

# What really drives a knowledge economy?

---

**Chris Hollstedt, FORREX Chief Executive Officer and JEM Editor-in-Chief**

Recent announcements about resource sector transformation suggest knowledge and technological innovations will revitalize our provincial and national economies. So what is the foundation of a knowledge economy? Is it defined by technological innovations that make it to the marketplace and improve the debt-to-GDP ratio? Is it enabled by regulators and consumers making informed choices? I would argue that a resilient and thriving economy is driven by knowledgeable people, whether they inform policy, regulation, professional practice, or consumer choice. In an era of information overload, FORREX strives to create a venue for open access to trustworthy information about the latest science, technology, and innovative approaches to natural resource development.

All too often a better technology or management approach is rejected by the public, or those responsible for making public decisions, because of aggressive resistance from a vocal minority or because the decision is generally unpopular. Best science, technology, and even expert opinion can be trumped by people's beliefs or values.

If the knowledge economy is to succeed, we need to recognize, value, and support not only technological innovation but the people and the institutions that strive to acquire the knowledge through research and development to better understand the impacts on our ecosystems, economies, and communities. It is knowledge that will help people make better choices.

Having access to the best information and using the acquired knowledge to make decisions is only part of the answer. A knowledgeable community is made up of individuals who recognize what they don't know, know where to go for good information, and know how to ask questions, test assumptions, and interact to learn from each other in a learning commons. A social media of sorts, *JEM* online strives to be a moderated forum for dialogue, where the natural resource community can share perspectives, showcase case studies, and submit discussion items on topics of interest. Reader feedback is always encouraged, and in the near future FORREX will introduce more social networking features to improve two-way communication. And just as important, with *JEM* and other FORREX peer-reviewed journals providing reliable information, we will continue to host forums (virtual and in person) for dialogue, investigation, and learning to help communities of practice adapt to new challenges.

The knowledge economy, based on sound sustainability principles, cannot be built on technology alone. It is built by people making informed choices—choices that will provide benefits now and create opportunities for future generations.

As both *JEM* and FORREX look toward the future, we remain committed to providing you with not only access to the best available information, whether digital or in print, but facilitating your opportunity to learn in a venue you prefer so that you can make informed decisions to achieve the balance between complex social, economic, and environmental natural resource development objectives. I hope you enjoy this and many future issues of *JEM*.