

For Immediate Release

Thompson Unlimited takes Winter Weather Testing to Paris, France

(June 15, 2009) – Thompson Unlimited landed its Winter Weather Testing initiatives in the middle the world's largest air show in Paris, France in June, as part of its efforts to expand this evolving industry. Thompson Unlimited (TU), the community economic development corporation charged with diversifying the city's economic base, joined a Canadian delegation including provincial ministers, the National Research Council and representatives of Canada's aviation industry.

"We have worked long and hard to bring an increased level of aerospace business to Thompson and our efforts have now paid off in a significant manner," explained Roxie Binns, Development Coordinator with TU. "And our debut was successful. We did our homework in advance, contacting trade ministers and inviting them to our booth. Through the National Research Council and our own Competitiveness and Trade Minister Andrew Swan, we arranged meetings with businesses and organizations. One result of this advance work was that we had organizations seeking us out."

Winter Weather Testing in Thompson started out quietly in the 1980s with vehicle manufacturers testing one or two units a year. "Today Winter Weather Testing in Thompson is truly evolving into a major and world class industry," said Mark Matiasek, General Manager of TU. "Our first major commitment came with Ford, when it developed its centre at the Thompson Airport. We are now planning for a permanent facility at the airport. And while we continue to grow our successes in the automotive industry, it is appropriate to expand into the aerospace industry, especially with the recent announcement of our jet engine test facility."

For years, automotive manufacturers have known Thompson is the best place in the world to test their products under severe weather conditions, said Competitiveness and Trade Minister Andrew Swan.

"The recent decision by Pratt & Whitney USA and Rolls Royce UK, two of the largest aerospace manufacturers in the world, to test their products in Thompson cements the city's international reputation," said Swan, who supported the community at the recent Paris Air Show. "All Manitobans can take pride in knowing that much of the world's fleet of next-generation jetliners will be flying with engine models tested in Thompson."

Thompson is a favoured test site for several reasons. It has ideal climate conditions, all required infrastructure, and is a relatively low-cost location that is accessible by road, rail and air. "The consistent cold temperature, remoteness for maintaining confidentiality and friendly people of Thompson make it the ideal

place for cold testing,” said Naomichi Aoki, Product Development, Technical Operations Director for Honda Canada.

“These developments are not by accident,” said Curtis Ross, Executive Director of the Thompson Regional Airport Authority. “There have been dozens of people who have done research, been part of delegations and proposal writing to attract new testers. This is in addition to the dozens who have ensured that all the needs of the current testers are met, securing their return each winter.”

“There is no doubt that Thompson is a place of unlimited opportunity,” said Mayor Tim Johnston. “But make no mistake, it has taken and will continue to take, the dedication and commitment of all sectors of Thompson to continue to grow this industry. The very professional way in which Thompson Unlimited presented the city and Winter Weather Testing to the Paris Air Show is just one example of that commitment.”

For further information, please contact Mrs. Roxie Binns at tel: (204) 677-1903.



Thompson Unlimited was among 2,000 exhibitors at the International Paris Air Show in June. Representatives from major manufactures of aircraft, ranging from light jets to helicopters to unmanned spaceflight vehicles, airplane components, fuel, tires, radar systems and promoters of 'green aviation' initiatives showcased to more than 770,000 visitors and 3,500 journalists. More than 140 aircraft were on display in the 192,000 square-meter static aircraft display area.