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# Focus on Wellness

## Health Research Innovation Centre Leads the Way in Health

CALGARY, ALBERTA IS KNOWN FOR BOTH A PIONEERING SPIRIT AND A BOOMING ECONOMY, the very two elements that make Gary Duke's job a willing task. As project director on the Health Research Innovation Centre (HRIC), Duke was there on day one, in the conception stage during May 1999, and will be there to see the project complete in late 2009.

By **Michelle Greysen**

The 10-year commitment, starting with a functioning program master planning stage, to breaking ground in September of 2003, and now the end phase, has been a challenge. The ultimate goal was to pioneer a leading-edge facility to attract the world's best in medical research, teaching and health care, establishing Alberta as an international innovative health care leader.

"The project has been a huge success

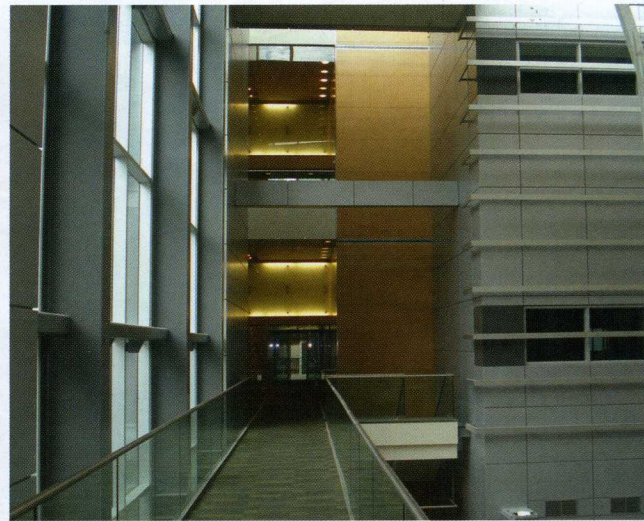
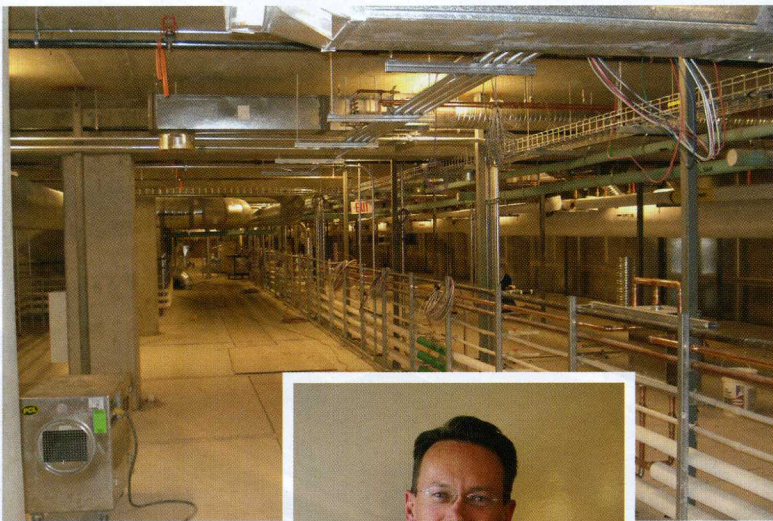
which can only be attributable to the vision and leadership established by Dr. Grant Gall," says Duke.

Duke also attributes the success of the HRIC project to the huge team effort, with rock solid stability and continuity, of the original core staff. The challenges of securing and maintaining trades in the booming Alberta economy, with constant cost escalations and overruns, has offered its own

unique set of hurdles. The fundraising efforts of private and granted monies has been the plus that has kept the project afloat, but requires Duke's constant awareness as he pushes along on the building project within the tight limitations of what the budget can handle at the time, often having to go slow to match the money.

As the funding stream continues, the 52,000 square metres of buildings facing





*Gary Duke, project director for the Health Research Innovation Centre (HRIC).*

west from the Foothills Hospital site in Calgary, boasts two shells of structure, based on a trans-disciplinary model. The multi-phased HRIC project is housed in two interrelated buildings, the HRIC Lab building and the Teaching, Research and Wellness building (TRW).

Now intact with the interior space under completion, the HRIC base buildings carried a shell only cost of \$135,350,000, with fit-out costs projected at over \$100,000,000. With Alberta Infrastructure & Transportation along with the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research



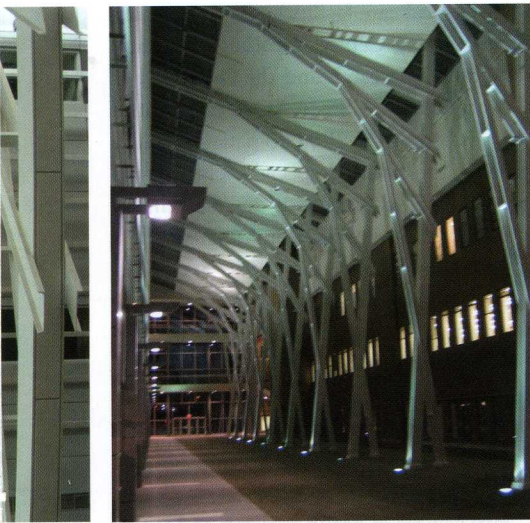
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**The multi-phase HRIC project is the result of much teamwork.**

*(Left to right)*

*Much planning has gone into the various stages of the HRIC project.*

*The HRIC project is one of the major building projects in Alberta.*

*Private funding and grants have helped make the HRIC project possible.*

putting up the largest of the monies, the balance has come through grants, community partners and donors, with a current unfunded balance of just over \$71,000,000.

Coming on-board mid-project and housed within the HRIC, has been the much anticipated and much-welcomed University of Calgary's veterinary school. Opening for student intake in September 2008, the school will bring not only a much-needed facility but also a financial boost to the overall project.

The Board of Governors of the University of Calgary have ultimate accountability for the HRIC development, with the Dean of Medicine acting as the project sponsor, having the role of ensuring the project is developed in accordance with the faculty's research programs and initiatives.

The prime consulting and structural engineering has been the work of the Calgary-based award-winning architectural and engineering firm of Cohos Evamy. The contemporary design was chosen with an Atrium connector of tree-like steel columns and beams with skylights, to complement the existing Health Science Centre and Heritage Medical Research Building on the medical research campus. The exterior walls create an aluminium and glass curtain wall system, with interior finishing including stonework, millwork

paneling and glass balustrades with stainless steel handrails.

The construction has been the work of PCL Construction Management Inc. Currently a crew of 100 are working on site daily to complete the interiors of the two shell buildings. At eventual completion and final full turnover in late 2009, the staffing volume will be in excess of 2,400 faculty, researchers and support staff opportunities.

The HRIC Lab is a five-storey cast in place concrete structure, anchored by two ten-storey office blocks at the north and

south ends of the building, creating a research facility with both office, conference and training support space. Also housed in the HRIC Lab building is the Centre for Advanced Technologies in the Life Sciences, bringing in-house a team of researchers in the biomedical technologies investigating the building blocks of the human body.

The majority of the research space will be occupied by wet labs (chemistry, biology, etc.), on five floors designed with state-of-the-art interstitial floors constructed of hanging structural steel with metal decking



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*The Health Research Innovation Centre is a facility designed to attract the world's best in medical research, teaching and health care.*

and concrete topping. This innovative design allows for long-term flexibility for future refitting of labs with ease in the wide-open mechanics, electrical and venting of each lab between the interstitial floors. The building can be mechanically isolated in specific small sections at any given time, allowing for repairs and upgrades with little impact on surrounding

laboratories or the structure as a whole.

The TRW is a seven-storey building which will house the patient clinics and transitional and clinical research space. The TRW directly connects to the Lab building, creating a well-planned-for innovative flow from laboratory bench discoveries to physicians and then directly on to patient bedsides. The TRW will house

three clinical care facilities, the Colon Cancer Screening Centre, the Calgary Centre for Clinical Research and the University of Calgary Medical Clinics. These care centres will see upward of 200,000 patients visits a year in non-hospital specialty clinics with access to immediate hands-on research.

Included in the TRW building will be a state-of-the-art Kinetix Fitness and Wellness Centre, contributing to staff wellness through exercise and training space coupled with personal training and nutritional counseling. This revenue-generating members support centre will also aid in teaching and research activities within the total HRIC facility.

Five centres of health research and teaching will be jointly established by the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine, the Calgary Health Region (CHR), and community partners. The Dean's Office will be moving into the centre and then first on stream this coming October 2007 will be the Southern Alberta Cancer Research Institute. The Hotchkiss Brain Institute will be in house by November of 2007, followed by the Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation in January of 2008. The Alberta Bone and Joint Health Institute and the Libin Cardiovascular Institute of Alberta expect to have their space turned over to them in a year's time.

The health benefits of the collaboration between the Faculty of Medicine and the health care delivery throughout the Calgary Health Region will be maximized under this common umbrella. Albertans, as well as all Canadians, will directly benefit from this provincial, national and international collaboration among researchers, teachers and academics, as the cutting edge Health Research Innovation Centre (HRIC) will ensure recruitment and retention of some of the world's best researchers. ♦

## **Proud to be involved in the HRIC Lab at the University of Calgary South Campus**

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