



Canadian Trade Successes 01-06

WINNIPEG TACKLES INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Company Name/Address:	Contact Name:
	Greg Dandewich, Director of Economic Development, Destination Winnipeg Tel: (204) 954-1982 Fax: (204) 942-4043 Email: greg@destinationwinnipeg.ca

Key Quotation:

“The Community Investment Support Program (CISP) support was integral to our efforts to undertake this strategy,” said Greg Dandewich. “With the assistance of CISP, we tapped into existing resources to better position some of our economic clusters, and to go through a profiling exercise that would help us understand our strengths, and then market them in the US.”

Story details:

It’s a bold challenge that can only help build the city’s international reputation and enhance its future growth.

Winnipeg, Manitoba, has taken on the task of conquering infectious diseases before they spread, even diseases that might start on the other side of the world.

Destination Winnipeg, the services agency promoting economic development and tourism in the city, is halfway through a five-step strategy to promote reciprocal opportunities with foreign investors in the area of infectious diseases.

The initiative is a partnership with the provincial government and the recently established International Centre for Infectious Diseases, a not-for-profit organization based in Winnipeg. The Centre undertakes collaborative research on the impacts of infectious diseases and seeks reciprocal investment opportunities in this area.

The federal government is also a strong supporter. In 2005, the agency secured a \$117,000

contribution to the project from the Community Investment Support Program (CISP), a program run by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to help municipalities attract foreign direct investment.

The first two steps of the agency's five-step plan involved an environmental scan of the city's capabilities, and the identification of market opportunities in the United States. In the third step, currently under way, the city is securing the services of a U.S.-based consultant to generate collaborative efforts that will stimulate investment. The pharmaceutical industry is the prime target.

"You must develop a foundation, and then build on that foundation to attract investment," said Greg Dandewich, Director of Economic Development for Destination Winnipeg.

In the fourth step, the agency will participate in U.S.-based biomedical life sciences events and coordinate meetings to bring together potential investment partners. As well, the city will retain a consultant from Washington to organize one-on-one meetings with potential investors.

The fifth step will require Destination Winnipeg to prepare a framework on how to position the city's expertise, and the biotechnology centre, to attract U.S. investment.

Typically, the CISP offers a contribution of up to 50 percent of the value of a project. The rest of the funds must come from the private sector and local communities.

Dandewich gave much of the credit for the infectious diseases initiative to the CISP.

"The CISP support was integral to our efforts to undertake this strategy," said Dandewich. "With the assistance of CISP, we tapped into existing resources to better position some of our economic clusters, and to go through a profiling exercise that would help us understand our strengths, and then market them in the U.S."

The CISP support for the current initiative follows in the wake of a very successful project supported by the program's forerunner, the Program for Export Market Development – Investment (PEMD-I).

In 2000, the city secured a contribution of over \$125,000 in federal funding through PEMD-I to fund research into industry "clusters" and determine which area should be a focus for foreign investment. Based on this work, the city put together an industry-led task group to work on composite economic development in three thriving areas: aerospace, ground transportation and civil infrastructure.

In part due to the PEMD-I support, the city moved ahead to create the Composites Innovation Centre, a not-for-profit organization with a staff of 12. Established in 2003, the Centre develops and commercializes composite technologies and applications in partnership with industry, government agencies and educational institutions.

One of the Centre's projects involves testing alternative material forms and process methods that could lead to lower-cost, high-quality composite aircraft parts.

“The Centre acts as a magnet for investment in developing technologies,” said Dandewich. “It is there for applied purposes.”

With the launch of the infectious diseases initiative, Winnipeg is gaining strength as a collaborative research and development hub in specific technology sectors.