

Funds are available for the development of products and markets, business feasibility studies and market research.

The trade opportunities program, introduced in 1986, gives Saskatchewan exporters financial assistance to hire college marketing graduates to assist in developing new foreign markets for their products and services. The program provides 50% of the new employee's salary and export travel expenses, to a maximum of \$13,000 and \$5,000 a year, respectively, for a period of two years.

Saskatchewan exports and market development is promoted through permanent trade representatives located in the United States, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

Major construction projects totalling over \$9 billion are under way or in the planning stages in Saskatchewan; each project is valued at \$10 million or more. To ensure Saskatchewan benefits from these projects in terms of employment and the sale of supplies, the major projects procurement policy is applied which encourages developers to use Saskatchewan suppliers if possible. The department assists Saskatchewan suppliers to take advantage of this market by: encouraging them to bid on contracts; providing information on import replacement opportunities; helping them develop new product lines; and encouraging suppliers to get involved in joint ventures with local and out-of-province companies.

Alberta. The Alberta Opportunity Co. (AOC), a Crown agency, promotes economic growth by stimulating new businesses and aiding existing enterprises. AOC gives priority to Albertans and Alberta-owned enterprises, small businesses and centres of small population.

To qualify for assistance, a business may be a proprietorship, partnership, co-operative or corporate body, must operate for gain or profit, must be in Alberta and must provide assurance that any aid given will be used exclusively in Alberta. Eligible businesses include manufacturing, processing and assembly operations, service industries, commercial wholesale and retail trade, recreational facilities, tourist establishments, local development organizations, student business enterprises and new industries which are unique and valuable additions to the province. The program is not designed for finance companies, suppliers of residential accommodation other than tourist facilities, public utilities including power generation and distribution, or resource-based industries such as mining and oil and gas production.

Assistance may provide for establishing new businesses, acquiring fixed assets — land,

buildings and equipment — expanding existing facilities, strengthening working capital, financing raw material or finished inventories for manufacturers, and research and development. Funds are made available directly or by guarantee in various forms.

Business counselling services of AOC include management advice and guidance on financial, technical and marketing matters for small and intermediate-sized Alberta businesses which cannot afford to obtain this type of help elsewhere. Services are provided through the company's head office in Ponoka and branch offices in Calgary, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, St. Paul, Medicine Hat, Edson, Edmonton, Peace River, Lloydminster, Red Deer and Brooks.

British Columbia. The Ministry of Economic Development has programs, services and expertise for industry, the business community and government agencies. Goals of British Columbia's economic strategy are growth of employment and real income, improved efficiency, price and incomes stability, balanced regional economic development and industrial diversification.

An economics and statistics division carries out research and long-term economic assessment, planning and forecasting. This complements the ministry's statistical and financial analysis and the policy planning and budgetary functions of the ministry of finance. The business and industrial development division designs, negotiates and monitors intergovernmental and government-industry programs, and provides their financial management. The international trade and investment division helps manufacturers develop, finds new export markets for BC goods and services and encourages new investment by BC companies and firms elsewhere in Canada and abroad. It sponsors trade missions and trade shows. The small business services branch of the business and industrial development division supports and strengthens small enterprises through financial assistance, problem solving, specialized research, management training and counselling. A central statistics bureau within the economics and statistics division collects and disseminates information on economic and social characteristics of the province and its regions.

The ministry maintains liaison with the British Columbia Development Corp. for development of serviced industrial land in areas where it was not previously available, or where high land costs prohibited location of individual firms. It provides loans to businesses to expand existing operations or create new ones. The ministry maintains a trade office and economic adviser at British Columbia House in London, England.