

Ideas



CENTRE FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION
A GPRC/PREDA Partnership

June, 2011

Diagnostic Project Ok'd

Written by Aaron Hinks, Herald Tribune staff, May 10/11 Reprinted with permission

With the approval of \$925,360 in funding from the Rural Alberta Development Fund, the Centre for Research & Innovation has teamed with the Beaverlodge Research Farm to create a new one-stop-shop for all honeybee diagnostics.

The program will research honey bee mortality across Alberta and the country. The new initiative at the federal research farm will study the three main contributors to honeybee mortality: Pests, pathogens and parasites.

"It's difficult for beekeepers to know exactly what is killing their bees (and) this diagnostic program will help farmers narrow down the problem," said Bruce Rutley, Director of the CRI. "We hope our diagnostics program will be able to help reduce bee mortality right across Canada."

Between 2003 and 2009, there were 605,288 bee colonies in Canada, 237,060 of which were in Alberta. Since Alberta hosts more than one-third of the nation's colonies, their wellbeing is crucial to the industry.

"The Peace Country makes up about 40% of the Alberta beekeeping industry. Alberta is a major honey producer. It's important to have this type of research facility

located in the heart of the region; it will strengthen beekeeping economics," said Rutley.

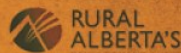
In 2006, the bee mortality rate rose from 15% to 40%. At the time, Canada had no designated research facility to monitor bee fatality; it is unknown what spiked the increase.

"A big chunk of the colonies in Canada are in Alberta, so 2006 was a big loss to the industry nationally," said research farm technician Andony Melathopoulos.

If the mortality rate continues to increase, it will have a serious effect on bee economics as well as Alberta's agricultural system.

"This extends outside of beekeeping. One of the largest industries in Alberta is the production of hybrid canola seed. The production of that seed requires a lot of bee colonies to pollinate," Melathopoulos explained. "Those high losses can have an impact on one of the biggest field crops in Canada."

"This bee diagnostics program adds another piece to the puzzle," Rutley said. "The college already has a Beekeeper Technician program, and now we have the bee diagnostics facility. Together we have a center of excellence for beekeeping that will service the industry very well."



Welcome Melissa

The Centre for Research & Innovation is pleased to welcome Dr. Melissa Day as the Research Coordinator for the Pollutants 2 Products (P2P) initiative.

Melissa attained her BSc Honours in Environmental Biology from the University of Alberta, MSc Botany from the University of Manitoba, and her PhD Ecology from the University of Alberta.

Melissa recently moved to Grande Prairie from Edmonton and became the new face on the GPRC Grande Prairie campus as of May 17th.

Melissa will be working with Dr. Weixing Tan on the Pollutants 2 Products initiative and can be reached at her office in E401-16 or call 780-539-2704.

Export Readiness

Over breakfast on May 19, 2011, the CRI hosted an interactive export readiness presentation at Centre 2000.

Attendees found out what the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service could do to assist them. Additionally the speakers shared their many and varied experiences and expertise. Attendees were also given the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the speakers for private consultations.

Response to the session has inspired many ideas for the formation of a local export self-help group. The CRI will continue to explore these ideas.

RADF Case Study Celebration

On May 6, 2011 the Centre for Research & Innovation hosted a celebration at Centre 2000. It seems that the Rural Alberta Development Fund (RADF) selected the CRI as an example of how their funding has brought a vision to life. Effective May 2, 2011, the CRI's story of progress and success was featured as a case study on the RADF website at www.radf.ca.

Seeded with \$3.2 million of RADF funding, the CRI was designed to help entrepreneurs in the Peace turn ideas and innovations into commercially viable services and products. Nearly three years later, the CRI and its "culture of innovation" are being recognized as a success.

RADF launched its series, Small Town, Big Sky, to tell the inspiring stories of innovative rural communities. They asked Albertans, "How big is your sky?" and to imagine the

possibilities that could become a reality with another \$100 million. With support from the RADF, more than 70 community-driven projects have taken off and are positively impacting communities by helping them to be more sustainable, vibrant and successful.



GPRC's Eligibility for New Research Funding

On May 6, 2011, Grande Prairie Regional College received confirmation that they had been deemed eligible to apply for Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) funding.

"CFI eligibility enables GPRC to gain access to the new funding program that has been created especially for Colleges and Technical Institutions," said Bruce Rutley, Director CRI. "We see CFI as the source of the next round of funding for the micro-algae research led by

Dr. Weixing Tan."

Created by the Federal Government, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation strives to build Canada's capacity to undertake world-class research and technology development. Thanks to CFI investment in state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, universities, colleges, research hospitals and non-profit research institutions are attracting and retaining the world's top talent, training the next generation of researchers and supporting private-sector innovation.

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Innovator's Workshop



The May 6, 2011, What comes after the “Big Idea”? Innovator's Workshop was a ‘big’ hit! The 18 innovators heard from a variety of speakers each with solid information to move their ideas forward.

Chris Laue, the CRI Manager of Innovation Services kicked things off with a quick overview. Then Holly Sorgen took the lectern and explained what Community Futures could do to assist innovators to become investor ready. Lou Beres and Robert Roy, NRC-IRAP, discussed the technical expertise and financing available to support the design and engineering of patented ideas. Fred Estlin gave an accountant's perspective on the cost of commercialization, Angel Investing and the issues involved in owner-managed businesses. Doug Thompson from Woodruff & Associates followed and gave a quick overview of intellectual property and patents. Then to wrap-up the afternoon, Kris Clemis-Love from Alberta Innovates Connector Service explained how they help by providing necessary information, connections and introductions.

Software-as-a-service; Tools for SME's

Today, small firms can tap into a swelling portfolio of business applications residing in far-off computer servers. These programs are a part of the *Internet Cloud*.

The Cloud is a set of hardware, networks, storage, services, and interfaces that enable the delivery of computing as a service. These services include the delivery of software, infrastructure, and storage over the Internet either as separate components or as a complete platform. Users just pay as they use. So-called software-as-a-service, or SaaS, offers small businesses a whole new level of capabilities.

Services have cropped up to manage Internet phone systems, do expense and travel accounting, and handle complex client sales and prospecting data for small firms. For modest fees, these suppliers assume the burden of keeping programs updated, secure and readily accessible.

At Google, the proliferation of such services played into the hands of the team behind Google Apps Premier Edition, the suite of Web-based email, calendar and clerical programs the company sells to businesses for \$50 a year per employee.

In March 2010, the search giant rolled out Google Apps Marketplace. Businesses can choose from more than 90 hosted services that tie into Google Apps. More than one million Google Apps users are now using services supplied by Google's marketplace partners.

IBM is making a similar bet that small firms will gravitate to a mix of

basic and specialized hosted services seamlessly blended by a tech giant doing the behind-the-scenes heavy lifting. In the spring of 2010, it announced partnerships with UPS, Skype, Salesforce.com and Silanis, and e-signature authentication maker. Subscribers to LotusLive, IBM's hosted email and document sharing service, can now ship packages, make phone call, manage customer records and authenticate documents directly from LotusLive. IBM intends to add more partners.

Microsoft, meanwhile, is easing small-business patrons into the Internet cloud with Office 2010. A new key function is when closing Word, Excel or PowerPoint, the user is able to navigate to “Save & Send”, then “Save to Web.” The file then flies off to SkyDrive, a free file-storage service that resides on Microsoft's cloud servers. The user can then access the SkyDrive file and work on it from any Web browser on any computing device. Unlike Google and IBM, however, Microsoft has not let any partners tie in.

Cloud Services

Hundreds of internet-delivered software apps and tech assistance programs are available to help small firms. A sampling:

AT&T Tech Support 360: Gives access to live tech help via online access to your PC. \$19/mth/user.

Central Desktop: Enables shared use of Office 2003, Office 2007 files. \$25/mth/user.

Concur Breeze: Manages employee expense reports. \$8/mth/user.

Speakeasy: Supplies advanced VoIP phone systems. \$30/mth/user.

Zimbra: Email and calendar system with advanced indexing search. \$4/mth/user.

Global Entrepreneurship Week 2011

The 2011 Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) will be held from November 14-20, 2011, and the week-long series of events will be supported by more than 1300 partners across all 50 states in the United States. GEW will also see some thirty-five thousand organizations in 100 countries around the world take part to spur on new ideas and create new companies.

Created by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the world's largest foundation dedicated to entrepreneurship, GEW will feature a number of programs and competitions at local colleges, high schools, government agencies and entrepreneurial support organizations for budding entrepreneurs, including:

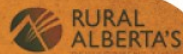
- **Startup Open (www.startupopen.com)** - a competition that will recognize the 50 most promising start-ups around the world;
- **Clean Tech Open Global Ideas Competition (www.unleashingideas.org/event-details/global-cleantech-open-ideas-competition)** - a competition that will reward the best clean technology idea submitted with \$100,000 (US) in support and services to turn their idea into a business;
- **Your Big Year (<http://www.unleashingideas.org/event-details/your-big-year>)** - Offers two winners a free year-long trip around the world to meet leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs;
- **Startup Weekend (<http://www.unleashingideas.org/event-details/startup-weekend>)** brings developers, marketers, product managers and startup enthusiasts together for 54 hours to share ideas and launch new start-ups.

If you're an aspiring or current entrepreneur, or just generally interested to see how unleashing new ideas can help shape our world, check out:

Global Entrepreneurship Week—www.unleashingideas.org



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Your comments and feedback are appreciated. Articles on topics relevant to innovation may be submitted for consideration.

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