



Nanotechnology and Alberta's Strategic Industries

> May 13, 2008

> Industrial Sector Stakeholder Dinner: Peter Hackett

> INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone and thanks for being here. Welcome some old friends and welcome some new friends. I hope that you will have a good time tonight – I know that you will.

A special welcome to our panel members who have come here to offer their perspectives on opportunities in nanotechnology in the key sectors of Alberta's economy Agriculture, Forestry, Energy, Environment and Health and Medical Technologies.

>Some 20 years ago...

with two colleagues, Martin Moscovits from Toronto and Dennis Salahub from Montreal, I prepared a proposal to the Federal Government around what we called 'Systems of Finite Size'. And that's why I am here today.

We were told that while the proposal was exciting and the researchers were great; the ideas were impractical. Industry would never be interested. There would never be applications. The network was cancelled.

Maybe it was just another bad proposal and this is just sour grapes. Or maybe it was just bad branding. 'Systems of Finite Size' is called *nanotechnology* these days.

>Fast forward 20 years.

I was NRC's Vice-President Research. Arthur Carty had given me the task of bringing an NRC Institute to Alberta. We had none, and we getting tired of meeting Bob Fessenden and Roger Smith, who was then VP Research at the UofA, and having no answer to the question: "Bet you can't do just one."

At any rate, at one point, back at NRC we had sold a certain Kevin Lynch on the concept of regional innovation systems and we suddenly had money. I called a certain Bob Church and a certain Roger Palmer and said, "how about systems-of-finite-size - I mean nanotechnology?"

And we did it on a handshake. A \$120 million partnership to create NINT – on a handshake.

That's why I am in Alberta - because we could do things on a handshake.

Last year two friends, Bob Fessenden and Ron Dyck, came to see me. And they told me about their plans for the Government of Alberta's Nano Strategy. Could Ingenuity help? You bet we could! I had to go to our Trustees, but they took no time to agree, and once again we did it on a handshake.

In short form, Ingenuity will invest \$100 million to create an Accelerator in nanotechnology. The Province is providing \$15 million to Ingenuity to build a graduate student program in nanotechnology and today Alberta announced that it is providing a further \$25 million to Ingenuity to deliver an industry research partnership program in nanotechnology.

Another \$130 million investment – on a handshake.

>Now why is this handshake stuff important?

JAPAN, FINLAND, IRELAND, PORTUGAL

ALBERTA IS RICH!

It takes a few committed partners to make a change under those circumstances.

And we need to do it on handshake.

Let's not lose that key strategic advantage. Let's not forget what got us where we are today.

Because each of our industrial sectors have unique challenges and opportunities, this few days of scrutiny in what the landscape looks like here will show us where we can dig in to make the biggest impact to solve Alberta's problems and enhance our global competitiveness.

>So, nanotech is putting us on the road...

to becoming a global innovation icon that will bring an enormous swell of benefits – both socio-economic and for creating a better future for our grandchildren.

We'd never dream of doing this without the help of everyone in this room. Enjoy your evening.

Thank you for your engagement in this challenging and important dialogue.