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Western Canadian IT Conference to Address Industry Labour Shortages and Effectiveness

The logo for 'Connection 2012' features a stylized blue Wi-Fi symbol integrated into the letter 'C' of the word 'Connection'. The year '2012' is rendered in a large, bold, blue font.

Business Leaders & IT Professionals Meet in Saskatoon to Discuss Strategies for Alleviating Staff Shortages in Western Canada's High Growth Economies

Sept. 26, 2012 (Saskatoon) – Nearly 400 business leaders, IT professionals and students are gathering in Saskatoon this Friday to discuss IT staffing issues resulting from Western Canada's economic boom. Although the rapid growth has created an exciting opportunity for companies to expand, a steady increase in the demand for labour has resulted in a shortage of qualified IT professionals.

In response, WBM has begun placing IT professionals into the offices of their clients to help fill positions in IT departments. These positions have dramatically accelerated efforts to attract and retain qualified IT professionals in the province, bringing in dozens of new hires who will work within many of the province's largest organizations.

The ability to provide these organizations with the people they need to operate and grow is becoming a critical condition of success for IT to keep up with the aggressive business strategies the province is now seeing.

Paul Cluett, Director of IT Staffing at WBM, described how the shortage had "shifted the power from the employer to the employees," characterizing the opportunities for IT professionals in Saskatchewan as "endless."

Conversely, companies are having difficulty filling IT positions because of a lack of candidates who meet the necessary job requirements. “The challenges are in finding, training and retaining qualified people. Certainly, that is nothing new, but now the scale of this problem has changed. With new companies coming into the Western Canadian market and establishing offices, further strain is being added to an already strained market.”

The conference will bring together key players from across the industry to develop ways of combatting the ongoing supply crunch. An important part of helping this labour market is to continue developing tomorrow's IT leaders. With that in mind, educational institutions like SIAST were invited to attend so students and instructors could learn more about the practical aspects of the IT industry. The company has also initiated a life mentorship opportunity with students from Vincent Massey School in Saskatoon to develop awareness of career opportunities in the field. This event was conceived by WBM and their partners to help local youth learn what it takes to be an IT service professional in Canada.

Over the years, the conference has become a leading event within the Canadian IT sector, receiving coverage in a number of IT publications and drawing over 350 professionals from across Western Canada. This year, the theme is Connections and will feature presentations, panels and speeches by many key executives, as well as industry leaders, such as Microsoft and Apple.

As companies across the Prairies continue to grow, so has the role of IT in their success. The main challenge for progressive IT organizations will be to effectively strategize on ways to attract, grow, and retain the necessary talent to succeed.

There will also be a VIP Thank You reception and a special charity announcement at the Premier Festival of Fine Wines and Spirits.

Local media are invited to sit in on part of the event as outlined in the schedule below. Industry experts will be available for interviews throughout the day.