

**Innovation Place Newsletter**  
**August, 2001 Edition**

**Innovation Place realized as a model for international research park development**

What does the Malaysian state of Sarawak have in common with the province of Saskatchewan?

Both jurisdictions have a strong commitment to progressing from a commodity-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. One of the tools the province of Saskatchewan has utilized to achieve this goal is the development of Innovation Place, now considered one of North America's most successful research parks.

The Sarawak government considers Innovation Place an excellent model for the development of its own technology park, to be located on 2,000 acres of land just outside the state capital, Kuching. In 2000, the state government signed a contract with the Saskatchewan Research Council to advise on the project.

David Grier, Director of Small Industry Services with the Saskatchewan Research Council, explains, "The SRC has done a number of projects in Southeast Asia in the general area of support for the innovation chain since the mid-1980s. Through our activities in this area, we got to know the Canadian Commercial Officer in the High Commission in Malaysia. It was he that introduced us to this opportunity.

"In addition, the Sarawakians had done a previous project investigating research/technology parks and had discovered Innovation Place. The Chief Minister (equivalent to our Premier) himself had visited here while in Canada to visit his daughter who lives in Ottawa. So it was a combination of SRC's international experience, our connections in the international community and Innovation Place's very strong reputation as a successful research park that got us the job," says Grier.

Grier, acting as team leader, assembled a project team of local experts. Grier says team members offered "international project experience, innovation system development experience, a knowledge of IT and biotech which are key sectors in the new economy, and knowledge of the development and operation of a successful research park."

The project team, led by Grier, included Gerry Brown, Director of Business Development with the SRC; Dale Lindquist, an IT expert with ADS/BDM; and Austin Beggs, Innovation Place Marketing Manager and research park development management specialist with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation.

Beggs says, "The team turned out to be a powerful tool, because we all brought different strengths to the table. This proved very valuable because the project turned out to be much broader in scope than was first thought. We were able to work together with the Sarawakians to narrow the scope of the project and focus on strategic issues and opportunities. We helped them to define and enunciate their vision for their research park."

Beggs says the project team was particularly impressed by the Malaysian's expertise in practical financial planning. "They were obviously committed to this concept because at all

levels, whether it was the Chief Minister or various heads of departments, they were very eager to see how we could assist them in moving this vision forward."

The project team traveled together to Malaysia in July of 2000, where they met with all parties involved in developing the research park in Kuching, including the local chambers of commerce, the academic community, the business sector, technical sector and government officials.

The trip also included a visit to the proposed site of the park, located on 2,000 acres of jungle, adjacent to a tidal river.

"Upon our return, each of the project team members put together their findings for a preception report which was assembled by David Grier. We narrowed down the many areas of interest to two or three strategic foci which we thought would be key to the development of the park," says Beggs.

At the end of July, a delegation of Sarawakian officials traveled to Saskatoon to tour Innovation Place. "This was a very useful experience for them, as they were able to see the relationship between Innovation Place and the University campus. They met with a number of the research park's tenants who confirmed the things we had been saying to the Malaysians about the need for cluster development and the need to interact with the University," says Beggs.

In August of 2000, Grier and Beggs returned to Sarawak for additional meetings with officials, and to obtain further information to refine the strategies being developed by the project team.

"We wanted to be sure we were aware of and had captured all of the various issues that needed to be dealt with in our report," says Beggs.

Upon their return to Saskatoon, the project team worked together to finalize the report. "What impressed me about the process was how well it was managed by the SRC and the unanimity of the team's approach to the project. We agreed on objectives and goals very quickly. It was a very positive experience for me and I think for the other members of the team," says Beggs.

Issues which the report addressed included the need for the development of a transit corridor and on-site housing to service the research park, which could eventually accommodate as many as 40,000 employees.

"We also wanted to encourage interaction between the research park and the two neighboring universities, as well as the medical research clinic that's going to be built adjacent to the site. That was a new concept to them," says Beggs.

The project team stressed the need to build the research park on the local strengths of Sarawak and the Island of Borneo where the state is located. "That's the Innovation Place model: to build on local strengths and local capabilities. Then because of that local capability, we were able to attract foreign organizations to our research park," says Beggs.

"That was a new approach for the government of Sarawak. I think it helped to crystallize their concepts about marketing the research park. We were also able to identify some local opportunities which they had not considered."

In October of 2000, Grier presented the final report to the government of Sarawak. "The response was very positive," says Grier. "They have now moved to the development of cabinet decision items based on our work."

Grier says the project team hopes to remain involved in the further development of the research park. "We would like to remain involved and the Sarawakians would like to have us involved. However, at this point, there are no arrangements in place. We continue to keep in touch with one another."

Grier adds that as a result of the opportunity to work on the project, he feels rewarded by "the strong friendships that developed among the project team members and with our client. I felt very at home there, in spite of the cultural and climatic differences."

Beggs agrees, saying, "We found the Malaysians to be warm and welcoming. They were very pleasant and outgoing people. We deeply enjoyed their company and their country."

While there, Grier and Beggs discovered many similarities between Saskatoon and Sarawak. "We both live in river cities, although theirs is a tidal river. Both jurisdictions are resource and commodity-based economies, eager to take advantage of the new economy as much as possible," says Beggs.

"Like us, they are a low population state far from the seat of national power, and have an economy based almost entirely on exploiting natural resources, as does Saskatchewan," says Grier.

Beggs says that Sarawak is not the only international jurisdiction looking to model new business development projects after Innovation Place. Beggs is currently consulting with clients in Eastern Canada, the United States and as far away as Panama, on the development and management of research parks.

"Innovation Place is globally known, and its that sort of global reputation that causes others to want to visit here, to determine what the model is, and to emulate that model as much as possible," says Beggs.

Rather than seeing other research parks as potential competitors, SOCO takes a more altruistic view, says Beggs. "The more research parks there are in Canada, the better off the Canadian economy is. The more buoyant the Canadian economy, the more buoyant the Saskatchewan economy is. The more buoyant the Saskatchewan economy, the better off the park is.

"It's not competition so much as it is interaction between research parks that we're trying the encourage. We want to use this development and management process as a way to market Saskatchewan's capabilities outside of our borders," says Beggs.

## **24 Hour Relay rocked around the clock!**

On June 9 and 10, the normally serene landscaped grounds of Innovation Place were transformed into a giant activity zone as the host site of the 24 Hour Relay for Easter Seal Kids.

Carrie Olson of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council said that this year's 24 Hour Relay proved to be a huge success, with \$94,991 raised to support programs designed to enable kids with disabilities. "Last year, the fund-raising total was just over \$70,000 so the amount of funds raised increased significantly."

The team to earn top fund-raising honours was Century 21; they drummed up donations totalling over \$16,000.

"This was the first year that the 24 Hour Relay had an official website, allowing us to accept on-line donations," says Olson. "We gave away a prize to the top on-line fund-raiser. This year, the award went to Marilyn St. Marie."

The number of relay teams participating also increased in 2001, reports Olson. This year, 27 teams of approximately 20 people each walked, jogged, ran or wheeled their way around the course at Innovation Place for 24 consecutive hours. When all the numbers were crunched, relay participants had chalked up a total of 3,889.6 kilometers in 24 hours.

"We changed the layout of the site this year, and received some very positive comments as a result. Everyone said they really enjoyed themselves and were very excited to be there," says Olson. "There was a real feeling of community spirit. We were very pleased."

A new event was added to turn up the fun at the 2001 24 Hour Relay, says Olson. "We added a Tug-Of-Water competition, in partnership with Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services. It was a lot of fun and really wet - so it was good that we had some warm weather. Many teams told us that they are definitely going to be in that competition next year."

An event on this scale requires a huge amount of volunteer support, and Olson says the 24 Hour Relay was fortunate to have approximately 150 volunteers participate. "We had quite a few volunteers from Innovation Place. The set up and take down went very smoothly this year. It was just excellent."

The funds raised by the 24 Hour Relay now go to support three programs established by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council: Camp Easter Seal at Lake Manitou near Watrous, the Summer Fun Program and Adaptive Technology Services.

Camp Easter Seal provides an opportunity to enjoy summer fun to hundreds of children with disabilities over the summer months. Often, it's their very first opportunity to try such activities as swimming, boating, horseback riding or wagon rides. Each session lasts one week, in an environment specially designed to eliminate barriers and help children with disabilities access a traditional summer activity.

Adaptive Technology Services matches children with disabilities to specialized technology that will help them to be more independent. Equipment like computers is provided that will enhance communication or mobility at home, at school or at play.

The third program funded by the 24 Hour Relay is the "Summer Fun" urban day camps, held in Saskatoon, Regina, Yorkton and Swift Current. "It's a summer urban program that takes kids with disabilities within the city to venues like a museum or swimming pool. It's one-on-one with a volunteer, making it a safe and enjoyable outing," says Olson.

Serious planning will begin in September for the 2002 24 Hour Relay, says Olson. "Then we'll be out in full force again, encouraging teams and sponsors to come on board."

### **Cronus Technologies awarded software development contract by PepsiCo**

Since its start-up four short years ago, Cronus Technologies Inc. has grown from a fledgling family-owned home-based business to a dynamic information technology consulting/development firm with offices in the Galleria Building at Innovation Place.

Cronus specializes in e-business solutions, Internet strategy/marketing, web portal development, enterprise applications and database systems with a particular emphasis on Oracle-based solutions.

"We combine the latest technology with proven business principles to transform your investment in information technology into a strategic business advantage," says Cary Schuler, Business Development Director with Cronus Technologies.

Offering a broad range of services, Cronus has established a large and diverse customer base.

Just weeks ago, the company signed an agreement with U.S. soft drink giant, PepsiCo, to develop communications software that will support the corporation's human resources activities across its business divisions: Pepsi, Frito-Lay and Tropicana. The project will be completed in partnership with award-winning human resources content provider, PartnerComm Inc., based in Arlington, Texas.

By deploying Cronus web-based communications software, PepsiCo gains the benefits of a flexible, fast and cost-effective method of communicating its HR information to their employees - anytime, anywhere! PepsiCo anticipates a significant cost savings by implementing a web-based communication system for its human resources documents.

"Utilizing the web enables PepsiCo to reduce the need to distribute expensive print-based human resources documents to approximately 200,000 employees," explains Carey Schuler.

"Print communication is expensive to produce and ship, and it's cumbersome to store. Print documents are difficult to share between employees in different locations, and revisions or updates generally require the creation of entirely new documents, starting the cycle all over again. Cronus communication software enables PepsiCo to overcome these limitations."

An additional benefit of the web communication is that the information is always up-to-date, he adds. "PepsiCo employees know that the benefit plans contained on their company Intranet are the latest versions. The sophisticated search capabilities of Cronus software make it very easy for employees to zero-in on the information they require."

Rodney Schuler, Director of Technical Services for Cronus Technologies, says, "We view finalization of the PepsiCo contract as the beginning of a strategic alliance between Cronus Technologies and PartnerComm to develop a variety of IT solutions. The combination of PartnerComm's award-winning content creation expertise and Cronus information technology capabilities create a strategic partnership from which to pursue additional opportunities."

The principles of Cronus Technologies are extremely excited about the PepsiCo contract. "We are excited to be given this opportunity. We are proud to be located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Through the capabilities of information technology, many of the projects we work on can be done remotely, allowing our employees to remain here in Saskatchewan while offering our services to companies across North America," says Carey Schuler.

Cronus is also proud to be serving clientele based right here in Saskatchewan. In addition to the new PepsiCo contract, Cronus has inked an agreement for software development with the province's largest payroll provider, the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO). SAHO is the employer representative for 32 health districts and affiliated health agencies in Saskatchewan, and provides payroll services for approximately 30,000 employees.

Cronus will be implementing a content management portal solution to enable SAHO to migrate its Payroll and Systems department reporting services to a web-based format. The project includes integrating SAHO's legacy payroll system with a web-based reporting environment. Utilizing Cronus' portal solution enables SAHO to enhance their current system with the latest in Internet technologies. Improving the reporting capabilities of the existing payroll system allows SAHO to continue to utilize their significant payroll system knowledge while providing a number of additional benefits to their members. Additionally, the new solution allows SAHO P&S staff to deploy informational content provided to their members through the new web portal.

"The SAHO project effectively demonstrates Cronus' flexibility in integrating a client's existing legacy systems with a leading-edge web-based portal," says Cary Schuler. Immediate benefits of implementing the new system include reduced report turn-around time, reduced costs associated with printing, better access to management information, advanced search capability on all reports and easy access to historical data.

"The web portal will now allow organizations to use today's technology to expand access to reporting information already produced by the payroll system. Utilizing new interactive tools, end users will have the ability to analyze reporting information not attainable through traditional hard copy reporting systems. SAHO is very excited to have the opportunity to provide this value-added service to our members," says Susan Antosh, Vice-President of SAHO.

Rodney Schuler says that whether Cronus is marketing its products and services to international clients or organizations based right here in Saskatchewan, there are many advantages to being located in Saskatoon.

"Saskatchewan has a lot to offer the world in the technology field and we are pleased to be part of this growing sector of the local economy. We made a conscious decision to start our business in Saskatchewan. Being located here enables us to take advantage of the wealth of

talent that is available in the province. The University of Saskatchewan should be commended on the quality of the graduates they are developing in the IT sector."