

PPE procurement contract lands with Winnipeg-based Mondetta Clothing

MONDETTA CLOTHING OUTSOURCES PRODUCTION OF PPE TO MANUFACTURERS IN CHINA, VIETNAM

Local journalism initiative reporter By: Sarah Lawrynuik

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Mondetta's Darlene Serduk (from back left), Danielle Cote, Ash Modha, Hayley Clackson, Erika Spiring, Leeza Metalinos, Jon Mead, Tony Lavilla (seated) and Asif Khan show the medical scrubs the company is now making to fill an order from the Manitoba government. Modha credits his staff for being able to switch gears quickly.

Winnipeg-headquartered clothing company, Mondetta, is one of the companies filling orders for the Manitoba government to bring in personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical professionals.

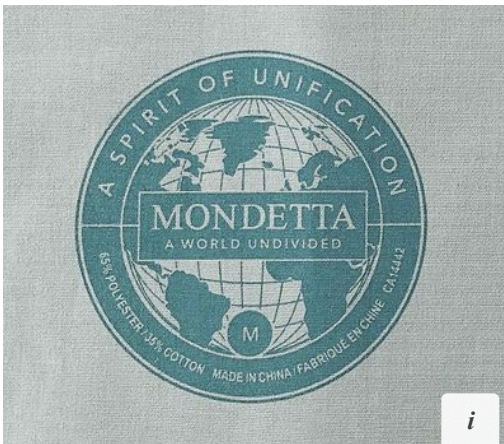
Normally known for their flag-bearing sweaters, the company is now tasked with coordinating with their supply-chain partners to produce and procure reusable medical scrubs, disposable gowns and gloves.

"With the disposable gowns, we are actually retooling a woven shirt factory," said Ash Modha, CEO of Mondetta Clothing Company. "It's not something that I would have ever expected."

Mondetta received Class I and II medical device establishment licences from Health Canada in April to import medical products. Since then, Modha describes the mad dash to get products here as fast as possible. He said in one case, a factory was retooled in six days.

The first flight with Mondetta-procured products onboard left China for Winnipeg on Saturday, he said.

The partnered factories are principally based in China and Vietnam, Modha explained, while he knows many people would like to see this kind of work done right here in Canada, that capacity doesn't exist anymore, he said.



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Mondetta has locked in a multi-million dollar COVID-19 contract from the Manitoba government to produce medical scrubs. Reporter: Lawrynuik

But between Mondetta's primary business, which is still ongoing, government supports during the pandemic and now this government contract, Mondetta has been able to keep on 90 staff members in Winnipeg. The company is looking to soon bring back 10 employees who are still furloughed.

Modha describes the company's role as a middleman in the procurement of PPE, which he says takes a lot of pressure off the government which otherwise might be running around trying to find suppliers who they can trust. By going through Mondetta, Modha says those relationships already exist.

"This is about making sure that this is done right because this is for the health-care community and we have to make sure that it's not something that's imported, and we then find out it's the wrong product," said Modha.

Adding to that, because his company typically supplies products to large outlets like Costco, their partner companies and producers in Asia (and elsewhere around the world) are already forced to adhere to international environmental and labour standards, Modha said, and even in the rush to procure PPE during this pandemic, it's important that governments don't forget about those priorities and standards by cutting corners.

While all of this is going on and Mondetta is trying to fill this new role, demand for their athletic wear product line is also higher than ever as people stuck at home have been looking to round out the casual end of their wardrobes.

"It's just been remarkable," he said. "But we're just excited to help the province. We are a Manitoba-based company and we want to do what is right for the province."

Since stepping into this contract with the Manitoba government, Mondetta has also been approached by the provincial governments in Quebec and Newfoundland to potentially do similar work there.

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Sarah Lawrynuik reports on climate change for the Winnipeg Free Press. Funding for the Free Press climate change reporter comes from the Government of Canada through the Local Journalism Initiative.

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