

## EDUCATION

### PLANNING FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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Promotional efforts by both the state and the city focus on high technology industries. "We want to attract foreign investment that requires skilled labour," says Omar Cruz, director of *ProExport Nuevo León*. "That way our highly educated work force can find jobs that compensate them well. If a low-skill manufacturer comes to our state and we know they will not survive in our high-skill, medium-wage environment, then we will pass them on to a lower-skill, low-wage state."

David Martínez, Director, *Dirección de Proyectos Internacionales, Secretaría General del Gobierno de Nuevo León*, International Projects for Nuevo León, said in an interview that the key target industries for new foreign investment are financial services, telecommunications, electronics, environmental technology, health care, marketing, distribution, software and tourism.

Monterrey's excellent technical training resources are among the northwestern region's most important assets. In particular, the *Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM)*, Monterrey Institute of Technology, is considered one of Mexico's leading universities, and is arguably the nation's most important centre for the development of new technologies. It has 65,000 students at campuses throughout Mexico, with about one-quarter of the enrollment at the Monterrey campus. The Monterrey campus includes the *Centro de Tecnología (Cetec)*, Centre for Advanced Manufacturing Technology, which is devoted to solving production automation problems.

Other important universities include *Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León*, which is the state university, *Universidad Regionmontana*, and the *Universidad de Monterrey*. All of these universities have programs designed to link their research work to practical problems in the industrial community.

Monterrey also features many bilingual schools, including 14 bilingual technical schools, which helps to maintain a good supply of English-speaking personnel.

## INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL MARKETS

The economy of the northeastern region is highly diversified, and most of Mexico's leading industries are present. Companies in the region have been hard hit by Mexico's economic crisis, and many of them are rationalizing their operations to adopt a stronger export orientation.

For example, a big Monterrey-based steelmaker named *Hyslamex* was exporting less than 5 percent of its product prior to the crisis. The domestic industries that were its biggest customers — construction, automaking and appliances — were all badly hurt by the peso devaluation in December 1994. Automotive sales dropped 56 percent in Greater Monterrey during 1995. But *Hyslamex* was able to quickly re-orient itself towards the export market. In the first nine months of 1996, exports rose to more than one-third of sales. Total sales rose by 25 percent, even though domestic sales were down 6 percent. Not all of Monterrey's major producers were able to accomplish this kind of turnaround, but most of them have increased their exports substantially.