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TRADE COMMISSIONER  
SERVICE

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## Insulation exporter's deal in China air tight

For one of Canada's leading building product exporters, the celebration in China was two and a half years in the making. To top it off, the occasion was marked with Labour and Housing Minister Joe Fontana in attendance at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing.

In China on an official visit, Minister Fontana witnessed the mid-September project signing ceremony involving the distributors of Icynene Inc.—an Ontario-based company recognized as a world leader in foam insulation for steel- and wood-frame construction—and its first major Chinese clients.

Modern Land Group, Liaoning Nianhua Real Estate Development Co., Ltd. and Beijing First China City Development Co., Ltd. purchased the Icynene Insulation System®.

This lightweight foam insulation windproofs and seals wall, floor and ceiling cavities against air movement, including spaces around electrical outlets and light fixtures, at baseboards and where walls meet windows and doors. In a spray or pour fill formula, the system minimizes air leakage for increased energy efficiency, healthier air quality and reduced airborne sounds.

"I'm hearing that some other developers in attendance at the event have shown keen interest in using Icynene for their future projects," says Hiro Tawara, Icynene's Director of International Sales. "It is a great advantage being a Canadian company in China with strong support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Embassy."

Since its inception in 1986, Icynene has achieved phenomenal growth, deriving 80% of its revenues from exporting to the U.S., the U.K., Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Caribbean and now China.

The road into the Chinese market wasn't easy, according to Icynene President and CEO Alan Rankin. "We certainly weren't an overnight success. China has 28 provinces and three city states, and all have different building codes," he says. "After trying on our own, and then six months after SARS, CMHC and International Trade Canada pointed us in the direction of the right people. We then worked our way through the Chinese regulatory agency and found success dealing with the Ministry of Construction."

He advises prospective exporters to China to spend some time finding out who the key people are and to develop personal relationships. He believes the Chinese purchases were closely linked to the government's increased emphasis on energy-saving green building concepts.

In 2004, CMHC and International Trade Canada introduced Icynene to select Chinese contractors, builders, and developers. This past March, the company was also part of an 11-company trade mission to Beijing and Shanghai, organized by CMHC.



Icynene representative Bo Bi (seated, middle) and Labour and Housing Minister Joe Fontana (standing, behind Bi) at the signing ceremony in Beijing.

"We're extremely proud to have assisted Icynene in developing new markets," says Leslie Barrett-Sanderson, Manager of Communications and Marketing for CMHC International. "They have a track record of excellence that clearly makes them a Canadian success story."

In addition to China, CMHC has also assisted Icynene by supporting product-awareness seminars—organized in conjunction with staff of regional Canadian consulates—as well as arranging interviews and providing introductions with interested parties in the U.S. and Mexico.

The Icynene Insulation System® has won numerous housing and construction industry awards, been featured in new home construction demonstrated by well-known television personality and respected house builder Bob Vila (host of Bob Vila's Home Again!) and used as part of EarthCraft House, a voluntary build green program.

For more information on CMHC International, go to [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/homadoin/excaprex](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/homadoin/excaprex).