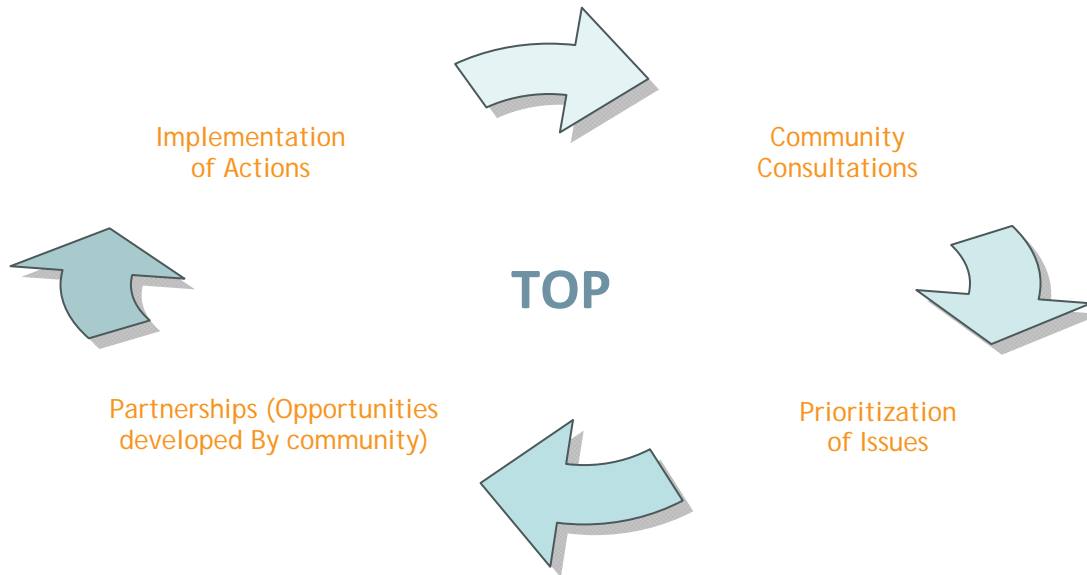


TOP Update:

Each year the Local Training and Adjustment Board (LTAB) conducts its annual community consultation sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to discuss local workforce issues and develop a community plan of activities to address the issues.



In October of 2007, the Board held three community consultation sessions throughout the region. As a result of these sessions, the prioritized workforce trends were as follows:

- 1 Skilled Trade Shortages
- 2 Lack of Essential Skills
- 3 Youth Out Migration

Communities felt that Skilled Trade Shortages remains a major issue and that action needed to be taken to address the issue at the local level. One of the Opportunities identified in the TOP report (by the community at the consultations) included an event to bring awareness of the trades to the region in an effort to attract more young people to the industry.

Action Taken since October 2007:

ACTION #1: The Board spearheaded *Explore the Trades in Muskoka* on April 29th. This one day event brought over 1500 local residents through the doors of the Bracebridge Arena to discover what a career in the trades is all about. Over 30 employers were on hand to demonstrate their trade by offering hands on experience to those interested. Youth, parents, educators and the general public all were on hand for this highly interactive event that included an Iron Chef competition, on sight hairstyling as well as the construction of a utility shed by local students.

ACTION #2: To address the Skilled Trade Shortages issue in North Bay, the LTAB brought the stars of MTV's Pimp My Ride to North Bay for three showings at the Capitol Centre on May 21st. *Mad Mike* and *Jason* were flown in from Los Angeles, California to speak to local students about their journey to stardom as automotive trades technicians. These two celebrities wowed the students with their creative styles and demonstrations on a variety of vehicles. Their personal journeys from regular auto mechanic to world class wiring and sound system professional offered inspiration and insight into the world of automobiles.



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Guiding partners to workforce solutions.

ACTION #3: In addition to attracting youth to the Trades, it was determined at the consultations that action needed to be taken immediately to bring already skilled people to businesses who were in need of workers right now. In response to this, the LTAB spearheaded *Why Your Company Should Hire Immigrants* on June 5th in North Bay. This breakfast session hosted key note speaker Peter Paul of hireimmigrants.ca and offered a panel of additional speakers that offered advice and hints to local employers interested in obtaining skilled workers. The breakfast session also offered many local agency display booths for employers to follow up with further information and be able to ask questions regarding immigration.

ACTION #4: As a result of the 2006 community consultations, the LTAB has partnered with the City of North Bay, the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce, Nipissing University and Canadore College to conduct a Labour Market Needs Assessment for North Bay. This two- year, highly interactive project involves interviewing over 200 employers to determine their future Human Resources needs. The data received from this survey will not only allow for a microscopic view of what the current workforce looks like now, but will give community partners insight on what types of skill sets are needed for North Bay's future workforce. Phase one of this project has been completed and the committee is implementing strategies for phase two. All data and promotional material for this project will be complete by March 2009.

Upcoming actions to address issues identified in TOP report include:

Essential Skills Awareness Campaign: This large scale media project will showcase Literacy and Essential Skills in a new light. TV and Radio ads will be developed to heighten messages regarding workplace literacy and the importance of employing a skilled workforce. These media announcements will span the Board's entire geographic region and will be heard in the districts of Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound. The media campaign will educate and inform both employers and the general public of what workplace literacy means and how it affects individuals and the workplace as a whole.

Parry Sound Networking Breakfasts: During our Parry Sound consultations, it was duly noted that a comprehensive networking system does not currently exist that informs the community of what services exist and what activities are taking place. Beginning in the fall of 2008, networking breakfasts will bring community leaders together on a weekly basis to discuss current and relevant issues as well as provide information on various services, agencies and activities that are ongoing within the community. The purpose of these sessions will be to enhance the local knowledge of various programs and services so employers, students and the general public can take advantage of some of the options available to them locally.

Parry Sound Career Day: Similar to the Explore the Trades event, this smaller scale version will expose various local employment opportunities to local youth in hopes that they will take advantage of local job opportunities. A full day showcase, this event will combine interactive career demonstrations with employers looking to hire. This event is scheduled for spring of 2009.

2008 TOP Consultations:

New 2006 census data will be the focus of the 2008 TOP community consultation sessions. The highly anticipated new figures will form the basis of new workforce related trends, opportunities and priorities to be implemented for 2009. The Board will be hosting two additional sessions this year in order to maximize community input. Sessions will be hosted late September and will be held in North Bay, Bracebridge, Parry Sound, Sturgeon Falls and the Almaguin District. Watch for your invitation in early fall.

The Labour Market Group (formerly the Local Training and Adjustment Board) is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and is part of the Employment Ontario network.