



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **WEConnect Canada Partners to Bring Women-owned Business Trade Delegation to Largest Conference and Business Fair of its Kind in North America**

*Event in Las Vegas, NV, puts Canadian products in front of global purchasers*

LAS VEGAS, NV – WEConnect Canada, in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade (DFAIT), has taken over 100 Canadian women business owners to the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)'s 2011 National Conference & Business Fair, "The Opportunity Connection." These women owned businesses represent all provinces and include many nationally recognized award winners who have a focus on expanding their customer base and extending market reach to corporations looking to diversify their supplier base.

"Supplier diversity is the proactive business process of sourcing products and services from previously under-used suppliers. Trade missions like this one increase the visibility and profile of our certified women-owned businesses to some of the biggest corporate players on the planet," says Mary Anderson, executive director, WEConnect Canada. "These women entrepreneurs would not normally have such ready access to a large corporation's supply chain." An estimated 97% of large multinationals have supplier diversity programs.

WEConnect Canada is the certification body for women-owned businesses. It certifies firms that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by women and connects them with the growing global demand from corporations and the public sector for diverse and innovative suppliers.

"Certification assures corporations that they are doing business with recognized diverse suppliers and is the first step for these businesses to make important contacts, which will help open doors to international business opportunities," explains Anderson. "WEConnect Canada not only delivers internationally-recognized certification, but offers training and education to help women business owners successfully bid on procurement contracts."

WBENC's annual conference and business fair, June 21-23, 2011 boasts more than 3,000 partici-pants and nearly 350 exhibitors. The trade mission to WBNEC will provide Canadian women-owned business enterprises with access to leading corporations practicing supplier diversity. During their time at WBENC, members of the delegation will meet with corporate procurement representatives and women business owners from across North America. There will also be networking and educational opportunities.

"You have to be at WBENC to network," says Stephanie McLarty, president, REefficient Inc. and a past WBENC delegate. "This is the place to get introductions and resources and it increases the possibility of opportunities."

The trade mission is also supported by provincial governments through regional women business enterprise centres across Canada.

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**About WEConnect Canada:** WEConnect Canada delivers the leading international certification standard for women-owned businesses. WEConnect Canada is a Canadian non-profit organization led by corporate members that certifies firms that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by women. It then connects these businesses with the growing global demand from corporations and the public sector for diverse and innovative suppliers. In addition to certification, WEConnect Canada delivers education, training, and mentoring programs. WEConnect Canada partners with corporations, associations, governments, women entrepreneurs and their supporters, and is affiliated with a global certification network for women-owned enterprises.

For more information please contact:

**WEConnect Canada**

Mary Anderson

Executive Director

Phone: 1 855 831 8169

[info@weconnectcanada.org](mailto:info@weconnectcanada.org)