

# **Health Canada wins Award of Excellence for their commitment to sustaining environmental health on First Nations reserves**

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<http://www.directionsmag.com/press.releases/?duty=Show&id=24715&trv=1>

Health Canada, Alberta Region was presented with an Award of Excellence at ESRI Canada's Regional User Conference in Edmonton earlier today. Tim Walker, Prairies Regional Manager for ESRI Canada presented the Award in recognition of Health Canada's significant contribution to supporting environmental health on First Nations reserves.

"Health Canada has successfully developed an application that is the first of its kind in Canada and unique to the health industry", said Tim Walker. "We are truly proud to present the Award of Excellence to such an innovative organization who is leveraging technology to empower communities and promote sustainability."

In 2005, Health Canada began to look into using GIS to monitor environmental health and wellness programs for First Nations peoples and started to collect relevant information to populate a database. Prior to utilizing GIS technology, the organization did not have access to geographic data or mapping capabilities to aid in understanding the environmental health of the region. Using ArcGIS Server and ArcGIS Desktop, Health Canada created an application that displays and serves water quality information to Environmental Health Officers over the web. The data - which includes over 25,000 water samples - is now readily available to Environmental Health Officers, enhancing their investigative abilities while vastly improving the speed at which decisions are made.

In addition to increasing access to information for Environmental Health Officers, the unique application will make it possible to serve environmental health information back to native communities, providing online access to data that was previously only available on paper. One of the overarching benefits is that First Nations will now have greater control over their own information and will be able to apply this data to create housing inventories, develop emergency response mechanisms and countless other functions that will serve to benefit their communities. Looking forward, Health Canada plans to consult with First Nations communities in the region to ensure that they are accurately represented by the application and will then proceed to roll the application out in phases, through a secure hosting environment.

For more information about Health Canada, please visit: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

## **About ESRI Canada**

Established in 1984, ESRI Canada is a Canadian owned company specializing in geographic information systems (GIS) solutions. ESRI Canada distributes the world's leading GIS software

including solutions from ESRI Inc., Miner and Miner, I.S.M. International Systemap Corp. and Azteca. In order to provide organizations with complete industry-specific solutions ESRI Canada has established an extensive business partner program that includes more than 130 Canadian organizations. ESRI Canada also provides professional services including consulting, training, technical support, and enterprise GIS implementation. ESRI Canada is a leader in providing world-class enterprise GIS solutions for many industries including public works, land management, utilities, defence, public safety, business demographics, education, natural resources and transportation. ESRI Canada has fifteen regional offices across the country, with headquarters in Toronto, Ontario. For more information, please visit [www.esricanada.com/](http://www.esricanada.com/) or call 1-800-447-9778.

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