

PRESS RELEASE

OCT 20 2021, THOMPSON, MANITOBA

Thompson, Manitoba is pleased to announce the relaunching of its Winter Weather Testing Campus.

A Winter Weather Testing Centre of Excellence is open for business in Thompson, Manitoba.

In spring of 2020, the Thompson Chamber of Commerce tasked a special committee to reinvigorate its cold-weather testing industry. The committee retained CAVCOE, a consulting firm, to conduct a feasibility study. The firm presented a series of recommendations, which were provided to the Thompson Community Development Corporation for ongoing management and implementation.

The relaunch announcement came after a Winter Weather Testing Campus workshop was held on October 20th, where key stakeholders were invited to participate in a moderated discussion around industry development. The discussion closed with a demonstration from Swap Robotics, the world leader in robotic snow removal, grass cutting & sidewalk inspections. Swap Robotics are slated to begin testing automated snow removal technology in Thompson this year.

“Thompson will be an ideal testing ground for us. The extended cold weather season will enable us to conduct testing in harsh, real-world environments before bringing our snow removal robots to market”, said Tim Lichti, Founder & CEO of Swap Robotics.

While Thompson has been a traditional testing centre for major aviation and automotive brands for over 25 years, the increasing importance of electric and battery power has seen a surge of new industries looking to the northern city. Government, research, and industry partners are expected to further explore testing opportunities at Thompson’s inaugural North American Cold Weather Testing Conference in late 2022.

Thompson’s location and weather offer four key advantages for industry:

- Average temperature below freezing for 222 days per year (avg) and snow cover for six months
- Central location with easy access via road, rail, and air year-round
- Existing amenities including isolated roads, frozen lakes, secluded terrain, and fibre-optic connections
- Economic and community benefits such as Canadian exchange rate, hotel accommodations, affordable hydro-electric energy, and urban recreational opportunities

Winter weather testing also provides many skilled employment opportunities to Thompson’s local workforce. “The most advanced jet engines in the world from Rolls-Royce and Pratt & Whitney are brought to the GLACIER centre for developmental testing and icing certification. With the facility operated and maintained by MDS AeroTest, the Thompson community has provided tremendous support for fabrication and construction, industrial supplies, building and equipment maintenance, and of course excellent accommodations for the teams of technical analysts” said Kim Olson from MDS AeroTest.

Chris Reddy, manager of the Thompson Community Development Corporation, believes relaunching the winter weather testing campus will be welcomed news to industry. “Thompson is uniquely positioned to offer real-world testing conditions in a pristine environment, making it the best outdoor cold weather test site in the world.”

Located in Northern Manitoba, Canada, Thompson is approximately 750km north of Winnipeg. The city is located in Treaty 5 territory, the traditional territory of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

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