

NEWS RELEASE



Media Release

November 8, 2023

RDCO hosts cleantech, manufacturing and aerospace familiarization tour

On November 8, The Regional District of Central Okanagan's (RDCO) Economic Development Commission (EDC), in partnership with [Tourism Kelowna](#), hosted elected officials, community partners and economic development staff on a cleantech, manufacturing and aerospace industry familiarization tour.

Familiarization tours are a staple in the tourism and hospitality space and provide guests with firsthand experiences, immersing them in facilities and services. The OKGo team adapted the concept to have an industry-specific focus, providing a platform for the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus and industry leaders in cleantech, manufacturing and aerospace to share stories and information to deepen industry understanding for elected officials and partners.

"It was an incredible privilege to engage with industry leaders to learn about research, innovation, growth and the challenges that lie ahead. Today's insights have inspired us and furthered our commitment to a shared vision of a resilient, clean and prosperous future," said Loyal Wooldridge, Chair of the RDCO Board. "These industries are the engine driving our regional economy and it is essential that we create an environment that not only attracts and retains the brightest talents but also fuels research, innovation and technological innovation."

Attendees began the day at the RDCO with a welcome from the Board, followed by an economic update and industry stats for cleantech, manufacturing and aerospace from the EDC.

Attendees then visited UBC Okanagan's [Cleantech Hub](#) at the UBC Innovation Precinct. While touring the facilities, the group learned about academic-industry collaborations aimed at promoting clean technologies and helping industry bring their technologies and products to domestic and international markets, all while supporting Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy. Last year alone, UBCO attracted nearly \$45 million in research funding to the Okanagan.

“UBC Okanagan places a high priority on research partnerships that solve pressing societal issues while helping drive economic development and industrial diversification in the valley. The work taking place at the UBCO Cleantech Hub is doing just that, with exciting projects underway in areas like carbon recovery, hydrogen tech, renewables and more,” said Dr. Lesley Cormack, Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at UBC’s Okanagan campus. “It’s critical that we continue to work together across the region to promote clean technologies and help local companies bring innovations to the marketplace.”

The next stop was Vitalis, a leading manufacturer of clean CO2 technology solutions. Sustainability is a core value at Vitalis, where passion for decarbonization is devoted to helping communities transition to low carbon energy through reliable technology and strategic partnerships.

“Meeting with regional elected officials, community partners and economic development professionals has been an incredible opportunity for Vitalis. I am a firm believer in the power of collaboration between government, community partners and private enterprises,” said James Seabrook, CEO of Vitalis. “By working together, we can address our common challenges, leverage opportunities and drive sustainable change that benefits all stakeholders - our communities, our economy and our planet.”

The final stop of the day was [KF Aerospace](#), Canada’s Largest Commercial MRO and supplier of the year by Boeing. At KF Aerospace, Grant Stevens, Chief Corporate Services Officer, guided the tour group through the advanced hangar facilities, providing an up-close look at the company's commercial maintenance and modifications, flight operations and engineering. Stevens also provided an update on the regional aerospace sector, discussing challenges and presenting opportunities for future growth and innovation within the industry.

Overall, the day showcased the thriving cleantech, manufacturing and aerospace industries in the Central Okanagan and provided a platform for key regional institutions, community organizations, and elected officials to connect, share strategies and foster economic development.

To learn more about the COEDC and what we do visit www.investkelowna.com.

Photo Captions:

Photo 1:

Photo 2:

Photo 3:

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I acknowledge my presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded [tɪxʷúlaʔxʷ](#) (land) of the syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial. I recognize, honour, and respect the syilx / Okanagan lands upon which we live, work, and play.