

BEST PLACES TO WORK

NON-PROFIT

His name is Monty and he's a stuffed gorilla sitting on Bonnie Vockeroth's desk at the Calgary Economic Development office in the Telus Convention Centre. Monty is the "Calgary Economic Development Gorilla Marketing Award," an accolade regularly passed on from one employee to another whenever a worker deserves special recognition.

Vockeroth, a marketing and communications specialist, explains that the first Monty recipient was a colleague who plastered the office bathroom walls with clever slogans for Calgary Works — a CED initiative to bolster Calgary's thinly-stretched labour force. Bruce Graham, the agency's CEO and president, was so impressed by the employee's efforts he had his brother-in-law create the popular award.

The non-profit agency is the city's lubricant for developing new commerce and business. The CED's approximately 25 employees are a mix of economists, analysts, former bureaucrats, marketers and a film commissioner. That may sound like a stodgy mix, but the only thing stuffy about this bunch is Monty. For Vockeroth, the gorilla is a symbol of the great aspects of the CED — a fun, energetic group of people who work hard and play hard and are passionate about improving Calgary.

The buzz generated by Calgary's current success runs through CED's blood, which in turn boosts office adrenaline, says Graham. "At the outset, I wanted to see an environment where the people who worked here could take pride and ownership in what they did." In appreciation of its enthusiastic staff, the CED holds at least two major annual staff events. Last year, it was Cowboy College at Rafter Six. Like cowboys, CED staff know how to whoop it up after the hard work is completed.

— Anthony A. Davis

CALGARY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PUMPING UP THE OFFICE ADRENALINE



Left to right, **Yolanda Bilger, Derek Zhao, Michael Brown, Bonnie Vockeroth, and Karen Garrick.**

Number of employees: 25

Key benefits: Twice yearly fun events such as whitewater rafting and Cowboy College; 10-per-cent-of-salary bonuses for meeting or exceeding agency objectives; numerous informal staff socials; opportunity to meet local and international movers and shakers; a chance to earn the "Gorilla Marketing Award"; opportunities to attend educational classes.

Why a Best Place to Work: A supportive, dynamic workplace of sharp, lively people; constant recognition of achievements, large and small; an opportunity to make a difference in Calgary's future.

Small companies and non-profits are more likely to have employees that admire and respect their employer. 89% of employees at companies with less than 25 employees admire and respect their firm, compared to 80% of employees at medium and large companies.

Non-profits are most respected by their employees at 92%, followed by 88% in legal, and 89% in tourism and hospitality. Lowest scores went to media and creative industries at 72%.

Support of learning and professional development is strongest in the non-profit sector.

The non-profit sector rated support of learning and professional development at 84%, followed by the real estate industry at 82%. The lowest ratings were in media and creative industries at 56% and the health and wellness sector at 60%.

There are some downsides to working in Calgary's non-profit sector.

Non-profits received the lowest sector rating in each of the following categories: Excellent employee benefits at 24%, extended benefits for prescription drugs and dental at 68%, recruitment campaigns to attract new talent at 24%, and stock options or bonus plans at 8%. When it comes to employee perception of competitive salaries, non-profits came in at 48%, just below the overall average of 50%.