



## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Algoma U receives \$500,000 from FedNor for health informatics research institute

## Funding continues momentum for health informatics research work at Algoma University

Sault Ste. Marie, ON, April 16 2009 – FedNor Minister Tony Clement announced today that Algoma University (AU) is receiving \$500,000 in funding towards the establishment of a health informatics (HI) research institute. The institute will be established to provide governance, management and promotion of health informatics research activities initiated in northern Ontario. Sault Ste. Marie has been recognized internationally for its advanced work in the field of health informatics and the institute will capitalize on this advantage to drive further research in this field and deliver benefits to the health care system. In doing so, the institute will focus on the area of Primary and Community Care Informatics and will engage local expertise in the applications of geospatial technologies, health system management and serious games for health.

This FedNor funding builds on previous funding announced by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and ESRI Canada to establish a health informatics research chair at Algoma University. The project funding from FedNor will support a managing director's salary for two years, information resources, facility renovations, travel and conference attendance, visitor funds and institutional membership fees. The ESRI Canada Health Informatics Research Chair position was announced in December 2008 and received over \$1 million in funding from NOHFC and ESRI Canada. The position is currently posted and Algoma University hopes to have the successful candidate in place for July 2009.

"The establishment of the health informatics research institute will provide many important benefits to northern Ontario, and also the Canadian health care system as a whole. By leveraging the community's established health informatics strengths the institute will: build research capacity, attract research funding to the region, attract skilled research and management professionals, drive job creation, develop commercial opportunities, enhance the reputation and standing of Algoma University and more," said Dr. Celia Ross, president Algoma University. "Overall, the health informatics research institute is an important step for economic growth and improved health outcomes."

"Health geomatics is a critical component of a modern healthcare system and is nowhere better showcased than in Sault Ste. Marie," said Alex Miller, president, ESRI Canada. "We are very pleased that FedNor is joining us in supporting this important research and building on the strong knowledge base in Sault Ste. Marie."

"Sault Ste. Marie has been recognized internationally for its work in health informatics and the establishment of a health informatics research institute is an important step to furthering research that will benefit the health

system and attracting highly qualified researchers to our community,” said Tom Vair, executive director, Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre. “The field of health informatics holds tremendous potential for growth and this funding from FedNor puts in place critical resources to help ensure the success of the ESRI Canada Health Informatics Research Chair. We are very proud of this important achievement for our project partner Algoma University.”

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) and Dominic Covvey from the National Institutes of Health Informatics (NIHI) have worked in a partnership with Algoma University on the development of this project. Health informatics is identified as an important sector for development in the community’s IT strategic plan. As a result, SSMIC recognizes the need to bring in academic researchers, such as the health informatics research chair, and the necessary support systems, such as the health informatics research institute, to help further the work of local researchers in health informatics. The National Institutes of Health Informatics is dedicated to growing the health informatics research sector and building partnerships between health informatics researchers, centers, institutes and industry partners across the country.

“Our primary goal for the National Institutes of Health Informatics (NIHI) is to foster the development of centers of excellence in health informatics research and education,” said Dominic Covvey, president and director, NIHI. “Algoma University, together with the medical community in Sault Ste. Marie and the Innovation Center have realized the dream by establishing an Institute of Primary Care Informatics. We look forward to the value that this institute can deliver in the important and needy area of primary care in Canada.”

When established, the health informatics research institute will collaborate with local health care providers, the Northern School of Medicine, the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and industry partners to capitalize on nationally recognized strengths in health informatics. As a result of this collaboration relevant educational programs will also be developed. The establishment of the health informatics research institute will help position northern Ontario as a leader in research and development in the emerging field of health informatics.

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#### **About the National Institutes of Health Informatics**

NIHI ([www.nihi.ca](http://www.nihi.ca)) is a Canada-wide, virtual institute of institutes bringing together academic experts in Health Informatics. NIHI serves as a catalyzer, co-ordinator and facilitator that assists in defining, fostering and bonding together local Health Informatics (HI) initiatives in academia and industry dedicated to Health Informatics research and education.

#### **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 sixteen regional offices across the country, with headquarters in Toronto, Ontario. For more information, please visit <http://www.esricanada.com/> or call 1-800-447-9778.

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### **About Algoma University**

Algoma University offers a wide variety of liberal arts and sciences degree options including programs in Psychology, Computer Science, Business Administration, Fine Arts, Community Economic & Social Development, and Biology; Algoma U is committed to offering a personal education experience unlike any university in Ontario. As the Canadian home of the internationally recognised MSc CGT from the University of Abertay Dundee, Algoma University is at the forefront of computer games technology education. Algoma University also offers accelerated second degree programs in Business Administration and Computer Science on its Brampton campus. To learn more about Algoma University, visit [www.algomau.ca](http://www.algomau.ca).

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### **About Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre**

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre serves as a catalyst for growth in the science and technology sectors in the Algoma District.

The Innovation Centre is focused on three core areas: the operation of a business incubator to encourage the establishment and growth of science and technology start-ups; the provision of support services to the SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) community and the development of strategic markets such as the highly successful GIS project. The Innovation Centre has developed and implemented an award-winning GIS product, which serves a number of municipal customers and is responsible for the growth of private sector GIS firms in the Algoma District.

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