



RDCO hosts technology and aerospace sector familiarization tour

COEDC NEWS

NOVEMBER 28, 2024



On Thursday, regional leaders toured innovative facilities in the Central Okanagan, spotlighting the region's growing technology and aerospace sectors. The tour highlighted companies and advancements shaping these industries, positioning the Central Okanagan as a hub for talent and investment in technology and aerospace, which have seen significant growth over the past decade.

On November 21, the Regional District of Central Okanagan's (RDCO) Economic Development Commission (EDC), in partnership with Tourism Kelowna and Accelerate Okanagan, hosted elected officials, community partners and economic development staff on a technology and aerospace familiarization tour.



technology and aerospace sectors. During the tour, attendees gained insights into opportunities, challenges and the evolving landscape of these two sectors in the Central Okanagan.

"It was an incredible privilege to connect with technology and aerospace leaders in the Central Okanagan," said Blair Ireland, Chair of the RDCO Board. "We learned how interconnected these businesses are in sharing knowledge and supporting one another to build a dynamic hub for innovation, talent and growth in these thriving industries. Many industry leaders collaborate, highlighting how the cross-pollination of ideas and partnerships strengthens our local business community. This collaborative ecosystem is essential for driving progress, attracting talent and investment, and making a meaningful economic impact."

Attendees began the day at the RDCO with a warm welcome from Blair Ireland, Chair of the RDCO Board. Krista Mallory, Manager of the EDC, then provided an economic update on the technology and aerospace sectors including specific industry statistics and trends.

Attendees then visited [Anodyne Electronics Manufacturing Corporation \(AEM\)](#) in Kelowna. At AEM, Taylor Wylie, Group Chief Operating Officer, guided the tour group through the high-tech production facilities, provided insights into the company's challenges and opportunities, learning about AEM's products and their ground-breaking structural health monitoring technology.

"Sharing the innovative work being done at AEM has been an invaluable experience," said Taylor Wylie, Group Chief Operating Officer at Anodyne Electronics Manufacturing Corp. (AEM). "Collaboration between government, community partners and private enterprises is key to addressing shared challenges and creating opportunities. By working together, we can continue to strengthen AEM's foundation of quality avionics solutions that are manufactured locally and distributed globally. Ultimately benefiting our local community and supporting sustainable growth in the Central Okanagan."

The final stop was [Accelerate Okanagan](#), where Alex Goodhew, Community Manager hosted the technology update. While touring the facility, attendees learnt about Accelerate Okanagan's latest Economic Impact Study. The Central Okanagan's technology sector plays a vital role in the regional economy, contributing nearly \$3.01 billion annually and supporting 5,517 jobs across a diverse set of subsectors such as Software as a Service (SaaS), Artificial Intelligence, Animation and Agritech.

"The Okanagan technology sector reflects the diverse business ecosystem in the region with many sub-sectors emerging like aerospace and advanced manufacturing. As of 2023, 467 tech businesses operate in the Central Okanagan, creating substantial economic growth," said Brea Lake, CEO of Accelerate Okanagan. "This sharing of insights and innovation within the community empowers our elected officials and community partners to offer meaningful support and advocacy for this vital sector."

Overall, the day showcased the thriving technology and aerospace ecosystem in the Central Okanagan and provided a platform for industry organizations, elected officials and community partners to connect. It also emphasized the vital role the technology and aerospace sectors play in cultivating talent and fueling economic growth in the region.