

ACCESS

British Columbia

The wait is finally over for high-speed Internet access

by Jillian Glover,
WD Communications, Vancouver

Remember when you had to connect to the Internet through your telephone? The drawn out process of dialling in, and then the wait, and wait... and wait until you finally opened your Internet homepage? Of course, by this time your spouse would complain that he or she needed to use the phone to call your in-laws.

Once upon a time, almost everyone had to deal with the frustration of dialling in to connect to the Internet. For some remote communities, this is still a reality. However, for the 650 residents in the northern community of Dease Lake, British Columbia, dial-up is a thing of the past, thanks to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the Dease Lake Internet Society.

WD invested \$38,000 to help the Dease Lake Internet Society install a stand-alone repeater system that connects to the provincial government satellite earth station. With the new repeater system, high-speed Internet access is now available to local residents and businesses.

According to Garrett Apperloo, President of the Dease Lake Internet Society, the old 33K dial-up speed was very restrictive for people using the Internet for business and research.

"The old system was having a very negative impact on local businesses," said Apperloo. "We have a lot of mining companies in the region that could not download the documents they needed from websites without being cut off because it was taking too long."

Downloads are no longer an issue with the new high-speed Internet access, which is significantly faster than dial-up. "It has made a world of difference," said Apperloo. "Online documents that used to take five hours to download, now take five minutes."

Internet access is especially important to communities like Dease Lake, which are often far removed from the amenities typically associated with urban centres, like access to post-secondary education. With faster Internet

access, the people of Dease Lake are now able to participate in online learning courses.

According to Apperloo, improved Internet access is making the residents of Dease Lake part of a larger, online community. The wait is finally over. ■



by Jamie Kokoska, WD Communications, Vancouver

Sustaining cities with greener roofs

A British Columbia educational institution is hoping to lead the way in environmental technology and sustainable building practices... by growing grass on the roofs of buildings.

British Columbia's Institute of Technology (BCIT) recently received over \$176,000 from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) to expand its Centre for Advancement of Green Roof Technology. This facility will test, promote, and patent new construction technologies for "green roofing," the construction of roofs comprised of layers of rock, soil, and vegetation.

Several of Vancouver's prominent buildings already feature green roofs, including the Vancouver Public Library and the new Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre expansion, which is currently under construction. Green roofing can reduce the storm level run-off at the site, lower the building's cooling and heating energy bills, and extend the overall life of the roof itself. If this method is widely used, it

can reduce negative impacts on regional watersheds, mitigate urban heat island effects, and improve the air and water quality in local communities.

WD's investment will be used to facilitate a commercialization plan and process for green roof construction techniques at BCIT's research facility.

Many industry participants are eager to support the centre as the sharing of construction information, technical data, and roofing performance will enable the industry to promote this roofing technique to builders more confidently.

Students in the program are becoming the first graduates of a program that incorporates a degree-level course in green roof technology—expertise that will surely be in demand.

"The evaluation of green roof benefits contributes to regional adoption of the technology," notes Dr. Maureen Connelly, Research Program Director for the Centre for Advancement of Green Roof Technology at BCIT. "The benefits extend beyond the property owner to the manufacturers and suppliers, and eventually to the development of a new viable economic industry." ■



BCIT students examine the green roof atop the Vancouver Public Library.

by Tom Wakefield, WD Communications, Vancouver

Women's Enterprise Centre celebrates 10 years of success

When Lori Kliman and Heather White started their small business, *Cupcakes*, people told them they were crazy. They had no business or baking experience but they had a great idea. One million cupcakes later, they have a thriving business.

Lindsay Smith created *Techvibes* to bridge the gap between business and technology, all while trying to maintain a life of her own. Her business has grown to support more than 10,000 of North America's technology professionals and 5,000 companies.

These were but two of the success stories celebrated at *you GROW girl!*, a landmark, one-day "unplugged" forum attended by over 200 women business owners in B.C. Presented by the Women's Enterprise Centre (formerly the Women's Enterprise Society of B.C.), the event showcased the growing trend of entrepreneurship among B.C. women, and promoted growth and success within their own businesses.

"2005 marked the Women's Enterprise Centre's 10th anniversary," said Laurel Douglas, CEO. "The business environment for women has changed in the last decade and there are exciting developments ahead. Championing this growth was what *you GROW girl!* was about."

Established in 1995 by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), the Women's Enterprise Centre assists B.C. women to start, grow and succeed in their businesses with an empowerment-lending program, complementary

professional guidance and affordable skills-development programs.

Over the last decade, the Women's Enterprise Centre has helped nearly 30,000 B.C. businesswomen, blazing a trail to remove barriers and meet the needs of women entrepreneurs. Its financing program has facilitated over 140 new business starts, assisted over 165 existing businesses to grow or stabilize, and leveraged over \$10 million of indirect financing to the economy. Today, women own 36 per cent of all businesses in British Columbia.

In an effort to support the rapid growth of women-owned businesses in B.C., the Women's Enterprise Centre's tenth anniversary also included a rebranding of its name and logo.

"We've strengthened our foundation under a new banner, improved tools and services, and centralized resources that will assist B.C. women entrepreneurs to realize their dreams," said Douglas.

For more information about the services offered through the Women's Enterprise Centre, visit www.womensenterprise.ca. ■



(Left to right) Conference Host Maria LeRose (Bartlett-LeRose Productions), Business Partners Tana McNicol and Leilani Kopp (Sweet Leilani Cosmetics), Lindsay Smith (CEO, Techvibes), and Bernice Davidson (former owner, Support Services Unlimited) relating personal experiences about how they grew their businesses.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGELO CIKES

by Jamie Kokoska, WD Communications, Vancouver

B.C. reduces its ecological footprint with “green” buildings

Many B.C. communities are doing their part for the environment by building “green” facilities. They are contributing to more sustainable communities across Canada by decreasing energy needs and increasing water conservation.

To better distinguish “green” buildings, which utilize environmentally friendly materials and technologies, the Canadian Green Building Council adopted the LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation from similar programs in the United States.

LEED designated buildings fulfill several environmental, design and accessibility requirements. Areas of evaluation include such things as the use of recycled or regional materials, the ability to conserve water on the premises and the use of energy efficient technologies. The interior environment of these buildings is also taken into consideration. Recognition is awarded to buildings that use low chemical-emitting carpets, paints, and adhesives; advanced ventilation and natural light sources.

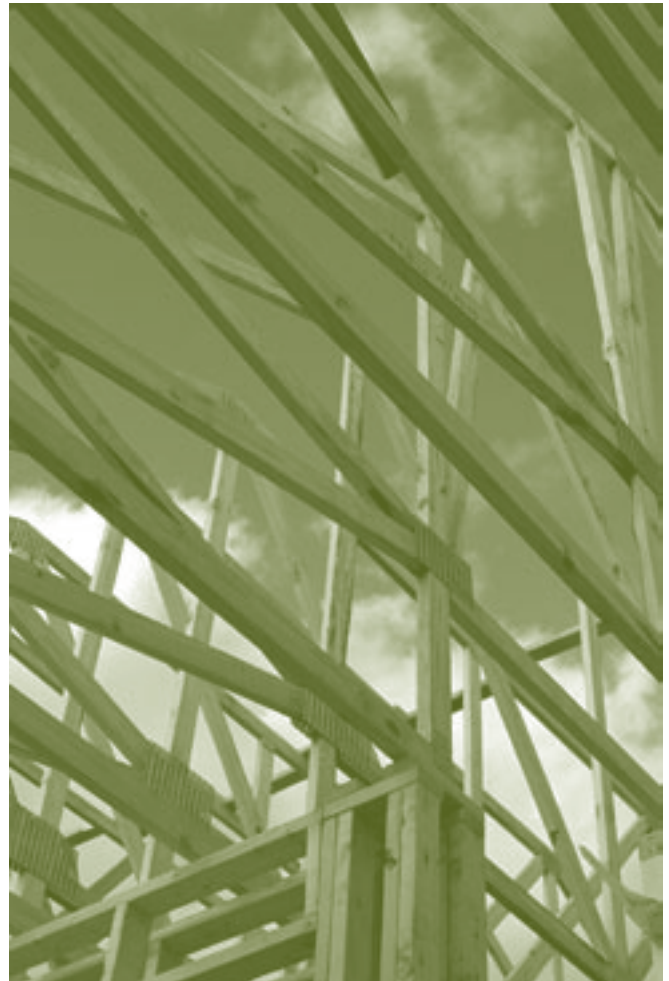
Through the Canada-B.C. Infrastructure Program, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has funded various green building projects, two of which include the Poirier Aquatic Facility in Coquitlam and the White Rock Operations Building.

When the \$13.8 million Poirier Aquatic Facility is completed in late 2006, it will include a 25-metre swimming pool, a 20-metre lap pool, leisure pools, hot tubs and fitness facilities. Extensive energy reductions and water quality

improvements will be made in the new facility. The Canada-B.C. Infrastructure Program is contributing \$2 million towards the construction of the facility, which will replace the community’s former Chimo pool.

“This new pool will greatly enhance our facilities at Poirier,” notes Coquitlam Mayor Jon Kingsbury. “And by building to LEED standards, we’re also contributing to a more energy efficient operation that offers savings and benefits in the long term.”

WD invested \$898,000 in the \$1.3 million White Rock Operations Building, another Canadian benchmark for “green” buildings, through the Canada-B.C. Infrastructure program. Green roofing, solar and thermal heating, stormwater management and the extensive use of natural light earned this building a LEED Gold award and recognition as one of the Top Ten Green Projects for 2004 from the American Institute of Architects. In fact, nearly 98 per cent of demolition waste from the previous buildings was diverted from landfills and recycled into products for use in the new structure. Today the



building is used by the City of White Rock for civic operations.

Vancouver is becoming a focal point in the green building industry. Sustainable living and green technologies will be featured at the third United Nations World Urban Forum taking place in Vancouver this June. Many projects funded by WD through the Canada-B.C. Infrastructure Program and built to LEED standards will likely be featured at the international event. ■