

MEDIA RELEASE

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Trail and Area Metal Tech Alley Campaign Already Generating Results

Trail, BC –New startups, new investment and new jobs are already on the score board for Trail and Area’s recently launched economic development program.

“The most impactful result so far are the partnerships we’ve created with local tech leaders and catalyst organizations like KAST (Kootenay Association of Science and Technology) and MIDAS (Metallurgical Industrial Development Acceleration and Studies Centre),” said Wesley Startup, the chair of the regional economic development office, Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation (LCIC), that is leading the area’s new business brand, **metaltechalley** (MTA) and turning it into action.

With the vision from (KAST) in establishing MIDAS, the creation of i4C Innovation Centre, partnerships with companies like fortune 500 giant Teck (Trail Operations is the world’s largest fully integrated refining complex for zinc, lead and dozens of other metals), and combined with the region’s lifestyle, location and affordability we have created the perfect storm of innovation and disruption, changing the way we do things and challenging the status quo.

The MIDAS facility, Southern BC’s only rural, major industrial science fabrication centre with over \$400,000 of 3D printing and robotics equipment offers a supported environment including, rapid prototyping, technology training and research and growth development support for entrepreneurs interested in advanced manufacturing, with future development underway for the materials science sector. “More than 60 entrepreneurs are already using MIDAS to accelerate their product development and design businesses, meanwhile we continue to build on this technological foundation to attract and support new companies, like the i4C Innovation Centre,” said Startup. “Our goal was to sell the area for investment by marketing the availability of affordable local land and buildings that can support technology companies. And that’s exactly what’s happening.”

Internet of Things trail blazers, Brian Fry, Pilar Portella and Tim Dufour teamed up with the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) to purchase one of Trail’s most advanced buildings. This 46,000 Square Foot (sq ft) building offers a high tech environment and is located at 9200 Industrial Road, across from the Trail Regional Airport. Together the high tech leaders, known for their pioneering in cloud computing, have launched an innovation centre that will support and accelerate growth for other like-minded tech leaders from around the world.

“We’ve already attracted 3 new companies to the area because of the focused effort being invested in the **metaltechalley** campaign,” said Brian Fry who, along with his business partner Tim Dufour were pioneers in cloud computing and led the way for multinationals like Microsoft and IBM. They recently sold their cloud computing company Rackforce Networks Inc in a multi-million dollar deal with Toronto-based TeraGo.

“Now we’re launching a new catalyst that will continue to navigate the region’s future as a leader in technology and industrial big data,” said Pilar Portella, CEO of i4C Innovation. “At this early stage the total new investment is around \$5M when we include the value of the land and buildings, and this comes with 10 new jobs within a very short period of time.”

metaltechalley already hosts a recognized cluster of international industrial, advanced recycling and technology companies that over the years has attracted one of the largest service supply chains in rural Western Canada.

“We have more engineers and PhD’s per capita here in Trail than many urban centres,” said LCIC’s Executive Director Terry Van Horn. “Teck employs thousands of people world-wide and this is their largest metallurgical facility. That requires constant advancement in technology, monitoring, environmental stewardship and research into new material sciences and processes.

“Not only do we never take this for granted, “We are teaming up to tell this story better, the story about why our region is a magnet for continued investment into these integrated industrial clusters. This is the Fourth Industrial Revolution, evolving right in front of us and we are leading it with our visionary collaborators who understand the endless opportunities to cluster both industry and brain power” said Van Horn.

Thus the **metaltech**alley campaign was developed. It was formally launched in May when nearly 200 partners and guests attended an unveiling at the new i4C Innovation Centre which is already in operation as an international industrial IoT lab, production and testing facility that will include R&D, light fabrication, commercialization, and professional business support service with access to venture capital for scalable companies through early and mid-stage growth.

“This is exactly what we set out to achieve,” said Van Horn, who explained that The MTA campaign was created with input and engagement of multiple stakeholders, citizens, business leaders and community officials. Leaders from industry, technology, institutions and government have all come together to collaborate with this program and ultimately stimulate awareness and growth.

We are connected globally yet choose to live here, on the edge of life, in the mountains on the Canada/US border. **metaltech**alley is located in the Trail area which is renowned for its lifestyle, but it’s also remarkably accessible to global markets with the availability of industrial and commercial lands that are so affordable they’re almost free (for now).

The MTA partners will continue stimulating economic growth while always connecting dots to community prosperity and wellbeing. The MTA website www.metaltechalley.com will feature ongoing articles, interviews and visual media focusing on the businesses and people that are innovating and disrupting the expected. **metaltech**alley’s aim is to help business leaders grow and accelerate their enterprises, from ideation to globalization, in a region known for affordability and incredible lifestyle.

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