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INNOVATIVE LEADERS DEVELOP NEW MODEL FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY*LCIC's Supply Chain Study Provides Data for New Online Tool*

TRAIL, BC — Imagine if you knew exactly what resources were in a community before deciding whether launching your venture there was a good fit. A new online interactive tool is providing that insight in the West Kootenay.

Metal Tech Alley, an industrial and tech think tank leading circular economy development strategies, recently launched the [West Kootenay Supply Chain](#), a digital feature that markets the region's existing industry, highlights the potential for more development, and models the supply chain through a circular economic lens.

“For Metal Tech Alley to be most effective at investment attraction, we need to show clearly and in detail the companies operating in the region,” explains Rebecca Richards, director of the Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation (LCIC), the economic development organization that drives Metal Tech Alley. “This model allows outside parties to see at a glance what industry exists here and its supply chain reach. It also helps us understand how the region's industry may be impacted by future global supply chain events.”

The model was triggered by a [Regional Supply Chain Study](#), undertaken by the LCIC and funded by Columbia Basin Trust, Economic Trust of the Southern Interior of BC, and CanExports Community Investments.

“COVID-19 made us realize just how dependent we are on supply from outside Canada,” Richards explains. “The model provides the basis for us to take on projects, which will create resilience in local companies, especially with respect to supply chains.”

Using the compiled data, Kootenay-based web development and GIS analytics company TruGIS built the research-based tool that organizes industry data into an interactive visual network. TruGIS' Managing Director Colin Jaeck says the goal is to provide an accessible way to view and build grassroots supply chains.

“We knew we could help remove some of the fundamental barriers communities face when understanding local supply chains or implementing circular economy strategies by providing real examples,” explains Jaeck. “There needed to be a ‘bridging of silos’ — a collaboration between governments, industries, nonprofits, and companies of all sizes using a common platform.”

The result is a visual representation of how goods move into, within, and out of local industry sectors. Once populated, the regional model will be integrated into a growing national model to show the supply chain in a larger context.

“We're focusing on creating local bubbles, which hasn't really been done until now,” says Jaeck. “Essentially, we're trying to minimize the impact of external influences beyond our control such as inflation, political instability, and supply chain disruptions with proper planning made possible by these models.”

Take Fenix Advanced Materials for example, a company specializing in the manufacturing of ultra-high purity

metals for use in the solar energy, telecommunications, and commercial markets. The clean technology company uses some of Teck's by-products to produce high purity metals. The goal is to facilitate other similar business partnerships, where waste can be diverted and value-added products created.

“The West Kootenay Supply Chain model will be able to connect companies, reducing environmental impact, lowering production costs, and increasing competitive advantage for businesses,” says Jaeck. “It's an excellent research tool for finding new opportunities and connections.”

As more data is entered, the model has the capacity to further demonstrate a closed-loop circular economy, according to Metal Tech Alley Director Jacomien van Tonder. She invites organizations and businesses to enter their details into the intuitive model housed on the [Metal Tech Alley website](#) to help the region gain a more comprehensive understanding of the economy.

“Our intention is that this map will foster new development and strengthen the circular economy, especially in the battery manufacturing and recycling industry,” van Tonder says. “In the future, we'd like to explore whether this model can be linked with similar models in other areas, so that Metal Tech Alley continues to be a leader in forwarding the circular economy movement in Canada.”

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Stacked Films Photos:

IMG 2229 or IMG 2266

The Trail Regional Airport is situated in a valley beside the Columbia River, and serves both Trail and nearby Nelson and Castlegar. Pacific Coastal provides flight service to and from Vancouver, opening up the region to outside business with only an approximate one-hour flight.

IMG 2297

The Lower Columbia region is uniquely situated approximately 10 km north of the US border, making it an ideal location for rail transport.

OR

Yanive Feiner Photo: (make sure the watermark is left on the picture)

Yanive Train.jpg

The Lower Columbia region is uniquely situated approximately 10 km north of the US border, making it an ideal location for rail transport.

DJI 0067 or DJI 0050

Metal Tech Alley just launched the [West Kootenay Supply Chain](#), a digital model that markets the region's existing industry, including the metallurgical expertise in the City of Trail, and highlights the potential for more development by mapping local supply chains and championing offshoot developments from collaborative businesses and professionals.