



### **MICROSOFT PLANS TO OPEN DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN CANADA**

Microsoft announced its plans to open this fall a new development center that is envisioned to become “home to software developers from around the world” in the Vancouver, British Columbia area. Vancouver, a global gateway with a diverse population, is close to Microsoft’s corporate offices in Redmond (state of Washington), and allows the company to recruit and retain highly skilled people affected by immigration issues in the U.S.

This announcement follows the recent “death” of the immigration bill that would have expanded the number of foreign high-tech workers that could enter the U.S. each year on H-1B visas.

High-tech companies have been pushing hard for Congress to increase the number of visas they are allotted. Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates made a strong plea for unlimited H-1B visas while Google called for expanded ability to hire foreigners which it credits for the company’s success.

According to Microsoft spokesman Lou Gellos, while the immigration issue was a factor, the company would be opening the center in Vancouver even if it were not for the immigration challenges. However, this plan will help the company address the challenge it has in the United States of hiring very qualified people, many of whom are graduating from schools in the U.S., but who cannot acquire the necessary documentation to work in the U.S.

Microsoft Canada President Phil Sorgen said his unit had long pushed Canada as a great place for the software maker to do development work given its burgeoning high-tech and software industries and a globally envied quality of life. This center will help Microsoft remain globally competitive while providing strong economic benefits to British Columbia and Canada.

The software maker currently has just over 900 workers based in Toronto, where Microsoft has a local subsidiary.