

Softworld 2002 success

P.E.I.'s new Help Desk NOW to U.S. customers

Despite a deep recession in the information technology (IT) industry, **Softworld 2002** turned out to be a success, especially for Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.). Held in September 2002 in Charlottetown, Softworld is Canada's premier international IT networking forum. And one of Softworld's successes was the grand opening of North Carolina-based Help Desk NOW's (HDN) P.E.I. call centre—a big boost to the small island's economy.

HDN is a leading provider of outsourced customer care solutions and offers customer relationship management services for both technical and non-technical clients. HDN clients—whose customers come from all across the U.S.—include a prepaid cellular phone company, local and long-distance telephone companies, and even an auto manufacturer.

With a call centre already set up in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, HDN's P.E.I. centre will bring hundreds of

jobs to an island not known for its IT industry. "We are very pleased to be a part of the Prince Edward Island business base. Nothing can be better than working with great people in such a pleasant location. We are looking forward to growing here and providing more jobs in the Bloomfield area," says Fred Riek, CEO of HDN and DPSI—a U.S.-based provider of products and services for the maintenance management of industrial plants, facilities and fleets of vehicles.

HDN currently employs 35 people in P.E.I. with a view to expand to 250 in the next few months. In Grand Falls—a small town of 11,000 in central Newfoundland—HDN employs close to 550 people, making it a huge presence and positive force in the local economy.

"The best decision I've made in 36 years in IT was expanding HDN and DPSI's operations to Atlantic Canada," adds Riek. Located in the Bloomfield Business Park, HDN began taking calls at its P.E.I. centre on July 1, 2002.

Why Atlantic Canada?

"The biggest attraction is proximity to the Eastern U.S., and the fact that there are well-educated people in Atlantic Canada. There is also a significant enough wage differential that makes an investment here worthwhile," explains Riek. "There is more employee stability in small markets like P.E.I. and Newfoundland than there is in bigger centres."

As a matter of fact, a recent KPMG study showed that Canada has a 19.7% after-tax bottom-line advantage over similar business operations in the U.S. in corporate services, which includes

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centralized account processing, call centre and IT support operations. In advanced software operations, Canada has a 22.3% advantage. For more information on the study, go to www.competitivealternatives.com

Support attracts investment

Funding was provided by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement. Also, the Government of Prince Edward Island, through **Technology P.E.I. Inc.**, invested in training, labour, capital and rental incentives.

"I can't stress enough how important Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has been in building our presence in Atlantic Canada. From getting lines of credit from banks, and leases for buildings, ACOA provided tremendous financial support," says Riek.

For more information, contact Fred Riek, CEO, HDN, tel.: (336) 854-7700, e-mail: fred.riek@dpsl.com Web site: www.helpdesknow.com or Steve Flamm, Business Development Officer, Canadian Consulate General in Atlanta, tel.: (404) 532-2000, fax: (404) 532-2050, e-mail: steve.flamm@dfait-maeci.gc.ca ✪

(For the unabridged version, see www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport and click on "The U.S. Connection".)

Canada-U.S. FAST border



Photo: Jason Kryk
Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (right) and U.S. President George W. Bush on the Ambassador Bridge demonstrating the technology that makes the FAST program possible.

New CCC Chair of the Board appointed

On November 12, 2002, International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew appointed Alan R. Curleigh as the new Chair of the Board of Directors of **Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC)** for a three-year term.

In March 2002, the **Canadian Commercial Corporation Act (Bill C-41)** was amended to enable CCC to borrow commercially and to charge market-based fees for its services, as well as to separate the roles of CEO and Board Chair. In doing so, Parliament re-affirmed the importance of CCC's mandate and services as an instrument of trade development.

As a result, CCC is able to execute a strategy to expand its business in government procurement markets in sectors where Canada has a comparative advantage, and strengthen its

capacity to meet increasing demand for its services, particularly from small and medium-sized enterprises.

"Separating these roles will give the Board more independence and the impressive export experience Alan Curleigh brings to the table will enhance

the Board's ability to provide good business advice to CCC's management," said CCC President Douglas Patriquin.

Since 1996, Curleigh has served as Executive Vice-President, Corporate Secretary and Member of the Board of TESSAG KSH Ltd.—a major capital projects engineering contracting company based in Montreal. He has also been a member of the Board of Direc-

tors of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters since 1996, acting as its Chair from 1999 to 2002. Prior to that, he was a member and Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Exporters Association from 1988 to 1996.



Alan R. Curleigh, newly appointed Chair of the Board of Directors of CCC

Put the power of Canada behind your export sales



The **Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC)** is a Crown corporation mandated to facilitate international trade, particularly in government markets. Acting as a prime contractor, CCC signs export contracts which provide access to markets for exporters and a government-backed performance guarantee for buyers. CCC also assists exporters to increase their pre-shipment working capital from commercial sources, and offers its international contracting expertise on a fee-for-service basis. When it comes to exports, CCC means credibility, confidence, and contracts.

For more information, contact CCC, tel.: (613) 996-0034, toll-free in Canada: 1-800-748-8191, Web site: www.ccc.ca

"I am very much looking forward to working with the Board and senior management of CCC in fulfilling its challenging mandate," said Curleigh. ✪

ExportUSA program plans missions to the U.S.

The **ExportUSA** team is currently preparing the program of missions to the U.S. for the coming year and is seeking the cooperation of associations representing Canadian companies interested in exporting their products or services to the U.S. market.

ExportUSA, formerly known as NEBS, is a program designed to prepare Canadian firms not yet exporting to the U.S. and assist those now exporting to diversify and expand their markets in the U.S.

The ExportUSA program consists of training sessions, or "missions", that are often planned around trade shows to give participants an in-depth look at a specific business sector. More than 15,000 small and medium-size enterprises have participated since the program began in 1984.

Submit your proposals

Business associations from various sectors of the Canadian economy are invited to participate by proposing missions to the U.S. or seminars in their

region in Canada that may interest members looking to export. The deadline for submitting proposed activities for 2003-2004 is **January 18, 2003**.

To send your proposals, contact the person responsible for the program in your province's international trade centre. For a complete list of these contacts and the unabridged version of this article, go to www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport and click on "The U.S. Connection".

For more information, contact Jocelyn Guimond, Trade Commissioner, United States Business Development Division, DFAIT, tel.: (613) 996-6192, e-mail: jocelyn.guimond@dfait-maeci.gc.ca ✪