



## **December 2013 Issue**



**The Honourable Michelle Rempel, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification Canada**

### **Welcome from the Minister**

Our Government is committed to engaging with Canadians across the country. As Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, I have had the tremendous opportunity over the past few months to consult with more than 150 stakeholders in communities in four Western provinces.

We have met with Aboriginal, academic, industry, provincial, municipal, and community stakeholders to discuss the economic opportunities and challenges in Western Canada. Unanimously, we have heard that our department can play a strategic role in strengthening Western Canada's economy. This insight has been invaluable and going forward will be reflected in Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) long-term vision and strategic direction.

To continue this engagement process, I would like to welcome you to the new Access West. Through this electronic publication, you will learn how our Government is enabling economic growth and the specific role WD can play as an advocate and partner in Western Canada.

Please keep in touch by following us on twitter and reading this new monthly publication. I look forward to working with you as we show the world that the West Means Business.



### **Minister Rempel Announces The New Western Innovation Initiative**

## **Growing through innovation**

Canada's West is home to world-class universities, producing phenomenal research. Our innovators show tremendous drive and continue to develop products and services that have great market potential. Our Government recognizes that innovation is a key driver of high-paying jobs and continued economic growth. After extensive consultation with western Canadian business leaders, it is clear that WD can play a greater role in taking innovative ideas from the test bench to market.

WD has responded to this feedback with the [Western Innovation \(WINN\) Initiative](#). WINN will provide tangible financial support to western Canadian entrepreneurs, helping them accelerate the innovation process and realize their full potential.

This will build on WD's investments in [WestCard](#), Envirotec, and the [Composites Research Network](#), as well as — in projects like VIDO Intervac, and the Vancouver Institute of Visual Analytics — where we have worked with industry to accelerate opportunities for innovation.



## Supporting high-paying jobs

Through consultations with our stakeholders, we have heard that WD should continue to play a role in supporting skills and training programs. Our work in this key area is directly linked to [Economic Action Plan 2013](#) and will continue to benefit Western Canadians.

We will work closely with partners in industry and education to deliver skills development projects that will strengthen a variety of sectors including aerospace, mining, and information and communication technology. These projects will equip students with the skills they need to access new high-paying jobs, improve business productivity and support the needs of industry.



**Global Aerospace Centre For ICING + Environmental Research (Envirotec) in Thompson, MB.**

## Connecting our businesses with opportunities

WD works hard to promote western [Canadian businesses](#), helping them gain access to new domestic and international opportunities, and making certain that they are aware of new opportunities.

The department works extensively with industry partners to develop a unified presence at international events (e.g., tradeshow) that showcase the [aerospace](#) and [defence](#) industry while highlighting regional strengths. This work is increasing opportunities for western Canadian companies to connect with international businesses and prime contractors, and become part of multinational value chains.

We have heard that this effort has been well-received, and we want to ensure that western businesses can gain even greater access to opportunities. That is why we work with prime contractors to assist them in engaging small-and medium-sized western companies.

Advocacy on behalf of your company is important — we want to work with you to make certain that you are able to act on opportunities as they develop.

## Consulting, engaging, and encouraging success with our Aboriginal communities

The West is home to talented and successful Aboriginal entrepreneurs and business leaders. WD is committed to collaborate with them to accelerate opportunities for business development and growth.

WD has partnered with Aboriginal leaders and communities on projects ranging from skills development to business development and innovation. Moving forward, WD will continue to engage western Aboriginal communities to promote job creation, economic growth and prosperity.



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