

expertise in the marine sector positions the province to attract investment in other knowledge-based fields, such as clinical trials management, regulatory assistance, business information and statistics.

Small Businesses — Huge Impact

As with the rest of Canada, export growth comes from both large and small enterprises. Atlantic Canada has its share of large-scale producers, such as Michelin, McCain, Irving, Clearwater, Fisheries Products International and Oxford Frozen Foods, which make a major contribution to the region's export growth. However, the "new economy" has also created opportunities for small- and medium-sized companies. Thanks to the cumulative effect of these enterprises, thousands of Easterners earn their pay-cheques making and exporting anything from chocolates to batteries and software to water test-kits. Although often located in rural communities, many have "gone global", finding niches in culture and giftware, information technology, foods and health care products.

A Team Effort

Just as the federal government has been very successful in organizing and carrying out a series of "Team Canada" trade missions, the Atlantic provinces have complemented this initiative with "Team Atlantic".

In April 1999, "Team Atlantic" enabled 39 East coast companies to participate in a trade mission to New England. The overwhelming majority of the participants found the trip extremely valuable. The mission generated immediate sales of \$2.2 million and created 19 full-time jobs and 10 seasonal jobs, with potential for more. For Royalty Hardwoods Ltd. of Montague, PEI, a specialty manufacturer producing maple, birch, pine, spruce, hemlock and tamarack products such as flooring, mouldings and furniture components, the mission resulted in its first-ever export sales. INNOVA Multimedia Ltd. of Newfoundland had been attempting to penetrate the export market for some time; the Team Atlantic mission provided a huge boost to that effort by enabling them to make contact with companies and organizations that might be interested in distributing their educational software. Fundy Fibreglass of Digby, Nova Scotia completed an initial \$170,000 sale to one New England company. Even more exciting is the fact that, because of the technology shift resulting in the application of Fundy's fibreglass components to the U.S. production line, the

client has retooled, increased productivity and reduced product costs, allowing them to confidently increase production and sales by 250 percent for calendar 2000. This will represent approximately US\$400,000 in sales to one U.S. customer.

The Future

In many areas, economic growth in Atlantic Canada is outpacing both national and international growth in the same sectors. Without question, the success of companies already investing in Atlantic Canada and using the region as their export base for goods and services will convince additional companies of the benefits and rewards to be gained by doing business there.

Small- & Medium-sized Atlantic Canada Businesses Going Global

- Unexus University, based in Fredericton's Knowledge Park, is the world's first private, Internet-based, degree-granting university. It has offices in Boston, Ottawa, Halifax and Calgary and existing partners in Kuala Lumpur. Additional partners are being sought in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China.
- BioScan Environmental Products Inc. of Truro, Nova Scotia, developed and produces a home water-test kit for coliform bacteria, including *E. coli*. The company has millions of potential customers in North America alone. BioScan plans to develop test kits for water hardness, chlorine, iron, manganese, lead, nitrates, phosphates and pH.
- Ganong Brothers Limited, founded 1873, employs 200 from rural New Brunswick. Ganong chocolates and confectionery products are sold in over 14 countries. In August 1999, Ganong announced the expansion of its fruit snack line, creating up to 26 new jobs.
- Alliance-Saint-Laurent Group of Edmundston, New Brunswick, announced in November 1999 the addition of 34 new jobs to increase its share of the growing U.S. market for corrugated cardboard caskets used mostly in cremation.
- Cisco Systems trains some 600 people a year at its Halifax facility in IT for global markets.