

**Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce  
Business Retention & Expansion Action Plan  
November 6, 2006**

**Background**

- Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) is a program that supports existing businesses in a geographic region or sector. The philosophy of the program is that these businesses constitute approximately 80% of economic activity should be the focus of local development efforts.
- The Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce (DLCC) initiated a BR&E project in 2005 and over the next year interviewed 52 businesses in the region. The final report was completed in June 2006 and presented at the chamber's annual general meeting on October 12, 2006.
- On Saturday, November 4, 2006, the local BR&E Leadership Team held a strategic planning session to prioritize issues arising from the business interview findings and develop a realistic action plan. In attendance were:

**Jim Goudie, President**  
Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce

**Jason Higgins, BR&E Analyst**  
Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development

**Paul Knott, President**  
PMK Consulting Services

**Stewart Read, Economic Development Officer**  
Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development

**Doug Richardson, Economic Development Officer**  
Humber Economic Development Board

**Marilyn Young**  
Grand Lake Centre for Economic Development

- The Leadership Team is recommending three major initiatives to be coordinated by the Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce in response to BR&E findings. These include: 1) a Business Builder Seminar Series; 2) an On-Line Business Directory; and 3) a Human Resources Needs Assessment and Support Identification Proposal. These initiatives will be led by board members of the DLCC with support from a local committee. Board approval is required for further action.

## **Issues & Action Items**

### **1. HUMAN RESOURCES**

Research identified demographic issues related to an aging workforce and out migration, making employee recruitment more of an issue than retention. Complicating this, 41.2% of firms interviewed expected an increase in employment from a limited and shrinking skilled labour pool. In response, most companies rely on hands-on (95%) and on-the-job training (85%) training to enhance job-specific skills.

#### **Action 1.1: Internal Training Support Brochure**

To support companies who rely on predominantly internal training, the leadership team recommends the development of a brochure with information on supports available for these companies. The information will include:

- an overview of the support programs;
- contact people for further discussion; and
- tips and best practices for developing an internal training program.

This document will be available online at the chamber's and municipalities' websites and promoted via e-mail, newsletter notices and word of mouth.

Lead:	<i>Doug Richardson</i>
Support:	<i>HRLE, Service Canada, CoNA</i>
Budget:	<i>n/a</i>
Completion:	<i>December 2006</i>

#### **Action 1.2: Human Resource Needs Assessment and Support Identification Proposal**

The team recommends the development of a proposal to contract a human resources outreach professional to work with a network of interested companies to complete a company-specific human resource needs assessment, develop a long-term recruitment strategy. and identify existing supports available.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, Service Canada</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>January 2007</i>

#### **Action 1.3: Business Builder Seminar #2 - Interview Skills**

To assist companies in recruitment, it is recommended that an Interview Skills Seminar be designed, promoted and delivered as part of a series of seminars hosted by the Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce. Topics may include:

- preparing a standard interview process checklist;

- understanding legal obligations and human rights;
- knowing the job requirements and completing job descriptions;
- identifying people in your organization with interviewing skills;
- matching skills to the jobs;
- using professional placement services; and,
- identifying support tools already in place.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, HEDB, CBDC, BDC, CoNA, Banks, local consultant, accountants</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>March 2007</i>

## 2. MARKETS & MARKETING STRATEGY

Almost half of firms who participated in BR&E interviews have no marketing plan. While 48% of these indicated it was due to the nature of their business, 39% said they are working on a plan and 26% had not started because of limited time, money, or perceived benefit. Transportation was also an issue, but the leadership team felt the municipality of Deer Lake is dealing with the issue in their Strategic Plan.

### Action 2.1: Business Builder Seminar #3 - Marketing Plans

To promote awareness of the benefits of a marketing plan and to assist companies in the development of a marketing plan, a Marketing Plan Seminar will be designed, promoted and delivered as part of a series of seminars hosted by the Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce. Topics would include:

- the importance of a marketing plan;
- how a marketing plan can make you money;
- how to create a relevant and real marketing plan for your company;
- how to focus on revenue generation and revenue streams;
- what marketing components you need, ie. trade shows, branding, web site, advertising;
- how do you do “market research”;
- marketing to local customers;
- local business-to-business marketing; and,
- identifying local sales opportunities.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, HEDB, CBDC, BDC, CoNA, Banks, local consultant, accountants</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>June 2007</i>

### 3. TECHNOLOGY

The research indicated a limited use of web technology among local firms and the final report recommended the leadership team explore this issue further. Since the final report, local broadband capacity has increased and further improvements are expected by December 2007. The municipality of Deer Lake's recently completed Strategic Plan is targeting the development of a communications plan to promote internet usage and web-based applications among business.

#### Action 3.1: Monitor Town of Deer Lake SEP re: Technology

The leadership team agreed that the role of the Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce is to monitor, support and encourage the town in these efforts.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC</i>
Budget:	<i>n/a</i>
Completion:	<i>On-going</i>

### 4. FINANCIAL

A number of firms indicated difficulties obtaining financing as well as limited use of financial statements in their operations.

#### Action 4.1: Business Builder Seminar #4 - Financial Statement Analysis

The BR&E Leadership Team proposes the design, promotion and delivery of a seminar on financial statements and analysis. This would include:

- an overview of financial statements;
- how and why they can be used;
- benefits of financial statement analysis; and,
- how to increase profit using analysis.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, HEDB, CBDC, BDC, CoNA, Banks, local consultant, accountants</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>September 2007</i>

### 5. SUPPLIERS

BR&E research indicated that usage levels of local suppliers could improve, and that business opportunities for local suppliers could be identified to expand their product and service offerings. The team felt local business-to-business marketing and opportunity

identification could be addressed in the Marketing Plan Seminar, but did identify other actions to support local supplier development activities. Specifically, the focus should be on promoting the use of existing local suppliers and helping these firms identify additional products and services they could offer to local customers.

**Action 5.1: Business Builder Seminar #1 - Sales & Merchandising 101**

The Chamber will host a Sales and Merchandising Seminar for local firms to kick-off its Business Builder Seminar Series. This session would cover:

- tips on selling yourself and your business;
- the do's and don'ts of store front and layout;
- how to keep customers happy; and
- spotting local opportunities for sales.

Lead:	<i>Susan Goulding</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD</i>
Budget:	<i>\$800 - INTRD</i>
Completion:	<i>November 27, 2007</i>

**Action 5.2: Business Builder Seminar #6 - Quality Programs**

As part of it's seminar series, the Chamber will host a seminar on quality programs available to local firms. This will include presentations from Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exports, and other sectoral representatives.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, HEDB, CBDC, BDC, CoNA, Banks, local consultant, accountants, CME, HNL, other associations</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>January 2008</i>

**Action 5.3: On-Line Business Directory**

The Chamber will lead the development of an on-line business directory by identifying a project lead and forming a committee to develop a proposal. The committee will:

- determine objectives and expectations;
- explore approaches taken by other chambers;
- identify businesses for the directory;
- collect information from the town and region;
- determine a budget (ie. advertising, usage fees?);
- outline a promotional and training strategy;
- prepare a proposal for support partners;
- determine fields for the business directory ie. links to their corporate website, quality certifications, products and services, "sales pitch", memberships;
- determine the structure for delivery, ie. where it will be housed;

- design the website and on-line directory;
- consider the best approach for maintenance and updating the existing dBase;
- consider search ability, printability.

The committee will consider the use of local students when appropriate. This project should be tied into the VIC project. Maintenance could be done by local students as part of a regular, community project to facilitate IT learning.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, HEDB, CBDC, BDC, CoNA, Town of Deer Lake Bob Hiscock (Manager), Larry Hall (Chair), independent consultants/programmers, ie. Phil Wheeler of Computers and Communications, community volunteers ie. students</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>March 2007 – in conjunction with VIC project</i>

## 6. LOCATION, REGION, MUNICIPALITY

The municipality's role in economic development is being addressed by the Town of Deer Lake under the municipal Strategic Plan.

### Action 6.1: Monitor Town of Deer Lake SEP re: Economic Development

The Chamber will monitor progress and offer support as needed.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC</i>
Budget:	<i>n/a</i>
Completion:	<i>On-going</i>

## 7. FUTURE PLANS

Future business expansion issues and Main Street development was deferred to the town of Deer Lake to address under the municipal Strategic Plan.

### Action 7.1: Monitor Town of Deer Lake SEP re: Local Development

The Chamber will monitor progress and offer support as needed.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC</i>
Budget:	<i>n/a</i>
Completion:	<i>On-going</i>

## 8. INFORMATION ASSISTANCE

Almost 40% of responding firms requested additional information on sources of financial support.

### Action 8.1: Business Builder Seminar #5 - Financial Support

The Leadership Team proposes a seminar on sources of financial support available to business as part of Small Business Week activities.

Lead:	<i>Jim Goudie</i>
Support:	<i>DLCC, INTRD, ACOA, HEDB, CBDC, BDC, CoNA, Banks, local consultant, accountants, associations</i>
Budget:	<i>TBD</i>
Completion:	<i>October 2007 Small Business Week</i>

### Implementation Schedule

<b>Nov 2006</b>	5.1: Business Builder Seminar #1 - Sales & Merchandising 101
<b>Dec 2006</b>	1.1: Internal Training Support Brochure
<b>Jan 2007</b>	1.2: Human Resource Assessment & Support Identification Proposal
<b>Mar 2007</b>	5.3: On-Line Business Directory
<b>Mar 2007</b>	1.3: Business Builder Seminar #2 - Interview Skills
<b>Jun 2007</b>	2.1: Business Builder Seminar #3 – Marketing Plans
<b>Sep 2007</b>	4.1: Business Builder Seminar #4 - Financial Statement Analysis
<b>Oct 2007</b>	8.1: Business Builder Seminar #5 - Financial Support
<b>Jan 2008</b>	5.2: Business Builder Seminar #6 - Quality Programs
<b>On-going</b>	3.1: Monitor Town of Deer Lake SEP re: Technology
<b>On-going</b>	6.1: Monitor Town of Deer Lake SEP re: Economic Development
<b>On-going</b>	7.1: Monitor Town of Deer Lake SEP re: Local Development

## Next Steps

1. **Chamber Approval:** This action plan proposal will be presented to the Deer Lake Chamber of Commerce at their next board meeting on November 8, 2006 for discussion and approval.
2. **Project Leads & Committee Formation:** DLCC board members will be identified to take over the lead for the following action items currently assigned to Jim Goudie:
  - a DLCC Business Builder Seminar Series;
  - an On-Line Business Directory; and
  - a Human Resources Needs Assessment and Support Identification Proposal.

Supporting committees will be formed by the new leads for each of these projects and will regularly report to the board regarding progress.

3. **Existing Seminar Identification:** All Leadership Team members will conduct an environmental scan for existing presentations similar to those proposed under the Business Builder Seminar Series and forward suggestions to Jim Goudie. Following this, the Seminar Series Committee will prepare a tender to develop and deliver the series. This will be discussed with Community and Corporate Services Division of MUN, Suzanne Dawe of CoNA, Joanne Philpott of Sir Wilfred Grenfell, and Marilyn Forward to determine what they can pull together. This will form the basis for a proposal for support to be developed by the Business Builder Seminar Series Committee.

Guiding principles for the seminar series include:

- Practical applications for firms with immediate benefits for their operation;
  - Convenient times for business operators;
  - Promotion among BR&E participants and the general business community;
  - Firms leave with specific operational objectives;
  - One-on-one follow-up is conducted with firms to offer support; and
  - Provision of on-line resources and “tip-sheets” for the participants.
4. **Seminar Series Launch:** The first session of the seminar series “Sales & Merchandising 101” will be organized and promoted by Susan Goulding and delivered by Jason Higgins and a local co-facilitator on November 27, 2007.
  5. **Leadership Team Status Meeting:** The DLCC Leadership Team will hold a status meeting on November 27, 2006. The details will be finalized by Susan Goulding.
  6. **Communications:** The chamber will draft a news release to announce their BR&E action plan and highlight their specific responses to local BR&E issues. This will be launched in conjunction with the November 27<sup>th</sup> team meeting and first Business Builder Seminar. The release will be posted, covered in local press, and forwarded to BR&E-participating businesses. Jason will forward a sample news release to the Leadership Team as an example.