

Youth Catch the Pacific Wave

Canada's geographic location and cultural diversity give it an important advantage as new poles of political and economic power emerge in the Pacific. With over two billion people, APEC economies account for 50 per cent of global economic activity, two fifths of the world's population, and about half of the world's emissions of pollutants, energy use, and production and consumption of food. This region will, without a doubt, affect future generations of Canadians economically, environmentally and demographically. People who adapt early to these global realities stand to lead the way.

The Government wants to help young Canadians realize the tremendous opportunities that exist in Asia Pacific. Canada believes that young people, through their enthusiasm and optimism, can help shape policies and programs in this region. That is why, as APEC Chair in 1997, Canada has designed initiatives to encourage youth to join in Canada's Year of Asia Pacific and APEC activities.



youth gain international work experience abroad, including the Asia Pacific region.

For more information on CYAP youth events, visit our Web site at <http://www.tgmag.ca>



Canada Honoured for Best Practices for Housing

Here's the problem — people need housing. Yet in many developing countries, building those houses puts an impossible strain on local forest resources, and on family resources as well.

The solution? The Canadian Self-Contained Housing Delivery System (SCHDS), a co-operative project involving the Canadian Universities Consortium and the Bangkok-based Asian Institute of Technology.

The SCHDS is a small-scale "instant" industry that can be set up in a local community to produce all the necessary elements to build low-cost houses out of pre-cast concrete. More than 100 housing and infrastructure projects in 13 Asian countries are building homes, schools and community centres using this technology.

"We're lowering the cost of houses and optimizing the use of raw and processed materials," says Professor Bernard Lefebvre, who has been seconded from the University of Calgary to manage the project in Bangkok.

"We use advanced concrete fabrication technologies and train local manpower to use them. Government and NGO-sponsored projects create the initial demand, but the skills and technology can go on producing for local markets."

The SCHDS project has garnered a number of prestigious awards, from the Japan Housing Association among others.

The CIDA-sponsored project is a good example of how Canadian government and private agencies, working in partnership with local authorities, can transfer knowledge and so-called "best practices" in design and management to parts of the world where development challenges continue to exist. In the process, people who need them get affordable houses and schools, scarce resources are protected and Canadian research and development is boosted.

It's also an example of the kind of sustainable, equitable growth that is at the heart of APEC. For instance, at APEC's Environment Ministerial to be held in Toronto June 9-11, the main theme will be "Sustainable Cities." Questions of infrastructure development and investment will be addressed, and innovative technologies and best practices for cleaner, safer urban environments will be explored.

For more information on the Environment Ministerial, contact Larry Funnell, Environment Canada. Fax (819) 953-7025.

The Self-Contained Housing Delivery System is described in detail on the Internet at <http://www.hsd.ait.ac.th/habitech/habitech.htm>



Workers at a soil-cement brick factory.
Photo: Bernard G. Lefebvre

Good News for the City of Vancouver:

The upcoming November meeting of APEC leaders in Vancouver is expected to generate an estimated \$23 million for the city. Some \$13 million of that will be the direct result of visitor spending and untold spin-off benefits as a result of the international visibility of Vancouver.

The meeting will draw an estimated 5300 delegates, 3200 media representatives and thousands of support staff to Vancouver.

Source: Tourism Vancouver

APEC Trade Ministerial — Outcomes

On May 9 and 10, APEC trade ministers met in Montreal to discuss ways to move forward APEC's trade and investment liberalization agenda. A number of important decisions were taken.

Highlights of the Meeting:

- Ministers agreed that by November 1997 they will identify sectors for early, voluntary liberalization that will increase trade in the region. Sectors that Canada is investigating include environmental goods and services, wood and paper products, and chemicals.
- APEC will help advance the work of the WTO on trade facilitation, especially in areas such as investment, competition policy and government procurement where APEC is on the leading edge.
- Ministers agreed to intensify domestic trade liberalization and to commit to further measures by November.
- Ministers welcomed the launch of an APEC customs tariff database on the World Wide Web, developed in partnership with FedEx, the official courier for APEC and Canada's Year of Asia Pacific. The database is the only one of its kind, providing consolidated tariff and customs-related information on APEC members for easy access by business.