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Ontario's Export News



Fall 2004

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

» Ontario Global Traders Awards

» Ontario Networking Solutions Company Targets Emerging Global Markets for New Growth Inc.

» Getting Ahead with ExportEdge

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

» [click here to see events](#)

APPOINTMENTS & RETIREMENTS

EXPORT SUCCESS STORY

Product Innovation Key to Export Success for Ontario Global Traders Award Winner

Widespread industry recognition for having the most innovative product in the market has helped Varis – Smart Underground Communications build a global business for its communications products, and earned this Sudbury-based company the province's top export award.

» [click here to read more](#)

DEBBIE'S HELPFUL EXPORT HINTS

By Debbie Walker, Ontario Exports Inc.

Since 9/11, the border between Ontario and our main export market to the south has become somewhat less welcoming in the understandable attempt to tighten security. This new climate is affecting all travellers, but none more so than the personnel of Ontario enterprises regularly visiting their customers in the U.S.

» [click here to read more](#)

FEATURE ARTICLE

Export Challenges

9-11 changed a lot of things. It changed the way we view the world, and it dramatically changed the way we do business. For the seasoned exporter, the new rules are difficult to wrestle with at best. For the new exporter, they are formidable.

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From within the GTA, call 416.314.8200. E-mail trade.officer@edt.gov.on.ca

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» E-BULLETIN

Ontario's Export News


[Back to E-bulletin](#)


Product Innovation Key to Export Success for Ontario Global Traders Award Winner

Widespread industry recognition for having the most innovative product in the market has helped Varis - Smart Underground Communications build a global business for its communications products, and earned this Sudbury-based company the province's top export award.

Varis communications products improve safety and productivity for mine and tunnel operators by enabling two-way voice and data communication underground, regardless of the tunnel size or length.

"We have extremely user-friendly products and a respected service record that has earned us a growing reputation throughout the world's mining community," explained Craig Russell who sells Varis technology to major mines in Latin America and Europe.

Launched in 1996, the company now has 12 employees dedicated to increasing Varis' market share in underground communications.

"Our strategy was to first look after the Canadian mine industry and then move into the U.S. and overseas markets," said Russell. "Today, we are a multi-million dollar company with exports accounting for between 60 and 70 per cent of our revenues."

Those exports include selling into all the major mining countries of the world, including the U.S., Mexico, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Australia, Africa, China, Turkey and other Eastern European countries.

The entry point for a basic system runs about \$20,000, rising to \$250,000 for sophisticated communications systems similar to the configuration Varis recently installed in a huge mine in Turkey.

Craig noted that the innovative features in the communications products, including voice, data, video and diagnostic capability offer immediate payback for mine and tunnel operators. "Varis helps improve process flow and increases productivity," he added.

The company's combined innovation and export achievements were recognized this year when Varis was presented with the northern region award for innovation at the sixth annual Ontario Global Traders Awards held in Sault Ste. Marie.

Ontario Global Traders Awards (OGTA) recognize and celebrate outstanding Ontario companies, partnerships, individuals and students who have achieved exporting success. The OGTA are coordinated by Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI), the export development agency of the Ontario government, with a mandate to assist Ontario's small and medium-sized enterprises begin exporting and diversify their export markets.

"Winning this prestigious award has added even more credibility to our reputation and the recognition to our underground communications products," said Russell. "We definitely consider the OGTA award a 'seal of approval' for our marketing efforts."

Russell also paid tribute to the assistance Varis has received from OEI to increase exports, particularly through the company's participation in the Ontario exhibit at trade shows in Brazil, Chile and Peru.

"The biggest challenge of exporting is understanding the cultural differences of each country and how they conduct business. OEI's International Marketing Consultant Maureen Angus has excellent local knowledge of the various markets and has been very valuable in introducing us to credible potential distributors and agents in these countries."

He added: "I would urge any Ontario company looking to export for the first time or venture into new export markets to make use of all the products and services offered by OEI. They can certainly help to smooth the road to becoming a successful exporter."

OEI provides a range of services and products. This includes the New Exporters to Border States (NEBS) program, export education and one-on-one consulting to providing market information, workshops, market contacts and export literature.

To find out more about how OEI's service can help small and medium-size companies with their export strategies, visit the OEI website at www.ontarioexportsinc.com or call (416) 314-8200 or toll-free in Ontario at 1-877-468-7233.

[Back to E-bulletin](#)




[Back to E-bulletin](#)


Debbie's Helpful Export Hints

What Exporters Should Know About Cross-Border Movement

by Debbie Walker

Since 9/11, the border between Ontario and our main export market to the south has become somewhat less welcoming in the understandable attempt to tighten security. This new climate is affecting all travellers, but none more so than the personnel of Ontario enterprises regularly visiting their customers in the U.S.

In an effort to address some of the concerns raised by business persons travelling to the U.S., this column is devoted to some of the rules governing cross-border movement.

This is one of the many topics covered in our New Exporters to Border States (NEBS) program. I recommend that companies looking at exporting to the U.S. take part in this valuable program to answer questions about cross-border movement as well as a host of other topics.

(As the export development agency for the Government of Ontario, Ontario Exports Inc. makes the NEBS program available to new exporters on a regular basis. For more information on future NEBS dates, call 416-325-6659).

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Chapter 16 facilitates the cross-border movement of business persons who are citizens of member countries to NAFTA.

Chapter 16 recognizes several categories of business persons:

Business Visitors who plan to carry on any business activity related to research and design, growth, manufacturing and production, marketing, sales and distribution, and after-sales and service.

Professionals who plan to carry out professional activities for an employer or who contract to an enterprise located in a member country other than one's own. These activities cover a broad spectrum - from accounting, computing and engineering, to the legal, medical, education and scientific professions.

(Chapter 16 also recognizes **Intra-Company Transferees** and **Traders and Investors**, but for the purposes of this column I'll concentrate on the first two categories).

As a business visitor, you have the right to enter the U.S. for the purpose of international trade. In the majority of cases, Canadian citizens can enter the U.S. and do business on a verbal B-1 visa by showing their proof of Canadian citizenship.

If you are a frequent business traveller to the U.S., it is useful to carry a letter from a third party in your company that explains the purpose of the trip. However, if you face repeated questions from immigration at the border crossing, it is worthwhile to get an I-94 (record of entry document). This is the "hard copy" of the B-1 visa and can be issued for up to six months of use.

The TN (Trade NAFTA) visa is designed for the specified professional occupations, which I referred to earlier - architects, engineers, etc. - and allows the holder to work and live in the U.S. for a

specified company. For Canadian citizens, the TN visa can be processed at the border.

Yet another visa - the L-1 - covers the transfer of a Canadian executive to the U.S. to oversee the management of the Canadian branch operation. To obtain a L-1, a firm must incorporate in the U.S. This visa is good for a period of seven years and can be the catalyst for a fast track to the famous "green" card.

Temporary Importation of Goods

Another source of frustration for Ontario exporters to the U.S. are the rules governing the importation of goods. It is recommended that consideration be given to obtaining an ATA Carnet through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. This document simplifies customs procedures for the temporary duty-free admission of goods. This includes commercial samples, goods for presentation or use at a trade show, fair or exhibition, or professional equipment. More information on how to obtain a Carnet is available at www.chamber.ca/carnet/.

After-Sales Service

I recommend that you refer to the website www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/nafta-alena/cross-en.asp to understand this often "grey" area of exporting to the U.S. Prior knowledge and understanding will go a long way to smoothing after-sales service for you and your American customer.

This site also covers the rules for 'third party service' as it relates to an Ontario exporter contracting the after-sales servicing to a third party.

Finally, if you continue to experience difficulty entering the U.S. on business, contact the International Trade Canada NAFTA Temporary Entry help line at (613) 944-2046 or by fax at (613) 944-0058.

Bon voyage!

(Debbie Walker is Director, Community Export Development, Ontario Exports Inc., the export development agency of the Government of Ontario. She can be contacted by email at debbie.walker@edt.gov.on.ca).

[Back to E-bulletin](#)




[Back to E-bulletin](#)


Export Challenges

Anne M. Miskovsky

9-11 changed a lot of things. It changed the way we view the world, and it dramatically changed the way we do business. For the seasoned exporter, the new rules are difficult to wrestle with at best. For the new exporter, they are formidable.

The terrorist attacks required the U.S. and Canadian governments to develop new approaches to ensure public and economic security. The result is the "Smart Border Action Plan", which is comprised of 30 action points revolving around four pillars: the secure flow of people, the secure flow of goods, a secure infrastructure, and information sharing and coordination in the enforcement of these objectives.

The action plan for the secure flow of goods, originally drafted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and now managed by Foreign Affairs Canada, includes initiatives that will identify security threats by adopting compatible standards, and identifying high-risk goods while expediting the flow of low risk goods.

Every effort has been made to harmonize processes to make the implementation of new security measures easier on exporters. Keith Pickard, Operations Manager for Red Zoo Marketing in Ruthven, Ontario suggests: "if you're going to export you need to develop a positive mind set. You can either fight it from the get go and end up frustrated, or you can get on with it and comply with the new regulations."

This is exactly what Red Zoo chose to do. Red Zoo is the marketing and distribution arm of one of the largest greenhouse produce companies in North America. Besides their Canadian operation, they have distribution points in Michigan, Florida and Arizona. Red Zoo has learned right from the start that being prepared is the best way to ensure smooth sailing across the border.

The smooth sailing part only comes after a lot of hard work. Red Zoo is ISO certified, a rarity among produce growers, but having the policies and procedures in place made it easier for them to comply with the new regulations. Pickard explains: "the purpose of these border initiatives is to assess the flow of goods based on the degree of potential risk the goods impose throughout the supply chain. The more secure the elements in the supply chain are, the lower the risk. Companies that can demonstrate that they have implemented certain procedures have minimized the overall risk in the supply chain and their products can move more quickly across the border."

Compliance is the name of the game. Red Zoo, is enrolled in the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), a joint government-business initiative to build cooperative relationships that strengthen the overall supply chain and border security. According to the U.S. Customs & Border Protection Agency (CPB), participation in C-TPAT requires companies to conduct a comprehensive self-assessment of their supply chain security. C-TPAT guidelines encompass a review of your procedural security, personnel security, physical security, education and trade access controls, manifest procedures and conveyance security. Once a company is approved, it is important that they communicate their guidelines to others in their supply chain and work to implement the guidelines within these companies as well. A copy of the C-TPAT guidelines and compliance procedures can be found at www.cbp.gov.

Canadian and U.S. customs agencies have harmonized, to the maximum extent possible, their clearance processes for commercial shipments. One such process is the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program, which enables companies to expedite their customs clearance processes. To be FAST approved in Canada according to Exportsource.ca, you need to meet the requirements under the Customs Self-Assessment program and be enrolled in the Partners in Protection Program (PIP), which is similar to C-TPAT. Your carrier must also be approved under C-TPAT and use drivers that carry FAST cards.

FAST will streamline and integrate registration processes for drivers, carriers, and importers; minimizing paperwork and ensuring only low risk participants are enrolled as members. Red Zoo's Pickard says: "all our drivers have applied for FAST cards. This entails a police clearance, background check and a detailed personal interview. The FAST cards come with a microchip that is read at the border before the driver reaches the agent. By the time the truck gets to the agent, the driver's picture is displayed for verification. It won't be long before biometrics become part of the process. Right now they are deciding on what method to use. The U.S. wants a thumb print system, whereas internationally, the move is towards reading a person's eyes and other facial features."

It is important to note that as of November 15 all products going across the border must adhere to the newly implemented Automated Manifest System and Pre-Arrival Processing System. These systems use barcode technology to expedite the release of commercial shipments. All cargo information, regardless of its value, will have to be sent electronically one hour prior to arrival at U.S. Customs or risk being turned back. This requirement is longer for items crossing that require FDA or USDA inspection. Trucks with shipments qualified for clearance under the FAST program require at least 30 minutes prior warning.

Now more than ever, exporters are being asked to comply with strict documentation and record keeping. Ignoring U.S. customs requirements will result in your goods being turned back. Save yourself some headaches by complying with the new regulations right from the start. Make sure your shipper is C-TPAT and FAST approved. Using a customs broker can solve these problems for you, but you will still be the one ultimately responsible for verifying the contents and assuming the risk entailed with any thing shipped.

Anne Miskovsky is the Economic Development Officer for the Municipality of Leamington, and a freelance writer.

[Back to E-bulletin](#)





» E-BULLETIN

Ontario's Export News

[Back to E-bulletin](#)

Mark Your Calendars

Locations and dates have been announced for the 7th annual Ontario Global Traders Awards, which honour outstanding export achievements of the most innovative and successful small and medium-sized enterprises, business leaders and students in Ontario.

Regional Awards:

Southwest region	Windsor	April 7, 2005
Central region	Ajax	April 14, 2005
Eastern region	Cornwall	April 21, 2005
Northern region	Thunder Bay	April 27, 2005

As always, the provincial awards will be held in Toronto in May. Visit www.ontarioglobaltraders.com for more details.

[Back to E-bulletin](#)

» E-BULLETIN

Ontario's Export News


[Back to E-bulletin](#)


Ontario Networking Solutions Company Targets Emerging Global Markets for New Growth

The downturn in the North American telecommunications market resulting from the end of the 'dot com' boom has held a silver lining for NTG Clarity Networks Inc. - it prompted the Markham-based company to turn its focus on new and emerging export markets to bolster domestic revenues.

It's a strategy that has already born fruit for this Canadian leader in delivering telecom, networking, IT and network-enabled application software solutions to network service providers and large enterprises.

In June, 2004, NTG was awarded a \$1.8 million multi year contract by Algeria Telecom to provide consulting services to manage the upgrade of their existing telecom infrastructure to a "next generation networking platform." NTG's upgrade will enable Algeria Telecom to deliver new and enhanced broadband services.

"This is a significant contract win for NTG", said Naim Malik, Vice President, Business Development. "We were the only North American supplier out of 56 global companies who responded to the prebid and then eventually one of the six companies asked to respond to the Request for Proposal. We won out over the very strong historical presence of Europeans, including French telecommunication providers in Algeria."

NTG has added Algeria to a list of overseas markets for its telecom and IT solutions exports that already includes Egypt, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Sudan, Pakistan and Malaysia.

And as well as servicing these emerging markets, the company is also targeting opportunities in Mexico, Yemen and Qatar.

"Diversification of our market base is paramount to our growth over the next five to 10 years," explained Malik. "The telecommunications scenario in North America is mature, and we believe the real opportunity for growth is in these new and emerging markets."

Exports currently account for between 15 and 20 per cent of annual revenues for NTG, but Malik emphasized that the goal is to increase the percentage of exports significantly for the company. (NTG is listed under the symbol 'NCI' on the Canadian Venture Exchange, and forecasts revenues for 2004 of between \$8 and \$10 million dollars).

The company already has a sizeable investment in the Middle East with a subsidiary employing 50 people in Cairo and Aswan, Egypt. "However, this contract with Algeria Telecom will add further credibility to our reputation as a leading networking solutions company and provide an excellent reference for other national telecom companies in this part of the world," said Malik.

Malik pointed out that part of the company's recent Middle East successes could be attributed to the ongoing assistance NTG has received from Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI), the export development agency of the Government of Ontario.

"Al Hinton, OEI's International Marketing Consultant for the Middle East, has been very helpful in supplying us with business leads and played an instrumental role in marketing the NTG name in the region," said Malik. "He has also helped us take full advantage of the services of federal export

partners, including Export Development Canada and the Canadian Commercial Corporation."

OEI provides a range of services and products to Ontario companies looking to export for the first time and those enterprises expanding into new global markets. These include the New Exporters to Border States (NEBS) program, export education, one-on-one consulting, market information, workshops, market contacts and export literature.

To find out more about how OEI's services can help small and medium-sized companies with their export strategies, visit the OEI website at www.ontarioexportsinc.com or call (416) 314-8200 or toll-free in Ontario at 1-877-468-7233.

Malik has some advice for Ontario companies looking to export to new and emerging markets. "It's important to have a local presence in these markets, and the best way to achieve this is through local partners, distributors and agents. However, you must exercise due diligence to make sure the partner you choose is the right one. Consulting with OEI and using the experience of our Embassy staff in these countries will go a long way to helping you make the right decision."

He added: "A lot of these emerging markets like to do business with Canadian companies. A major complaint is that these companies go to an initial meeting with a prospective client in these new markets, but don't follow up. In these markets, you need to make numerous visits to secure a contract."

[Back to E-bulletin](#)



» E-BULLETIN

Ontario's Export News



[Back to E-bulletin](#)



Getting Ahead with ExportEdge

Peter Varaklis

The ExportEdge program matches and mentors eligible individuals between the ages of 15-30 who are interested in developing export-based careers with companies that need assistance with specific export oriented projects.

Since 1999 the program has been sponsored by the Canadian government through Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD), which has provided \$15,000 for the delivery of each six month intern placement. A wide variety of projects are eligible and can include both international and domestic based placements.

The program is managed by I|E Canada and delivered with the assistance of Cornerstone International and the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT).

Once an appropriate company defined project has been submitted, the ExportEdge staff will work with participating companies to create an appropriate intern profile and begin a search to identify possible candidates for companies to interview.

A one time placement fee of \$4,500 + GST (which offsets program administration costs) will apply.

Placements are limited so companies interested in participating should act quickly to secure a spot in the program. For more information on participating in the ExportEdge program visit "www.exportedge.net."

Peter Varaklis is the President of Cornerstone International, a management consulting firm committed to helping companies pursue business excellence.

[Back to E-bulletin](#)



» E-BULLETIN

Ontario's Export News


[Back to E-bulletin](#)


Calendar of Events

November 5 - December 5, 2004

Market Development Mission to Israel, Kuwait, U.A.E., Qatar and Saudi Arabia

During the upcoming market development mission, Ontario Exports Inc.'s (OEI) international marketing specialist for the Middle East will research new business opportunities, identify and research new projects, match overseas projects to Ontario firms and advocate on behalf of Ontario companies.

While there, OEI's Middle East specialist expects to meet with senior government officials of the host countries and conduct briefings with Canadian government officials in Israel, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

In addition, OEI will participate and accompany Ontario companies to three key trade events, assist Ontario firms in positioning themselves in the respective markets, and pursue market development on behalf of Ontario exporters.

Contact: Al Hinton, 416 325-6792, e-mail al.hinton@edt.gov.on.ca

November 20 - 24, 2004

The Big 5 Building and Construction Products Trade Show

The Big 5 is the largest trade show for the construction industry in the Arabian Gulf. This unique event features approximately 1,700 companies from 48 countries and combines five major exhibitions under one roof:

- Building and Construction
- Water Technology
- Cleaning and Maintenance
- Glass & Metal
- Bathrooms & Ceramics

One of the most commercially successful trade fairs in Dubai, the Big 5 features national pavilions from all major exporting countries in the East and West; alongside important local developers, contractors, importers and distributors.

In partnership with the Canadian Consulate in Dubai, Ontario Exports Inc. is assisting in the recruitment and is co-hosting the Canadian National Pavilion.

Contact: Al Hinton, 416 325-6792, e-mail al.hinton@edt.gov.on.ca

November 20-December 2, 2004

Market Development Mission to Chile, Argentina and Brazil

The focus of the upcoming market development mission will be to identify and research new projects, gather market information and meet with buyers.

While there, Ontario Exports Inc.'s (OEI) international marketing specialist for South America will also meet with senior government officials of the host countries, Canadian government officials in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, and work with OEI in-market consultants.

Contact: Maureen Angus, 416-325-9821, email maureen.angus@edt.gov.on.ca

November 24 - 27, 2004 MEDICA 2004

MEDICA, World Forum for Medical Technology, is the leading international medical trade fair offering a global business platform for exhibitors and trade visitors alike. Visit www.medica.de for more information.

MEDICA 2003 attracted a total of 134,700 trade visitors and 4,133 exhibitors from 65 countries. Canada featured 56 exhibitors, with more than half from Ontario.

Ontario Exports Inc., in close co-operation with Messe Duesseldorf, is again offering Ontario companies an opportunity to co-exhibit within the Ontario Group stands located in Hall 3, as part of the Canadian Biotechnology pavilion, and in Halls 14 as part of the new Canadian IT Healthcare pavilion.

Participants and visitors to MEDICA 2004 will have the opportunity to find out what's new in their established market sector, assess the competition, learn about new markets and network with potential business partners.

Contact: Laura Vasarais, 416 326-1075, e-mail laura.vasarais@edt.gov.on.ca

December 1 - 3, 2004 Construct Canada '04

Ontario Exports Inc., in conjunction with the members of Team Canada Inc. will be holding a number of export related events during Construct Canada '04.

Seminars and events include:

- Government Programs and Services for Canadian Firms Doing Business Internationally

An overview of Team Canada Inc. trade programs, services and resources available from the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, and crown corporations to assist Canadian firms in developing their international business. Discussion will also include advice on how to effectively use internet resources such as the Virtual Trade Commissioner, Infoexport and Strategis for market information, and how to participate in trade missions.

- The U.K. Construction Market

Consider diversifying your international construction or building materials business to the United Kingdom. The U.K. has a common language, common business practices, and has become a top destination for Canadian business investment. This session will outline the U.K. residential and commercial construction markets and will highlight the significant opportunities in those markets. The session is particularly targeted to all manufacturers and service providers in the Canadian construction industry who are serious about diversifying their international business.

- International Networking Session

The afternoon will feature an International Networking Session where Canadian building products

manufacturers, architects, contractors, engineers and suppliers will be able to meet at designated tables with foreign delegates and Canadian Trade Officers from around the world. International visitors will also have an opportunity to connect with Canadian companies that might have an interest in their market. Appointments will be arranged in advance.

Registration for the all day program is \$50.00 in advance, \$60.00 at the door. For more information or to register, visit www.constructcanada.com and click on 'International Program'.

Contact: Ken Campbell, 416 325-6659, e-mail ken.campbell@edt.gov.on.ca

December 1 - 4, 2004

Incoming Delegation from Mexico for Construct Canada '04

Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI), in partnership with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is pleased to announce that it is co-hosting an incoming delegation of buyers, developers and importers from Mexico.

The delegation will be of interest to Ontario companies offering products and services in the building products, construction and environmental equipment and services sectors.

Ontario companies will have the opportunity to meet the delegation and OEI's in-market consultant at the Construct Canada trade show and during delegation site visits.

Organizing events involving incoming delegations is one way OEI helps to match foreign buyers with Ontario suppliers and assist exporters in information gathering on industry sectors abroad.

Contact: Fred Sheehy, 416 314-8243, e-mail fred.sheehy@edt.gov.on.ca

December 2 - 3, 2004

Who is Who in IT in Ontario

Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI), in partnership with ITAC Ontario and International Trade Canada, is holding the fifth "Who is Who in IT in Ontario", in Toronto.

This international partnering forum and showcase program will be of interest to Ontario companies in the information and communications technologies sector, which seek to establish international partnering and technology alliances with U.S. firms.

Participants will have an opportunity to learn from the experiences of innovative Ontario firms and network with business representatives from Canada and the U.S. For more information or to register, please visit www.itaontario.com/whos-who/.

OEI's seminars, workshops and conferences provide an ideal educational opportunity for Ontario exporters. At these events, business representatives can network and learn from the experiences of their fellow entrepreneurs and exporting experts with service organizations.

Contact: Mauricio Ospina 416 325-6151, e-mail mauricio.ospina@edt.gov.on.ca

February 1 - 3, 2005

Economic Developers Council of Ontario Annual Conference

Ontario Exports Inc. will be participating in the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Annual Conference in Toronto. EDCO is a non-profit organization representing economic development professionals in Ontario. Its mission is to provide a forum to enhance the professional development of its members. Ontario Exports Inc. views its involvement in the EDCO conference as an important opportunity to build upon the Government of Ontario's strong relationship with economic development professionals across the province. The conference also provides OEI with the opportunity to deliver export development workshops and to deliver on its commitment to build an export culture in Ontario in cooperation with its regional partners at the community level.

Contact: Debbie Walker, 416 325-6658, e-mail debbie.walker@edt.gov.on.ca

February 9 - March 4, 2005

Market Development Mission to the Middle East

The focus of this mission to the United Arab Emirates is to participate with Ontario companies exhibiting in the Arab Health Exhibition.

Ontario Exports Inc.'s (OEI) international marketing specialist for the Middle East will also follow-up on continuing projects including previously identified engineering, telecom and pharmaceutical opportunities, as well as pursue opportunities in Israel for Ontario companies in the high-technology, raw material [metal, metal tooling, plastics, specialized paper products (non commodity)] sectors.

Contact: Al Hinton, 416 325-6792, e-mail al.hinton@edt.gov.on.ca

February 12 - 15, 2005

Arab Health 2005

The 2004 edition of Arab Health, the Middle East's premier hospital, medical equipment and services event, broke all previous attendance records with over 23,000 unique visitors to the four-day event. Some 19,058 medical professionals attended Arab Health 2004, which occupied 12,180 square meters, featured 1,003 exhibitors from 50 countries and 20 national pavilions.

Almost three-quarters of visitors were prime decision makers with a full 75 per cent saying the event has become a platform for the healthcare industry to launch new products. Over a quarter voted Arab Health as the only medical equipment and services exhibition they had attended in over a year.

Arab Health 2005 gives you the opportunity to showcase your products and services in one of the fastest growing, and most lucrative healthcare markets in the world.

Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI) will once again co-host the national stand with the Canadian Consulate in Dubai. OEI believes that participating in trade shows is an excellent way for Ontario companies to gain valuable exposure, assess new markets and future trends, make business contacts, and generate sales.

Contact: Al Hinton, 416 325-6792, e-mail al.hinton@edt.gov.on.ca

February 13 - 17, 2005

Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Trade Show

Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI), in partnership with the Canadian Healthcare Information Technology Trade Association (CHITTA), is hosting a pavilion at the Annual Meeting and Trade Show, of the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) in Dallas, Texas.

At this trade show, OEI is showcasing Ontario companies in the IT health care sector. Ontario IT health care companies will be invited to exhibit at HIMSS within the Ontario pavilion.

Participants and visitors to the HIMSS trade show will have the opportunity to find out what's new in their established market sectors, assess the competition, learn about new markets, and network with potential business partners.

Contact: Patricia Cosgrove, 416 212-1030, e-mail patricia.cosgrove@edt.gov.on.ca

February 16 - 17, 2005

NEBS Mission to Detroit

This practical program, operated by Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI) in co-operation with the Canadian Consulate in Buffalo, introduces companies to the basics of exporting to the United States. Of interest to new and experienced exporters alike, this program is ideal for small and medium-sized Ontario

manufacturers or service firms. Over two days based at a U.S. entry point, participants learn about export pricing, customs procedures, banking and legal issues, export financing and insurance, new market opportunities, and much more.

This well-established, proven OEI program provides Ontario exporters and new exporters with the essential planning tools and business and government contacts they need to prepare for success in U.S. markets.

Contact: Ken Campbell, 416 325-6659, e-mail ken.campbell@edt.gov.on.ca

February 19 - March 4, 2005
Market Development Mission to Croatia and Turkey

During the upcoming market development mission to Croatia, Ontario Exports Inc.'s international marketing specialist for Eastern Europe will research new business opportunities, identify new projects and follow-up on previous agreements and arrangements made with Ontario companies. An extensive follow-up will also be conducted with the Ministry of the Environment, local municipalities and local partners to Ontario businesses.

A series of follow-up meetings are scheduled in Turkey on behalf of Ontario companies that participated in a previous trade mission to this country.

Contact: Vitaly Paroshyn, 416 314-0915, e-mail vitaly.paroshyn@edt.gov.on.ca

February 27 - March 9, 2005
Market Development Mission to Mexico

During the upcoming market development mission, Ontario Exports Inc.'s international marketing specialist for Mexico and the Caribbean will identify new business opportunities, research new projects, match projects to Ontario firms, gather market information, identify new contacts, represent Ontario business interests and meet with buyers.

While there, the specialist will also meet with senior Mexican government officials and initiate briefings with Canadian government officials in Guadalajara, Mexico City and Monterrey.

Contact: Fred Sheehy, 416 314-8243, e-mail fred.sheehy@edt.gov.on.ca

If you're with an Ontario-based company or Ontario consortium already exporting to the above markets, or you're interested in expanding to these markets, please contact Ontario Exports Inc. by phone at 1-877-468-7233 (toll free in Ontario), 416-314-8200 or by email at trade.officer@edt.gov.on.ca.

[Back to E-bulletin](#)





» E-BULLETIN

Ontario's Export News

[Back to E-bulletin](#)

Retirement

Tyrone Prasad

Financial Officer and Quality Assurance Co-ordinator

Tyrone Prasad, OEI's Financial Officer and Quality Assurance Co-ordinator has retired after 28 years of service with the Ontario Public Service.

Tyrone started her career with the Ontario Housing Corporation in 1976 and later joined the Ontario Educational Services Corporation when it merged with the Ontario International Trade Corporation.

During her tenure, she was instrumental in the development of the Acquisition Tracking System, the initial phase of the Activity Results Tracking, and OEI's ISO certification.

Staff at OEI thank Tyrone for her dedication and hard work throughout her many years of service. She will be missed by all of her colleagues who wish her well in this exciting new phase in her life.

Tyrone's initial retirement plans are to do absolutely nothing except enjoy life with her family and work on landscaping her new garden. She is also planning on traveling in the spring.

[Back to E-bulletin](#)