



Access

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External Affairs
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Canadian Business Centre to Open in September

With flair — and plenty of flare — the Canada Business Centre in Mexico City (CBCM) will open its doors on September 1 with a gala fashion show featuring some of Canada's most talented designers.

Part of a fashion exporting trade mission, the show will be a stylish introduction to what will be a continuing hive of activity at the CBCM. After the models, musicians, florists and designers have departed, the Centre will be open for business. The first year may see events undertaken by manufacturers of other products, exporters of services, marketing managers, sales representatives and agents from the entire runway of Canadian endeavours.

The CBCM is Canada's first stand-alone trade centre, and the choice of Mexico City as its location indicates the strength of Canadian belief in the Mexican marketplace, a faith that has increased steadily even in these first months of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

One of the centrepieces of the Access North America program, the Centre will provide Canadian business people a working "home away from home." Tired of doing business from your hotel room? The CBCM will mitigate the feeling of being

unsupported in a new market environment by providing a professional, fully-supported and trouble-free working milieu. Among the facilities available: trilingual administrative, secre-

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tarial and clerical staff; voice mail; telephones with Canada Direct; facsimile service; translators.

Located near the Canadian Embassy in the downtown Polanco district of the Mexican capital, the Centre will offer a 600 square metre exhibition hall and an expandable seminar room. It will also contain up to 10 fully-equipped offices and a conference centre to be used on a

daily basis by visiting Canadian business people, industry associations and government officials.

The CBCM will not be an empty building housing sporadic events, but a dynamic facility with frequent activities to support private sector objectives in Mexico. Canadian staff, working with Mexican business, plan to establish the Centre as the place for Canada to do business in Mexico. The Department of

Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has consulted over 100 Canadian businesses in the planning process, to ensure that the Centre offers the services and facilities that Canadian companies need in order to do business effectively in Mexico.

Many of the over 6000 annual business visitors to Mexico seek access to the limited space at the Embassy. The CBCM will offer more rooms and facilities than the Embassy possibly can.

The CBCM will enhance DFAIT's participation in up to 20 major international trade fairs annually. It will also provide the site for follow-up solo shows, for up to 35 Canadian companies for 3-4 days each, to events held elsewhere. This will allow buyers from other parts of Latin America to attend events, and the

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Hasta La Vista!

Access will not publish in July and August, but will return to the pages of **CANADEXPORT** in September.

Have a good summer!

After the Fiesta

EXPORTERS REFLECT ON CANADA EXPO '94

Most of the exhibitors at CANADA EXPO in Mexico City this past March seemed to be having a grand time — working hard, yes, but enjoying the buzz that comes from taking part in a high-profile, well-attended event in a new and somewhat exotic market. A few took some time out to visit local beauty spots before or after the show, but the intense activity inside

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the Exhibimex site was a result of preparation, focussed work and a lot of good will and healthy curiosity.

After returning from CANADA EXPO, a number of exhibitors reflected on the show and its value.

"The Government of Canada did a heck of a good job," said Joseph Lipsett, President of **Compustep**, a company that produces large part machines in Peterborough, Ontario. "It was well organized, and well supported. It got a very good draw. We met some people, and for us it had a positive marketing result."

Mr. Lipsett, making his first visit to Mexico, ran up against some cultural difference. He found that in Mexico, people with whom he had appointments were often late or did not show up at all, but granted that some of this may have been due to the confusion after the assassination of Presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, which occurred midway through the trade show. But, he said, "Canada Expo produced some contacts we'll follow in the future, and two or three that may generate business."

Compustep made a contact for dis-

tribution of its products during CANADA EXPO, and as the company is considering entering the Argentinian and Chilean markets, this seems a successful outcome from their week in Mexico.

"We also had a week in which we were side by side with other Canadian business people. There was a good deal of networking and learning about the market. We may have some mutual business deals in Canada with four other Canadian companies."

Paul Mann, President of **National Connect** of Vancouver, also had a good CANADA EXPO. "I was very impressed with the logistics and the set-up, the way the movement of people was organized," he said.

Mr. Mann describes National Connect as a "corporate dating service. We're an information brokerage. We put companies together — find suppliers, manufacturers, whatever, in Indonesia, Venezuela or worldwide that you are looking for."

"We'll certainly be doing anything else like CANADA EXPO that comes along," Mr. Mann said. "The quality of people we wanted to see was definitely there. We have set up agents and opened up offices. There have been faxes galore."

Jay Charendoff, an architect who is the Latin American representative for **Yeadon, Ltd.**, based in Guelph, Ontario, thought "it was quite excellent." The firm makes air-supported prefabricated buildings and ships them to the end users.

"I was there with a product that most Mexicans have no clue about," he said afterward. "People were fascinated that a building of that large size could be pre-fabbed and inflated by air pressure."

He used a video presentation to introduce the wonders of the product and "made some excellent contacts." Since returning to Canada,

he has had requests from 10 different end users, examining the product's viability for everything from warehouses to pool covers. "I'm now pulling together the prices for these inquiries," he said recently.

NAFTA has made life somewhat simpler for Yeadon. "Applicable tariffs were heavy before — about 80 per cent. They are now approximately 25 per cent. There was no point in us looking at that market before. But Mexican businesses like leading edge products, and some companies looking to replace warehousing see our product as that. Also, the environmental considerations in firms that produce dust and noise are looking for ways to mitigate the problem — these buildings have simple ways to do this. NAFTA has made us price-competitive."

Corporate Development Director Glenn Peckover came to Mexico City representing **Northland Superior Supply Company Ltd.**, part of a larger company,

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Daycon, based in Winnipeg. Northland manufactures grain cleaning equipment.

"It was my first, and our first, time in Mexico," he says. "We were attracted by the government initiative, and intrigued by the possibilities NAFTA held out — we are interested in the international development of our business."

Mr. Peckover is a recent addition to his company, and brought to it an interest in exporting. "What the government set up for us was excellent,"

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MEXICAN OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE

The **Open Bidding Service** (OBS) from Information Systems Management Corporation is a national electronic service offering businesses current and complete information about procurement opportunities.

As of April 1, 1994, OBS has entered a contractual agreement with DFAIT for a one-year pilot. The OBS collects Mexican NAFTA procurement requirements, translates them from Spanish to English and French and posts the notices in the OBS. The primary source of the procurement opportunities is the Mexican business daily, *El Diario*. By the end of April, 30 notices were already posted out of Mexico. Time between publication in *El Diario* and translated appearance on the OBS is two days.

All that is needed to have access to this service is

a computer with a modem. The subscriber receives procurement notices from over 20 Canadian federal departments, including Government Services, the Province of Alberta, and the *U.S. Commerce Business Daily*. Other services include, but are not limited to, an online service from eight Canadian newspapers, a Bid Matching Service that will search the database for opportunities matching a company's profile, and an historical database of past procurement notices and awards.

Annual subscription fee is \$130, and online charges, from anywhere in Canada, are 42 cents per minute. Spokesperson Derek Peper says the programs are extremely user-friendly, requiring minimal computer expertise.

For more information, or to register with OBS, call 1-800-361-4620 (Ottawa area 613-737-3374).

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he says. "We learned a lot about the Mexican environment, talked to a few people, and I came back with a list of people with whom I will be in correspondence. Our current priorities are domestic, but it was a chance to assess what is down there. The market opportunity is different there — it would need product re-development in many instances."

Mr. Peckover felt that "the government did us a favour — by the logistical arrangements, the information, the briefing. Arranging the hotel, the transportation — all that helped."

His one reservation is that, because it was a mixed trade fair rather than an industry-specific one, the proportion of people to whom he passed his card and literature might not have been very well-focussed. But he did see the value of a high-profile show. While Northland's export venture may be on the back burner for a while, he expects to absorb what he has learned for future ventures in that direction.

Glenn Smith, President of **Cygnus**

Technology Ltd., an electronics service specialist in Fredericton, N.B., said afterward that it had been a problem "getting the equipment there and back." His display material arrived in the nick of time, but as of mid-May had yet to be returned. Feeling certain his paperwork had been in order, he was critical of Mexican customs and the freight forwarder engaged to transship Canadian products.

"But that was the only negative thing," he said later. "Considering

the bureaucracies involved, it was great — incredibly good. We had lots of inquiries, and some hot, hot, hot leads. We have people we're working with, and we are going to be following things up."

Smith is a firm believer in exploring the opportunities offered by exporting. "It's new money," he said during Canada Expo. "It's not just recirculated money out of the common stock. Canadian business people have got to realize that it's the only way."

• NEW PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE •

The Access North America Program has recently produced two new publications of interest to exporters.

The New North America: Opportunities for Canadians (349LB) deals with what's in store now the NAFTA has come into force, as well as how to prepare for and to take advantage of the widening trade horizons in the United States and Mexico.

Where to Find...: Info Sources for the Mexican Market (348LA) provides a comprehensive guide to gathering current and accurate information on doing business in Mexico.

Both are available from InfoEx, 1-800-267-8376 (Ottawa area 944-4000).

Mexico Streamlines its Requirements

One of the most frequent complaints of Canadian business visitors to Mexico recently has been about the amount of red tape necessary to get a business visa. Travellers to *CANADA EXPO* in March were particularly annoyed at having had to obtain this visa (at a cost of about \$100) for what was for most of them a five- or six-day trip with no selling anticipated.

Mexico has announced that, as of April 1, 1994, there is a new format for the admission into the country of business visitors who qualify under the temporary entry provisions of NAFTA Chapter 16. This will go a long way toward easing the frustrations of Canadian business visitors, some of whom had resorted to enter-

ing the country by tourist visa even when planning to conduct business.

The new visa is initially valid for 30 days and is issued without charge. The visa will continue to be available at Mexican embassies and consulates, but, more importantly, will now be issued by airlines, travel agencies and tourism offices, on board airplanes and at land and maritime entry points. It allows multiple entry in the 30-day period. After 30 days, it may be extended for up to a period of one year, but that extension will make it subject to a fee (currently \$100 U.S.).

A total of four such one-year extensions are allowed providing the terms under which the visas have previously been issued have

not changed.

Mexico has also prepared a guide for those business people, traders, investors, intra-company transfers and professionals who qualify under the new procedures.

The new visa will greatly facilitate the activities of Canadian business visitors to Mexico. Truckers, for example, can now obtain visas at border points. The system will encourage individuals to fill out the proper forms, meaning that fewer will be at risk of contravening Mexican immigration regulations.

Canadian members of a NAFTA working group on visas are continuing to monitor the concerns of Canadian business visitors on an ongoing basis.

CBCM - from page 1

CBCM will become a launching pad for exporters looking at markets in Central and South America.

There is also the opportunity for smaller solo trade shows, with 15-20 companies. The CBCM will be an ideal venue for conferences, receptions and seminars.

But while the government and Embassy will continue to stage their programs to enhance Canadian trade in Mexico, the Canadian Business Centre will be driven by exporters, sales teams, marketing strategists. The activities of the Centre are very much to be determined by those who choose to take advantage of its facilities, to set their own agendas, design their own, tailor-made, programs in Mexico.

Each company or group of companies has different needs, and the only limitation on Canadian businesses (within the laws of the affected countries!) will be imagination and enterprise. Despite a substantial lineup of DFAIT-spon-

sored events for its first year, the chronology of the CBCM will consist in large part of activities created by Canadian business people.

A new initiative, previously impractical in the absence of a low-cost venue, is the reverse trade show, where importers exhibit the wares they buy. This helps the first-time Canadian visitors get a line on what the market wants. Additionally, Canadian companies want to keep their local representatives involved in their export effort, and having the agents mount the show is one way to do this to great effect.

The CBCM is to be run on a busi-

ness basis. Fees will be charged for space rental, translation services, conference facilities and the like.

The CBCM will become an attractive and recognisable symbol of Canadian enterprise in a very short time. Its ongoing sequence of activities will help raise the profile of Canada in a market where we have been told we are very welcome, but not yet well known.

For further information, contact Latin American Caribbean Trade (LGT) by fax at (613)943-8806, or the CBCM fax at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City at (525) 724-7902.

Access

Access, the newsletter of the new Access North America (ANA) program, is published monthly and only in *CanadExport*. Subscribers to *CanadExport* automatically receive *Access*. It examines opportunities for Canadian businesses, introduces some Canadians already operating in the Mexican and U.S. market, profiles specific sectors, and notifies readers of forthcoming events related to doing business in Mexico.

Your feedback is welcomed; correspondence should be sent to *Access*, BCT, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0G2, or by fax, (613) 992-5791.

For further information on the copy of a brochure on North America, contact InfoEx at 1 (800) 967-3535 (In Ottawa 944-4000).

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