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Destination Exploration receives CanCode funding through Actua to expand digital programming for youth

Actua, the national organization that represents Destination Exploration at the University of Lethbridge, has been named the largest recipient of funding from the Government of Canada's new CanCode program.

CanCode is a \$50-million fund, announced in the federal budget 2017, that supports the development of coding and digital skills for youth across Canada.

"Coding is the next big job. Industries ranging from automotive and agri-food to the life sciences and clean technology need coders, given their increasingly digital nature. That's why our government is equipping Canadian youth with the digital skills they need for the jobs of the future. By teaching kids to code today, we're positioning Canada for future success across all industries and sectors," says the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

As a network member of Actua, Destination Exploration is pleased to receive \$95,000 from Actua's CanCode funding. The funding will be directed toward scaling up Destination Exploration's community programming to reach even more youth in Lethbridge and southern Alberta with inspiring, hands-on coding and digital skills experiences.

"Canada needs to address the upcoming skills shortage in areas related to information technology, and this is a step in the right direction," says Faculty of Arts & Science Associate Dean and Professor of Computer Science, Dr. Jackie Rice. "I'm thrilled to see this is coming through Actua with their emphasis on STEM programming for girls and indigenous communities, as these groups are still significantly underrepresented in areas related to computing and engineering."

Destination Exploration is one of 35 network members receiving CanCode funding through Actua and will work with colleagues across the network to develop and exchange content that will help inspire Canada's next generation of innovators.

"We are honoured to be a recipient of CanCode funding and thrilled to provide additional support to Destination Exploration to engage more youth in building digital skills," says Jennifer Flanagan, President and CEO of Actua. "This support means that thousands more youth in Lethbridge and southern Alberta will have the opportunity to access free, deep-impact, face-to-face learning experiences which are critical to their future success and our future Canadian workforce."

Through the CanCode funding, Actua's 35 network members will reach 500,000 youth and over 10,000 teachers across every province and territory.

About the University of Lethbridge

Alberta's Destination University, the U of L attracts approximately 8,700 undergraduate and graduate students from around the world to our campuses in Lethbridge and Calgary each year. We offer more than 150 undergraduate and 60 graduate programs in seven Faculties and schools: Arts & Science, Education, Fine Arts, Health Sciences, Management, Graduate Studies and Liberal Education. The U of L will soon be home to a new science and academic building – the Destination Project – which will advance research and learning opportunities for generations to come, and will shape the future of the University of Lethbridge and southern Alberta.

About Actua

Actua is Canada's leading science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 35 university and college-based members. Each year 250,000 young Canadians in over 500 communities nationwide are inspired through hands-on educational workshops, camps and community outreach initiatives. Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented youth through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. Actua's major funders include: Government of Canada, Google Canada, Suncor Energy Foundation, GE Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Finning, Toyota Canada Foundation and Lockheed Martin. For more information about Actua, visit actua.ca.

About CanCode

The CanCode program will invest \$50 million over two years, starting in 2017-18, to support initiatives providing educational opportunities for coding and digital skills development to Canadian youth from kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12). The program aims to equip youth, including traditionally underrepresented groups, with the skills and study incentives they need to be prepared for the jobs of today and the future. Canada's success in the digital economy depends on leveraging our diverse talent and providing opportunity for all to participate investing in digital skills development will help to achieve this.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/destination-exploration-receives-cancode-funding-through-actua-expand-digital-programming>

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