

# Leading resurgence from the recession

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As Canada contemplates its technology strategy and emergence from a recession, one organization is helping plant the seeds that could lead to the next Nortel or Research in Motion.

The non-profit organization Okanagan Research and Innovation Centre (ORIC) is planning its expansion — this time in Penticton — to create a business incubator that will draw on the intellectual horsepower of the South Okanagan and link with Okanagan College to help nurture new technology businesses.

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# ORIC

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“When you think about the scientific community that exists in the South Okanagan, with the National Research Council’s Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory (DRAO), the Pacific Agrifood Research Station and now the planned Okanagan College Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Technologies and Renewable Energy Conservation, you realize that there are opportunities for developing new technology-based businesses that we need to exploit,” said ORIC president Peter Haubrich.

ORIC, which was started in 2005, manages a successful technology business incubator at DRAO and expanded last year in downtown Kelowna. ORIC is home to several start-up and emerging technology companies, including Pro-Active Safety Systems Technologies, Vericorder Technology, Vineyard Networks, EvolutionaryInk and SituWare.

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The Kelowna office is also home to the Okanagan Innovation

Peter Haubrich

Fund and the Southern Interior Innovation Fund, as well as hosts a complete team of NRC’s Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP).

When the \$28-million Centre of Excellence opens on the Penticton campus in 2011, ORIC will have incubator space in the building.

“We’ve had a long affiliation with Okanagan College and are excited at the opportunity to establish a presence in Penticton on the College campus, and in association with a project as visionary as the Centre for Excellence,” said Haubrich.

“The new Centre for Excellence features leading edge green technology,” said Okanagan College President Jim Hamilton.

“A major focus will be training technicians and tradespeople to use the latest in sustainable building technologies. Connecting entrepreneurs with the expertise of the College and our industry partners makes good sense.”

At first, people might not see the link between something such as the science at work at ORIC, DRAO and the building trades, but it is definitely there, said Haubrich.

“Homes, warehouses, and office buildings are becoming increasingly reliant on communication and smart technologies,” he said.

“They use radio signals to control heating and ventilation systems, to optimize construction, measure and report structural loads — the list goes on. And there is an incredible amount of expertise focused on radio technology, advanced signal processing, software and electronics. There is opportunity for innovation and commercialization that we ought to — and will — take advantage of.”

It’s also a tremendous opportunity to expose students to a culture of blending research, learning, and entrepreneurialism, said Donna Lomas, Okanagan College’s regional dean for the South Okanagan-Similkameen.