

The Government also intends to work as hard to seek trade opportunities beyond North America as we have worked within North America. The Asia-Pacific region has become an economic powerhouse of vital importance to Canada and the world.

The challenge we face is how to maintain and expand our economic, investment and trade links with the region, with Japan in particular, at a time of rapid global change. To meet that challenge, Prime Minister Campbell has said she will work toward the creation of an Asia-Pacific Economic Community at the summit of Asia-Pacific leaders in Seattle in November.

But trade agreements alone cannot create more trade or the jobs and prosperity that follow. It takes exporters to seize the market openings that trade agreements provide. Recently I had the pleasure of presenting this year's Canada Export Awards to 10 companies that exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit so vital to successful exporting. They represent the best Canada has to offer the world, from sophisticated telecommunications equipment to creative children's toys.

Many of you will be familiar with the outstanding achievements of one of our winners this year, Newbridge Networks Corporation of Kanata, Ontario.

This company has become a global leader in ATM -- asynchronous transfer mode -- an exciting technology that increases the capacity of telecommunications companies to move information in large quantities and at high speeds. I believe that through the efforts of companies such as Newbridge, Canada will maintain its stature as one of the world's most competitive exporting nations.

But you don't have to leave the Kitchener-Waterloo region to find successful exporters. Just look at the example of Mortice Kern Systems Inc. (MKS), which has established itself as an outstanding source of expertise in computer-systems standards. Last year MKS exported 97 percent of its software production.

There's also WATCOM International Corp. The company has used strategic alliances with industry leaders to develop an impressive array of software products, which it has sold worldwide.

In anticipation of new market opportunities worldwide, the Government has launched a series of trade initiatives to help more Canadian companies enter and broaden their participation in foreign markets.

As the market for about 77 percent of our exports, the U.S. continues to be a major priority. It is the critical market for the majority of our new exporters and specialized high-tech and services companies looking for partners. Our focus for this