

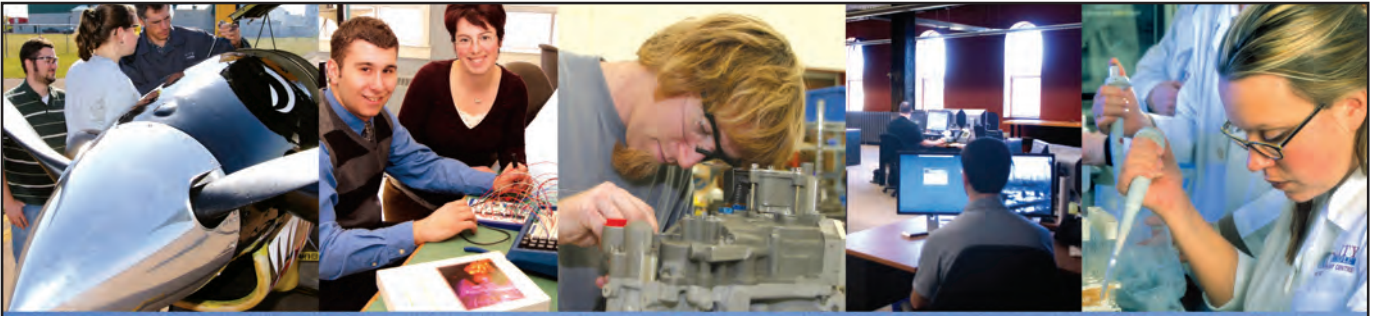


# THE MAN WITH A PLAN

IN APRIL 2009,  
**PREMIER  
ROBERT GHIZ**  
ANNOUNCED AN  
AMBITIOUS INITIATIVE  
TO BOOST THE PEI  
ECONOMY THROUGH  
THE STRATEGIC  
INJECTION OF  
\$200-MILLION INTO  
FOUR SELECTED  
INDUSTRIAL SECTORS  
OVER THE NEXT  
FIVE YEARS.

By Nicholas Oakes

Photo Credit: Brian Simpson



# innovationpei

The Government of Prince Edward Island is pleased to announce the launch of Innovation PEI.

Building upon client services currently offered by PEI Business Development Inc., this newly-branded agency will reflect government's commitment outlined in the Island Prosperity Strategy – to build a more prosperous and vibrant economy.

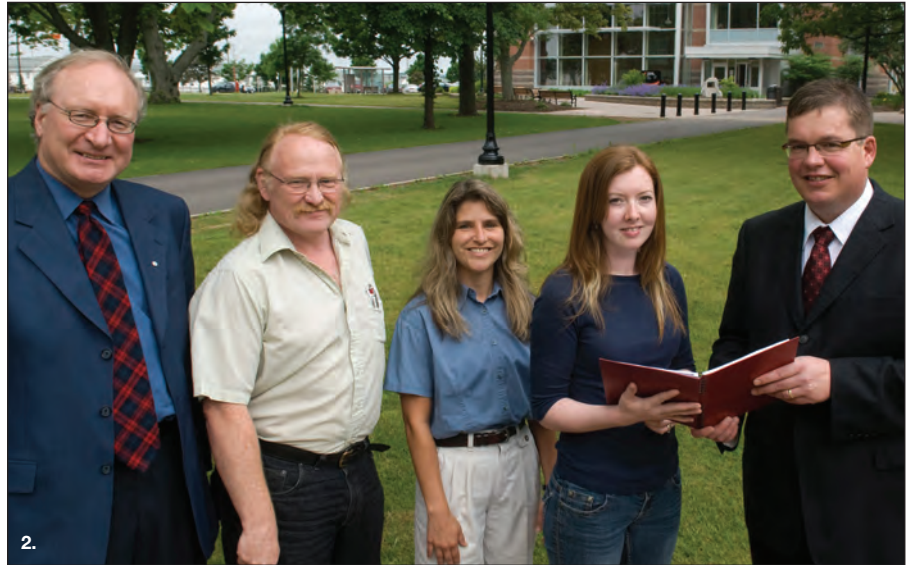
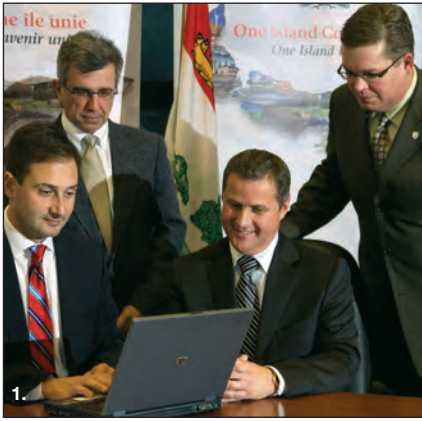
Innovation PEI  
902-368-6300  
1-800-563-3734  
[www.IslandProsperity.ca](http://www.IslandProsperity.ca)

Allan V. Campbell, *Minister*  
Innovation and Advanced Learning



**One Island Community**

**One Island Future**



**When** it was launched, PEI government officials said the Island Prosperity Strategy would double the size of the province's aerospace workforce, attract a host of bioscience research and development, boost home-grown energy self-sufficiency and energize the domestic I.T. sector – all this while simultaneously modernizing traditional industries and encouraging the repatriation of Islanders who had moved away for work.

The Liberal government claims their 70-page Island Prosperity Plan is the play book for all this, but the Progressive Conservatives say this plan won't create any jobs at all – unless you get a job making glossy signs announcing government projects.

The Plan includes a \$40-million investment in people, with a focus on attracting skilled immigrants and former Islanders to man the key sectors. Another \$100-million is earmarked for investment in innovation. This includes programs like the pilot fund and the discovery and development fund which will provide money for high-risk projects with commercial potential in order to get them to market more quickly. An additional \$60-million will be invested in infrastructure such as the new Biocommons Park and to triple wind energy capacity on the Island (more on this in "Whistling in the Wind?" page 87).

The proposed Biocommons Park, valued at \$35-million, is hoped to become the core of the Island's bioscience industry and its 27 companies. It's slated to be built on the outskirts of Charlottetown and is currently in the planning stages.

At the present time, PEI's bioscience sector produces revenues of about \$78-million annually and spends \$75-million each year on research and development. The Province wants to see revenue grow to \$300-million yearly and employment grow to 2,000 workers (up from the current roster of 850).

Commercialization has been flagged as the key to achieving that – which is where the Biocommons Park comes in.

The 65-acre Park will be owned by government and will be run either by them or the bioscience industry (the details are still being hammered out). Government monies will be used to install the Park's infrastructure (e.g. electrical and water and sewer systems) and construct a "business accelerator building" that will house incubation suites where businesses can grow and test products. Other lots in the Park would be available to commercial enterprises which would buy or lease the land from the Province.

Rory Francis, executive director of the PEI Bioalliance says the need for the Park is great. He says the sector is increasingly cramped for space, as the activities of individual companies and at the National Research Council building at UPEI have outgrown their physical footprint.

Canada has a great reputation for government-funded research, but it doesn't do as well when it comes to commercializing the results of that research, Francis says. He sees the accelerator building as a significant step in reversing that trend.

"With the new economy we're all stepping out into the unknown here. It's not like we've had a bioscience sector for generations or anything. We're learning together what it takes to do this and create a science platform that's credible globally," says Francis.

Ron Keefe, CEO of Biovectra (a bioscience company), agrees that the Plan's focus on that sector is much needed. "I think I speak for all the industry when I say this is a good Plan and will help us to grow," he says.

Some incentives in the Plan include tax breaks for bioscience companies with long term agreements to stay in the sector, and tax breaks for specially-trained employees who have to be recruited to the province. This

fiscal commitment, along with an educational and research partnership with Holland College and UPEI, is building the roster of biochemical professionals on Prince Edward Island, Keefe says. "This gives us a critical mass, and frankly will help move the sector forward and move the province forward in terms of employment opportunities and economic development. You focus in this particular area; you're going to get some solid interest from a number of companies."

Over \$100-million in bioscience infrastructure spending has already been invested over the past five years. During that same time frame, existing companies have expanded and new ones have arrived on the Island. Keefe admits it's not all because of government but he says there is a definite link.

Nowadays, Keefe's main concern is whether or not the Province can stay on the Plan, considering recessionary pressures, problems in primary industries, and a growing deficit. "(There) is a lot of noise going on that can knock you off your Plan very quickly. But, this is a long-term Plan. This isn't a one-year short-term gain."

The Island Prosperity Plan is supposed to mean equally big things for the aerospace industry, yet 10 months after the Plan's much heralded arrival, Lindo Lapegna (president of Testori Americas) says he's never even heard of it.

Testori Americas, founded in 1993, is situated in Slemmon Park, PEI. It employs 200 people and is one of the leading firms in the Island's aerospace industry. Lapegna says the provincial government has been very supportive of his company but he isn't familiar with the Plan.

Andrew Hall, however, is decidedly familiar with the Province's commitment to aerospace growth and development. Hall is president of the PEI Aerospace Industry Association and he says this Plan has the



1. From left to right: Premier Robert Ghiz; Richard Brown, Minister of the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning; Bruce Howatt, VP, Prince Edward Island, Aliant; and Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development Minister Allan Campbell look over details of an agreement between the Government of Prince Edward and Aliant to provide broadband services to rural PEI. (Brian Simpson, Provincial Photographer)

2. PhD student Jessica Livingston-Thomas, second from right, and Allan Campbell, right, Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, read the list of successful applicants of the Graduate and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program. Livingston-Thomas is one of eleven applicants selected for the program funded through the Island Prosperity Strategy. Dr. Andy Tasker second from left, Professor and Director at Atlantic Center for Comparative Biomedical Research and Dr. Tracy Doucette, center, Assistant Professor of Biology, are supervisors of Livingston Thomas' project. Also present, UPEI president Wade MacLaughlin, left. (Brian Simpson, Provincial Photographer)

3. Aerial view of Slemon Park, home of PEI's aerospace industry. Inset, Hercules and Cormorant aircraft and a fuel truck on the runway at Slemon Park. (Slemon Park Corporation photos)

potential to create a great number of jobs in the sector. Although he's not sure if this Plan can create 1,000 new jobs like it promises, he points out that it wouldn't take a lot of money invested in research and development to "spin off into quite a few jobs."

Money has to be put into research and development to develop anything downstream and with this Plan, the seed money is being provided by government, he explains. "The money downstream all comes from the

intellectual property and that starts with the research and development stream. If you have a product or process that needs some additional research and development work, this (funding) takes some of the risk out of it and makes it easier to jump in and try to develop that. And if you find a unique way of making something or fixing something, that generates revenue, and revenue generates jobs."

In the Information Technology sector, the Province hopes to increase annual sales from

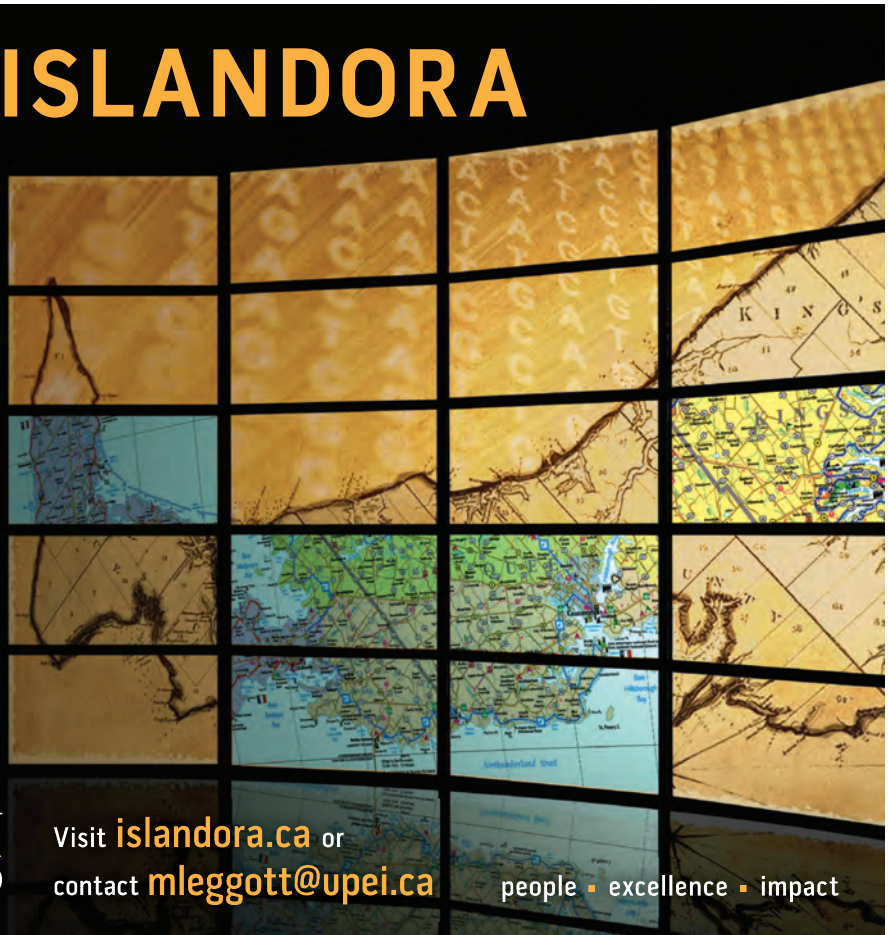
\$30-million to over \$100-million, as well as add an additional 800 workers to the existing 1,200 on the Island. This is hoped to be achieved through various program funding and by the building of a new E-Health Centre in the city of Summerside. The building is expected to have a \$7-million price tag and will house simulation software and hardware to test healthcare IT products.

Though the Plan has lofty goals, Progressive Conservative opposition MLA

# Introducing ISLANDORA

Islandora is an open source software product developed by a team at the University of Prince Edward Island's Robertson Library. Combining Drupal and Fedora, Islandora offers a robust asset management system for collaboration and digital data stewardship.

Soon to be released Islandora Sprouts provide out-of-the-box solutions for a range of data requirements — images, video, audio, and print in a variety of key research areas: social and life sciences, chemistry, and more. Commercial-level support, customization, and digitization services are available.



**UPEI** UNIVERSITY of Prince Edward ISLAND

Visit [islandora.ca](http://islandora.ca) or contact [mleggott@upe.ca](mailto:mleggott@upe.ca)

people • excellence • impact



# the birthplace of Canada is now the birthplace of **bioscience innovations**

The Prince Edward Island Bioscience Cluster is the location of choice for companies engaged in the research, development and commercialization of bioactive-based health and nutrition products for humans, animals and aquaculture.

## From Collaboration to Commercialization

Discover how we can  
get you to market faster.



Photo: National Research Council Canada

[www.PEIBIOALLIANCE.com](http://www.PEIBIOALLIANCE.com)

## Holland College - partners in economic development in Prince Edward Island.



**HOLLAND**  
COLLEGE

1-800-446-5265 • [www.hollandcollege.com](http://www.hollandcollege.com)

Mike Currie says he has yet to see any new jobs created or movement on any projects. He claims the Biocommons Park is a waste of time and money when there are industrial parks in Charlottetown's bedroom communities of Stratford and Cornwall that are 75 per cent empty. As for the Park itself, there isn't any sign of progress at its proposed location sparing a sign stating it will be the future site of the Park.

"At the end of the week, when Friday rolls around, people just want a paycheque to take home and buy groceries with," Currie says. "This Plan isn't doing that."

Currie asserts that the Plan's funding structure is a sign that the Plan is "just for show." Funding is not earmarked in one place but rather is spread throughout the budget. Some of the funding for the Biocommons Park, for example, is in the provincial capital budget while much of the program funding is pre-existing under other programs.

Currie goes on to say that the greater majority of the province's wealth (agriculture, tourism and fisheries) is outside of Charlottetown and Summerside and has nothing to do with IT, bioscience, aerospace or power development. He sees the Province's focus as misguided and the report too hard for average people to understand. "This report is for academics, not everyday Islanders."

Allan Campbell, Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, disagrees with Currie, saying the benefits will be felt across all of Prince Edward Island. "Our ability to invest as a Province is directly related to our economic performance. It dictates how we can allocate dollars to healthcare, to education, to highway construction."

When Campbell went to a conference last spring in Atlanta, Georgia, he noticed how PEI has become recognized on the international stage. That's no doubt due in part to the two large multinational companies which have a presence on PEI. Novartis has their global aquaculture fish health products manufacturing division on the Island, while Genzyme operates a diagnostic chemical plant in the province. Campbell says the Biocommons Park was conceived as something that would help companies like these, and others, achieve greater growth, faster.

As more companies are attracted to PEI, and as other companies expand their Island operations, Campbell anticipates welcoming Islanders back home from away. "That's part of what we do - repatriation. We hear it all the time, about people going out West, and once they go it's hard to get them back. So if we create more opportunity and more meaningful employment here, hopefully we'll get some of them back home." 