

Now that a formal relationship is a reality, N. Yanke is expanding educational opportunities for its employees with in-house Spanish classes.

"Servicing the Mexican market is an objective and an opportunity for all employees of the company, not just senior management," adds Marcoux.

## SPANNING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT

The new North American market opens the way for the expanding environmental services industry.

"After reading an article in the September 1993 issue of *CanadExport*, published by DFAIT, we decided to take a serious look at the Mexican market," says Roy Shore, President of Briggs Environmental Canada Limited of Markham, Ontario.

"For the next three months we studied the NAFTA," adds David Campbell, President of Briggs Associates Inc., a U.S. firm that, like Briggs Environmental Canada Limited, is owned by

Tundra Environmental Corporation of Edmonton, Alberta. As well, we talked to as many people as we could who had direct experience in Mexico.

"Our research," Campbell continues, "indicated that Mexican firms must connect with a U.S., Canadian, or combination of U.S. and Canadian firms in order to bid on environmental assessments on Mexican sites designed for development. Our Mexican counterparts certainly possess the engineering skill, but many lack the experience in cleaning up contaminated sites."

In January 1994, Shore participated in a three-day private trade mission to Mexico, co-ordinated by the Toronto-based law firm Smith, Lyons, Torrance, Stevenson & Mayer. "It was truly a crash course on Mexico.... Thirteen business meetings were compressed into a two-day span. We met with Mexican officials and also heard first-hand opinions from the heads of private Mexican corporations as to the potential opportunities that exist for companies that are willing to be patient and take time to understand the business climate of Mexico," says Shore.

## Borders not an issue for the I.D. Group

The I.D. Group has been selling its Canadian engineering and environmental knowledge and technology in the U.S. market for over 20 years. Currently, the Group responds to niche-oriented opportunities throughout North America from offices in western Canada, Arizona and Mexico.

The Winnipeg-based company looked south to the United States for business opportunities in the 1970s and 1980s. I.D. Systems, the company's environmental division, was asked to prepare an environmental assessment for the proposed MANDAN transmission lines from Manitoba to Nebraska. The project was done in conjunction with a small U.S. environmental group. A project office was established in Grand Forks, North Dakota, to manage the venture.

Further U.S. projects in the field of high voltage direct current transmission were carried out in Vermont, Arizona and California by Teshmont Consultants, a joint-venture affiliate of the I.D. Group that operates worldwide.

Another one of the Group's affiliates, D.R. Systems, develops, markets and installs software to assist in the management of natural

resources. The company was instrumental in establishing Applied Eco-Systems Management Inc. in Flagstaff, Arizona, in response to another client's demand. The U.S. firm specializes in forestry management, and has particular expertise in dealing with threatened and endangered species.

A chance meeting in Winnipeg with several Mexican engineering technicians from Guadalajara turned into a business opportunity for the company. "Our firm responded rapidly to their call for a waste-management study for a large industrial client. Initially, we worked on a small project with the firm," says David Farlinger, Chairman and CEO of the I.D. Group. "This

gave us an opportunity to see first-hand how the relationship functions."

Before the close of 1993, a joint venture was struck and GRUPO I.D. CANMEX S.A. de C.V. came into being. The I.D. Group brings to this partnership expertise in technology, project management and quality control that matches well with its Mexican partner's strong government and business linkages.

"We have found that Canadian firms are favourably received in Mexico," says Farlinger. "Our Mexican colleagues are positive toward Canada and Canadians. As neighbours of the U.S., we share many common experiences."

"Our commitment to the Mexican market is ongoing. We hired an in-house consultant specializing in Mexican culture and language to work with our business development and technical staff," says Farlinger. The in-house consulting will serve the company well as it grows in the Mexican market and expands into South America. For example, through Westdev International, a Calgary company, the I.D. Group recently signed a memorandum of understanding with an Argentina engineering firm, and is looking to develop this market.



The I.D. Group