



Alberta Ingenuity Centre for Carbohydrate Science Announcement: Dr. Peter Hackett

> July 23, 2009

> Location: University of Alberta

Good morning everyone: Minister Ambrose, Dean Taylor, Chairman Heidecker and David Bundle.

Before I begin, let me thank some folks at WED: David Woynorowski, Rose Amlani and Doug Maley - although I suspect that Doug is tooling around somewhere in his Mercedes. We are very, very grateful for all that you have done today.

It is another great day for research and innovation here in Alberta. Not only do we have the prospect of the renewed research and innovation system being developed under the leadership of the Honourable Doug Horner coming into being – a system that will build upon the great foundation built in Alberta by organisations like the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research and Alberta Ingenuity. And a system that will move from good to great, helping achieve Premier Stelmach's goal of developing that next generation knowledge-based economy so important for the future of the Province.

Not only that, it's a great day because we have yet another example of the Province of Alberta and the federal government cooperating, building great partnerships that are facilitating and accelerating the translation of research into viable commercial products and services with benefits for the global community.

Minister Ambrose, I know that if Minister Horner were here today he would congratulate you and Minister Yellich once again for your leadership in supporting projects under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement that will make a real difference in the lives of Albertans. Projects which promise to bring real “Made in Canada” benefits to the rest-of-the-world.

They say, it takes a village to raise a child, and it takes an innovation system, a regional innovation system AND a national system of innovation both aligned to raise in Canada that nation sparkling with innovation that we know Canada can be – a nation sparkling with innovation – with the points of light sparkling most brilliantly here in Alberta.

For that is our vision, a place that just sparkles with innovation.

The Alberta Ingenuity Centre for Carbohydrate Sciences is now in its second five-year term of funding. It harnesses Alberta’s brain power, focusing specifically on developing therapeutics, vaccines, medical devices and diagnostics for the health and pharmaceutical industries. The Centre is based at both the Universities of Alberta and Calgary. It hosts some of the best researchers in carbohydrate science in the world. It gives them the resources to achieve great things. It partners research stars with innovative industries to continue to bring the best people to our province – researchers, students, industry leaders plus investment – building Alberta’s advantage and creating new opportunities.

Stars like Dr. Christine Szymanski, who has been recruited to Alberta from the National Research Council in Ottawa as an Alberta Ingenuity Scholar. Christine has emerged as a leader in food-safety technologies. Integrating her expertise in carbohydrate science with nanotechnology, gives her the opportunity to develop improved vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics for food borne pathogens like Campylobacter and Salmonella.

And companies like TheraCarb Inc., a spin-off company from the Centre. TheraCarb works to commercialize vaccines and treatments for infectious and neurodegenerative disease. We hope that companies like TheraCarb, will grow and thrive in Alberta, creating more jobs, keeping our best students to work here, all the while bringing products into the global marketplace.

TheraCarb was one of the seven companies worldwide and the only Canadian company to be recognized with a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges Explorations Grant for Innovative Global Health Research which awards scientists exploring bold new solutions for health challenges in developing countries.

Minister Ambrose, if you will allow me I want to stop and personalize this for you. Last night, I went with my granddaughter Emma, to the International Airport to pick up my daughter Alison. Alison was returning for two years in Togo, West Africa. And Alison brought with her fourth grandchild and my newest grandson, Kwasi Emmanuel, four months old. I have an African grandchild. That is the global village. Now, Kwasi, Alison and Kudjo, all have Malaria, its hard to escape it in Togo. There is no vaccine against Malaria. Every two minutes a child, under the age of five dies from the disease.

So we in Edmonton are intimately linked to the big problems in the rest of the world – none of us stand alone.

That's what the Gates Grand Challenge are all about. Building a global system of innovation that can make a difference on the big problems.

Carbohydrate science is central to the vaccine problem as the sugars at the surfaces of cells are the key to way cells talk to each other and thereby to the immune response.

It is my hope that the researchers in the Alberta Ingenuity Centre for Carbohydrate Science will seize the opportunity provided by this funding that is announced here today. That they will probe ever deeper into the molecular interactions that are central to some of the world's biggest challenges. That they will continue to ensure that ideas flow from researchers to into companies that can make a difference. That they will continue to lead and build a nation sparkling with innovation and they will use that leadership to make a better world.

Again, thank you all for being here for today's event. It is an exciting time in the province. There is a wave of big things continue to come.

Alberta Ingenuity was proud to be but a small part of it all.