



# Getting Connected

Links to More Business for Canadian Women Across Borders

Fall/Winter 2001 Issue 1 Vol. 2



## Trade Critical in Times of Tension

There's no question the events of September 11 have rocked the world economy and affected many of our businesses. The tendency is to pull inward, but now, more than ever, businesswomen should be connecting through their networks and ensuring that international trade take on heightened importance. This is the message emerging from WITO's network.

"For our part, history demonstrates that positive trade relations lead to improved international relations," **Meg Jones**, President of Geneva Women in International Trade, told other OWIT Board members after September 11. "As women in trade, we have a responsibility to grease the wheels."



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is both with sadness and hope that I write this - with sadness because September 11 changed us forever and robbed an otherwise progressive society of its innocence. The fall-out of that incomprehensible act of violence has touched us all, some more closely than others.

Many of our members have expressed concern about the economic fall-out. Clearly, any tightening up or disruption of the US\$1.3 billion in goods exported to the U.S. daily - 80% across Ontario's border - will be felt here. At a time when consumer confidence is shaken, and border security and public safety are top of mind, the free flow of legitimate goods and services is more important than ever.

But still I have hope. During Small Business Week, BDC's president **Michel Vennat** stressed the importance of small business in economic renewal. He said SMEs are more flexible and can make faster turn-arounds to take advantage of emerging opportunities. Some economists predict that the technology development underway as well as the monetary and fiscal stimulus in the U.S. and Canada will result in a strong longer term recovery.

As you'll see in this issue, WITO members have been on the move—expanding their businesses in other markets, receiving awards and appointments and making their mark around the world and at home. Congratulations!

On behalf of the Executive, I'd like to wish all WITO members and their loved ones a happy and safe holiday season and all the best in your business and personal lives in 2002. A special thank you to the sponsors of this newsletter; **Export Development Corporation** and **Industry Canada**.

Let's all shop 'til we drop and do our collective duty as women to boost consumer confidence!

Sandra Anstey

Perhaps one of the best ways to do this is through our networks, both formal and informal, says **Andrina Lever**, President of Lever Enterprises. "With the tightening of money and fear of travelling, we have to look at alternate ways to keep up business and establish new contacts - whether through Virtual Trade Missions and teleconferences, through using the Trade Commissioners and government services or through professional associations and our own networks."

**"Now, more than ever, it's important for women to have networks."**

This is a good time to revisit all your contacts, such as those made at past trade missions, and reassess how to work with them more efficiently and creatively, she recommends. "Although things are uncertain, remember the world has gone through worse. These are just different times requiring a different response. Our networks could be the key to helping us through."

Others echo similar sentiments. "Today it is even more important that we connect with businesswomen around the world - to build the connections we need to combat terrorism and support each other," says **Donna Messer**, President of ConnectUs Communications.

"Now, more than ever, the free flow of legitimate goods and services becomes even more important," adds **Sam Bulte**, Parliamentary Secretary

*Story continued on page 3*

### Canadian clinches OWIT award

Our chapter nominated Astrid Pregel for the award



Canada's Consul General in Atlanta and WITO member, **Astrid Pregel**, is the first Canadian to win OWIT's prestigious Woman of the Year Award. This honour recognizes women who have furthered international trade through excellence and innovation and who by doing so have enhanced the status of women in international trade. Astrid will officially receive her award in Dallas at the OWIT Annual Conference next fall.

Until the summer of 2000, Astrid was the Minister Counsellor (International Business Development) at the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC. In this position, she spearheaded the first Businesswomen's Trade Mission to Washington in 1997 that had a ripple effect across North America. Astrid has been with Canada's foreign services for 22 years. She spent three years at the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya and served as Counsellor Commercial at the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi, India. Her work on behalf of women's international business development has been recognized by APEC and OECD as best practices internationally.

"This really is a phenomenal honour for someone in the foreign service," Astrid told WITO members at our annual barbecue in August, "and I'm going to use it as leverage in talking about women's role in the economy."

### This Issue

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Success Profiles	2
Ask the Experts	3
Meeting Highlights	3
Trade Resources	4



## Success Profile



**Names:** Jill Anderson, President and CEO

**Company:** Aecometric Corporation  
Richmond Hill, Ontario  
905.883.9555  
[www.aecometric.com](http://www.aecometric.com)

**Year Established:** 1980

**# Employees:** 35

**Annual Sales:** Over \$4 million

**Export Sales:** 75-90%

**Description:** Designers, manufacturers and suppliers of industrial combustion equipment to Fortune 500 companies like Bechtel Engineering. The company's 20,000 square foot facility incorporates a leading-edge branch of R&D.

**Background:** Aecometric's roots go back 30 years when Jill's husband, Larry, started a burner manufacturing company and

became an expert in combustion and engineering innovation and R&D. In 1983, Jill took the helm of the newly-created Aecometric Corp., which focuses on total control system integration. Although there are still times when she may require a male colleague to make a call, for the most part Jill hasn't found her gender to be a barrier in dealing with customers. Many of Aecometric's engineers are women and increasingly she sees more women in her contract negotiations with major companies.

**Export Markets:** U.S., Japan, China, India, Saudi Arabia, South America

**Major Export Benefit:** "It gives you a bigger market. And with downturns in the economy, you're not at the mercy of a single market."

**Export Goal:** To sell direct to emerging markets like China. "We want our own presence offshore and not be entirely dependent on the major U.S. companies we deal through."

**Biggest Export Challenge:** "Breaking into new markets like China is a long haul. We've done installations through large engineering companies but the direct sale will take time."

**Help Accessed:**

- Export Development Corp. (EDC): Performance guarantees from EDC for

large projects mean Aecometric can avoid having its bank take funds from its operating line. "EDC's turnaround is amazing. I couldn't be more pleased. And their people are well versed about target countries and the competition; they really know what you're all about."

- Canadian Manufacturers Association (CMA): "I'm impressed by the country-specific information they provide, particularly on privately-owned competitors."
- Government: "The Canadian government has bent over backwards to make good export resources available."

**Export Tips:**

- "No matter how much you read about a new market, you are better off finding an agent or rep there. But it can be tricky getting the right person and even harder exiting from a bad relationship. Use the EDC and Canadian embassy to lead you in the right direction and help you find not just an agent or rep but an established company similar to yours that can represent you."
- "One of the best things you can do is use the tools available, such as the CMA's Web site and Canadian consulates for market intelligence. EDC is an excellent resource across the board; anyone I've dealt with is very knowledgeable."

## Success Profile



**Names:** Evnur Taran, President

**Company:** Northern Legacy Inc.  
Concord, Ontario  
905.761.9192  
[aetaran@globalserve.net](mailto:aetaran@globalserve.net)

**Year Established:** 1997

**Employees:** 5

**Description:** The company's 16 lines of surface design, inspired by wildlife and nature, are applied to ceramics produced in its studio. Best selling designs are also printed on textiles, beachwear, umbrellas, and coffee mugs.

**Background:** While many businesses start from home, Evnur began her business in bed. In 1996, while recovering from hip replacement surgery, she started decorating the ceramics she produces as a hobby. Soon, her visitors began placing orders, and it grew into a business. Today her products are sold in seven provinces across Canada and in the U.S.

**Export Sales:** 5%

**Export Market:** Midwest United States

**Export Goal:** To expand her textile line into the Caribbean, and possibly Europe. "I have to take small steps - research the market carefully and then adjust my wildlife designs to fit that region."

**Help Accessed:** Uniquely Ontario; Industry Canada; NEBS (New Exporters to Border States) trade missions to Boston, Buffalo, Minnesota, and Seattle; Global Women's Summit trade mission to South Africa; SEAP (Self Employment Assistance Program); WITO (Women in International Trade - Ontario)

**Benefits:** "The NEBS missions are well organized and inexpensive. They have local trade experts, accountants and lawyers to provide information on trade and border regulations. It's valuable information. I am glad I became a member of WITO because the events it organizes are very professional. Sharing business ideas and experiences among fellow members is fruitful. What I like most is that members inform each other as soon as they find out about upcoming national/international events."

**Biggest Export Challenge:** Although contacts in Argentina and South Africa are interested in carrying her ceramics, Evnur's homework revealed that the freight costs and border taxes would be prohibitive, so she plans to focus on expanding and marketing her textile line instead.

**Export Tip:** "Consideration must be given to utilizing local marketing and sales agencies in your targeted foreign market."

## Ask the Experts

**Q:** With the 2008 summer Olympics slated for Beijing, I anticipate increased demand for my product in China and would like to pursue export opportunities there. What factors should I consider when preparing my export plan?

**Candice Rice**, Trade Commissioner, Americas Section, with International Trade Centre, **Industry Canada**.  
(Tel: 416-973-5157; e-mail: rice.candice@ic.gc.ca) responds:

**A:** Both financial and cultural factors must be addressed. Be well-prepared financially to undertake what could be a very long negotiation process which may require several visits. It is critical to ensure that your buyer has an import license to legally accept products and borrow funds from the central bank. Also, if your partner in China is having a letter of credit drawn up by a local bank, ensure that your Canadian bank will accept it.

There are many significant cultural differences between North America and China. Chinese do not make quick decisions. Deliberation – involving many face-to-face meetings and social gatherings – may seem prolonged to North Americans. Chinese do not like to say no in a business setting nor admit that they don't understand. "No problem" usually means "I'll try". Canadians often come away from meetings thinking that a deal has been struck, only to find out later that the Chinese buyer is still undecided.

Other cultural tips:

- Check the meaning of any colours you use in presentations or in gifts since colours are very significant in Chinese culture.
- Be sure to bring a plentiful supply of business cards (an important symbol in Chinese culture), with one side printed in the local Chinese dialect.
- Always present your business card with two hands and examine any cards given to you before placing them on the table in front of you or in your wallet.

- Evening banquets, with carefully planned seating, are the most popular occasions for business entertaining. Reciprocate with a banquet of the same value; never surpass your host.

The Chinese market does have huge potential but it is not for everyone. You must commit resources in both time and money and be prepared for potential failure.

**Q:** How can I determine and reduce the risks of not getting paid by a foreign customer?

**Mary Palmer**, Business Development Manager for Small Business at **Export Development Corporation**,  
(Tel. 416-640-7636; email: mpalmer@edc-see.ca) explains:

**A:** Foreign market risks fall into two categories: commercial risks such as bankruptcy and other payment default, and political risks such as foreign insurrections or expropriations, which again can lead to non-payment. You can evaluate these risks yourself by using various tools, such as trade references and Canadian embassy contacts abroad. The easier way is to protect your foreign sales with insurance from Export Development Corporation (EDC). This Crown corporation specializing in trade finance can do the credit checks and assess the economic/political risks for you, while protecting you for 90 per cent of your loss if your buyer still doesn't pay.

EDC's accounts receivable insurance has several other advantages – it can help you get more working capital from your bank and lets you offer competitive credit terms to your buyer. The insurance can be put in place quickly and affordably by calling 1-800-850-9626. As a customer, you also get access to EDC's economic reports and a new online service, Export Check, that lets you learn more about 64 million potential buyers in 70 key export markets. If you are not a customer, you can still subscribe to these services through EDC's web site at [www.edc.ca](http://www.edc.ca)

## Meeting Highlights

### "America You All"

"When you're in my business, no place is home, but coming here tonight is like coming home." That's what fellow WITO member **Astrid Pregel**, Canada's Consul General in Atlanta, told members at our annual barbecue in August at the Toronto Island Yacht Club. Astrid admitted that in her multifaceted role, her passion is telling people about the role of women-owned businesses. "Politicians, in particular, need to pay attention to this incredible growing segment of the economy," she said. "When I give the stats and show them how to reach their constituents, they are blown away."

As Canada's first female Consul General in Atlanta, Astrid is enjoying her role. "The title gives you access to politicians and community leaders you wouldn't otherwise meet." Her biggest challenge? "Most Americans don't realize Canada is their largest trading partner. It's hard, with limited resources, to influence them."

In addressing Canada/U.S. cultural differences, Astrid noted that Americans can be overly optimistic on timelines whereas Canadians are more cautious and may miss the decision point in business dealings.

Astrid emphasized the trade opportunities with the Southeast U.S. market, which boasts 50 million people and one of the world's largest economies. "Atlanta's economy is bigger than Thailand and Indonesia."

### Trade Critical in Times of Tension (continued from page 1)

to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. "By fostering economic interdependence, the possibility for long-term peace is greatly enhanced."

While the global economy has suffered a setback, it remains fundamentally strong, says **Rhona Levine Ruben**, BDC's National Market Manager, Women in Business. "Innovative approaches to doing business and ideas that are creative and original are precisely what is needed now to rebuild and strengthen the underlying values of our society."

Some businesspeople, like WITO member **Carole Proud** who owns granite quarry Belmont Rose Granite, have actually stepped up their exporting activity to the U.S. since September 11. "There will be a lot of rebuilding, which enhances the kind of raw material exporting I do." Although Carole has not yet travelled to the U.S. since September 11, she has stayed in close contact with the Presidents of her client companies. Her advice to others during these times of tension? "Persevere. Keep in touch with the U.S. market and your customers – by telephone, e-mail, fax. One to one calls are very important."

If you are travelling abroad, **Candice Rice**, Trade Commissioner, has this last piece of advice: "Register with the Canadian Embassy or Consulate ([www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca)) and leave your itinerary with relatives or friends. And always check the DFAIT Web site for the latest travel advisory."

# COMING UP Calendar

**November 29:** WITO and the International Trade Club are co-sponsoring this luncheon on "Women Pioneers in International Trade" at the Ontario Club, featuring Andrina Lever, President of Lever Enterprises, and Mary Anderson, formerly with the Council of Great Lakes Governors.

To register: 416-323-9270 or [tradeclub@home.com](mailto:tradeclub@home.com)



## TRADE Feature

Check out the recently revamped Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade's **Business Women in Trade** Web site at [www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen](http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen). Tailored to women entrepreneurs who want to prepare for – and succeed in – the export marketplace, the site's enhanced content includes advice from savvy women exporters, market leads and opportunities, an Ask the Experts section, hundreds of key contacts, advance notice of trade events, and a comprehensive list of support programs.

Info: Andrea Kucey at 613-996-4785 or [andrea.kucey@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:andrea.kucey@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)

## Members On the Move

**Betty Penny**, President of Penny & Associates, has launched the first Business & Technology Precinct in Ontario, an entrepreneur incubator and business centre that mixes new tech business startups with traditional businesses... **Maxine Westaway** has been named the first non-American President of The International Alliance (TIA), an umbrella organization of worldwide women's business groups... **Andrina Lever**, President of Lever Enterprises, is the new Commonwealth Coordinator of the Commonwealth Businesswomen Leader's Network. It brings together leaders and associations to influence trade policy and learn how to best use trade policy to their advantage... **Sandra Anstey**, President of WITO, accepted an invitation by the OWIT board of directors to sit as secretary on the international executive.

## WITO BOARD MEMBERS

President

**Sandra Anstey**

Tel: (416) 929-3890

E-mail: [anstey@istar.ca](mailto:anstey@istar.ca)

Vice-President

Sponsorship

**Vicki Saunders**

Tel: (416) 640-4733, ext. 222

E-mail: [vicki@vmsaunders.com](mailto:vicki@vmsaunders.com)

Vice-President, Communications

**Susan Baka**

Tel: (416) 410-1654

E-mail: [sbaka@interlog.com](mailto:sbaka@interlog.com)

Vice-President, Programming

**Candice Rice**

Tel: (416) 973-5157

E-mail: [rice.candice@ic.gc.ca](mailto:rice.candice@ic.gc.ca)

Vice-President,

Membership

**Anne Rose**

Tel: (416) 487-5204

E-mail: [anne.rose@sympatico.ca](mailto:anne.rose@sympatico.ca)

Secretary

**Angie de la Cerna**

Tel: (416) 973-5013

E-mail: [delacerna.angie@ic.gc.ca](mailto:delacerna.angie@ic.gc.ca)

Treasurer

**Betty Penny**

Tel: (905) 985-0712

E-mail: [betty@pennyinc.com](mailto:betty@pennyinc.com)

*Getting Connected* is published by **WITO** Women In International Trade – Ontario

Editor: Susan Baka, *Bay Communications*

Design: DUO Strategy and Design Inc.

**Contact Us.**

If you have content suggestions

or trade tips to share,

contact Susan Baka, Editor, at:

Tel: (416) 410-1654

Fax: (416) 467-4630

E-mail: [sbaka@interlog.com](mailto:sbaka@interlog.com)

**WITO**

Women In International Trade –

Ontario

P.O. Box 715

31 Adelaide St. E.

Toronto Ontario M5C 2J8

[www.wito.ca](http://www.wito.ca)

## More Useful Web Sites

By Eiko Shaul, Shaul Inforesearch

### 1. Trade Data Online

[http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc\\_mrkti/tdst/engdoc/tr\\_homep.html](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_mrkti/tdst/engdoc/tr_homep.html)

An amazing Strategis site that helps with research and gathering facts related to trade. It allows us to generate customized reports on Canadian and U.S. trade with more than 200 countries. Reports use data from Statistics Canada and the U. S. Census Bureau. There are two options for generating a report: Canadian and U.S. Trade by Products; and Canadian Trade by Industry.

In generating a report, we have options for categories (e.g. Trade Type, Time Period, Trading Partner, Product), with explanations for each category in a separate window. We can also find out the last update date for data used. Best of all, we can have results in graphs and reports. "Advanced functions" will allow us to save reports and charts, run or edit reports/charts and download ZIP files. Registration (free) required for the use of this function.

### 2. ProfitGuide.com – Export World

<http://www.profitguide.com/export/index.asp>

EDC (Export Development Corporation) sponsors the "Export World" page of ProfitGuide.com, business source for Canadian entrepreneurs. The page offers helpful articles by experts in the field and by business people based on their own experiences. There are also links to Resources, Associations, Government, Events, etc. Right panel is an EDC section offering links to EDC related sites such as Export Wise (quarterly magazine), Global Export Forecast and Electronic Information Services (free).

## Sound Bites

Roger Martin, Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, is troubled by Canada's slide in international competitiveness. At a Small Business Week seminar called **Entering Foreign Markets: Strategies for Entrepreneurs**, he urged businesses to focus on the global – not the local – peak. "The way forward to greater competitiveness and greater prosperity for Canada is through innovation – and not replication – of what other countries and companies have done." His advice? Be unique, set global aspirations and goals, and compete globally, serving the most sophisticated and demanding customers.

The *Globe and Mail* featured WITO and members Astrid Pregel and Sandra Anstey in a story on promoting women entrepreneurs in the September 19 issue.

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