

## Tech companies look to gain from Arnie's whirlwind visit

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Citizen Special

*Monday, May 28, 2007*

The heads of more than 70 Ottawa high-tech companies will rub elbows with California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Wednesday night, hoping to draw his eye to their products and services.

The reception at U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins' residence is the result of several months of planning by the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation and the office of Environment Minister John Baird.

OCRI president Jeffrey Dale said it was important to get a meeting with Mr. Schwarzenegger because of the interest Ottawa companies have in the California market, and because many of them are already working there.

"What we really want to show him is that there are incredible linkages in the technology community between Ottawa and California," Mr. Dale said, adding that the guest list includes more than those from telecommunications and software industry. Since Mr. Schwarzenegger is a green governor, that list also includes people from Iogen Corp. and Plasco Energy.

"We want to introduce him to all the capabilities of this region," Mr. Dale said.

He and his high-tech colleagues will tell the governor, for example, that a Statistics Canada report just revealed that after San Jose, Ottawa has the highest concentration of engineers in its workforce.

Asked what the meeting might represent in terms of sales and opportunities for Ottawa companies, Mr. Dale said it was simply a matter of "relationship-building."

"Mainly, what we're doing is marketing our capabilities along with California's capabilities."

And it's not just the private sector that stands to benefit. He pointed to the California-Canada Science Council, a science program looking at how Canadian and Californian universities can work together. One area the program has covered is stem cell research. When he's in Toronto, Mr. Schwarzenegger and Premier Dalton McGuinty are expected to make an announcement on that.

"So not only are there industry opportunities, but there's also research that has some government sponsorship," Mr. Dale said.

Perhaps those with the most to gain are the clean energy and clean technology companies.

Since California was one of the first states to introduce tough emissions standards, Iogen -- which makes advanced biofuels -- stands to make inroads. Mr. Dale also pointed to Plasco to address California's huge challenges with waste and waste management.

"Plasco would have keen interest in municipal-sector activity."

Mr. Baird's office was eager to organize something when Mr. Schwarzenegger's visit was announced.

"The Ottawa high-tech community is so important and has done so much for the

community, when we heard the governor was coming, we saw an opportunity that made a lot of sense," said Baird spokesman Mike Van Soelen.

The governor's visit to the capital will be a quick one. He flies in sometime after 3 p.m. and leaves again after the 5-7 p.m. reception.

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