

Calgary telework promotions initiative taking shape

BY MARIO TONEGUZZI, CALGARY HERALD APRIL 19, 2010 10:03 AM



Working from home while staying in touch with the office via telephone, e-mail and other forms of communication is hardly a new concept, but telework enthusiasts say employers have been slow to introduce it.

Photograph by: Photos.com,

CALGARY - Several Calgary companies came together today to sign the Calgary Telework Charter.

The charter is an initiative through Calgary Economic Development's WORKshift program which is promoting telework throughout the region.

Companies signing the charter today were TELUS, ATB Financial, SAIT Polytechnic, Calgary Police Services, ENMAX and CED.

Robyn Bews, project manager, WORKshift, said the idea behind WORKshift is not revolutionary.

"Many employers have already adopted a flexible work arrangement of some sort," she said. "This program is about raising awareness and encouraging organizations to track their behaviour so they can fully understand the benefits and capitalize on the opportunity to incorporate the practice as one of their key business strategies.

"Calgary Economic Development understands that this is something that will allow Calgary businesses to differentiate themselves and we believe it can do a lot for the triple bottom line- individuals,

organizations and the environment. It's a win-win-win."

Brad Harper, vice-president of TELUS Workforce Solutions, said the company has adopted its own telework program because it helps employees better balance their work and personal lives while reducing the impact on the environment.

"Telework gets our team more engaged and raises morale, which is good for them, and helps TELUS attract and retain the best and brightest people," he said.

Harper said more than half of TELUS' team members are equipped with the technology to work at home or wherever they're most productive. More than 1,000 TELUS customer care agents already work at home full time, while thousands of team members work at home at least once a week.

Calgary city council has declared this Calgary Telework Week.

"Through WORKshift, Calgary is becoming a centre of excellence in telework," said Deputy Mayor Diane Colley-Urquhart. "The City of Calgary is already showing tremendous leadership in flexible work arrangements and through WORKshift, Calgary will differentiate itself to employees and employers while leaving a smaller environmental footprint."

She said that if every company in Calgary encouraged its staff to work from home or a distributed work centre just one day a week, the number of cars commuting would drop by about 20 per cent each day and CO2 emissions would be reduced by over 170 metric tons a month.

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