

BC Regional Innovation Chair on Canada-India Business and Economic Development

Economic relations between British Columbia and India will strengthen due to a \$1.25-million investment from the Province for a new regional research chair at the University College of the Fraser Valley, said Abbotsford-Mount Lehman MLA Michael de Jong today.

"The appointment of B.C.'s second regional innovation chair is an example of how this government is supporting innovative research in the province," said de Jong. "The new chair, DJ Sandhu, will supply effective, appropriate and practical research to local businesses helping them to capitalize on

opportunities between British Columbia and India."

The BC Regional Innovation Chair on Canada-India Business and Economic Development will help businesses in the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland region take advantage of the opportunities offered by the huge Indian market. The new chair, with support from the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies at UCFV, will provide local businesses with the expertise and research necessary for them to access the fast-growing Indian economy and other overseas markets.

Sandhu is an MBA who combines teaching at the University College of the Fraser Valley with management consultation here and in India. He has extensive experience developing international markets and launching and running companies involved in financing new manufacturing ventures.

"By attracting and retaining top researchers like DJ Sandhu, a body of work will be

developed in B.C. that will improve our economic ties with India, benefiting both countries now and into the future," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. "The new Chair supports government's vision to enhance the province's unique competitive advantage by our proximity,

Continued on page 23



Continued from page 19

cultural ties, and natural connections to the Asia-Pacific."

The Province provided a \$1.25-million contribution for the BC Regional Innovation Chair on Canada-India Business and Economic Development with matching funding from hundreds of community supporters to bring the total endowment for the chair to \$2.5 million.

"The establishment of this research chair is a direct result of a strong partnership with the Province and incredible support from our local communities through our Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies," said Sandhu. "As a result, we feel a tremendous sense of responsibility to get it right. There is a recognized need for the services we will provide and the strong interest expressed



by local businesses to date indicates that we'll be kept very busy."

B.C. regional innovation chairs are designed to support applied research, development and innovation that will bolster regional economic and social development in all areas of the province; foster the development of highly qualified people in areas relevant to regional social and economic development; and foster collaboration between post-secondary institutions.

The \$56.25-million Leading Edge Endowment Fund will support 20 leadership chairs and nine regional innovation chairs across B.C., with matching funds to be secured by post-secondary institutions from external partners. Since 2001, British Columbia has invested over \$1.5 billion in research and innovation across the province.

