

September 16, 2009

New Manufacturing Productivity Tools Highlight Local Resources

(Red Deer, Alberta) The manufacturing sector in central Alberta is stronger today, thanks to new information tools developed in the *Central Alberta Manufacturing Industry Productivity Improvement Project*. The aim of the Project was to improve awareness of local resources amongst manufacturers in the region.

CAEP collaborated on the project with Productivity Alberta - a service of Alberta Finance and Enterprise, Central Alberta Rural Manufacturers Association (CARMA), and the Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network (CARIN).

“Together, these organizations help foster economic growth throughout the central region, and provide resources to manufacturers to help them raise the bar on productivity and innovation.” explained CAEP Chair Dale Barr. “We wanted to ensure manufacturers were able to connect quickly and easily to the wide array of resources available.”

Based on research and stakeholder consultation, the following Manufacturing Productivity Tools were developed:

1. *Sharpen your Competitive Edge* brochure: highlights world class expertise and assistance provided by CAEP, CARMA and the Red Deer College Centre for Innovation; online at: http://www.centralalberta.ab.ca/imagesedit/CAEP_Brochure_April2009_11.pdf
2. Web content for CAEP, including a Central Alberta Manufacturers Directory, online at: www.centralalberta.ab.ca/manufacturingCentralAlberta
3. Web Content for CARMA and CARIN (Red Deer College Centre for Innovation).
4. USB Flash Drive: The USB Drive has room for 1 GB of data storage; content includes the Central Alberta Manufacturers Directory and a pop-up menu to direct users to the CAEP web content.

The brochures and USB Flash Drives were distributed to key manufacturers, members and stakeholders in August 2009. For more information on CAEP and its successes visit www.centralalberta.ab.ca.

Backgrounder attached

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Media enquiries may be directed to:

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BACKGROUND

Manufacturer Definition:

- A manufacturer is generally defined as a business that generates income by adding value to raw materials and/or lower value components and selling the finished products.

Manufacturing in Central Alberta

- The central region, defined by CAEP's boundaries, has approximately 240 key manufacturers.
- Much of central Alberta's manufacturing sector involves metal fabrication for the oil and gas industry. Key industry sectors represented throughout the region include:
 - Agri-Food and Agri-Processing
 - Architecture, Engineering and Construction
 - Building Products
 - Chemicals and Petrochemicals
 - Energy Extraction, Servicing and Consulting
 - Industrial Machinery and Equipment
 - Information and Communication Technology
- Through CAEP, manufacturers can connect with businesses, municipalities and government to access critical information and resources. CAEP played a pivotal role in creating CARMA, the voice of our region's manufacturers, and strongly supports the Centre for Innovation in Manufacturing at Red Deer College.

Labour Force:

- In 2008, manufacturing employed over 144,000 people in Alberta with wage levels about 19% above the provincial average.
- In 2008, Alberta's overall labour force productivity was higher than any other province's. The total value added per hour in Alberta exceeded the Canadian average by 16 per cent. (Source: Alberta Finance and Enterprise, Labour Force Productivity 2008, Real GDP per Hour Worked, in 2002 constant dollars)

Manufacturing Statistics:

- The manufacturing industry's share of the Alberta Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is around 10%. (Source: Alberta Finance and Enterprise, www.albertacanada.com, Nov 20, 2008)
- Every \$1 of manufacturing output in Alberta generates \$3.22 in total economic activity –the largest economic multiplier of any sector in the Alberta economy. (Source: CAEP Rural Manufacturing Opportunity Identification Project Report, 2008)
- Alberta has had a rapidly growing manufacturing base. Between 1998 and 2008, manufacturing shipments more than doubled to \$70.1 billion. (Source: Alberta Finance and Enterprise, www.albertacanada.com)
- Alberta's manufacturing sector is closely tied to the resource sector. About two-thirds of manufacturing output consists of value-added resource products such as petrochemicals and lumber. In 2008, the largest manufacturing sectors were refined petroleum products, chemicals, and food and beverages. (Source: Alberta Finance and Enterprise, www.albertacanada.com)
- In June 2009, the value of Alberta manufacturing shipments fell 29.5% from June 2008, to \$4.5 billion. The food products sector registered the largest increase of 21.0%, followed by beverages (+2.8%). The largest decreases were in petroleum and coal products (-45.0%) and computers and electronics (-42.0%). On a year-to-date basis, Alberta manufacturing shipments fell by 19.9% from the same period in 2008. On a national basis, the value of manufacturing shipments fell by 18.4% over the same period. (Source: Monthly Economic Review, www.albertacanada.com/statpub/1171.html, August 2009)

Key Contacts for additional information.

1. **Productivity Alberta – a service of Alberta Finance and Enterprise**

The Government of Alberta, in close partnership with industry and other levels of government, is working to help Alberta companies improve their productivity and innovation performance. Productivity Alberta uses a strategic three-pronged approach to address the productivity growth challenges faced by our province:

- i. education and awareness of productivity
- ii. productivity enhancement tools
- iii. policies to promote and enhance productivity and innovation

In the next few months Productivity Alberta will be launching a new web portal to give industry instant access to interactive benchmarking and measurement tools, customized menus of programs, services, funding, and continuing education opportunities, and access to the latest news and reports on productivity improvement and innovation. Contact us to be notified when the Productivity Alberta web portal is launched.

Contact: Productivity Alberta

Tel: 780.427.6648 (call 310.0000 toll-free from outside Metro Edmonton)

E-mail: productivity.alberta@gov.ab.ca

Website: www.albertacanada.com/productivity

2. **Red Deer College – Advanced Manufacturing in Central Alberta**

Manufacturers develop new products and discover groundbreaking advanced manufacturing strategies at the Centre for Innovation in Manufacturing at RDC.

Working with the latest technology and equipment, faculty and students work with you to come up with innovative solutions to your real-life manufacturing problems. Visit the Centre to see state-of-the-art equipment, including robotics, in action and to work with students and instructors who are highly trained in prototyping, instrumentation and CNC machining.

RDC has served the needs of students and the community for 45 years. With more than 75 programs to choose from, we pride ourselves on providing a practical education, in a genuine and sustainable learning environment. Our 7,800 full-time and part-time credit students and more than 13,000 continuing education students are at the core of everything we do.

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3. **Central Alberta Rural Manufacturers Association (CARMA)**

There is a network of innovative manufacturers of all sizes, from a wide range of industries, collaborating for everyone's success.

Through networking and educational events, members access an amazing depth and breadth of technology, expertise and information. CARMA members often compare notes on local issues and global challenges and work together to develop unique solutions to common problems.

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