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Building a Stronger Knowledge-Based Economy in Western Canada

There is no denying that Canada's well-trained and highly educated workers are a key advantage in competing and succeeding in the global economy. International events also play a large role in increasing the visibility of western Canadian companies internationally, as well as developing the essential skills of Canadian workers. This is important to our productivity and future economic success. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) continues to support communities by ensuring that they have access to the essential equipment and programs they need to capitalize on economic opportunities.

Showcasing Western Canadian Companies at CANSEC 2015

Organized and hosted by the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI), CANSEC is the largest defence exhibition in Canada. Held on May 27-28, the event provided an opportunity for companies to develop new business relationships with representatives from industry, government agencies and decision makers in Canada and around the world.



Minister Rempel addresses the crowd at CANSEC 2015.

This year, the Honourable Michelle Rempel, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, spoke to the Government of Canada's strategic investments in procurement projects that grow the western Canadian economy. Exhibitions such as CANSEC provide a valuable forum for western Canadian aerospace and defence companies to market their capabilities and technologies.

This annual event is important to the defence and security industries as it provides an opportunity for Western Canadian SMEs to both participate in discussions about key issues facing this sector, and showcase their innovative products and services.



This year's exhibition also features CANSEC's Business Development Program, which allows businesses and government representatives to build relationships and develop new procurement and export opportunities.

QUICK FACTS

- CANSEC 2015 brought together 11,000 registrants and over 30 international delegations and embassies.
- This year, CANSEC's tradeshow featured 695 Canadian and international exhibitors.
- Military procurement is a significant priority for the Government of Canada with Canada's defence-related industries representing more than 2,000 companies, 70,000 employees and \$12.6 billion in annual revenues. Federal offset obligations are projected to grow from \$23 billion in 2011 to \$49 billion in 2027.

Events such as CANSEC play a vital role in showcasing western Canada's significant capacity to develop new technologies for these sectors, while also linking western Canadian companies with new procurement and export opportunities.

Developing a Highly-Skilled Workforce in Northern British Columbia

There is an increasing demand for heavy equipment operators in northwestern British Columbia (B.C.), particularly in the mining, oil and gas industries. With WD's support, the Northwest Community College (NWCC) developed and launched the Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program in 2012. Through this project, NWCC acquired a truck and customized trailer equipped with heavy equipment operator training simulators to deliver training in communities across Northwest B.C.



Students at Northwest Community College practicing how to safely operate heavy equipment using simulators in the mobile training unit.

NWCC's mobile training program provides accessible education to students in remote areas and reduces costs related to on-campus training, such as transportation and accommodation.


In the first two years, 282 students completed the full Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program, including many students living in rural and Aboriginal communities. Students who graduated from the program found entry level employment within the trades sector. Through NWCC training program, these students now possess the skills to succeed in many different fields such as


construction, oil and gas, surface mining and quarrying activities.


DID YOU KNOW?


- Heavy Equipment Operators in B.C. can expect to make a similar wage to psychologists, accountants and secondary school teachers with three or more years of post-secondary education.
- From 2012-2022, there could be as many as 7,800 jobs openings in the heavy equipment operator industry.


NWCC's Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program has helped strengthen ties between industry, educational associations and Aboriginal stakeholders, as NWCC now works closely with the B.C. Aboriginal Mine Training Association, Aboriginal communities and other industry sectors. These relationships will result in greater opportunities and success for students in the program.


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