



OKANAGAN SHUSWAP TECHNOLOGY ATTRACTION STRATEGY

Economic development organizations from throughout the Okanagan and Shuswap valleys in conjunction with the Okanagan Science and Technology Council are collaborating on an innovative new plan to attract technology companies to the region.

The group intends to capitalize on recent developments such as IBM's assertion that the Okanagan is the best place to build a data centre in North America and their partnership with Rackforce; Disney's purchase of Kelowna-based Club Penguin; the ongoing growth of the University of British Columbia Okanagan and Okanagan College; the region's attractive quality of life and the existing highly entrepreneurial technology sector consisting of over 250 companies

A four-part strategy is being developed that includes:

1. A labour market study of the region that will be funded by Service Canada and will be completed in late summer 2008 for a cost of \$80,000
2. An initial consultation with a prominent site selection company to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the region beginning in late spring (running in parallel to the Service Canada study) for completion in the fall of 2008 for a cost of \$20,000
3. A detailed strategy for promotion and attraction to be completed by the end of 2008 for a cost of \$30,000
4. The implementation of the strategy beginning early in 2009 and continuing until 2010 for a cost of \$200,000

The strategy will examine parameters such as competitive advantage, target markets, research and development capability, human resources, skills and training, infrastructure, access to capital and commercialization capacity. The intent is to raise both the quality and quantity of jobs through out the Okanagan and Shuswap, to generate significant economic growth by attracting successful companies to the region and to produce a model that can be deployed in other parts of British Columbia as well. It is intended to build on the strengths of the region rather than to try and attract a completely new industry

This initiative is supported by:

- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
- Okanagan Science and Technology Council
- Salmon Arm Economic Development Society
- Okanagan Research and Innovation Centre

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