

# 'Courting' the CleanTech Sector

*Calgary CleanTech forum attracts worldwide investors*

BY T.L. DUDAR

Alberta has a rapidly emerging cross-section of companies working on innovative ways to create new or adaptive 'green/clean' technologies. The development of products that provide solutions for the ongoing quest for sustainability and clean methods of production are catching the attention of local entrepreneurs and worldwide investors reaching as far as California and Switzerland.

A recent CleanTech forum held in Calgary hosted 10 investment firms, both multinational and interprovincial, that actively invest in Western Canada's CleanTech sector. The local entrepreneurs attending not only wanted to hear what the investors had to say but also had the opportunity to have the investor's ear as they learned about local entrepreneurial developments within our community.

In partnership with CETAC-West, Climate Change Central, Calgary Economic Development and Calgary Technologies Inc., entrepreneurs heard first hand about the various opportunities and options available in securing investment for their CleanTech venture. They discovered which sectors are catching the attention of the investing groups, when they invest and how to best approach an investing group.

"As a local operating venture fund, we have the ability to accelerate the growth of the CleanTech sector and provide leverage to take companies to the next level; we can proactively engage those entrepreneurs and share information on what avenues they can pursue in terms of potential funding," states Shawn Abbot, partner with iNovia Capital. "This CleanTech forum also allows investors from outside the region to get to know the entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs to better understand the investment criteria of those funds."

The emerging demand for clean/green technologies is piquing interest globally and Alberta, one of Canada's largest energy sectors, is a natural fit for the development of such technology brought to market. Yet, the birthing of a new industry, however green, comes with growing pains. The creation of a forum to connect industry, investors, business partners and agencies helps engage a network of resources and support – essentially accelerating the CleanTech ecosystem. An ecosystem that will in turn, attract more entrepreneurs, investors and industry partners.

"The Calgary CleanTech forum provides me with the opportunity to meet various investors, agencies and other

"The Calgary CleanTech Forum provides me with the opportunity to meet various investors, agencies and other entrepreneurs to learn...about this growing support network."

~ Manford Kwan, president and CEO,  
ASAT Solutions Inc.

entrepreneurs to learn not only about this growing support network but share ideas, best practice and challenges face to face. I can identify and collaborate with industry and better position my company within the market, which is a significant contribution to my company's success," says Manford Kwan, president and CEO, ASAT Solutions Inc.

Alberta has the opportunity to be a leader within the CleanTech sector; the province already is a heavyweight in terms of energy exploration and production. As this sector continues to gain momentum so does the need for CleanTech developments. It is paramount, therefore, that Alberta remains positioned as the most attractive business environment to host this emerging CleanTech ecosystem.

"We need to hear more about our local entrepreneurs developing and marketing their CleanTech products. There is so much happening right here in our backyard that is not widely known. Connecting entrepreneurs, investors and industry partners is the first step to both attracting and retaining business in our province," says Kevin Dahl, Calgary Technologies Inc.

The key to successful 'courting' within the CleanTech sector is to keep connected and maintain network relationships. Active networking within the CleanTech community can yield higher success rates providing new economic growth for communities and the province. Who knows, maybe even land your company a foreign relationship.

To learn more about the Calgary CleanTech forum, contact Kevin Dahl, Calgary Technologies Inc., kdahl@calgarytechnologies.com or 403.284.6400.