

## I BUSINESS

# \$60M project means '40 new jobs'

SURREY – A Surrey company is poised for expansion after securing a federal government contract to build portable state-of-the-art shelters for the Canadian military.

**Marisa BABIC**  
Staff Reporter

Tri-Metal Fabricators, in partnership with **Burnaby-based Weatherhaven**, will build 400 units. Tri-Metal will manufacture the structural shells and Weatherhaven will design and craft the functional components, such as wiring, plumbing and power generation.

Known in the industry as expandable container shelters, the units are akin to a "command post in a box." The units can also be outfitted for use as kitchens, field hospitals and other purposes.

"It's a two-year program, it should create 40 new jobs," Tri-Metal Fabricators president Joe Toso said Monday of the \$60-million project.

**Weatherhaven** partner Glen Thorne said the Department of Defense contract will help the companies grow and create new markets.

"This is the kind of government investment and partnership that allows companies with innovative technology to build an international business model," Thorne said.

Toso led the House of Commons finance committee on a tour of the facility on Monday. (See photos of the tour at **the-nownewspaper.com**.)

The committee is on a cross-country

tour as part of their annual pre-budget consultation process.

Toso said that the design of the shelters has been refined over the years, making it the standard for this type of product.

Dubbed the "the Canadian solution" by the Australian armed forces, the shelters are sold all over the world to both military and industrial clients. On the tour, committee members saw units headed for Australia and the United States.

The shelters arrive at their destination appearing as normal shipping containers but can quickly be expanded to full operational size. The shelters can be deployed in about 20 minutes. Once set up, they have all the amenities, "just like an RV, a sophisticated RV," said Toso.

Aside from military use, the shelters can also be used by agencies responding to natural disasters, such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

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