

ACCESS

MANITOBA

October - December 2004

Innovating Infrastructure

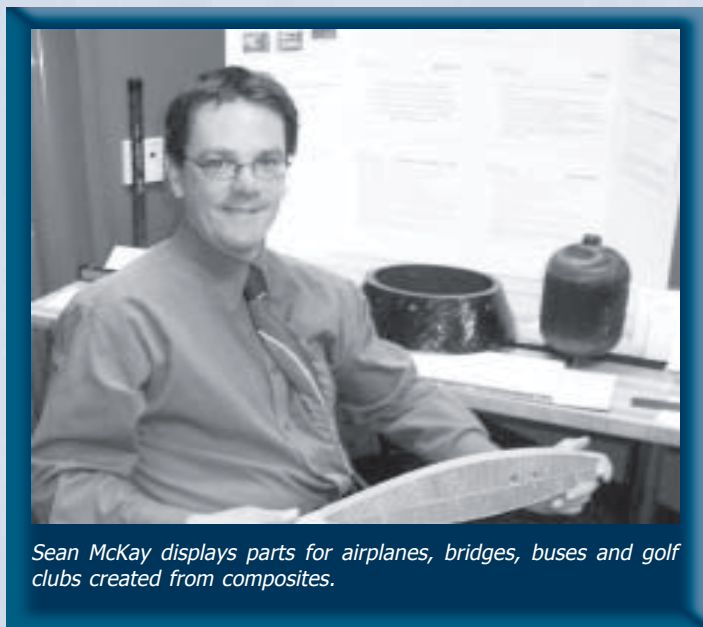
by Paula Scott

Making objects lighter and stronger — that's the name of the game in the rapidly growing field of composites technology. Sean McKay, executive director of the **Composites Innovation Centre Manitoba Inc. (CIC)**, can barely contain his enthusiasm about the company's newly enhanced capacity to compete in this whirlwind world of transforming the building blocks of modern infrastructure.

Composites are fibre reinforcements, such as fibreglass or carbon, embedded in plastic. They replace bulky materials such as metals, making products lighter and reducing assembly costs. "Composites are becoming a part of items we use in daily life more than people realize," says McKay.

Composites are used in many areas, including: sporting goods, electronics, furniture and infrastructure such as light standards. They are also found extensively in the aerospace and automotive industries.

The CIC helps companies develop new products and turn research into commercially viable applications. They are currently working with one business to create lighter, more damage-resistant tabletops for school desks. "Companies that have technology gaps, those that don't have the resources to do what they would like to — that's where we come in," says McKay. "We have contracts with companies such as Boeing Canada, Dow BioProducts and the Vehicle Technology Centre."



Sean McKay displays parts for airplanes, bridges, buses and golf clubs created from composites.

The cutting-edge research and development CIC is involved in has been made possible through \$2 million in **Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement** funding for equipment purchases for a new state-of-the-art laboratory, research projects and to support operating expenses.

For information on the CIC, call (204) 262-3400 or visit their Web site at: www.compositesinnovation.ca.♣

Making Technology

by Lee Gregg

Commercial Web sites are not just for big business, they're for everyone! They have become one of the most important tools a company has to promote their products and services. Equally important is keeping the site current. Yet many organizations overlook the need for the ongoing management of Web pages, images, files, links and other assets because they believe it's a complicated process.

"Publishing to the Internet should be as easy as using it," explained Carole Marshall, senior partner of **Modern Earth Inc.** "We strive to take technology and make it useable. We make it possible for our customers to manage their Web sites, communicate to their customers, and promote their businesses online."

Started as a part-time hobby business by Marshall's partner, Dan Belhassen, Modern Earth develops business tools that use the Internet to help companies expand their use of this marketing tool. By combining Belhassen's experience in product development and Marshall's experience in marketing, the duo has developed several software products and in one year expanded company sales across Canada and into the United States.

One of Modern Earth's most popular products is *greatBIGnews.com*, a permission-based direct e-mail marketing tool. In consultation with the client, Modern Earth's graphic design team develops a template using the company's logo, colours and style. With a simple update tool the client can edit the content of the newsletter and add text, pictures

and links quickly and easily. The completed newsletter is sent out with one click — and you don't even need to know HTML! The program also manages mailing lists and can track results of marketing campaigns. Marshall describes *greatBIGnews.com* as a "valuable, revenue-generating communications tool for customers."

School divisions offering continuing education courses and other education providers such as Winnipeg Technical College and Heartbeat Inc. have found *LOCALcourses.com* to be a valuable on-line course directory. From this one site users can search for courses as diverse as landscaping and martial arts, to first aid and career training. Modern Earth builds eye-catching custom interactive brochure sites for less than the cost of a single display ad in a major newspaper. The program offers a secure credit card transaction component, as well as waiting list notification, automatic replies to



Carole Marshall and Dan Belhassen,



Examples of the types of custom-design for *greatBIGnews.com* customers.

Photo courtesy of Modern Earth Inc.

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Technology Work For You



senior partners of Modern Earth Inc.



igned electronic newsletters developed

registrants, venue maps with every course, images with course descriptions and tell-a-friend course promotion.

“Unclog your inbox forever!” A promise made possible by *ResumeFiler.com*, an on-line human resource tool. This Modern Earth product makes it possible for a manager to create a corporate career site in minutes, profiling available job opportunities. Not only will *ResumeFiler.com* allow applicants to post their resumes, companies can rank and rate prospects and automatically generate e-mail replies to applicants.

Allowing clients to take control of their own Web sites is the premise behind *pointandedit.com*. “We recently became one of only three companies in the world listed as a valued-added reseller for a Macromedia content-

management product,” said Marshall. “This is an enormously versatile and easy-to-use tool.” With some

specialized Web site development by Modern Earth, this product gives users the ability to take control of their Web site, with no technical knowledge. Users can add pictures, links, videos, animations and more by simply dragging them onto the page. “With one click to edit and one click to publish, you’re an instant Webmaster,” noted Marshall.

Marshall credits Heather Stephens, loans manager with the **Women’s Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (WEC)** for making the partnership with Macromedia possible. “Heather was fabulous in helping us,” noted Marshall. “Without the financial support provided by WEC we would not have been in a position to establish the relationship we have with Macromedia.”

Virtual Incubation Manitoba, a project supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada, was also instrumental in helping Modern Earth succeed. “I can’t say enough wonderful things about how useful this program has been to us,” said Marshall. “The staff were capable and versatile, and have assisted us with not only the big picture items, but also the smaller details that are so important to running a successful business.”

Modern Earth is committed to building affordable, effective software tools that meet customer needs and delivering them on-line so customers everywhere can have instant access, anytime.

For information on Modern Earth, call 1-866-766-7640 or visit their Web site at: <http://modernearth.net>. ♦

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Fashionable Entrepreneur in the Exchange

by Lee Gregg

A desire to be their own boss is motivating young entrepreneurs to take on the challenge of creating a successful business. For Rebecca McCormack that meant using her creativity and need to feel committed to what she was doing to make the jump from employee to business entrepreneur and successful owner of **Cake Clothing**.

"I had a variety of jobs in retail, media, communications and small business accounting," said McCormack. "I worked for two years as a sales associate in a California fashion boutique and was a buyer for a company in Vancouver importing giftware from South America. But none of the jobs were what I wanted in terms of my future."

Unable to find a job to fit her personality, McCormack decided to take control of her future by starting her own business. As with many entrepreneurs, McCormack knew that she had an innovative idea and the drive to succeed, she just wasn't sure how to turn her idea into a reality.

Having attended several business seminars offered by the **Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (WEC)**, McCormack turned to WEC Business Analyst Sherri Cairns for support and direction.

"Sherri was great, she went over the top to help me," said McCormack. "I didn't know how to write a business plan, and I didn't have any money to open a business. Sherri did everything she could to help me succeed."

McCormack also used the services of the **Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (C/MBSC)**. "I used the Centre's library to research my industry and to work on my business plan," noted McCormack. "Roland Gagne and Richard Lloyd (C/MBSC Business Officers) really helped me with my business plan, especially the financial side of it, making it easier to access the capital I needed to start my business."

Realizing that she would have to secure funding from more than one source, McCormack worked with Cairns and Lloyd to explore her options. A business loan from the Women's Enterprise Centre was secured in March 2003, along with financing from the **Assiniboine Credit Union Micro Loan Program**, a program jointly offered by the ACU and Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Additional funding was also obtained from the **Canadian Youth Business Foundation**, a not-for-profit organization



Rebecca McCormack turned an idea into reality with help from WD's network partners.

Photo courtesy of Cake Clothing.

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McCormack Opens Doors to Success in Exchange District

focused on supporting young entrepreneurs through financing and community-based mentoring. In Winnipeg, mentoring support is provided by the C/MBSC.

McCormack's ability to see and believe in her vision brought Cake Clothing from its initial planning stages in late 2002, to opening its doors in May 2003, just six short months later. "It was a torturous process," noted McCormack. "I had no idea how difficult the business planning process would be."

But the planning paid off and even McCormack is surprised at how quickly her business has grown, with monthly sales 24 per cent over projections. She employs three part-time staff and recently hired a full-time manager to assist with running the store and taking charge of payroll and bookkeeping – services McCormack once contracted out.

Located in the Exchange District, Cake Clothing specializes in leading-edge style clothing and accessories, catering to women aged 13 to 40 who are looking for high quality, but not high prices. The upscale boutique carries clothing from local designers, as well as Hot Sauce, Zio and C'est Moi. An amazing new shoe collection has been added with designs from Irregular Choice, MC Power and Fly London. And, shoppers will be delighted with the wide range of accessories boasting playful styles from Oui Bee, Bisou Luck and Origin.

In May 2004, Uptown Magazine recognized McCormack's keen fashion sense when they awarded Cake Clothing *Best Women's Clothing Store* in Winnipeg.

McCormack was also presented with the *Pan West Award of Excellence for Emerging Business* during Women's Enterprise Initiative Week celebrations in May 2004. Selected from nominations received from across Western Canada, she was recognized for her management skills and contribution to the local economy.

Although McCormack's previous jobs did not give her the sense of accomplishment she was looking for, the combined work experience did form the cornerstone on which she has built her own successful business.

For information on Cake Clothing, call (204) 284-4854 or visit their Web site at: www.cakeclothing.ca. ♦



McCormack (R) with sales staff Robin Webb (C) and Katherine Rogozinski (L).

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Explore Western Ca

by Lee Gregg

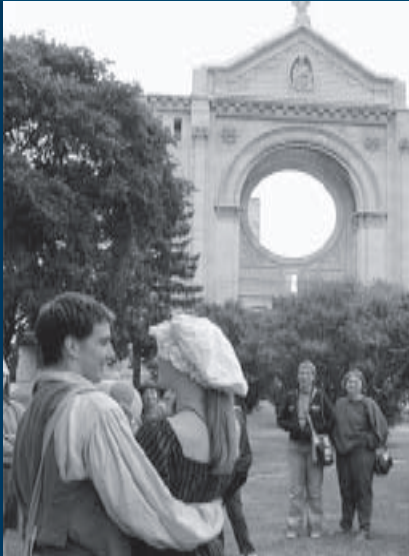
A growing number of tourists are becoming special interest travellers who rank the arts, heritage and other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for travelling. Western Canada's **Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs)** have tapped into this new wave of cultural interest by raising awareness of the diversity and character of Francophone communities throughout the West.

To promote Francophone tourism, the FEDOs turned to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) for assistance in 1999 to hire a tourism coordinator. Based in Manitoba, the coordinator worked with the FEDOs to coordinate a pan-western approach to marketing and to develop marketing tools.

Research was conducted to assess the travel and tourism market and identify specific areas of opportunity. Although the research covered locales as far away as Europe, and as close as the United States, the best potential to generate tourism was found in Canada's own backyard — the Province of Quebec.

In 2000, with an additional three years of funding from WD, the **Francophone Tourism Corridor for Western Canada** was launched. "Work began to promote Western Canada to Quebecers as an alternative tourism destination, with attractions and services offered in French," said Brigitte Léger, coordinator for the Tourism Corridor.

A tourism guide was developed and all four western provinces established toll-free numbers and Web sites to answer questions from potential tourists. Information kits were designed and distributed to Quebec tourism agencies and advertising placed in Quebec magazines and tourism brochures.



St. Boniface Cathedral-Basilica. Cultural tourism is based on the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences. This is reflected in the diversity and character of Western Canada's Francophone communities.

An aggressive campaign to promote Western Canada in Quebec was launched in January 2004. TVA Quebec ran a commercial on the Tourism Corridor and produced a half hour show on Francophone attractions in the West. TVA also promoted *l'Ouest canadien en français*, a tourism brochure distributed to 625,000 Quebec homes in April via seven daily newspapers.

The promotional marketing paid off, with calls from Quebecers looking for tourist information increasing by 967 per cent from January to April. And, 63 per cent of callers indicated that they planned to travel to Western Canada this year.

Trade shows play an important public relations role and this year the Tourism Corridor attended *Salon Vacances et Loisirs* in Montreal and Quebec City. To increase visibility, the provincial and Tourism Corridor booths were marketed under a combined Western Canada banner. Adding to this visibility was the inclusion of Via

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Canada's Joie de Vivre

Rail, the Camping and Caravan Federation of Quebec and Groupe Voyage Quebec, one of Quebec's largest tour bus operators. By partnering with these travel companies, the Tourism Corridor is making it easier for travelers to customize their itineraries based on their interests.

"What we heard at the trade shows were that many Quebecers are not fluent in English and are not comfortable in leaving Quebec," noted Diane Bruyère, Manitoba's assistant executive director/tourism coordinator. "Knowing that there are French communities across Western Canada reassures them that they can communicate and be understood. This is why this initiative is so important."

While Léger works to market Western Canada, it is up to provincial FEDO tourism officers to work directly with their Francophone communities to enhance their tourism attractions. "Manitoba is ahead of the game in partnering with their Francophone communities," said Bruyère. "We have been working to develop our tourism attractions and increase French services for several years."

In Manitoba, the **Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Communities (CDEM)** has developed a great partnership with Travel Manitoba, who traditionally had not focused their attention on the Quebec market. By combining their resources, they have produced *Joie de Vivre*, a guide that promotes Manitoba's French heritage, culture and history. The guide also highlights Manitoba's other star attractions. The success of this campaign has won CDEM Travel Manitoba's 2003 Tourism Marketing Award.

"We are improving all the time and creating more partnerships to facilitate tourism in our Francophone communities," said Léger. By looking at the different potential structures for partnerships in tourism development, the Tourism Corridor has improved their tourism strategy, which in turn has developed our Francophone tourism industry.

For information on the Francophone Tourism Corridor, call 1-866-808-8338 or visit: www.lecorridor.ca. ♣



St. Joseph Museum is a reconstructed pioneer village featuring 16 restored buildings and over 20 vintage tractors. The village offers visitors a unique opportunity to see firsthand how the early pioneer farmers lived and worked more than 100 years ago.

Photos courtesy of CDEM.

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Business Assistance is Just a Phone Call Away!

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) established the Western Canada Business Service Network to support western Canadians and help them achieve economic success. With over 100 points of service across the West, network partners provide rural and urban entrepreneurs with the expertise they need to establish a new business or make their existing business grow.

In addition to a WD office in Winnipeg, Manitoba network partners include:

Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre

P.O. Box 2609
250 - 240 Graham Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3C 4B3
(204) 984-2272 or 1-800-665-2019
www.cbosc.org/manitoba

Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities

200 - 614 Des Meurons Street
Saint-Boniface MB R2H 2P9
(204) 925-2320 or 1-800-990-2332
www.cdem.com/english

Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba

207 Donald Street
Winnipeg MB R3C 1M5
(204) 988-1860 or 1-800-203-2343
www.wecm.ca

Community Futures Development Corporations

Cedar Lake CFDC, The Pas
(204) 627-5450
Dakota Ojibway CFDC, Headingly
(204) 988-5373
Greenstone CFDC, Flin Flon
(204) 687-6967
Heartland CFDC, Portage La Prairie
(204) 239-0135
Kitayan CFDC, Winnipeg
(204) 982-2170
Neicom CFDC, Riverton
(204) 378-5106
North Central Manitoba CFDC, Thompson
(204) 677-1490
North Red CFDC, Selkirk
(204) 482-2020
Northwest Manitoba CFDC, Lynn Lake
(204) 356-2489
Parkland CFDC, Grandview
(204) 546-5100
Southeast CFDC, Winnipeg
(204) 943-1656
Super Six CFDC, Ashern
(204) 768-3351
Triple R CFDC, Morris
(204) 746-6180
Wheat Belt CFDC, Brandon
(204) 726-1513
White Horse Plains CFDC, Southport
(204) 428-6000
Winnipeg River Brokenhead CFDC, Lac Du Bonnet
(204) 345-2514

Provincial CFDC Association:

Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Inc., Winnipeg
(204) 943-2905
www.cfpm.mb.ca