

# ACCESS WEST

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA

July - September 2003

## Can my business keep up with technology?

Software and hardware upgrades. Systems maintenance. Staff training. With new information and communication technologies, or ICT, products constantly hitting the market, it is challenging for entrepreneurs and managers to make wise investments.

*Can my business keep up with technology? Can I afford it?* Outsourcing may be an option.

- Instead of buying technology that inevitably becomes obsolete, systems experts can provide ICT management on an “as needed” basis.
- Leasing computer or communications equipment means you don’t bear the cost of outdated technology. Upgrades are built into the contract; you look after repair and maintenance costs and software installation and upgrading.
- Growing sophistication of distance applications allow computer service firms to monitor and maintain equipment through remote access on a fee-for-service basis or monthly retainers.

- Application service providers can host the software you need on their server, while providing you with high-speed access. They maintain and upgrade the software as needed.
- Outsource the hosting of broadband content, but keep interactive functionality in-house. This means that Web site visitors do not slow the speed of customer interaction applications.

Ask yourself a few important questions before making your technology choices.

- How do your customers interact with you on-line? What technology do they use?
- Do suppliers expect you to be on-line?
- What is the potential for generating revenue or cost savings?
- What is your current ICT infrastructure? What are your connectivity requirements? Do you have a cable connection or ADSL?

This information will help your business determine the strategic approach it should take, allowing your business to realistically keep pace with technology and make the best use of your operating dollars. ♦



Western Economic  
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# Access West

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## A MESSAGE FROM *The Honourable Stephen Owen*



*Stephen Owen  
Secretary of State  
(Western Economic  
Diversification)*

In February, the Government of Canada announced its 2003 Budget. The Budget offers, among many things, strong support for social programs, infrastructure for growing cities, and measures designed to boost small business growth and development.

Budget 2003 will also enable Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) to plan and enter into multi-year agreements, such as the Western Economic Partnership Agreements, with the four western provincial governments and other partners, and expand the scope of its strategic investments in support of western Canadian communities and economies.

From fisheries and softwood lumber, to health and agricultural technologies, to trade and investment, WD works to address issues important to western Canadians and to find solutions that make sense for westerners — solutions that provide a relevant response to the full range of regional development challenges and opportunities, and that help build a stronger West, and a stronger Canada as a result. ♣



## Planning for the Future... Identifying Western Priorities

by Brenda Thibault

Senior Advisor, Headquarters, WD Edmonton

Keeping you informed about the plans and activities of your government is essential to a democratic system. To help, federal government departments and agencies submit an annual **Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP)** to Parliament identifying their priorities for the upcoming year. These reports establish a clear commitment to how each department will deliver programs and services that benefit Canadians.

The RPP is a statement of each department's strategic direction. Stakeholders and issues. Risks and challenges. Department policies, new programs and services, and how they fit into Government of Canada or regional priorities. Strategic relationships with other jurisdictions and non-government organizations.

These high-level planning documents focus on the outcomes departments expect to achieve, including objectives, performance indicators, milestones, timeframes and resource estimates. They also identify stakeholders, issues, risks and challenges. Parliament and other users rely on this information to make informed assessments of departmental plans and funding requests.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) focuses its programs and activities on priorities important to Western Canada: *Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Communities* —

directions that are in line with Government of Canada's economic development priorities.

WD is continually refining its performance indicators to identify its results and achievements. By making improvements to results-based planning and performance reporting cycles, the Department will be able to enhance its strategic objectives and priorities.

WD uses strategic partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector, academia and communities to maximize its investment in Western Canada's most valuable resources — the talents, energies and ideas of its people. The underlying goal of all of the Department's activities is to ensure that all western Canadians, including Aboriginals, youth, women and residents of remote and northern communities, have an opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, the economic success of the West, and Canada.

Western Economic Diversification Canada has made — and will continue to make — a difference by acting as a catalyst for change that results in a measurable impact on the sustainable and diversified growth of the western Canadian economy. ♣

For complete details of WD's 2003 Report on Plans and Priorities that was tabled in the House of Commons on March 27<sup>th</sup>, visit:  
[www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/plans/default\\_e.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/plans/default_e.asp).

## WD Releases Its Per

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has delivered programs and services that have evolved to meet the needs of the West for over 15 years. While the Department has undertaken periodic client satisfaction surveys, it had never fully examined and assessed its flagship program — the Western Diversification Program (WDP) — for its relevance, success and effectiveness.

The WDP is the Department's umbrella program for programs and services, such as the First Jobs in Science and Technology Program, International Trade Personnel Program and other initiatives that support WD's strategic directions – *Innovation, Entrepreneurship* and *Sustainable Communities*.

WD's new director of Audit and Evaluation, Robert Bellehumeur, brought enthusiasm and an impartial viewpoint important to the review process. "Everything is changing today, and WD is part of the change. A powerful tool to support change is to bring in new people with different skills and perceptions. I took a very personal interest in the evaluation that will help to establish standards or benchmarks that WD can use in the future."

An independent private sector firm, The Macleod Institute, worked with Bellehumeur to provide the Department with a retrospective appraisal of the WDP, with an expanded view that considered WD's overall activities. The evaluation relied on client surveys, stakeholder consultations and departmental reports and statistics. Not only does the report provide the

Government of Canada with historical data about the Department, but also key information that will help WD focus its future efforts.

### ***Yes, WD is relevant!***

The study confirmed that there is still a strong need for a regional economic development presence in Western Canada and it identified three of WD's significant strengths. The Department is very responsive to a broad range of regional and local challenges. It is effective at forming partnerships that helped leverage funding from other government sources — for every \$1 of WDP investment, another \$1.50 was raised. And, WD is extremely flexible, supporting a variety of government priorities over the years.

WD's business development programs – the International Trade Personnel Program and First Jobs in Science and Technology Program — have helped create 1,991 jobs in the West.

Results overall indicated that the most frequent incremental benefit of WD's assistance was longer-term project viability, larger project scope and increased



## Performance Appraisal

leveraging of funds. Clients also indicated their projects would not have proceeded without WD's assistance.

### *What did WD learn?*

While the Department's diverse and flexible portfolio is a strength, it is also a challenge. Over the years, WD's priorities and programs have changed to meet the evolving needs of the West, and to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. WD needs to balance this responsiveness with being proactive, clearly defining its programs in terms of measurable results and improving its collaborative efforts to maximize investment in Western Canada.



And, being strategic in its thinking, programming and how WD operates was also reinforced. A key stakeholder commented, "The more strategic WD is, the more effective it will be."

### *Where do we go from here?*

Western Economic Diversification Canada is both powerful and flexible, and every step taken should be made with the idea of making it a world leader in regional development.

The Department has endorsed the findings of the evaluation. The report provides an excellent platform to continue discussions that will enhance WD's effectiveness and the future direction of the Western Diversification Program.

Bellehumeur's audit and evaluation group has proposed a new management tool, a Framework for Strategic Management, as an answer to the findings of the evaluation. The Framework is a roadmap that will help to clarify WD's vision and align its operations and processes to produce consistency and maximum synergy.

While the full effects of the evaluation take time to implement, WD can now look strategically at how it will do business in the future, with realistic goals for program and operational directions in place in two years.

For complete WDP Evaluation details, visit the WD Web site at: [www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/audit/default\\_e.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/audit/default_e.asp). 🍁



# Program Offers Relief to Communities Caught in the Softwood Lumber Dispute

by Michelle Soucie

Senior Business Officer, WD Vancouver

Forest-dependent communities across Canada have been negatively impacted by punitive actions taken by the U.S. government against the Canadian softwood lumber industry. In October 2002, Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal announced federal funding totalling \$246.5 million in support of a national softwood lumber adjustment package.

Included in the package is the **Softwood Industry and Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (SICEAI)** that was designed to address the adjustment and transition of impacted communities. The \$110 million, two-year initiative announced by Industry Minister Allan Rock in December 2002 will be delivered and implemented by regional development agencies. In the West, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is working in partnership with local Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) to identify and develop potential projects and initiatives that support diversification and development of new economic opportunities.

SICEAI assistance is targeted specifically to those forest-dependent communities that demonstrate a negative impact on local employment directly linked to U.S. duties against Canadian softwood lumber exports announced in 2002. The initiative helps these communities create opportunities for economic development in order to stimulate investment and job creation. Specifically, it provides funding for projects in Canada's forest-dependent communities that address local adjustment priorities and which have demonstrable community support.

Priority areas under the SICEAI include:

- innovation and value-added forestry
- community capacity building
- diversification into new economic opportunities
- infrastructure that encourages growth

Eligible recipients are not-for-profit organizations, including: municipalities and municipal organizations, corporations, sole proprietorships, community development organizations, community groups and associations, as well as Aboriginal organizations.

There is a two-step process for applications under the initiative. First, applicants submit a two-page proposal to their local CFDC. If the proposal meets SICEAI guiding principles and criteria, the applicant will be invited to develop a full business or project plan (step two).

It is expected that the bulk of the SICEAI will be targeted to communities in British Columbia. Data from Statistics Canada's 2001 Labour Force Survey noted that B.C. mills employed 35,000 people, or 44 per cent of those employed in the industry across Canada. B.C. also accounts for 40 per cent of all softwood lumber produced in Canada.

For information about the CFDC nearest you, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit WD's Web site at: [www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.html](http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/pos/cfdc/xindex.html). ☘



Photo courtesy of the Council of Forest Industries.

## Prairie Landmark Saved

Almost every prairie image includes the grain elevator. Today, the changing rural landscape has seen many of these landmarks disappear.

In Westlock, Alberta, grain producers were frustrated with the possible shutdown of yet another elevator. Recognizing the negative impact the closure would have on farmers and the business community, a small group of producers and **Tawatinaw Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)** researched the viability of the Westlock elevators and studied similar independent operations. Their findings were shared with area producers and the business community.

A 10-person committee, including seven producers and three town representatives, proceeded with a plan to purchase the Westlock elevators from Agricore United.

In April 2002, the Government of Alberta approved the New Cooperative Act that allowed for the formation of “new generation co-operatives.” **Westlock Terminals (NGC) Ltd.** became the first new generation co-op in the province. Critical to the purchase was the co-operative’s ability to raise investment dollars from non-producers. In less than six weeks, they raised \$1.279 million.

“We could never have gotten this far without the help and support of Tawatinaw Community Futures. Their help and expertise was extremely important in making this happen,” said the co-operative’s chairman Dave Felstad. The co-operative took over the elevators in mid-November 2002, and they are already planning to modernize or build a new elevator in the next few years.

The Tawatinaw CFDC received the Minister’s gold award for this project in February 2003 at the Alberta CFDC annual gala. “Through this project, an innovative

co-operative was formed to keep the Westlock grain elevator open, and maintain the economic impact of agricultural trade in the region,” commented Stephen Owen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development).

Similar projects have been undertaken across the West where the closure of elevators would mean the decline of the rural population and the municipal tax base of communities. The efforts of Saskatchewan’s **South Central CFDC** kept the doors open on 14 community elevators. Two elevators were converted to pulse crop cleaning and processing facilities. Others are providing storage, grain cleaning services, distributing chemicals and fertilizers, or buying/selling feed and livestock products. ✦



*The Westlock Terminals’ buildings are a welcome scene as you look down the main street in Westlock.*

*Photo courtesy of Tawatinaw CFDC.*



## No Point Waiting To See What Develops

by Lee Gregg



*Sergio Camorlinga (seated) works with University of Manitoba students with Masters degrees in computer science and computer engineering. While performing research on behalf of MIRC, the students also use their work for their thesis – a win-win situation for both the students and MIRC.*

*Photo courtesy of MIRC.*

With a little curiosity and lots of ingenuity, medical science has improved lives since it began experimenting with x-rays in 1895. From MRIs and CAT scans, to x-rays and ultrasound, scientists have contributed to preventing and detecting disease and improving the management and treatment of patients.

With help from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), these technologies have been brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In 1998, WD provided \$1.25 million towards the development of ‘filmless’ radiology in Manitoba, the first such initiative in North America. The **St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre** designed and introduced new technology that provides

storage and secure electronic transmission of radiology images.

Physicians and radiologists at St. Boniface Hospital, Health Sciences Centre, Grace Hospital and the PanAm Clinic with access to a computer and high-speed Internet can use this technology to view a patient’s radiology images from their desktop computer without the delay of transporting x-ray film, the conventional means of transferring images.

A spin-off of the initiative is the **Medical Informatics Research Group (MIRC)** who is creating the next generation of these technologies. By partnering with **TRLabs** in Winnipeg and the universities of Manitoba and Calgary, MIRC is working on new prototype projects that include designing databases to locate medical data held electronically in different sites and enhance infrastructure that allows the secure transfer of medical data.

Sergio Camorlinga, a software architect at MIRC, is very enthusiastic about the projects currently underway. “The partnership between the St. Boniface Hospital, the private sector and the federal and provincial governments is unique in Canada. It provides us with the framework to research, develop, license and export our medical informatics technologies.”

Dr. Blake McClarty, Program Director of Diagnostic Imaging at St. Boniface Hospital, added, “Without WD, none of this would have been possible.”

MIRC is working hard on the next step — enhancing this technology to extend it to other hospitals and clinics in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba.

For more information, visit the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre at: [www.sbrc.umanitoba.ca](http://www.sbrc.umanitoba.ca). ♦



## Welcome Aboard the Information Highway, Strathcona County!

by Stacey Brockhoff  
Province of Alberta

Residents of Strathcona County, just east of Edmonton, are enjoying the benefits of a new high-speed computer network.

With \$119,740 in federal and provincial funding through the **Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP)**, the County installed fibre optic connections from its administration building to the Glen Allan Recreation Complex, Sherwood Park Transit Centre and local RCMP detachment.

Mayor Vern Hartwell says the technology significantly improves customer service in the county. "Our goal is to continually improve communication with our residents. These additions will make it convenient for our residents to get up-to-date information about their community."

The Glen Allan Complex uses a special system to manage its recreation programs, handle credit card and direct debit transactions, and store and display member photographs for quick and easy verification. All of the functions for this program require a fast and reliable network connection.

In March 2003, a computer kiosk was installed at the Sherwood Park Transit Centre. "The intent is that in the future, while people wait for their bus, they will be able to do business with the

County, such as apply for permits or check their tax account," noted Hartwell.

A high-speed fibre optic connection replaces a low-speed dial-up line at the RCMP detachment. This allows data from the traffic collisions tracking system to be readily available to county staff.

Strathcona County, enjoying the benefits of high-speed connections, now has another ICAP project scheduled for 2003. This project will provide high-speed wireless networking to three of its rural recreation facilities and make possible the establishment of a high-speed wireless link to two of its fire stations.

Rural and remote telecommunications and high-speed Internet access for local public institutions are priorities of the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program. In the West, the Infrastructure Canada Program is delivered by Western Economic Diversification Canada. For more information about other ICAP projects in Alberta, visit: [www.icap-pica.ca](http://www.icap-pica.ca).✻



*Mike Bagnell stops to check the bus schedules and latest Strathcona County news on the public Internet kiosk at the Sherwood Park Transit Centre.*

*Photo courtesy of Strathcona County.*

## A New Tool for the Country Doctor's Medical Bag

by Sherry Brownlee

The country doctor with his trusted black medical bag is a fond memory. Just what was in that bag was always mysterious, but combined with the doctor's expertise it was part of a lifesaving double act. Hospitals and fancy treatments were far away. Families relied on their local doctor and the health care resources at hand.

Fortunately, rural health workers today are not as isolated and can share resources through the **Prairie Association for Innovation in Continuing Care Inc. (PAIC)**. The non-profit association consists of health districts and facilities in the Prairie provinces.

PAIC undertook an innovative project, with assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), to develop a system that offers both care planning support and charting, resulting in an increased quality of care for patients. Southwestern Saskatchewan's **Cypress Health Region** stepped forward to pilot the project and implemented CARE Manager, the new electronic clinical care management system, in the Eastend Wolf Willow Health Centre.

Eastend users access the application over **CommunityNet**, a partnership initiative also supported by WD, that connects rural health facilities via high-speed Internet.



*The CARE Manager is demonstrated at the launch of the pilot project at the Wolf Willow Health Centre in January 2003.  
Photo courtesy of the Cypress Health Region.*

The benefits of the PAIC program are already being felt at the Eastend health facility where consistent 24-hour care for residents, enhanced communication between health care providers and improved access to each resident's clinical chart are creating more time for hands-on care.

David James, Director General of Program Development and Strategic Services for WD

Saskatchewan, points out that the needs of the health care sector are driving the development of this technology. "The health care provider defines the need and, in this project, a western Canadian technology can ease some of the paperwork burden for long-term health care organizations to allow for increased quality of care for their patients."

The good news doesn't stop there. Over the next year, the CARE Manager system will be implemented in long-term care facilities in Shaunavon, Leader and Maple Creek.

Shared expertise and resources are changing the landscape of rural health care. Today's patient can expect options in care that the doctors of yesteryear could only dream of offering.

For more information about WD initiatives, visit our Web site at: [www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca). ♦



## Telegraph Creek Reaches for the Mountain Top

Telegraph Creek, located in the Stikine River region of northwestern British Columbia, wanted Internet connectivity in a region that could only be serviced by slow and costly long distance phone connections. Rather than sit on their hands, a group of residents established the **Telegraph Trail Internet Society (TTIS)** to build a wireless community-wide local area network to provide the Village of Telegraph Creek with high-speed Internet access.

Next, the Society worked to bridge the digital divide by building a remote mountaintop antenna site that could broadcast a signal to the rural residents of the Stikine Valley, and located a suitable antenna site on top of Blueberry Mountain.

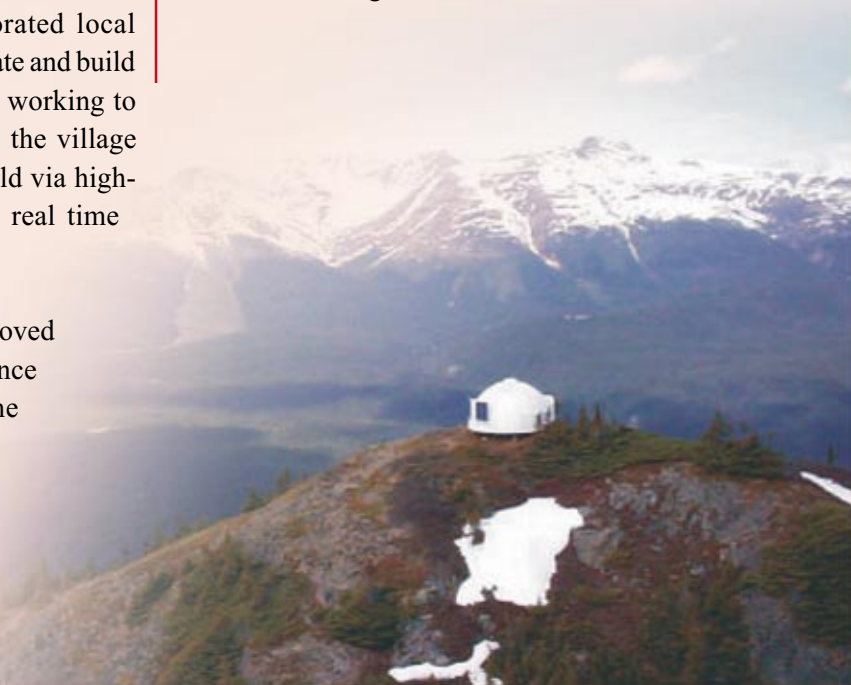
Blueberry Ventures Inc., a newly incorporated local company, was contracted to design, prefabricate and build the mountaintop antenna site. TTIS is now working to provide the infrastructure needed to enable the village and rural area to communicate with the world via high-speed Internet connectivity that will allow real time video conferencing.

“By achieving this goal, we will provide improved communications technology that will enhance the economic and social well-being of the region,” said Dan Pakula, TTIS spokesman.

The Internet system provides subscribers with always-on, relatively high-speed connection at an affordable subscription fee. Among the clients to the service are the Tahltan Band Council Office,

Telegraph Creek Community Health Nurse, Three Sisters Haven Society, Tsedu Recreation Centre, residents and local businesses.

The original project began in 1998 when Lucent Technologies agreed to use Telegraph Creek for a joint venture pilot project. Add to the mix a dedicated group of residents and assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada’s **Innovation and Community Investment Program**, Industry Canada’s Rural Community Access Program, the B.C. Community Network Association and the National Research Council, and the Blueberry Mountain project became a reality. The communication shelter/antenna array project now provides a template for other remote communities looking to improve Internet service to their region. ❄



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# Check It Out! [www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca)

by Nancy Girard-Bégin  
Web Master, WD Ottawa

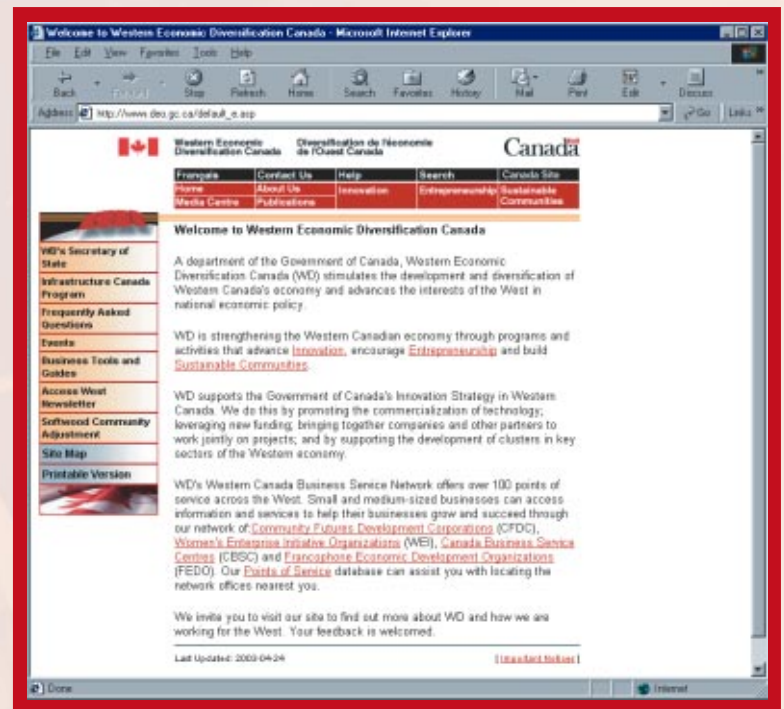
In the on-line world, image — and content — is everything!

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) recently unveiled a whole new look for its Web site — [www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca). Visitors will enjoy a more consistent design and better visual appeal. Our new site map and standardized menus make the site easier to navigate.

The *Media Centre* — home of the on-line *Access West* — now offers a list-serve option allowing subscribers to receive WD announcements, a specialized search function for quick information retrieval and a new print-friendly feature allowing you to print pages with text only.

The changes adhere to the Government of Canada's Common Look and Feel (CLF) standards that provide practical direction on Web development issues such as federal identity, appearance, navigation, accessibility and bilingualism. Users can easily identify a federal site, and navigate from one site to another to find the information they need quickly.

*The work has just begun!* The re-launch of WD's Web site marks completion of Phase I, but improvements to the structure, presentation and function of the resources and materials available on the site will continue through 2003.



Visit [www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca) to find tools for entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business, news about WD's recent investments in the West, economic and policy research, and information about programs and activities that are developing the western Canadian economy. ♣

Can WD better serve you on-line? We welcome your suggestions or comments: [web.comments@wd.gc.ca](mailto:web.comments@wd.gc.ca).



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