

Vehicle Technology Centre

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW TESTING EQUIPMENT FIRST COMPONENT OF VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – The purchase of a million-dollar piece of testing equipment will mark the launch of Western Canada's Vehicle Technology Centre. Western Canada Testing Inc. (WESTEST) will oversee the purchase and operation of a Multi-Axis Simulation Table facility, the first component of the new virtual Vehicle Technology Centre (VTC).

In January 2003, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) announced \$2 million towards the establishment of the Vehicle Technology Centre. The \$1.09 million cost of the MAST will be shared by VTC (93%) and WESTEST (7%). WESTEST will market the services of the testing equipment to motor coach, transit bus as well as other vehicle manufacturers, and will charge service fees for its use.

"Research and development activities at the Vehicle Technology Centre will benefit Manitoba's bus and coach industry, as well as other vehicle makers in Western Canada," said Stephen Owen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development). "Western Economic Diversification Canada is pleased to invest in the future of this industry."

"This is exciting news for Manitoba's vehicle manufacturing sector, as well as the entire manufacturing industry," said Ed Van Humbeck, President, VTC. "Today's announcement is a direct result of the partnership between the Vehicle Technology Centre, WESTEST, Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Province of Manitoba."

The Multi-Axis Simulation Table (MAST) system is designed to test the vibration levels of a vehicle component or piece of equipment, without the need for a complete vehicle. Simulating a realistic operating environment, durability, performance and noise levels can be determined. The new facility will be up and running in October 2003. It will handle payloads of up to 2000 lbs.

"The new MAST facility will assist vehicle manufacturers to test prototypes for resistance to vibration, a crucial aspect of vehicle development that is gaining in importance as vehicles become lighter for the sake of fuel economy," said David Gullacher, President & CEO, WESTEST. "Having the facility in Manitoba means reliability, convenience and economy for these companies, which should help them remain competitive."

The Vehicle Technology Centre is working to promote the development of a world-class vehicle and transportation equipment cluster, through the direct provision of services as well as through coordination and/or linking services provided by other entities. The VTC will identify and fill gaps between companies, government and service providers to ensure that existing resources are effectively utilized and that world class facilities and services are available to the vehicle cluster. It is managed by a private board of directors representing the vehicle industry. The Province of Manitoba is also providing support with an executive director to the VTC.

Western Canada Testing (WESTEST) was created in 1991 by a group of industry associations and public and private firms, investing together with WD. It is an industry-owned research and technology laboratory that provides equipment manufacturers with advanced physical testing services. Headquartered in Manitoba, the facility tests component parts, new product designs, prototypes and machinery for the agricultural, transportation, construction, mining equipment and product packaging manufacturing sectors. The organization is governed by a board of directors who are elected by the industry founders.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is a department of the Government of Canada that works in partnership with the provinces, industry associations and communities to stimulate and encourage diversification of the western economy, as well as to represent the interests of the West in Ottawa.

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