

The U.S. Connection

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Back to business after September 11

Washington D.C. welcomes Building Products trade mission

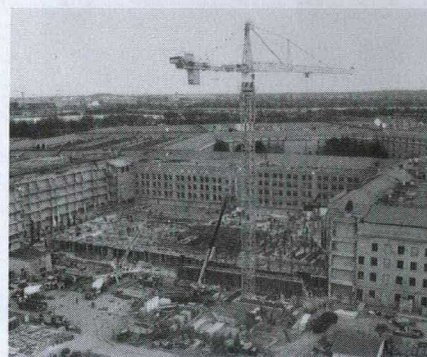
"Do we proceed, or don't we?" That was the question being asked after the events of September 11, 2001. At issue was a Building Products trade mission, in planning for months, targeting the dynamic Washington, D.C., region. The answer was, and continues to be, a resounding yes.

Ultimately, the Quebec Construction Association [L'Association de la construction du Québec (ACQ)] (www.acq.org) and the World Trade Centre (WTC) Montréal (www.wtcmontreal.com), supported by Canada Economic Development (www.dec-ced.gc.ca), brought the Building Products trade mission to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland, October 23-25, 2001.

A delegation of fourteen ACQ members, representing eight businesses, participated in seminars, site visits, networking events and one-on-one meetings. The delegation was led by Louis Potvin, President and CEO of LBL Skysystems (www.lblskysystems.com), who, as the head of a company that was already very successful in the target market, offered the benefit of his experience to the other participants.

All participants were tremendously reassured to learn that the local market was still active and open to new entrants. In fact, both regional and public representatives expressed the conviction that, if anything, activity in the

public building market would be increasing. For example, the utility of "building hardening," in which the



The Pentagon Renovation Program.

Pentagon was engaged prior to September 11, was graphically demonstrated, and the concept will now be applied to other public buildings deemed at risk. Within the building products market, the very strong commercial and residential sectors show no signs of slowing down either.

The personal touch

Given that the Canadians were targeting the American industrial building

Last call for the March 18-21 Extus Mission to FOSE 2002. See p. 15.

products market, which is expanding in Washington, the highlight of the mission was undeniably the one-on-one meetings with local general contractors who were very pleased with the opportunity to meet potential new suppliers and subcontractors and see their products. All of the American participants stressed the importance of being able to meet suppliers face-to-face before doing business.

The seminars on local and public markets proved to be very useful, providing valuable information to help the companies increase the effectiveness of their market entry efforts. A presentation on the red-hot topic of "green" buildings drew a spirited discussion about improving products currently in production as well as ways to develop and certify new products to meet the standards in this emerging niche market.

At the Canadian Embassy's networking reception, architects and engineers mingled freely with mission participants and local contractors.

Building successes

In the months following the mission, each of the participants has been invited to submit bids for between two to six large project competitions and all are awaiting the final results. Furthermore, prompted by recommendations from the American participants, at least one company, Orbi Metal (www.orbimetal.com), is considering hiring a local representative

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Check the **Business Section of the Canada-U.S. Relations Web site** at www.can-am.gc.ca ... for valuable information on doing business in and with the United States.

The Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) has experienced many changes since its creation in 1946. However, the Corporation's attention to quality customer service has remained consistent. Proposed amendments to the Canadian Commercial Corporation Act will strengthen the Corporation's commercial profile.

Update to legislation Strengthening CCC's capacity to serve its clients

In the last 50 years, CCC has developed a niche expertise, helping companies across Canada access government procurement markets worldwide. As Canada's international contracting agency, the CCC puts the power of Canada behind each export transaction that it supports.

Thousands of Canadian exporters have benefited from CCC's contracting expertise and its government-to-government mechanism to secure international contracts. CCC client satisfaction ratings have remained consistently high over the years, but CCC knew it could better serve clients by being more commercially oriented.

"Changes to the Corporation's operating structure were needed to allow the Corporation to become more commercially oriented and responsive to the needs of Canadian exporters in addition to strengthening its governance structure," explains Douglas Patriquin, President of CCC.

The first amendment calls for the separation of the positions of Chair of the Board of Directors and President,

thus bringing the organization's governance structure in line with modern corporate management practices and allowing the Board to be more independent from management.

The second change will permit CCC to charge commercial fees for service on its non-Defence Production Sharing Arrangement (DPSA) business. By charging a fee for its non-mandatory services, CCC will become more self-sufficient and able to expand its business beyond assisting Canadian exporters to sell into the U.S. market.

The third amendment authorizes the corporation to borrow funds in commercial markets. This will enable the Corporation to minimize its risk exposure by providing emergency cash flow to its exporter clients in advance of contracted payment flows from foreign buyers. This allows CCC's exporter client to finish its production run and deliver the contracted goods to the buyer, while minimizing the likelihood of calling in CCC's performance guarantee.

As stated by the Minister for International Trade Pierre Pettigrew, "These amendments will strengthen CCC's capacity to deliver the specialized services that have spelled success in export markets for thousands of Canadian companies and that have helped produce high-quality employment for Canadians across the country for many years."

For more information on the updates to the CCC Act, contact Sylvie Germain, Policy and Planning Analyst, tel.: (613) 995-9144, fax: (613) 995-2121, e-mail: sylvie.germain@ccc.ca

Details about the legislation and backgrounders can be found at: http://webapps.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/minpub/Publication.asp?FileSpec=/Min_Pub_Docs/104660.htm *

SHAPING TRADE SOLUTIONS FOR OUR EXPORTERS



The Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) is an export sales agency of the Government of Canada providing special access to the U.S. defence and aerospace markets and specializing in sales to foreign governments.

Canadian exporters can gain greater access to government and other markets, as well as a competitive advantage, through CCC's contracting expertise and unique government-backed guarantee of contract performance.

CCC can facilitate export sales that often result in the waiving of performance bonds, advanced payment arrangements and generally better project terms.

When requested, CCC acts as prime contractor for government-to-government transactions and provides access to preshipment export financing from commercial sources.

For more information, contact CCC, tel.: (613) 996-0034, toll-free in Canada: (800) 748-8191, fax: (613) 947-3903, Web site: www.ccc.ca

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in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Orbi Metal President Carlos Stella sums up the mission's success: "I strongly recommend this event to other exporters in the business. With the WTC Montréal and the Canadian government supporting us, we were able to make a much stronger impact as a group than we would have as individual companies."

More to come

The next ACQ Building Products trade missions in the U.S. will be held April 18-19, 2002, in Miami and

May 23-24, 2002, in Boston. For more information, contact Julie Bourgoin, WTC Montréal, tel.: (514) 849-1385.

For more information about business opportunities in the building products and services market in the Mid-Atlantic U.S., contact Amanda J.W. McNaughton, Canadian Embassy, Washington, D.C., tel.: (202) 682-7745, e-mail: wshdc.infocentre@dfait-maeci.gc.ca *

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