



Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound Local Training and Adjustment Board

A year in Review 2005/2006

Message from the Co-Chairs

As Co-Chairs of the Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Local Training and Adjustment Board (MNPS LTAB), we are pleased to bring you our 2005/2006 accomplishment report.

To begin our fiscal year in April of 2005, the Board's priority was that of hiring a new Executive Director. Through much diligence and determination, we were pleased to offer the position to Ms. Pat Lea Devereaux. Pat was hired on in September and with her guidance and support, we were able to produce our annual Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) report, and were able to complete the several community partnerships that form the basis of the Board's mandate.

This year's TOP report was a very involved process, and the Board was able to reach out to our communities to identify and prioritize the labour market trends, opportunities and priorities in the region. This working document provides the Board with the highly valued information that becomes the foundation for our community partnerships.

Several partnerships were completed this year-7 in total. Directors were very involved in the partnership process this year, and the Board was able to accomplish a variety of activities in all three districts (Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound). You will see in this report, the vastness of the partnerships, as well as the many community partners who come together to address the local labour force issues faced by our communities.

With the support of our valiant community partners, our gracious volunteer Directors, and our devoted staff, we plan to continue to work on several additional partnerships that have been identified in our most recent TOP report. Our partnership plan is updated twice annually, and we are continually outreaching to our communities in order that we can remain current with the issues that our communities are facing relating to workforce training and labour adjustment.

Once again, on behalf of the MNPS LTAB, we thank you for your continued support and hope you enjoy our 2005/2006 accomplishment report!

Jane Ruttan,
Co-Chair

Donna Forget,
Co-Chair

Trends, Opportunities, Priorities Report

Again this year, the MNPS LTAB embarked on its annual Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) Process. The TOP Report and the planning process is undertaken to arrive at a published document that promotes a greater understanding of the labour force and labour market trends, needs, opportunities and priorities in the areas served by the Local Board.

HOW WAS IT DEVELOPED?

The TOP Report process consisted of the following key steps:

1) Gathering information

- review Census-based profile information for key labour market related themes;
- gather and summarize local labour market information obtained from a variety of sources such as local labour market studies and report, local economic development reports, local newsletters, reviews, bulletins from the local Service Canada Centre;
- determine the issues or trends emerging from the collection of information and
- assess the impact of the issue or trend on the labour market.

2) Consultation with key community informants/stakeholders

- to share the Census information obtained and the local labour market information gathered and
- to identify, verify, prioritize local broad issues, trends and opportunities and organize issues in terms of whether they are new or ongoing, short or long term
- to identify next steps to be undertaken by community stakeholders and/or the Local Board to generate solutions.

3) Next Step or Proposed Actions (TOP Planning Chart- Section 3)

- indicate the action or “solution” that the key informants (community stakeholders and/or Local Board) have agreed to undertake regarding the prioritized issues;
- identify the partners who will be involved;
- identify the timelines for action;
- identify the expected outcomes;
- report twice annually on the status of the proposed action (next update – January 2005)
- continue to plan, co-ordinate and facilitate regular meetings with key stakeholders to monitor and ensure that planning, as well as activities are ongoing and to determine how well the identified needs are being met.

Local Boards Partnership Database

Over the last several years, Ontario’s Local Training Boards have been actively working with their local partners to address local labour market issues. In cooperation with these partners, they have succeeded in undertaking hundreds of exciting and innovative partnerships that could be

appealing for your own communities.

Local Boards are pleased to share information on the nature and outcome of these partnerships and invite you to search their Partnerships Database for ideas that may work for your community. The database will continue to grow as Local Boards take the lead on over 100 partnerships per year throughout Ontario. These efforts contribute considerably to the advancement and improvement of local labour market conditions across the province.

For more information on the Local Boards of Ontario, please visit their website at www.localboards.ca

2005/2006 Community Partnerships

Employer Forum – Parry Sound Pilot

This very successful half day **Employer Forum** was held on March 7, 2006 in the beautiful Charles W. Stockey Centre on the shores of Parry Sound. Fifty-five (55) people attended the early morning breakfast and ten (10) various presentations provided employers with information relating to:

- government and other funding incentives for hiring and training employees, and
- service providers delivering services.

Booths were set up around the hall and participants were able to network, ask for, and receive information and assistance on services provided and the application procedures.

This partnership brought LTAB together with the following groups:

- Chamber of Commerce – Parry Sound,
- The Business Centre – Nipissing Parry Sound
- Parry Sound Area Community Business & Development Centre Inc (CB&DC)
- Parry Sound Employment Services (Parry Sound - Job Connect)
- YMCA Parry Sound Employment Resource Centre
- Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Apprenticeship Office
- Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MND&M) Internship Program
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP) Program,
- YMCA - Self Employment Benefit Program,
- The Town of Parry Sound, and
- Ministry of Community and Social Services through the Ontario Disability Support Program and the Employment Support Section's program I.i.n.c. (leading into new careers)

By providing information to employers on hiring incentives, and encouraging employers to take advantage of programs and to hire locally, we addressed the intertwined issues of 'Employment in General' and youth-out migration. Feedback indicates that we have helped existing businesses with information and contacts from government agencies.

Health Care Handbook

With the support of the East Central Ontario Training Board, we have been working with community partners to localize the Healthcare Handbook. This partnership addresses the issues of employment in general, lower incomes than the provincial average, youth out migration, and the need for additional workers in the healthcare field.

By providing this updated reference booklet to students, parents, employers, service providers, and educators, we will promote and raise awareness of the many career options and paths in the health sector in Nipissing District. Additionally accurate, relevant information on health care careers will quickly and easily available and, in the long term, gaps for workers in various health care fields will be filled. By working with City of North Bay, the North Bay General Hospital and the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce, LTAB the handbook has been localized with relevant information for the Nipissing District. The first release of the handbook is scheduled for April 17, 2006.

North Bay Newcomers Network Symposium

The TOP process identifies significant shortages of skilled workers, particularly workers that have completed training and are certified or licensed in particular areas. This niche could be filled by encouraging immigration of qualified workers from other parts of Canada. The population of the MNPS LTAB area is decreasing and is aging. One solution to the issue is to encourage newcomers to our area.

A one-day symposium to share information and raise community awareness of the skill sets available and the potential that encouraging immigration of skilled people could satisfy our need for a skilled workforce and the decreasing population.

Working with the Corporation of the City of North Bay, and the Mayor's office of Economic Development, LTAB, and many other partners have pooled their resources to host the event. Several presentations were made and over 80 people attended!

The feedback was great and several sub- committees have been formed to identify ways to attract and retain skilled workers. An employer network of employers who are considering or would benefit from considering hiring immigrants will be working with others to build a stronger more diversified workforce.

Parry Sound Industry Tour

The issue of youth out migration and a surplus of low paying jobs in retail, food, and hospitality services has been identified as a high priority for the long term throughout the Board Area. The Board encourages communities to work together to raise awareness of training and employment opportunities available in other sectors within the area – specifically the skilled trades.

On Friday, October 21, 2005, several individuals participated in a tour of local welding businesses. The day included a tour of four (4) various industry work sites and lunch at a local restaurant. This event was a great success by bringing community partners together with employers and unemployed people to share information on the training requirements and employment environment and opportunities. The tour was full (with a capacity for inside the plants set at 15 for safety reasons); and a waiting list was started.

The businesses that participated included:

Connor Industries, Kropf Industrial Inc., Seguin Welding & Fabricating Ltd. and Shaw-Almex Industries Ltd.

The LTAB Board and a committee comprised of local community partners including Parry Sound District Employment Services, YMCA Employment Resource Centre, Near North District School Board, Parry Sound and Area Chamber of Commerce, and Canadore College will continue to work together to increase awareness of:

- a) existing businesses that offer full time “good paying” jobs;
- b) training requirements and hiring patterns for these companies;
- c) the programs and services available to help people enter careers in these occupations; and
- d) provide employers the opportunity to meet with and share information with the targeted audience about their business, future hiring needs, educational requirements, and how they became successful.

It is expected that through ongoing information sessions and industry tours, the committee’s actions will help to dispel the myths about “no good paying jobs here”, and promote training and job opportunities in the skilled trades in the Parry Sound area.

Diversity and Accessibility

Results from the TOP surveys revealed that there were issues surrounding the employment rate for *Persons with Disabilities* (PWD) and that there is a need to promote *Persons with Disabilities* as a group with human resources assets that could be viewed as positive and vital contributors to the local workforce. The passing of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act will have a tremendous impact on this group as well as the labour market in general.

Early last year, the community identified a need and desire to form a committee to gather and evaluate current education material that addresses the issue of diversity and accessibility within the community, and considered making a video and booklet to increase awareness of the benefits of hiring Persons with a Disability.

Unfortunately as roles, responsibilities and representation on the committee changed, neither the booklet, nor the video were completed and the committee disbanded. Although there is still an interest in this project, the next step will depend on community need, support, and commitment. Funds originally allocated for this partnership were re-allocated to the Women In Work partnership.

Mothers Daughters and Mentors

One of the trends arising out of the TOP process is the low participation rate of young rural women and the lower annual wages. Respondents indicated a need to pay particular attention to the special needs faced by young women in rural areas of the Board's districts. An alarming rate of poverty and vulnerability to violence and violent relationships linked to low education levels (including above average high-school drop out rates), geographic isolation, availability of transportation and a lack of guidance was reported by respondents as something to address, and is a high priority for the long term.

A "*Mothers Daughters and Mentors*" workshop was held in South River on October 19th, 2005 during Ontario's Small Business Week. The workshop brought together women of all ages to share ideas, discuss challenges to sustainable lifestyles, and to explore fundamental financial management concepts.

LTAB and the community partners, Women's Own Resource Centre (WORC), Women in Networking Growing Strong (WINGS), Esprit Outreach, District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, and Parry Sound Employment Services (Job Connect), provided a safe, informal and inclusive forum for young women to access 'mature' women they recognize as successful community members.

By providing participants with the opportunity to connect with role models, this partnership assisted in developing attitudes and skills needed to plan for and become independent, active and healthy members in their relationships and in their communities. The role model concept is important to the success of this partnership by exposing young women to the realities of financial planning, and share that all women experience similar challenges. The WORC delivered an Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) program "*What's Your Money Style*", a workbook designed to encourage self-reflection and discussion around fundamental financial styles, vocabulary and planning. It served as a model for information sharing, referral and support and through small group discussions, the women felt better equipped to obtain economic independence and sustainable livelihoods.

Community mentors, mothers and daughters worked together and follow-up discussions and meetings are planned. It is hoped that new programs will be created from this initiative and that more women will be prepared for financial independence.

Almaguin Highlands Skilled Trades Round Table

The "***Skilled Trades Round Table***" was created when it became clear that there was not enough support for a "Business Retention and Expansion" (BR+E) initiative that was proposed last year for the Almaguin Highlands. The "***Skilled Trades Round Table***" grew from information collected during the BR+E planning process and was held October 18, 2005 in the South River at the Machar Community Centre. It was presented in partnership with LTAB, the Women's Own Resource Centre, and Canadore College.

From the initial work on the BR+E, significant 'red flag' issues surfaced – employment and skills shortages. Since April of 2005, the Women's Own Resource Centre highlighted the issues monthly in the local press. As a result of increasing the awareness the 'red flag' issues, an ecotourism seminar was held; a round table discussion meeting was hosted to discuss the future of the District High School; and another red flag issue was addressed by hosting the “**Skilled Trades Round Table.**”

Several key stakeholders were in attendance representing: North Eastern Ontario Economic Development Council, District Social Services, the local employment service providers, Near North District School Board, Almaguin Highlands Secondary School, several local Municipalities, Canadore College, business and labour as well as the Provincial and Federal governments. By bringing key community stakeholders together, an understanding of the issues of employer needs associated with the shortage of available trained workers; and employee needs regarding training in the Skilled Trades was shared.

In all three districts, the issue of skill shortages was identified as being a high priority for the long term, and as follow up, an event called “Preparing for a Career in the Trades” to help interested people access training is being planned, and the key stakeholders continue to meet to discuss the feasibility of bringing Canadore College courses to the Almaguin Highlands Secondary School.

Women and Work

A day-long symposium event took place in Bonfield on March 29th. Building on an existing rural women's network and responding to the evaluations of the 2nd Annual Bonfield Women's Convention, where there were 160 women in attendance (women attending from: Astorville, Bonfield, Callander, Papineau-Cameron, Chisholm, East Ferris, Mattawa, North Bay, Sturgeon Falls, Powassan, Calvin, Garden Village, Quebec, Kenya, Tanzania) this event was designed to promote and provide information on women in business, classes in the area, training, skill development, operating your own business, and community counselling services.

Partners involved in this event included Amelia Rising Sexual Assault Centre of Nipissing, The Business Centre-Nipissing Parry Sound, Mattawa – Bonfield Economic Development Corporation, BUILT Network, NECO Community Futures Development Corporation and the North Bay Literacy Council.

Approximately 20 rural women attended the event and took part in various business skills related work shops and presentations and provided an opportunity for needs analysis on essential skills and meaningful work.

Additional Activities

Passport to Prosperity

The Passport to Prosperity campaign continues to promote the importance of school to work transition programs for secondary school students and encourage employers to work with educators in order to increase student participation in such programs as Co-op, Job Shadowing, and Apprenticeship. Many different types of events were approved for 2005/2006 by the funder, the Ontario Ministry of Education. These included various types of trade shows, innovative forums, presentations, industry tours and career fairs. New partnerships were developed this year that enabled Passport to become a more visible and influential presence in the community while carrying out the programs intention and mandate to generate a greater awareness and involvement of employers in secondary school-to-work programs in order that our students can make a successful transition from school to work.

The validity and value of the Passport to Prosperity campaign continues to prove itself year after year. Activities become more abundant and relationships become stronger. The Board looks forward to building future partnerships and successes in the years to come.

Explore the Trades and More

With over 50 different exhibitors and 1500 participants, Explore the Trades and More was deemed one of the top 10 local news stories of the week by Rogers Media. The organizing committee consisted of members of the Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Centre, District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board, local Employers, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, YES! Employment Services, Canadore College, Service Canada and the Local Training and Adjustment Board. This year's event held at Memorial Gardens in North Bay was the biggest event to date! Many break out sessions were scheduled throughout the day along with an interactive booth featuring "meet the tradesperson". For more information on the skilled trades, please visit the new Explore the Trades website at www.explorethetrades.ca

Inventory of Programs and Services

Continues to be an all-inclusive, comprehensive source of information for developing a pathway to employment. This updated database provides profiles on federal, local and provincial programs and services available in the region. Through the Board's marketing efforts this year, the IPS has received much attention. Also, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 'One Stop' initiative, this interactive database will take on a more pivotal role in the 'no wrong door' approach to services. This year, North Bay was chosen as a pilot site for this project and the Board was excited to participate in the regional community meetings.

MNPS LTAB Directors at March 31, 2006:

George Allerston-Business
Lynne Bennett-Community
Kristy Brophy-Business
Donna Brock-Community
Bonnie DeWitt-Education
Marg Docherty-Community

Donna Forget-Persons with Disabilities
Jane Jackson-Education
Karen Jones-Business
Cliff Peat-Business
Clayton Ralph-Aboriginals

Jane Ruttan-Labour
Donna Sedore-Community
Rick Stivrins-Business
George Whittet-Labour
Carl Wirth-Labour