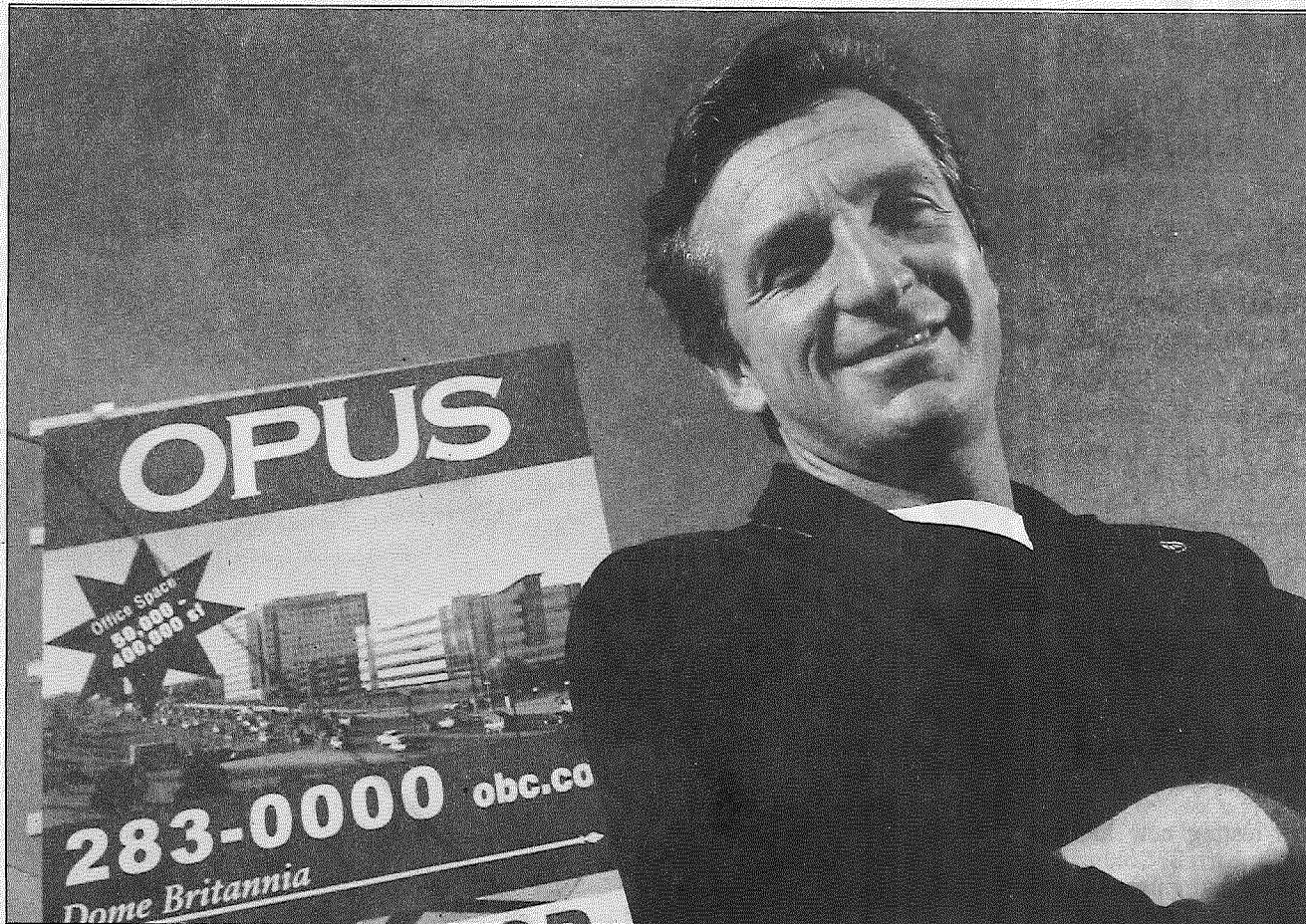


“In Calgary, there’s actually a shortage of land. So certain parcel sizes you can’t even get.”

HANNES KOVAC, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF OPUS BUILDING CANADA INC.



OPUS president and CEO Hannes Kovac sees a bright future for Netook Crossing Business Park near Olds, which is 45 minutes from Calgary. The project will encompass 57.8 hectares of serviced land for about 25 businesses. Calgary Herald Archive

## Lower price adds glitter to Netook Crossing

### Olds-area business park lots 50% sold

MARIO TONEGUZZI  
CALGARY HERALD

A major business park development north of Calgary, near Olds, has become an attractive alternative for Calgary businesses — and those expanding in the Alberta market — with its offering of available land at much lesser prices per acre than what typically can be found in the city.

The **Netook Crossing Business Park**, located at the southwest corner of the Queen Elizabeth II Highway and Highway 27 in Mountain View County, will include up to 31 serviced lots, with a minimum lot size of 1.01 hectare (2.5 acres). To date, about 50 per cent of available lots have been sold and plans are to break ground in May with the installation of roads, storm drainage, power, gas, high-speed Internet and telephone infrastructure estimated to be complete by this fall. Construction of properties on the site is expected to begin in early 2009 and when completed about 25 separate businesses are expected on the site.

The project, being developed and marketed by **OPUS Building Canada Inc.**, will encompass 57.8 hectares (142 acres) of serviced land for highway commercial and light industrial businesses.

It is the first phase of a multi-phased mixed commercial, light industrial and residential development plan by the county for future use on about 1,618 hectares (4,000 acres) in the area.

The primary attraction to the area for businesses is pricing, said Hannes

Kovac, president and CEO of OPUS.

“In Calgary, there’s actually a shortage of land. So certain parcel sizes you can’t even get,” he said.

“The Calgary-Edmonton corridor represents one of the most significant economic engines in the country and Mountain View County is at the heart of it. Add to that the many positive attributes of the town of Olds — their new shopping centre, new high school and recreation centre, and of course the Olds College — it all combines to make Netook Crossing an attractive location not only for highway service businesses but also for light manufacturing and industrial service companies who want easy access to the entire corridor.”

Lots for the Netook project have been selling from \$179,000 to \$249,000 per acre.

Kovac said businesses in the Netook Crossing Business Park could be anything from a hotel to a mobile home manufacturing company to a heavy equipment dealership (oil services related or construction equipment related) to an RV sales and rental company.

The Olds area is a growing community and it has very affordable housing compared with Calgary, said Mountain View County Reeve Al Kemmere.

“And for the people who are going to be coming to work here because of the proximity — we’re only 45 minutes from Calgary — we can offer everything and we can offer affordable housing for the employees,” he said.

The population of Olds is about 7,300 people.

Mountain View County has a population of about 12,500.

Kemmere said Netook Crossing will become as commonly recognized as Gasoline Alley (Red Deer) and Nisku to Albertans and travellers along the Queen Elizabeth II Highway.

“We see this as a tremendous oppor-

tunity for our county, but we also know that our county offers a tremendous opportunity for the businesses who move here,” said Kemmere. “Our primary trading area includes a population of 30,000 and our secondary market includes some 1.3 million people in Calgary, Airdrie and Red Deer. Whenever you can combine large-market access with smaller-market rates, you’re drastically improving your opportunities for success.”

Mountain View County’s development plans call for a potential 1,600 homes to be eventually built as part of the Area Structure Plan for 1,618.7 hectares at the intersection of the two highways.

With the scarcity and the cost of industrial land growing in Calgary, it’s pushing potential buyers outside the city limits to surrounding communities — and even those further afield such as the Olds area.

Kovac said the lure further north is because bigger parcels of land are available at hundreds of thousands of dollars cheaper than even the Airdrie and Balzac areas.

OPUS also has another 60.7 hectares of land in the Netook Crossing area which could in the future become the second phase of their development there to include residential and industrial use.

The name Netook Crossing was chosen from a short list of submissions to Mountain View County council in February. The origins of the word Netook can be traced to the journals of explorer Peter Fidler, who while travelling through central Alberta, mentioned that he and his party were about 20 kilometres away from a point in the woods containing a large single pine tree the Blackfoot called “nee-tuck-kis” — meaning lone pine tree.