



## Flying inside the box

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EDMONTON - "It's a lonely feeling up there some days," says Canadian North's flight operations director Steve Hankirk.

Especially when you're flying at 30,000 feet across vast expanses of the Arctic where there is no radar coverage.

So the airline is installing cutting-edge Alberta technology to give pilots the comfort of being in touch with home base, and make the skies safer.

The Automated Flight Information Reporting System (AFIRS), developed by Calgary's AeroMechanical Services, collects data from all the aircraft's systems and relays them every five minutes to the airline's ground facilities as e-mails using its UpTime software. The Blue Box, as it's called, works in a similar way to the Black Box that is recovered after a crash. It provides basic information such as position, speed and altitude, but also monitors the aircraft's systems.

It also helps keep planes on time because it even records the exact time the doors close and the wheels go up. The pilots can also call up weather information, and pass observations on weather they fly through back to NavCanada, Hankirk says.

Canadian North is a subsidiary of Edmonton-based NorTerra Inc., and that's not the only local connection. Darryl Jacobs, the brains behind Aero

Mechanical, was born and raised here.

### MEET THEM AT THE FAIR

The best place to recruit talented biotech people? The world's largest bio gathering.

It's BIO 2007 in Boston next month, and about 90 people from local biotechs will be among the mass of 20,000 delegates at the convention.

Bio Alberta and Alberta Employment are using a a new career fair at the event to recruit top talent to the province, BioAlberta president Ryan Radke says.

"There will be 3,000 to 4,000 job seekers there and it's a great opportunity to get them to come to Alberta, especially with the recruitment issues we are having in all sectors."

Radke is encouraging local companies to submit lists of specific positions they need filled, and local hiring firm Camire Group will help screen candidates in Boston.

## ROBOT RETRIEVER A PRIZE WINNER

Warren Jackson and his team of U of A engineering students walked away with top prize and \$5,000 at the University of Pennsylvania's annual invention competition for their GPS-based robot that retrieves atmospheric radio probes -- called radiosondes.

"Each day thousands of radiosonde devices are attached to weather balloons, but less than 20 per cent are recovered," says Jackson. "Our robot would guide radiosondes back, allowing researchers to use higher quality devices and collect better data."

## AN INGENIOUS IDEA

Ingenuity Enterprises, a three-way partnership to help grow Alberta's new technology ventures, blasts off Wednesday with a simulcast in Edmonton and Calgary.

TEC Edmonton, University Technologies International in Calgary and the Alberta Ingenuity Fund will showcase the five main supported programs at the free lunchtime event at Telus Centre here, and at the Netera Cyberport in Calgary. The \$3.2-million, three-year funding from Alberta Ingenuity will allow the pulling together of existing programs under one roof and the creation of new activities, including an executive-in-residence program to provide advice to technology companies.

## CONVENTION FOUNDER HONOURED

Delegates to the Cold Weather Construction Convention paid tribute Monday to Roly Ferris, one of the founders of the event, who died last week. Ferris retired from his position as director of the provincial government's architecture, engineering and construction investment division in 2004.

He was also founder of the annual Alberta Buyer Seller Forum, which is now a national event.

## HERE AND THERE

The Gateway Boulevard centre has been voted best visitor information centre in this year's RV West Magazine Readers' Choice Awards. The centre has had more than 1.6 million visitors and 314,000 phone inquiries in its 20-year history. ... Scotland-based Aggreko LLC has opened a service centre in Edmonton to provide power and temperature control solutions to the petrochemical and refinery industries. The company has more than 100 locations in 29 countries. ... Deloitte & Touche has a half-day mergers and acquisitions symposium April 26 at the Greenwood Inn. Panelists include John Stevens (Eveready Trust Fund), Jeffrey Lloyd (Stantec) and Terry Freeman (Northern Plains Capital Corp.). For more info e-mail [kimits@deloitte.ca](mailto:kimits@deloitte.ca) or call 780-421-3819. ... Isotechnika gets a chance to

showcase its promising anti-rejection transplant drug in the U.S. when it hosts a symposium at the American Transplant Congress in San Francisco May 5. ... Ward Hanson, Lorena Harris and Mark Woltersdorf have been made partners at Fraser Milner Casgrain's Edmonton law offices. They are among 13 lawyers promoted across Canada. ... Nick Strus, a maintenance planner with Diavik Diamond Mine, has won Arctic Energy Alliance's energy-efficiency award for figuring out how truck idling times can be reduced without reaching the point where engines freeze up in the bitter Arctic winters.

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