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## Featured News

Stay in the know on all of our 2017 projects and [check out our centre work plans](#) online to find out all about the work our research centres will be tackling this year, including:

- Modernizing the National Energy Board
- Matching skills with jobs based on competencies
- Navigating preferential trade in the Trump era and how to sell more to Asia
- Getting to successful Indigenous economic engagement
- Getting from innovation to adoption

You can also see [our annual impact report online](#) for some of our highlights from the past year.



## Matching jobs and people

Meanwhile, our first report of 2017 has been released. [Matchup: A case for pan-Canadian competency frameworks](#), looks at the matching of jobs with people and people with jobs. The paper builds on Human Capital Centre director Janet Lane's work on how a competency approach can transform Canada's workforce. It's already gained traction with policy-makers and media, including interviews Janet did with [BNN](#), CBC's On the Money and CBC's Blue Sky radio in Saskatchewan. Janet and policy analyst Christopher Rastrick also wrote an op-ed for CBC Alberta that was widely-read and shared online: [There are nearly 44K unfilled jobs in Alberta. So what's going on?](#)

## Smart infrastructure spending

The federal government has been taking some heat for its slow pace in selecting projects and spending dollars on its major infrastructure program. [We have recommendations for better planning and wise spending](#) on infrastructure, stemming from an Ottawa roundtable our Trade & Investment Centre convened in November. We also had an [op-ed published in the Globe and Mail: Ottawa should partner with private sector on infrastructure](#). Our work on the strategic infrastructure issue continues this year.

Other highlights of February included a number media interviews during Prime Minister Trudeau and President Trump's visit in Washington, including CEO Martha Hall Findlay's interviews on CNN, Global TV and the [Calgary Herald](#), and Trade & Investment Centre director Carlo Dade's interviews with [Politico](#), [Reuters](#), and CBC Edmonton.

## Must read commentaries

[Environmentalists should end the charade over the oil sands](#): (Globe and Mail). Martha Hall Findlay and Natural Resources Centre director Trevor McLeod write an open letter to Canadians on why keeping oil sands in the ground and stopping new pipelines will actually increase global GHG emissions.

[Why Ottawa's program for funding job retraining needs to change](#): (Maclean's): Janet Lane and senior policy analyst Naomi Christensen on how the economic downturn in the West shows the country's Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) program needs to change, across the country.

[Doing it right the first time to improve pipeline safety](#): (Vancouver Sun and Edmonton Journal): Janet Lane on how competencies play a big role in pipeline safety.

## Featured op-ed

[NAFTA's surging popularity in Canada](#): (Policy Options)

By Carlo Dade and Shachi Kurl

*It's no mystery why the topic of "women in the workforce" was a centerpiece of the first face-to-face meetings between Justin Trudeau and Donald Trump on Monday. It's a low risk subject for both sides, with the Canadian Prime Minister showing early leadership among G-7 leaders by making half of his cabinet women, and with the President's daughter and adviser Ivanka Trump suggesting it's an area of interest to her.*

*While bromides and sunny ambitions dominated this first meeting, in the longer term hard interests and the tougher reality of trade dependence will define the relationship – causing considerable angst in Canada. As they say, "things are about to get real."*

*Nowhere does this seem more evident than in shifting public opinion on the*

[Read the rest of the op-ed online, here.](#)

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## POLL: Can Canada overcome its innovation hurdles?

A small venture capital industry and a lack of engineering grads is hampering Canada's innovators, [argues this article](#). Do you agree?

[Take our one-click poll](#)

Last month, we asked you how Canada should approach the reopening of NAFTA in the Trump administration.

30 %: Focus on bilateral negotiations with the U.S.

40 %: Work with Mexico on a unified position

20 %: Wait and see

10 %: Petition to take the U.K.'s place in the EU

*"Important that Canada take steps to protect their own interests." – Everett Milotte*

*"With more than 40 free trade agreements in place and a rapidly growing middle class, Mexico makes a very attractive trade partner for Canada. We don't want to give up our lucrative trade relationship with the US, but we can do quite well by hitching our wagon to the Mexicans. Working jointly with Mexico on a NAFTA re-org should be our first preference but falling back to a bilateral agreement might be a beneficial and useful option. Mexico would look favorably on Canada if we stuck with them on NAFTA renegotiation. But, if that doesn't work out, at least we haven't abandoned them in the process. Yet, the new Trump administration is weighing heavily on the future."*

– D. Wayne Elhard

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## We welcome your comments

Want to talk about anything you read in this newsletter? Have an idea you would like to share? Send your comments to: [feedback@cwf.ca](mailto:feedback@cwf.ca) .

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