

PRESS RELEASE

Sparkling like a Diamond: RPC Offers 60 Years of Experience to New Brunswick's Innovation Agenda

April 13, 2022, Fredericton, NB - When Louis J. Robichaud's government created New Brunswick's provincial research organization in 1962, the vision was for RPC to be "the science and technology arm of government." Sixty years later, science and technology remain crucial for a vibrant economy, the pandemic recovery, and the prosperity of New Brunswick.

RPC was created when the New Brunswick Research and Productivity Act was proclaimed on April 13, 1962. It was a snowy Friday the 13th, so snowy that the planned legislative parade to Government House was cancelled. It was a stormy start, but the government of the day recognized that productivity, science and innovation were linked to our quality of life. Government funded the founding of New Brunswick's provincial research organization and committed sustained support which provided facilities, staffing equipment and instrumentation.

The inaugural board of directors included prominent New Brunswick entrepreneurs such as Harrison McCain and Ken Cox. Temporary offices were established in shared space with the Department of Agriculture in the current King's Place block of King Street. By 1965, the first of what would become a campus of buildings was opened in RPC's current location at 921 College Hill Road in Fredericton. The opening, attended by the Premier, President of UNB, heads of the Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan provincial research organizations and other dignitaries included a ceremony where a metal ribbon was cut by flame cutter. There were great expectations of what was to come, and RPC did not disappoint.



New Brunswick Premier, Louis J. Robichaud, cuts steel ribbon at ceremonial opening of the RPC building at 921 College Hill Road, Fredericton.



RPC's First board meeting, September 1962. Pictured left to right: K.V. Cox (Vice-President and General Manager NBTel), A. Savoie (Barrister), H. Fredericks (Management Consultant), Harrison McCain (President, McCain Foods), L.W. Flett (Businessman), Dr. L.W. Shemilt, RPC Board Chairman, D.W. Gallagher, RPC Executive Director (temporary), Dr. D.W.B. Robinson (Assistant Director of Research, Bathurst Pulp and Paper)



RPC's first office was located on King Street on the present day site of the King's Place Mall.

Early applied research efforts focused on fisheries, forestry, agriculture, mining and manufacturing; all sectors that remain prominent today. On the surface, it would appear not much has changed, but science and technology has brought dramatic changes. Consider how computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing revolutionized product design and manufacturing. Reflect on how science and technology have supported the development of completely new sectors such as aquaculture. Advanced chemistry and biotech developments have aided the monitoring of contaminants and contributed to the knowledge of agricultural and forestry products while supporting challenges such as the spruce budworm. Over the past 6 decades RPC has provided services to major developments such as mining projects, power stations, forestry developments, pulp and paper, agriculture, food and beverage, the LNG terminal, the frigate program, the pipeline, aquaculture and so much more. As New Brunswick's economy grew, RPC has been there to support the adoption and application of technology and respond to challenges with applied science and engineering.

“Now, more than ever, the success of our businesses and the prosperity of our province will be significantly influenced by our effectiveness in technology adoption and innovation.”

- Eric Cook, CEO, RPC

We have accomplished so much while only scratching the surface of what is possible. For example, the advancement of omics research will help solve some of our biggest challenges in cleantech, agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and health. Automation, artificial intelligence, machine vision, additive manufacturing and other technologies will revitalize our manufacturing sector. Biotech such as bioleaching will bring cleantech to the mining sector. These are some of the technologies and applied research RPC is already working on and considers to be part of a prosperous, sustainable future.

New Brunswick has its fair share of challenges; increasing labour costs, labour shortages, supply chain issues, transportation costs, sustainable development, globalization and more, all amplified by the pandemic. The competitive advantages of low-cost wages, abundant and easily accessible natural resources, and stable energy prices are slipping away. The combination of these challenges and the changing competitive landscape will require more businesses to adopt innovation as a core business strategy. Now, more than ever, the success of our businesses and the prosperity of our province will be significantly influenced by our effectiveness in technology adoption and innovation. That is why RPC's services are more important than ever. We are proud of our past 60 years of success, and enthusiastic about our next 60.

Eric Cook is RPC's 4th Executive Director and CEO. RPC is a research and technology organization mandated to support science and innovation. It is a not-for-profit, provincial Crown corporation. RPC will celebrate its 60th anniversary on April 13, 2022. To read more about RPC, see “Research and Development in New Brunswick, A History of the Research and Productivity Council”, by L. Schramm and E.Cook or visit www.rpc.ca.

About RPC

RPC is New Brunswick's provincial research organization (PRO), a research and technology organization (RTO) with locations in Fredericton, Moncton, and St. George, NB. RPC's complement of 170 scientists, engineers, technologists and support staff operate from a 13,000 sq. meter facility housing world-class analytical chemistry and material-testing laboratories, comprehensive life science capabilities, an internationally recognized fish health lab, extensive product development, design, manufacturing and testing services, and a wide variety of pilot facilities for the development and improvement of industrial and environmental processes and products.

RPC holds over 100 accreditations and certifications including a diverse ISO 17025 scope from the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and is ISO 9001:2015 certified. Further information about RPC's services is available from www.rpc.ca.

RPC Contact:

Eric Cook, Executive Director/CEO
Research & Productivity Council (RPC)
921 College Hill Rd, Fredericton, NB E3B 6Z9
506-452-1212
info@rpc.ca

