Huge opportunities for Coast in Christchurch rebuild

The Government is looking to the West Coast to help provide materials and components to rebuild Christchurch. In mid February representatives from New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) spoke to business people at a breakfast organised by Development West Coast. They want Coast companies to come up with innovative products and solutions to help re-establish Christchurch after the quakes.

"From tapware through to hydraulic systems, we are interested in anything that is going to give us an edge. If you are in manufacturing and you have people with new ideas we are keen to hear from you," says NZTE Project Procurement Advisor David Conney.

"The rebuild will change the whole way New Zealand builds its housing stock and corporate offices. If you can develop something that is a fit for Christchurch you can guarantee it will have export opportunities in the future," he says.

As Christchurch enters the re-build phase it will require 460km of roading and essential services in the distance. We are looking to the West Coast and other parts of the South Island to provide that," says Mr Conney. He says there are opportunities for companies to provide products as diverse as modular kitchens and bathrooms, aggregate, framing and timber. Companies also needed to be a lot smarter, efficient and cost competitive in looking at providing the best solutions for Christchurch. For example a German company was looking at licensing flat pack modular houses to be manufactured in New Zealand.

Around 30 people from 17 different companies were at the breakfast including construction and engineering firms, joiners, plumbers and electricians. Jane Chapman from Hokitika’s Top Notch Joinery says she was particularly interested in finding out more about the German modular houses.

"We work at the top end of the market and already deal with German products so that sounds interesting. The West Coast usually isn’t involved in what is happening in the east so this is the first step to hearing what opportunities might be out there," she says.

DWC CEO John Chang says the Christchurch rebuild offers a lot of opportunities to West Coast businesses.

"We will be arranging forums to bring manufacturers together to discuss how they can maximise the opportunities in Christchurch. We have a tremendous capability and capacity on the West Coast but need to stand out amongst all the others," he says.

Businesses are encouraged to check out the Industry Capability Network and Collaborate Canterbury website which put New Zealand suppliers and purchasers in touch about a wide range of project opportunities. Businesses should register with the site that best suits their needs at www.collaboratecanterbury.org.nz or www.cics.org.au, or contact Nelia Heersink at DWC on 03 768 1076 or Nelia@dwc.org.nz for more information.

Chairman's Comment

WELCOME to the first of DWC’s 2013 monthly updates.

It comes as no surprise to many customers of Greymouth Arnold Products when they realise they are not dealing with a large multinational company and that’s how general manager Barrie Calder likes it.

Situated in Greymouth’s South Beach the company has grown from a small West Coast business to a nationwide company manufacturing and supplying around 1000 cleaning and sanitary products to the hospitality and food service industry.

"Because of the interactions customers have with Arnold Products they expect us to be a big multi-national. It is good business to be operating all the way from the West Coast," says Barrie Calder.

Founded in 1990 by Tommy and Tony Arnold, Arnold Products Ltd initially manufactured chemical cleaning products. These days nearly half the company’s business is supplying toilet paper as well as manufacturing cleaning products and supplying products for janitor supplies and hospitality amenities.

Barrie Calder joined the company four and a half years ago and says one of its key strengths is its business-to-business servicing.

"It’s about service and matching the cleaning products to what the business needs," he says.

The company also hopes to innovate and refine products to meet changes in customer needs. For instance a recent innovation in dog shampoo for sensitive pooches has proved so popular the company has been asked to make a strawberry version.

Despite tough financial times sales are increasing year on year and the company now has 11 staff with four full time reps working in the South Island.

"We are really busy right now and serious to take your business to the next level come and talk to me," she says.

To register as a regional business partner you have to register your business on the Accelerate Success website. Subsidy for training and coaching may be available if you fit the eligibility criteria. www.acceleratesuccess.co.nz. For more information you can contact Nelia at DWC on 03 768 1076.