



Jenna Suds, executive director of the Kanata North BIA, says the Ottawa tech sector is thriving despite the demise of Nortel Networks in 2004. MIKE CARROCCETTO/FOR METRO

Kanata's exciting new IT landscape

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Ottawa's Silicon Valley North is back — just look at the momentum and energy behind the Kanata North BIA, says Jenna Suds, the organization's executive director. It's indicative of the region regaining its reputation as a renowned hub of technology and innovation, she said.

The BIA, launched last September, represents more than 500 member compan-

ies that mostly reside in the Kanata North Research Park and the Kanata North Technology Campus. Eighty per cent of members are in the IT sector while 15 per cent are companies that service those tech companies.

The area, long referred to as Silicon Valley North during the heydays of technological heavyweight Nortel Networks, seemed to suffer a heavy blow when the company filed for bankruptcy in 2009. Since then, however, the region has spawned dozens of new high-tech

Further growth

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Jenna Suds, Kanata North BIA executive director

companies and thousands of high-paying jobs.

"A lot of doors were opened post-Nortel," Suds said. "The people at Nortel were highly educated with a specific and valuable skill set. When they lost their jobs, many seized the op-

portunity to take control of their own futures and a large portion started their own businesses."

Of the 500 businesses in the Kanata North BIA, about 15 are large and quite successful companies. Ericsson, for example, has a staff of

950 people, while Alcatel-Lucent employs 2,300 people. Many companies are in expansion mode: CISCO expects to create about 1,700 new R&D positions in the next several years; Huawei, with 200 employees, continues to grow; and Mitel recently acquired PrairieFyre and Aastra.

Most other BIA members are small and medium-sized businesses poised for growth and many are making big strides, Suds said.

"In the next five years, you're going to see inter-

esting technology developments and further growth in the software industry."

Besides the highly educated workforce and access to world-class universities and talent, there are many advantages to having a high-tech business in Kanata, Suds said.

"This is where your competitors and customers are. There is easy access to the airport and 400-series highways. This area also offers a great quality of life with good schools, amenities and affordable housing."

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