



Business Exchange

PRODAN: SOWING THE SEEDS OF BUSINESS

by Stephan Patten

The small city of Etobicoke recently became the centre of one of the biggest private exchanges for Ukrainian businessmen and businesswomen.

A total of 81 Ukrainians travelled to Canada for the Prodan Canada-Ukraine Business Exchange; a week-long exchange that began on April 27.

PCUBE featured representatives from large, well established Ukrainian companies and recent entrepreneurial start-ups. Business executives that made the trip ranged from Oleg Romanenko, President and Chairman of the Board of an enormous 17,000 employee chemical manufacturing company concern "Oriana" to Yosyp Malitovsky, Assistant Director of "ZOD", a small, private transport company with six trucks.

PCUBE's main goals were to foster an understanding of business in Canada and to provide the opportunity to sign contracts with Canadian companies. "It's so hard to do business in Ukraine - because of taxes, government restrictions, and other hindrances - for those people who achieved something under these conditions I said, 'Let's do business! Welcome to Canada!'," said Ihor Prokipchuk, PCUBE's main organizer in Canada and owner of Prodan & Atomic Services.

The business executives from Ukraine were welcomed by Doug Holliday, Mayor of Etobicoke, Derwyn Shea, MPP and Douglas P. Ford, MP, among others. PCUBE's program

included business workshops, a visit to the 'Doing Business in Ukraine' Conference at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, a variety of tours and social activities.

A tour of the General Motors car manufacturing plant in Oshawa moved many of the Ukrainian business people involved in Ukraine's manufacturing sector.

"[The difference is] like day and night," said the General Director of a 3,000 employee-strong manufacturing company. "The psychology of the person must be changed."

After a brief tour of the Ontario Legislature building and a welcome from the Speaker of the House at Question Period, five of the Ukrainian business executives met with David Turnbull, Chief Whip and MPP for York Mills, and Joe Spina, Parliamentary Assistant for the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Stepan Volkovetsky, Head of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, lead a discussion about the differences in the business climate between Ontario and Ivano-Frankivsk.

In a statement to the press upon his return to Ivano-Frankivsk, Volkovetsky praised the experience.

On Thursday, Engineer Jerry Lawryshyn gave a tour of the construction site of the Toronto Hydro plant for the benefit of the numerous business executives involved in Ukrainian construction companies.

PCUBE's organizers estimate that potentially \$25 million in contracts were signed with Canadian enterprises over the



PHOTOS: S. PATTEN

Stepan Volkovetsky presents Ontario's Minister of Labour with a ceremonial "bulava".

course of that one week.

Many participants commended the week-long exchange during the closing ceremonies. "We sowed the seeds of business with this meeting," said Malitovsky, who worked in construction before becoming a trucking company executive.

"It is better to see [how business is conducted in Canada] once than to hear about it 10 times," said Stella Stankevich, Chairman of the Board of Trembita sewing factory based in Chernivtsi. "We understood what it is, this capitalist world."



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Ukrainian business executives meet with Ontario government's Chief Whip David Turnbull, MPP, York Mills; and Joe Spina.