ACCESS WEST

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

April - June 2003

Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Communities

Access West highlights Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) role in the West through three pillars that build on its mandate to promote the economic development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada.

WD plays a diverse role through programs and services that inspire *innovation*, encourage *entrepreneurship* and build *sustainable communities* from a western Canadian perspective.

Innovation at WD takes into account regional and local innovation capacities and economic development patterns in order to meet its objectives.

- Improve knowledge infrastructure and capacity.
- Increase commercialization of new technologies.
- Enhance the capacity of firms to develop and adapt new technologies and processes.
- Support community and regional innovation strategies.
- Coordinate and align innovation priorities and strategies between federal and provincial government departments and the innovation community in the West.

WD supports *Entrepreneurship* by helping to create a competitive and expanded business sector.

- Maintain a community and industry-based business service network to provide one-on-one service and program delivery to businesses.
- Improve access to capital for small and mediumsized enterprises.
- Increase export/trade opportunities and export readiness skills development to assist businesses to compete globally.
- Promote new investment in the West.
- Improve business management skills required to start, manage and expand business operations.

Sustainable Communities means increased economic activity that improves the competitiveness of and quality of life in urban, rural, northern and Aboriginal communities across the West.

- Support economic development of major urban centers.
- Strengthen the ability to plan and implement activities that promote community sustainability.
- Assist with community adjustment initiatives.
- Leverage new business investments in communities.
- Promote economic opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and their increased participation in the economy.

Through these three pillars, WD is helping to build on the strengths of Western Canada and developing programs and services with a unique *made-in-the-West* perspective. •

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A Message from Stephen Owen



Stephen Owen Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) Promoting the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada has been the mandate of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) since its doors opened over 15 years ago. WD coordinates federal economic activities in the West, and ensures western Canadian interests are represented in national decision-making.

WD offers programs and services that evolve to meet the current needs of the business community and the region. In 2002-03, this progress has included a natural evolution of our strategic direction to represent the outcomes we strive to achieve.

The West is filled with vast opportunities and tremendous potential. WD is working to ensure that the opportunities and potential are fully developed. Investing in innovation, maintaining a broad network of support for entrepreneurs, and building competitive cities and healthy communities across the West are all core priorities for the Department.

The Government of Canada, and WD, is working with the West to make the most of its strengths and ensure access to opportunity and solid infrastructure. I invite you to subscribe to *Access West* and learn more about Western Economic Diversification Canada's contribution to the prosperity of the West. •

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

WD Participates in Research into Rural Youth Out-Migration

by Shannon Rogalski Statistical Officer, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

Because Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) works to represent the interests of all western Canadians, it is important to have access to up-to-date research on economic development issues. Rural communities in the West, for example, have experienced population declines over the last several decades. According to the 2001 Census, 20 per cent of western Canadians still live in these communities.

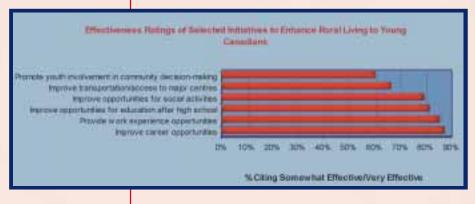
In 2000, Statistics Canada released the first phase of the **National Rural Youth Migration Study** entitled, *Rural Youth: Stayers, Leavers and Return Migrants*. The report looked at reasons behind the out-migration of youth from rural to urban centres. One significant finding indicated that the decrease in rural youth population was attributed to the inability to attract new youth, rather than to excessive out-migration.

The second phase of the study entitled, Rural Youth Migration: Exploring the Reality Behind the Myths, delved deeper into the issue by talking directly to youth and community leaders. What were the youths' aspirations and perceived opportunities regarding education, employment and preferred location to live? What were community leaders' perceptions about the need for post-secondary schooling, opportunities to create jobs and entrepreneurial self-employment opportunities for youth, and the availability of other community features for youth.

Phase Two was funded under the Canadian Rural Partnership. WD and several other federal departments

provided financial support and are participating members of the steering committee for the study. R.A. Malatest and Associates, Ltd., a public opinion research firm based in Victoria, B.C., conducted the research.

Roundtable discussions revolved around the question: "What would it take to get you [rural youth] to consider either not leaving your rural community or returning (if you have already left)?" Several remedies discussed included:



WD will continue to work with federal partners, the provinces and research institutions to examine issues of importance to Western Canada and to generate research that guides policy development across the region.

For a copy of the report, Rural Youth Migration: Exploring the Reality Behind the Myths, or other WD economic research, visit our Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/rpts/research/. Rural Youth: Stayers, Leavers and Return Migrants, along with many other reports on rural issues, can be accessed on the Rural Secretariat's Web site at: www.rural.gc.ca/research/research_e.phtml.*

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Thinking "Green" at

by Sherry Brownlee

Strong, sustainable communities thriving across Western Canada — at Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) this is not an abstract idea, it's an achievable goal.

WD is taking a sustainable approach to community development, and the **Infrastructure Canada Program** is one tool to achieve this goal. WD administers the program in the West in partnership with each of the four western provinces.

With a focus on "green" municipal infrastructure, the program is working with communities to build strong foundations for economic growth through priority projects, such as: water and wastewater systems, water management, solid waste management, recycling and energy efficiency.

The program is already seeing positive results.

New recycling programs and environmentally-friendly waste disposal are just a few tangible benefits.

Since October 2000, nearly 100 communities throughout Manitoba have received more than \$50 million from the **Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program (CMIP)** to improve, enhance and protect the environment.

For example, the CMIP and the City of Brandon provided \$1.9 million to the Westman Recycling Council for a new recycling facility. The facility will service Brandon's 40,000 residents, as well as surrounding towns and municipalities. It is expected to recycle a minimum of 5,000 metric tons a year.

"Thanks to the generous support from the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program and the City of Brandon, this new, much larger facility will enable us to divert even more material every year through recycling and composting," said Elisabeth Archambault, co-chair of the Westman Recycling Council.

Retrofitting or improving the energy efficiency of buildings and facilities owned by local governments ensures the long-term sustainability of community infrastructure.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program (CSIP) contributed more than \$2 million over four years to help fund over \$6 million worth of upgrades to lighting, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and fire protection systems to reduce energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, maintenance and operating costs, and emission of pollutants for seven of the City of Regina's major civic facilities. The project will result in savings of \$378,800 per year for the city.

The program also provided \$500,000 to the City of North Battleford to install an ultraviolet disinfection unit into its current filtration system, as well as additional monitoring systems for more effective plant operation at the F.E. Holliday Water Treatment Plant. The unit will increase the capacity to treat the water and enhance water quality and safety.

Clean, safe drinking water 'on tap' – for rural communities this is a major concern.

In December 2002, 43 Alberta communities received \$84.2 million through the **Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP)** for "green" infrastructure projects. "These are projects that will help protect our environment, maintain the quality of our air and water, and safeguard the quality of life we've come to enjoy as Albertans," said Minister Anne McLellan.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

the Community Level

In the East Peace River region of Alberta, residents in Northern Sunrise County have depended on dugouts and drinking water trucked in from filling stations. In July 1996, in conjunction with Northern Sunrise County, the member-owned East Peace Water Co-op embarked on a nine year, \$3.9 million project to pipe drinking water to country residents. ICAP funding for a later phase of the project allowed for the extension of the water services. The completion of the project this fall will mean a total of 282 rural residences will be connected to the system.



ICAP and the East Peace Water Co-op are laying pipe to bring fresh drinking water to Northern Sunrise County.

Reliable drinking water has really made a difference. "It's a quality of life issue," said Wilf Petluck, chairman of the East Peace Water Co-op. "Over the years, we've had problems with chemical runoff and livestock wastes contaminating dugout water." He adds that dugouts also pose a safety hazard, and there have been incidents in which people have drowned.

Municipalities determine their green infrastructure needs and put those projects forward for funding.

Under the Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Program (C/BCIP), the federal, provincial and local governments are investing a total of \$800 million in municipal infrastructure in urban and rural communities across the province over five years. To date, 103 projects have been approved, totalling in excess of \$274 million.

In B.C., the main focus is "green" – primarily water and sewer infrastructure projects. Specifically, access to safe, clean drinking water has been identified as a vital health priority for communities across British Columbia.

In December 2002, C/BCIP announced a contribution of \$100 million to the Greater Vancouver Water District to build a water filtration plant at Seymour in North Vancouver — the largest in Canada.

Through the Infrastructure Canada Program communities across the West are realizing immediate and long-term benefits — an improved quality of life today and new economic opportunities tomorrow.

For more information about the Infrastructure Canada Program, visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.

Hostels a Viable Option for Young Travelers.... And a Great Business Idea

Provided by the CFDC of the S.E. Region of B.C.



"Hostelling is an innkeeper's dream," said Simon Howse. "You can handle so many more customers than in a hotel."

Photo courtesy of the CFDC of the S.E. Region of B.C.

A successful entrepreneur does their homework and asks the basic question, "Will my business fill a need?" The answer for Simon Howse was, yes. He recognized the lucrative market for inexpensive hostel style accommodations suited to young travelers who spend their money on equipment and entertainment, not accommodations.

Located close to both Alberta and U.S. borders, the Fernie region offers tourists access to wilderness areas that appeal to outdoor enthusiasts. Howse took advantage of the opportunity to get in at the ground level just as Fernie began developing as a popular ski resort area.

Fernie's Grande Central Hotel was built in 1908. By

1999, however, the hotel's upper floors were condemned, the bar had deteriorated into a biker's hangout and the solid brick exterior was covered with cheap yellow siding. To anyone else, including the bank, the hotel was an unlikely bet. The banker suggested, however, that Howse visit the Community Future Development Corporation (CFDC) of the S.E. Region of B.C. Howse admitted that "a lot of

people thought I was crazy to take on the Central"—but not the CFDC.

With the help of a CF loan, Howse reopened the fully restored **Grande Central Hotel** in time for the 2000 ski season. He incorporated a rustic Rocky Mountain theme — fireplace and bar made of river rock, huge timber posts and dramatic colours and artwork — into the modern, funky hostel.

Howse gives the Community Futures staff a lot of credit for lending him the money to achieve success at the Grande Central. "They were so easy to deal with," commented Howse. "The loans manager was phenomenal — a real pleasure. He worked with me and established good communication right from the get-go. Instead of asking what I could do for him, he asked what he could do for me."

Howse plans to create a hostel system similar to the accommodations popular in Europe and Australia, and has already started work on his next hostel renovation project, The Fernie, another beat-up old hotel.

For more information about the Grande Central Hotel, call (250) 423-3343. To contact Howse and learn about his other hostel plans, call (250) 423-8674.

Community Futures Development Corporations across the West are funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), and are a member of the Western Canada Business Service Network. For information about the CFDC office nearest you, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit WD's Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.html.

Alberta's Francophone Communities Open to the **Tourism Market**

by Carmen Carvajal

Churches, museums and historic and tourism sites guard precious remnants of the history of the first western pioneers — unique because of their linguistic and cultural duality. In order to better market their heritage treasures, communities across Alberta are carrying out several projects ranging from bilingual signage to site renovations.

Regional offices of the Association canadienne française de l'Alberta (ACFA) are inspiring and leading the projects. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Canadian Heritage, the Province of Alberta and other provincial and community organizations are providing funding and consultative support.

"Francophone communities are gradually becoming popular destinations for retired travellers and other visitors interested in heritage tourism," said Raymond Lamoureux, ACFA provincial secretariat's director general. Thanks to the efforts of both government and community organizations, visitors from Canada and around the world will be able to spend more time learning about and enjoying the many Francophone sites and attractions in Alberta.

One of the projects that WD and Canadian Heritage are supporting is the development of bilingual program activities, exhibits and displays in the Lac La Biche Mission. Located on the shores of La Biche Lake, this National Historic Site was one of the most important fur trade sites in Western Canada. Today, visitors to the Mission can learn about the first Francophone and Métis settlers in the West, and some of the first technologies introduced to the area, such as the sawmill and printing press.

Other Francophone tourism development projects recently completed or underway include:

- upgrades to the tourism information centre in Legal;
- nine historic murals displayed in Morinville's St. Jean Baptiste Park;
- repairs to the historic Duperron House in Lac La Biche;
- the transformation of Falher's old train station into a tourism information centre and the addition of an apiculture (beekeeping) interpretive centre.

"The Government of Canada is working to enhance the vitality of French linguistic minority communities," said WD Secretary of State Stephen Owen. "These projects will increase the number of Francophone and bilingual visitors to Alberta and will help create new job opportunities, services and products in the tourism sector."

Tourism development projects in the Peace River, Lakeland and the greater Edmonton region will help increase the visibility of Francophone communities in the West. They will help Canadians rediscover and better appreciate the uniqueness of their cultural heritage and history.

For more information, contact ACFA at (780) 466-1680 or visit their Web site at: www.francalta.ab.ca/acfa/provincial/ acfa/acfa.htm.



settled in Legal in 1901.

First Nations Historical Site an International Tourism Success

A small group of First Nations representatives had a vision of a place to rejuvenate their spirits and walk the paths, breathe the air of their ancestors. To talk, sing and dance in an atmosphere of tolerance

and respect. This vision became reality 10 years ago when Wanuskewin Heritage Park opened just outside of Saskatoon.

The park, located on a National Historical Site, provides visitors with a wide variety of experiences that make it a favorite tourism destination. It is increasing awareness, understanding and appreciation of the cultural legacy of the Northern Plains First Nations people.

In 2001, approximately 40,000 people visited the park. Remarkably, 25 per cent of these visitors were international, many coming from as far away as Europe, Japan and South America.

What is the attraction? You can experience a traditional pipe, sweat or

smudge ceremony. Interact with the Aboriginal culture through interpretative walks, song and dance. Stay in rustic tipi accommodations, dine on traditional foods and listen to evening storytelling around a campfire. Or, attend an Aboriginal Awareness Education Workshop.

Within walking distance, the park contains archaeological sites common to the Northern Plains - a medicine wheel boulder alignment, buffalo jump, tipi rings and more.

Dr. Ernest Walker of the University of Saskatchewan's anthropology and archaeology department has also identified 21 archaeological sites in the park. The majority of these are undisturbed, but some findings uncovered at Wanuskewin have international importance, dating back more than 8,000 years, making them older than Egypt's great Pyramids.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has supported Wanuskewin Heritage Park since its inception. In March 2002, Stephen Owen, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification and Indian Affairs and Northern Development, announced assistance that allowed the park to undertake repairs and improvements, and upgrade its computer system. "Building on our past support, WD is pleased to help Wanuskewin renew its visitor centre," said Secretary of State Owen. "This facility brings us together educationally and culturally to better understand the culture and spirit of the Indian Plains people. It is important, not only to the heritage of Canada, but the heritage of the world."

"WD's assistance is significant to the future success of the park," said CEO Sheila Gamble. "The changes and refurbished exhibit halls will expand Wanuskewin's international tourism destination status, and create opportunities for First Nations and non-First Nations people to work together to foster economic growth."

For more information about Wanuskewin Heritage Park, visit their Web site at: www.wanuskewin.com.



Mistawasis' little warrior, Bryton Arcand, is a member of the Wanuskewin International Dance Troupe.
Photo courtesy of Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Polar Bears, Polar Ice & Polar Memories

by Lee Gregg

Lying on the ancient shores of Hudson Bay, you can hardly think of Churchill, Manitoba, without thinking of polar bears, arctic foxes or the aurora borealis. Located at the intersection of three ecosystems – coastal, boreal forest and arctic tundra – this northern community is home to breathtaking scenery and a rich and varied wildlife, the ideal getaway for nature lovers and adventurers.

Canada's only Arctic seaport is also home to Louise Foubert and Dwight Allen, owners of **Polar Inn & Suites** and **Polar Adventure**TM **Clothing**.

Opened in 1990, Polar Inn & Suites is a charming $3\frac{1}{2}$ star inn that provides full bilingual service for its national and international visitors. It prides itself on excellent customer service and a friendly, inviting atmosphere.

Wishing to develop the clothing line and expand the Inn's gift shop, the partners approached the **Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (WEC)**. "We had all the ideas, but not the financial resources or space," said Foubert. "We are very happy with the assistance we received [from the WEC], as we were able to expand and grow our business within a much shorter time frame."

Polar AdventureTM Clothing is extreme cold weather clothing created by Foubert and Allen. Down-filled wind pants, parkas, anoraks and a uniquely designed photographer's parka are available in adult and children's sizes. In addition to selling and renting their unique clothing line, the all-glass gift shop also carries a variety of original paintings and carvings celebrating the area's Inuit and Aboriginal cultures.

Foubert, recipient of the 2001 Minister's Award of Excellence, and Allen also wrote the script and shot footage for *The Hudson Bay*, a video used to promote



Dwight Allen enjoys a snow-filled adventure in Polar Adventure™ Clothing.

Photo courtesy of Dwight Allen

the "polar bear capital of the world" in North America and Europe.

If you want to get up close and personal with polar bears, go Arctic scuba diving with Beluga whales, or experience the ethereal aurora borealis, a visit to Churchill will leave you with a lifetime of memories, and Foubert and Allen make sure your stay is unforgettable. For information and reservations call 1-877-765-2733 or contact the Inn by e-mail at: polarinn@churchillmb.net.

The Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba is one of four offices of the Women's Enterprise Initiative in Western Canada and financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For information about their programs and services, visit their Web site at: www.wecm.ca.

INNOVATION

Investing in Climate Change Technology

by Linda Lee



Ballard Power Systems delivered heavy-duty fuel cell bus engines to DaimlerChrysler for a European Fuel Cell Bus Project - the world's largest fuel cell bus fleet demonstration program that begins operation in 10 European cities in 2003.

Photo courtesy of Ballard Power Systems.

Addressing climate change presents Canada with an important challenge to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Western Canada is well positioned to play a leadership role and benefit from the global shift toward new technologies and industries that will achieve this goal.

From investments in the development of agriculturally-based emission reduction protocols in Alberta, to the Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre at the University of Regina, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is working with industry and academia on innovative projects in key resource sectors.

WD has provided investments in several important projects to help meet the Kyoto protocol requirements and improve the quality of life for all Canadians.

For example, British Columbia is recognized as a global centre for fuel cell technology. Fuel cells provide an

environmentally-friendly source of energy, a solution to greenhouse gas emissions and an opportunity for significant economic development.

Fuel Cells Canada, a non-profit organization, was created by public and private sector partners to foster industry growth and promote the fuel cell industry in Western Canada. WD and the Province of B.C. each provided \$6.5 million through the Canada-B.C. Western Economic Partnership Agreement for fuel cell development. Over \$12 million of this investment is available to fund demonstration projects that employ this technology.

Fuel cells have the potential to become the energy source in the 21st Century. They are widely regarded as an important tool for addressing the threat of global warming. Fuel cells convert natural gas, methanol or hydrogen into electricity without combustion. When supplied with hydrogen, their by-products are non-polluting heat and water vapours.

Overall, fuel cells will be an economic source of growth including spin-offs of parts and subsystems, as well as engineering, design, testing, training and research services to this knowledge-based growth industry. By 2020, it is estimated that the potential market for fuel cells will be \$145 billion worldwide, creating 15,000 jobs for every billion dollars in demand.

Other WD-funded climate change projects include the design and operation of a Web site to showcase commercial technologies and processes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or improve energy efficiency by the Environmental Services Association of Alberta, and providing support services for the Manitoba Climate Change Task Force.

For more information on the other climate change projects, visit the WD Web site at: www.wd.gc.ca.*

INNOVATION

Sustainable Development for Small Business What does it all mean?

by Anastasia Lim
Policy and Planning Officer, WD Headquarters, Edmonton

Sustainable development. Kyoto. Climate change. Greenhouse gases. Recycling. Environmentally-friendly. What do these terms mean and how do they affect you, the small businessperson? To some, this jargon is overwhelming. Doesn't this only apply to larger corporations? Really, what does this all mean?

Let's start with some basics, what is *sustainable* development? According to The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), sustainable development (or SD for

short) is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

own needs." In layman's terms, SD is based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of all of society's scarce resources

 natural, human and economic. It is the balanced triangle of social, economic and environmental factors essential to satisfy human needs and improve quality of life.

Let's use an example: water quality. In its most simplistic form and in the context of SD, poor water (environmental) results in sick citizens. Sick citizens translate into an unhealthy community (social). And, an unhealthy community is an unproductive economy (economic). See the pattern? One side of the triangle depends on the other two. This may be an

oversimplification, but it gives you a picture of what SD can be.

As a business owner, how does this affect you? Well, have you thought of how much money you might save by having an energy efficient photocopier that turns off when not in use? What about benefits of recycling toner cartridges or buying recycled paper? Car pooling or taking public transportation? These little steps can help the environment and your community while also benefiting your business' bottom line.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and its partners in the

Western Canada
Business Service
Network are
exploring innovative
ways to inform the
communities we

serve of how to implement SD into their operations and benefit from including these practices into their

daily operations. WD will also be developing its 2003 Sustainable Development Strategy.

These initiatives will inform our communities of the linkages to federal strategies, yet make a difference for western Canadian communities. Stay tuned for information about these new initiatives in the sustainable development world in future issues of *Access West.*

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WD and the "World's Best" Program for SME Technology Assistance

by Dick Bourgeois-Doyle National Research Council of Canada

Thousands of Western Canada's most innovative small and medium-sized firms work with the **National Research**

Council of Canada (NRC) and take advantage of the NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP).

NRC-IRAP reaches over 12,000 firms annually across Canada through its national network of 260 highly-skilled Industrial Technology Advisors (ITAs) — typically graduate engineers and scientists with many years of industrial innovation experience. There are over 75 advisors in the West working at the community level and on the shop floor with companies looking for new ways to exploit technology-based business opportunities and confront technical challenges.

For many years, industry leaders and entrepreneurs have heralded NRC-IRAP as the

"world's best" program of its kind. A recent independent review found the program was better than its counterparts in other countries – both for the variety of services provided and knowledge of the people delivering it. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the NRC bring this service to western Canadian firms through a

partnership involving collaboration on a regional level and financial transfers.

"WD is certainly a great partner and shares in NRC-IRAP's success," said Dr. Arthur Carty, president of NRC. "Hundreds of firms in Western Canada have benefited from this partnership, and we look forward to building upon it in the future."

NRC-IRAP builds on the foundation of its people with extensive global networks and contacts. It not only partners with organizations such as WD at the regional level, but also links innovative firms to more than 1,000 public and private sector business service providers through the Canadian Technology Network (CTN).

Contact the NRC-IRAP Regional Office nearest you by calling toll-free at 1-877-994-4727 or visit their Web site at: http://irap-pari.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca. ◆

A recent independent review found the program was better than its counterparts in other countries...



1-888-338-WEST

www.wd.gc.ca