

# ACCESS

## ALBERTA

January - March 2005

### World Trade Centre Edmonton Opens Its Doors to Global Business

Edmonton added another page to its history books when the **World Trade Centre Edmonton (WTCE)** opened its doors to global business on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

The new centre allowed the **Edmonton Chamber of Commerce** to expand its business support services to entrepreneurs interested in taking steps towards global commerce. Northern Alberta business travellers can access the facility by virtue of membership in their local chamber of commerce, making the WTCE a vital component in the continuing process of building strong relationships between Edmonton and business communities in the North.

“The pace of the global economy is set by new technologies, new start-ups and most of all, by the creativity and ingenuity of businesses of all sizes – many of which will access the services offered at the World Trade Centre Edmonton,” commented Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan at the official opening.

The renovated historical former CIBC building, located at 9990 Jasper Avenue, is now home to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, Edmonton Tourism and an Edmonton Airports passenger, baggage and Sky Shuttle facility. The sixth floor World Trade Centre includes high-tech meeting and conference rooms, Internet-connected computers and other services for visiting users.



*Ribbon-cutting ceremony (L to R): former Alberta Economic Development Minister Mark Norris, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce Chair Dr. Paul Byrne, Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan, former Edmonton Mayor Bill Smith and World Trade Centre Association President Guy Tozzoli.*

*Photo courtesy of Terry Smith, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce.*

WTCE joins the world's most influential trading team – the World Trade Centers Association, a global non-profit network of 288 centres located in 98 countries around the world.

Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Province of Alberta each contributed \$3.5 million toward building renovations in October 2003. 🍁

## Drink Your Milk...and Don't Forget Your Vitamins

As children we often heard “drink your milk” and “don’t forget to take your vitamins.” Teachers explained that calcium, particularly in milk, helps to make growing bones healthy and strong. Later in life, women learn that calcium helps prevent osteoporosis after menopause.

What most people don’t know about are the regulations surrounding all processed foods. Dairy producers, for example, must add vitamins A and D to liquid milk.

These vitamins are necessary for the normal development and maintenance of the human body. Health Canada requires vitamins A and D to be added to milk to ensure that we receive adequate amounts to stay healthy, but at a level safe for human consumption.

As a result, dairy producers have mandatory testing requirements that currently take from 10 to 14 business days to get back from an outside lab, at a cost of up to \$350 per test.

Two years ago, an Edmonton company recognized the need for an alternative to this costly and time-consuming analysis of these vitamins.

**SciMed Laboratories Inc.** developed a new method that uses a fat extraction process and monoclonal (composed of cells derived from a single cell) antibodies. Their two patented, user-friendly diagnostic kits are capable of performing on-site analysis of vitamins A and D in milk samples in just two hours. The new kits significantly reduce the analysis time and give processors the opportunity to correct vitamin levels if necessary, as well as reduce the cost of performing mandatory food industry tests by up to two-thirds.

Dr. Rajan Gupta, president and CEO of SciMed, began the company in 1999 as a service-providing lab. As they moved into research and development, the need to retain staff with the right skills was obvious, and Dr. Gupta contacted Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). WD’s **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program** helped the biotechnology firm hire a recent University of Alberta graduate.

“The First Jobs program allowed our company to hire a graduate as part of a team of three scientists that were instrumental in commercializing the diagnostic kits for the testing of fortified milk products,” indicated Dr. Gupta.

SciMed recognized the impressive market potential – over \$1.3 billion in North America alone – for VitaKit A and VitaKit D, but required equity investment to make the leap from the developmental stage to commercialization.



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## Forget to Take Your Vitamins

The annual Greater Edmonton VenturePrize Business Plan Competition provided the company with an opportunity to take their idea and transfer it into a solid plan for growth. The grand prize winner receives \$25,000 cash, \$25,000 in-kind business services and \$50,000 in-kind research and development services from the Alberta Research Council.

VenturePrize is lead by the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) in partnership with an impressive list of industry, academic and government partners, including WD. A panel of business and financing professionals evaluates the business plans, looking for business ideas that are high-growth and feasible.

In 2004, SciMed Laboratories won this honour. Dr. Gupta said, "I think this is a stepping stone to something more." 'More' meaning attracting the capital they need to go the next step and begin marketing the VitaKits in North America.

Dr. Gupta reports that the company has successfully secured a second round of financing. The company is also negotiating with a group of local investors, and a number of venture capital firms in Canada and the U.S. have also expressed strong interest in the technologies being developed by SciMed.

SciMed Laboratories' hard work has paid off. The VitaKits went into production in September 2004. The company is now exploring the best method of marketing the technology, which should be available in early 2005.

While the new VitaKits are the company's primary product line, SciMed Laboratories also works in the area of nutritional food



*SciMed's management team  
(Back L to R): Dr. Mark Salkie, medical director, and Dr. Rajan Gupta, founder and CEO  
(Front L to R): Dr. Xinli Tang, R&D manager, and Holly Riopel, VP corporate development*

analysis and has products in the pipeline for the nanotechnology sector that has applications in both the agri-food and clinical industries.

For more information about SciMed Laboratories, call (780) 702-1509 or visit their Web site at: [www.scimedlab.com](http://www.scimedlab.com).

For more information about programs and services available for Western Economic Diversification Canada for technology and commercialization projects, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit [www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca). ♦



## Recognizing Alberta's Environmental Stewards

Pristine lakes and wandering rivers. Majestic mountains and rolling hills. Waving fields of golden grain. Wide open prairie skies. If you close your eyes, you can imagine these beautiful scenes around Alberta... and you have probably enjoyed many of them yourself.

Safeguarding this precious environment – today and for generations to come – is one of our greatest responsibilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is also important to recognize the outstanding initiative and leadership demonstrated by Albertans who have a keen sense of this responsibility.

The Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence established the **Emerald Awards** in 1991 to recognize positive achievements affecting the environment in our province, in hopes that such recognition would sustain efforts and encourage similar activities.

Nominations for these awards are accepted year round, but the deadline for the 2005 awards is February 28<sup>th</sup>. There are 11 categories that range from individual commitment to environmental achievements by a community group, education to research and innovation, and leadership by a small or large business, to name to just a few.

Applications are judged on the basis of:

- commitment to preservation, protection, enhancement or sustainability of the environment; and
- positive, tangible and long-term impact on: quality of air, water or land; preservation of biological diversity; climate change/greenhouse gases; and public or corporate attitudes toward the environment.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Emerald Awards will be held at the EPCOR Centre in Calgary on June 7, 2005.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is proud to be a Sustaining Patron of the Foundation, which promotes environmental stewardship and sustainable development through stimulating public awareness of environmental progress and recognizing best practices in Alberta.

WD recognizes that the development and commercialization of new environmental technologies is playing an increasingly important role in creating economic growth in the West and helping Canada achieve its climate change commitments.

For more information about the Emerald Awards and how to submit a nomination, visit [www.emeraldawards.com](http://www.emeraldawards.com).♣



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## Success Takes Flight at SAIT

by *Larry Lalonde*  
*SAIT*

Aviation maintenance training is being taken to new heights at **SAIT** with the opening of the **Art Smith Aero Centre for Training and Technology**.

Located in the heart of Calgary's aviation industry at the Calgary International Airport, the new \$22 million facility was built to meet the training requirements for the aerospace industry...an industry where 40 to 60 per cent of the current maintenance personnel are expected to retire by 2016.

Perhaps the most important and distinguishing element of the facility is its hangar that is large enough to accommodate a Next-Generation Boeing 737-700 aircraft. And, with the recent donation of a Boeing 737-200 aircraft from WestJet, SAIT's new training centre is the only post-secondary aircraft maintenance training facility in Canada with a hangar and one of only two Canadian institutions that can offer aircraft maintenance training on large commercial aircraft that are widely used throughout the world.

The building design was influenced by the aviation instructional staff at SAIT, and encompasses state-of-the-art teaching facilities and an adaptable layout. Occupying 17 acres of land, the 106,000 sq. ft. Art Smith Aero Centre includes a 21,528 sq. ft. hangar with a 43 foot ceiling height, 11 classrooms and 13 specialty labs.

Current programs, which began in September 2004, include aircraft maintenance engineers technology, aircraft structures technician and avionics technology.



*Inside view of SAIT's new Art Smith Aero Centre hangar containing a Boeing 737-200 and other training aircraft.*

*Photo courtesy of Gary Watson, SAIT.*

Complemented with one of the best-equipped fleets of aviation training aircraft in North America, there is no limit to the aviation programs that can be provided at the Art Smith Aero Centre. Future programs such as aircraft interior technician, aircraft parts technician and aircraft mechanical components technician are being planned. As well, aviation continuing education courses, aviation pre-employment programs and corporate partner-ship training are being developed.

Western Economic Diversification Canada, along with the Government of Alberta and the Calgary Airport Authority, provided financial support for the centre.

For more information about SAIT's Art Smith Aero Centre for Training and Technology, call John Myers, manager of business development and operations for the Art Smith Aero Centre, at (403) 210-4266, or visit [www.sait.ca/aerocentre](http://www.sait.ca/aerocentre). ♦

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## Providing the Tools for Sight,

by Tamnia Selig  
WORKink Alberta

Watching television. Listening to laughter. Talking to our friends. Sight, hearing, speech and mobility – these are basic skills we enjoy that enable us to enjoy life...and earn a paycheque.

For a person with a disability looking for employment, the task is often daunting. But with access to new technologies, persons with disabilities are now able to participate in employment training to update their skills and enter or re-enter the workforce.

Iris Saunders, executive director of **EmployAbilities Society of Alberta** in Edmonton says, “Assistive technology supports

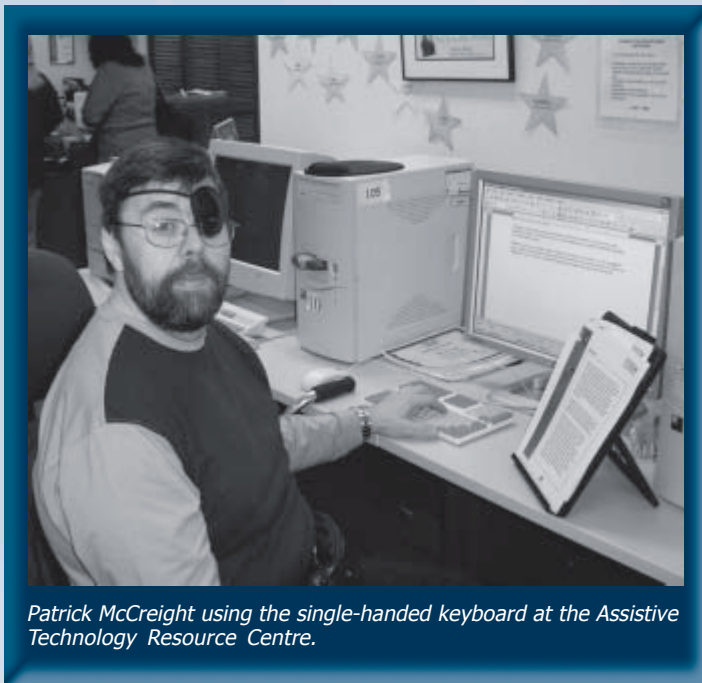
are providing more opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter the workforce and participate in the community than ever before.”

The development of the **Assistive Technology Resource Centre** has allowed EmployAbilities to continue their efforts to assist clients by providing access to a variety of technologies they would otherwise be unable to afford. Working with WORKink Alberta and Community Futures Development Corporations throughout rural Alberta, individuals can try out the equipment to decide if it could be useful for themselves, their office or their organization.

Patrick McCreight had difficulty learning computer skills in a traditional classroom setting using standard equipment. As a young man, McCreight had a stroke that left him with limited mobility, loss of vision in one eye and with a speech impairment.

McCreight has thrived in EmployAbilities’ encouraging environment thanks to the assistive technology supports. He now uses a space-saver keyboard that he operates successfully using one hand, and has improved his typing skills with a typing tutor program for single-handed users. McCreight is looking to gain employment with his former employer, Capital Health, with a shift from rehabilitation worker to a more administrative role.

Kathleen Lassell had no idea she had a hearing impairment – she didn’t know she was missing half of everything! Lassell was in her forties before her sister, a nurse, pointed out that she was answering questions inappropriately. The first time she used a hearing aid was the first time she heard the birds sing, and using the FM listening device at EmployAbilities



Patrick McCreight using the single-handed keyboard at the Assistive Technology Resource Centre.

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## Sound, Mobility and Success

has made learning a pleasure, says Lassell, who now uses two hearing aids. "I am suddenly able to hear everything the instructor is saying."

Although Lassell is a competent secretary, she knows that her disability restricts her from answering telephones in the workplace. She believes bookkeeping and accounting is what she would like to pursue, and EmployAbilities is assisting her to access funding and select the right courses.

Over 150 disabled individuals have utilized the services of the resource centre since February 2004, and 17 Edmonton area businesses have hired disabled employees, who with the help of assistive technologies, are making an impact in their businesses.

EmployAbilities developed the resource centre and purchased state-of-the-art hardware and software devices for use by individuals with vision or hearing impairments and physical or learning disabilities with support from Western Economic Diversification Canada and fundraising activities.

They have developed user-friendly guides that are written in basic English and use graphics, which has resulted in clients finding each product easier to learn. Clients utilize equipment and software including: ZoomText/Screenreader Software for those with visual impairments; single-handed keyboards; and Easy Listener Personal FM System and AudiSee Visual FM System for persons with hearing impairments. Wynn Wizard and Kurzweil 3000 are software programs used by those with learning disabilities. And, the Language Master SE Talking Dictionary helps those who are challenged by blindness, visual or speech impairments, learning disabilities or dyslexia.



*Computer instructor Rolando Vergara (L) and Kathleen Lasell (R). Lasell uses a portable wireless FM microphone and personal receiver that eliminates distance and background noise to help her hear during her computer classes.*

*Photos courtesy of EmployAbilities.*

The EmployAbilities Society of Alberta has been offering employment support for persons with disabilities in the Edmonton region for over 30 years. It provides a wide range of services, including working in partnership with WORKink Alberta to maintain a one-stop resource for employers who are interested in hiring persons with disabilities, a six-month full-time skills development program and operation of the Partners Call Centre.

For more information about the assistive technology available or other programs and services offered by EmployAbilities, call 1-800-785-6539 or visit [www.employabilities.ab.ca](http://www.employabilities.ab.ca). ♣

## New Business Services Available for Calgary Area Entrepreneurs

by Kristi Rosko

*Calgary Business Information Centre*

The **Calgary Business Information Centre (CBIC)** celebrated the launch of new advisory and business services to assist local entrepreneurs in starting and expanding their businesses in September 2004.

As small and medium-sized businesses grow and expand, their need for business knowledge and support increases. The not-for-profit organization recognized this need and introduced more indepth business services and resources, as well as senior business and trade advisory services.

The new advisory services help entrepreneurs with business plans and operations, including exporting and market development — free of charge. In addition, CBIC offers affordable consulting services, via partnerships with various service providers, in areas such as legal or accounting needs.

“We recognized that there were gaps related to business planning and development,” commented Executive Director Kristi Rosko. “The advising services we offer help address these gaps by providing clients with guidance to meet their individual needs.

“We realized that to help businesses be successful, not only do we need to provide them with the information to start up their venture, but also the resources they need to grow,” added Rosko.

CBIC also added short, practical business seminars to its services and launched its revised Web site that offers direct access to more business resources and tools. As well, the centre’s new Business Service Provider’s Directory helps entrepreneurs access other organizations that provide additional business support.



*The staff of the Calgary Business Information Centre help Calgary area entrepreneurs with a wealth of information, programs and services.*

The centre opened in 1996 with a mandate to assist SMEs in the Calgary region to succeed. CBIC helps over 20,000 people annually to reach their goal of small business ownership through services that include: one-on-one business guidance and advisory services with small business experts, a fully equipped onsite small business reference library, workshops and seminars, networking events, referral services to

government and other small business service providers, and professional consulting services.

CBIC is a joint initiative supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Alberta Economic Development and Calgary Economic Development. The centre is a member of WD’s Western Canada Business Service Network.

For more information about the services offered by CBIC, call (403) 221-7800 or visit [www.calgary-smallbusiness.com](http://www.calgary-smallbusiness.com). ♦