

# MONEY



## Setting high-tech pace

Deloitte Technology's annual poll names B.C.'s Westport Innovations its fastest-growing Canadian tech company for the year 2006.

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# Fast cyberlink for Charlottes

**INTERNET:** Community joins with Telus in high-speed service project

BY JIM JAMIESON  
BUSINESS REPORTER

Queen Charlotte Islands residents will soon be slamming down the receiver on dial-up, thanks to what is believed to be the world's longest radio Internet link over open water.

Telus Corp. and the Gwaii Trust Society have signed a contract for the project, which will enable service providers on the remote islands to offer the same kind of lightning-fast broadband Internet speeds that are available elsewhere in the province.

That's a leap from a 56-kilobit telephone modem to a typical three megabits per second.

The new service is expected to have a major impact on the islands' economic development, health care and educational opportunities.

"The contract represents the culmination of nearly five years of work with the province of B.C., Telus and other partners to bring this vital high-capacity service to the people of Haida Gwaii," said Miles Richardson, chairman of the Gwaii Trust Society.

Telus spokesman Shawn Hall said open water creates interference challenges on such "radio hops" not encountered in land-based installations.

"We have sites in place that beam phone service to the islands but we're having to build new hardware into those sites with cutting-edge technology so the signal can go 115 kilometres over water," said Hall.

"We've installed two dishes on each end and are running signals on several different frequencies," he said.

Expected to be operational by the end of the year, the project involves a \$1.3-million

investment by Telus to build a series of high-capacity mountain-top data transmitters to Mount Hayes near Prince Rupert.

High-speed Internet service will then beam across Hecate Strait to a station at Masset. Service will flow from the station to other points on the islands via fibre-optic cables.

Telus will be the broadband wholesaler and is partnering with the society, which created an Internet service provider, GwaiiTel, to make high-speed Internet service available to about 5,000 residents of the islands' seven largest communities.

Part of the connecting communities project started in April 2005 by Telus and the provincial government.

Telus expects to have 110 remote rural communities connected with high-speed Internet by the end of the year.

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Gwaii Trust chairman Miles Richardson signs on to new 'Net service provider GwaiiTel.

# Enviro-conscious car dealer to drive down green highway

BY ASHLEY FORD  
BUSINESS WRITER

Is the "greening" of the auto industry finally at hand?

A carbon-free vehicle era may still be off in the distance, but Vancouver car dealer Auto West BMW yesterday announced it is taking the "green route" in the construction of its new \$17-million, 1.5-hectare retail centre in Richmond.

Company president Joachim Neumann said it is investing \$2 million in eco-friendly features in the 60,000-square-foot space, beginning with drilling 75 metres into the earth beginning today to install a geothermal heating and cooling system.

"Although car manufacturers have been cleaning up their act with hybrid and alternative-fuel vehicles, it's up to all of us to ensure we look after the environment and reuse natural resources wherever possible," he said.

Neumann said he is also looking at the feasibility of using solar and wind power in the new development at the corner of Cambie and Shell roads.



An artist's rendering suggests the sweeping changes coming for Richmond's eco-friendly Auto West BMW.

"When we initially sat down, we set out to create a building that not only facilitates the BMW service but does so in a socially-responsible way," Neumann said.

Jason So, marketing manager, agrees there is a certain irony about going green, given the pollution caused by the internal-combustion engine.

"It is a small step along a long highway and we are trying to play our part," he said.

The geothermal system alone is expected to cut 100 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions a year. Pipes will reach down to where the earth has a constant temperature and then circulate it through the floor. The radiant system is both energy-efficient

and comfortable.

Other eco-friendly features will include a 6,000-square-foot green roof system with more than 30 species of exotic, drought-resistant plants that will help keep the building cool in summer.

Water resources will also be carefully monitored. Car dealerships traditionally use hefty amounts of

water and development plans call for 90 per cent of car-wash water to be recirculated. The dealership will also capture rain and grey water for irrigation, saving thousands of litres of water each year.

Earth Source Energy, who will supply the geothermal system, is the same company behind a similar, although much larger, system to be installed in the Richmond speed-skating oval being built for the 2010 Olympics.

California's Attorney-General Bill Lockyer yesterday sued the six largest U.S. and Japanese automakers, including GM, Ford and Toyota, for damages related to greenhouse-gas emissions. "It's part of a strategy to address global warming," Lockyer said.

"The goal . . . is to hold these automobile manufacturers accountable for the monies taxpayers are spending to address these harms."

The federal lawsuit alleges that vehicle emissions harm people's health, damage the environment and cost the state millions of dollars to combat their effects.

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— with a file by Associated Press