Kinder Campus Ltd.



To address concerns faced by busy working parents, **Kinder Campus Ltd.** of Edmonton has combined innovative technology with quality, caring daycare solutions. No longer do parents have to wonder how their children are interacting with their playmates or whether they are getting proper attention.

Privately owned and operated by Debra Paufler, Kinder Campus has introduced cutting-edge solutions to the daycare industry. Parents can log on to a secure Web site and view what is happening in the daycare. Cameras placed throughout the daycare monitor all activities. Whether they are busy parents working down the street or grandparents located on the other side of the country, they can look in on their child's day from their desktop computer.

"Our unique blend of traditional values and contemporary child development practice have created a warm and nurturing environment for children," says Paufler. "And, our use of technology creates an opportunity for parents to participate actively in their child's life at daycare."

The use of technology is also incorporated into the play and learning components of Kinder Campus. Children have access to age-appropriate computers and programs designed to develop skills at an early age. Traditional play, with blocks, sand, art and out-door activity complement the hands-on care they offer. The unique Internet capabilities and the staff's careful attention to the needs of the children at Kinder Campus have created a strong family atmosphere. Parents and

Work Their Children While They Work

other family members feel connected to the daycare, resulting in attendance of 150 people at special Halloween and Christmas parties.

“Our biggest success has been the respect that our staff get from parents who come to know how hard we work and how much our efforts impact the children. This happens, in part, because of the Web cameras, but even more importantly because of the close relationship and community atmosphere among all of the children, staff and parents,” said Paufler.

Paufler identified the opportunity for a new approach to daycare after 20 years in the child development and daycare industry. “I saw a need for superior quality daycare,” she explained. “I wanted to blend my interest in child development with my other passion — computers and technology. The idea of a high-tech daycare seemed right and I began working on my business plan.”

As Paufler began researching her innovative daycare idea she approached the **Alberta Women’s Enterprise Initiative Association (AWEIA)**. Through their support, she developed a comprehensive business plan, received a start-up loan, and accessed AWEIA’s follow-up business coaching services.

“Only after I was in business did I realize that AWEIA’s ongoing support would be so important. During the first few months of operation especially, there are so many stresses

and unexpected demands that having someone at AWEIA that would listen and troubleshoot with me saved my sanity,” noted Paufler.

After two years in business, Paufler continues to incorporate innovative ideas into her company. Whether it is her progressive approach to staff development or a new program that offers structured playschool for the older children, she is committed to providing the highest quality and innovative daycare option.

For more information about Kinder Campus, visit their Web site at: www.kindercampus.ab.ca or call (780) 425-6960. ♣

The Alberta Women’s Enterprise Initiative Association assists women entrepreneurs create their own unique competitive advantage through one-on-one business coaching, seminars, telephone workshops and networking events across Alberta. Their comprehensive program assists women entrepreneurs develop a business plan, evaluate market feasibility and, upon approval of a loan, offers follow-up management coaching.

AWEIA is one of four initiatives designed to assist women entrepreneurs start and grow their business, and is funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada. Visit AWEIA online at www.aweia.ab.ca or call 1-800-713-3558.

Alberta R&D Stands Shoulder to Shoulder with Global Corporations



WD Secretary of State discusses the new e-Health Edmonton Project at the project announcement in September 2002.

by Carmen Carvajal

An aging population, shortage of healthcare professionals in rural and urban areas, and budget cuts in the healthcare system are generating new opportunities for the development and growth of the e-health sector in Alberta.

A group of local companies, together with major global corporations, are capitalizing on this situation. They are developing revolutionary e-health applications that will enhance acute care follow-up, long-term care, home care and wellness management in the region.

The **e-Health Edmonton Project**, a partnership led by the University of Alberta and a dozen other organizations, is currently developing a new generation of wireless health

monitors. The project has been made possible thanks to funding provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Combining various technologies and expertise, project participants will develop and commercialize Wireless Wearable Physiological Monitors (WWPMs), as well as software and hardware applications for human and veterinary use.

“Innovation is about increasing the quality of life of Canadians, and we do that by fostering ingenuity and collaboration,” said Stephen Owen, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification. “Leading-edge technologies and products stemming from the e-Health Edmonton Project could revolutionize the health and veterinary sectors in Canada and worldwide.”

Like surveillance devices, WWPMs will track the health condition of humans and animals 24 hours a day without interfering in their daily lives. Monitors will help patients living at home to have more control over their own health. As well, health practitioners and veterinarians will be able to render better health care services to their patients.

“As an occupational therapist, I wanted to see people going about their normal lives and still be able to observe whether physiological changes were taking place. This prompted me to think about how to monitor patients’ health with new technology in ways familiar to them that would be comfortable,” says Mazako Miyazaki, principal investigator and integrator of the WWPM – e-Health Edmonton Project.

Monitors can take the form of a wristwatch or may be placed on clothing, or under a bed or chair. They will collect and

Shoulder-to-Shoulder with in Wireless e-Health

transmit relevant health data from our bodies, such as heart rate, motion and breathing, to an operations centre. Healthcare providers and family members, with a prior monitoring agreement, and patients will be able to access the information that will be permanently stored on a computer network.

WWPMs will be designed not only to monitor health, but also to save lives. They could alert health practitioners and family members when changes in physiological data signal health may be at risk.

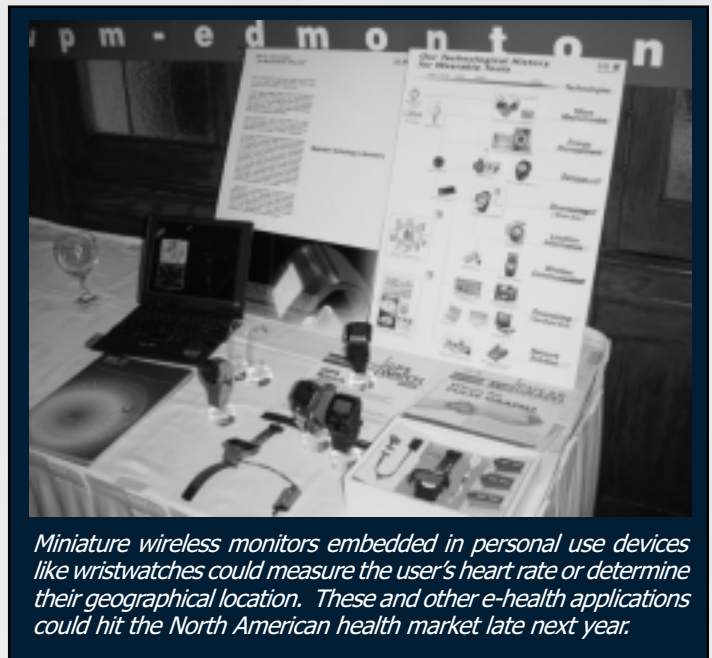
People with health problems and living in remote areas, extended care facilities or experiencing mobility difficulties at home will benefit the most from the new WWPMs.

Cattle producers and feedlot operators will also use WWPMs with the aim of enhancing their production and quality control processes.

But, as Miyazaki says, the applications of WWPMs are countless. "In the future, these WWPMs are not just going to benefit people with a handicap or illness, but also military personnel, super-athletes or any one of us."

The future production and commercialization of WWPMs will set the stage for the creation of a promising e-health technology cluster in Edmonton. New jobs and business opportunities will emerge, and the province will be able to attract new local and foreign investment.

For more information about this project visit the WWPM Web site: <http://64.42.209.121/wwpm/wwpm.asp>. ❁



Miniature wireless monitors embedded in personal use devices like wristwatches could measure the user's heart rate or determine their geographical location. These and other e-health applications could hit the North American health market late next year.

e-Health Edmonton Project participants:

- University of Alberta
- Seiko Instruments Inc.
- MI Laboratories Co. (Sony spin-off)
- Televital Inc.
- Alberta Research Council
- DevStudios Inc.
- Cymobile Canada Corporation
- Eleven Engineering Inc.
- e-Telehealth Technology Research International
- PHASYS Limited
- TR Labs
- ViewTrak Technologies Inc.
- The Good Samaritan Society

ThinkTrades

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Diversification Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Alberta Learning and Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

The Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project uses an approach uniquely suited to the needs to Aboriginal people, says Project Coordinator Bruce Arcand. "This initiative bridges cultures and provides interested applicants with the necessary support and guidance with

which to choose the right trade, secure positions with employers and successfully complete their apprenticeship program," he explained.

It is expected that a minimum of 180 people will participate in this apprenticeship program over the next five years.

For more information about the program, call 1-866-408-1840 toll-free or visit their Web site at: www.thinktrades.com. ♦

Grande Prairie Entrepreneurs Meet the Government



Over 400 people walked through the doors of the Info-Fair, and 197 people attended the various business information seminars offered throughout the day.

The Grande Prairie Inn was the site of the Government of Canada's Small Business Info-Fair on October 18th. The event provided entrepreneurs from Grande Prairie, northwest Alberta and northeast B.C. with an opportunity to meet with representatives from 27 government departments to learn about programs and services available to small and medium-sized businesses.