

# Parker: ConvergX expands in partnership with Farnborough Air Show

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Kimberley Van Vliet, creator of ConvergX, which has partnered with the Farnborough Air Show. *KELLY MULNER / SUPPLIED*

In February 2016, Kimberley Van Vliet welcomed delegates to her first ConvergX conference that brought together decision-makers in the energy and

## defence sectors in a forum to explore growth opportunities and create investment.

The success of the Calgary event grew into an annual conference and ConvergX has now partnered with the Farnborough International Airshow on a series of events to capitalize on Van Vliet's experience in connecting the global aerospace and defence industries.

The first is an executive roundtable in September at Canada House in London, this will be followed by a ConvergX Conference at the airshow in Hampshire, southwest of London in July 2020.

One of the world's biggest and most successful trade shows, it holds a global consultancy business with interests in China, the Middle East and the Far East.

Van Vliet is also in discussion with the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, and following this past February's conference in Calgary she has been approached by a representative of the Peruvian minister of defence, who was a delegate here, to organize a similar conference in Lima for the benefit of Latin America and be a guest speaker at the University of Cusco.

Busy on many fronts, Van Vliet and her business partner, Brad Robson, have built up a Calgary home-grown company into a world-recognized organization that provides a platform that attracts senior executives from around the globe.

ConvergX 2020 will host its annual conference at the Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire February 4-6. This year's event brought 200 top decision-makers in the military, aerospace, energy, security and mining sectors.

The senior level of the delegates meant that five deals were signed in Calgary and 60 others are still in progress. A big reason is the way in which the delegates are matched with the people they need to meet.

"There are enough conferences out there," says Van Vliet, "We ask for a corporate profile, ask what they are looking for, match them with others we feel they would benefit in meeting, and even organize warm introductions before the conference if they need to talk."

Many of the speakers are senior representatives of corporations who make an application to address the audience; 70 per cent of the limited number of

speakers have already been chosen.

A true Calgary success story, ConvergX has become a major in-bound trade mission over its five years, a big boost for government agencies.

Edmonton Global that advances economic development in the Edmonton region recognized the great opportunity the conference provided in reaching out to new markets and was a sponsor of the 2019 conference. Support has also been welcomed from the government of Alberta, Western Economic Diversification and the Department of National Defence.

Its major sponsors are Lockheed Martin and Haliburton, which have been supporters from the first conference. Along with representatives of Bennett Jones, Stonecracker Scientific Law and WaVv – another Van Vliet company, they will both be involved as judges in the first ConvergX Awards that will be presented at the pre-conference cocktail hour.

Van Vliet and her small team have built an organization that has helped put Calgary on the map as a city where new standards of technology are discussed and sold. It has also earned her many personal accolades, the latest in being named as one of the Top 20 Women in Defence in Canada.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary is Social Venture Partners' newest long-term investee, a partner for the next three to five years. It will receive \$15,000 in unrestricted funding in its first year as an investee and SVP will work together with the club to identify the best strategic initiatives to partner on, with the overarching goal of seeing our city's youth survive.

For more than 80 years the charitable, community supported organization serving over 45,000 vulnerable children and youth in every quadrant of the city each year has been transforming lives by providing safe places where kids can develop confidence, gain skills and experience success so they can reach their best potential in life.

*David Parker appears regularly in the Herald. Read his columns online at [calgaryherald.com/business](https://calgaryherald.com/business) (<https://calgaryherald.com/business>). He can be reached at 403-830-4622 or by email at [info@davidparker.ca](mailto:info@davidparker.ca) (<mailto:info@davidparker.ca>).*

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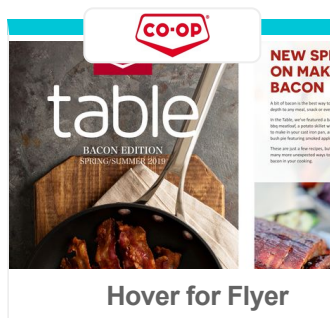


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