

Strategic Economic Plan 2008 – 2011

<u>SECTION:</u>	<u>PAGE #</u>
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	2
MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS	8
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS	12
SECTORS OF OPPORTUNITY / WORK PLAN	14
NATURAL RESOURCES / AGRICULTURE	16
TOURISM / HERITAGE & CULTURE	21
MANUFACTURING	31
EDUCATION & YOUTH	34
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES	39
OTHER SECTORS / AREAS OF SUPPORT	48
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN / PRIORITIES	54
COMMUNICATIONS	58
MONITORING & EVALUATION	59
APPENDICES:	
A. – POLICIES & PROCEDURES	
B. – COMMITTEE STRUCTURE	
C. – JOB DESCRIPTIONS	
D. – LITERATURE REVIEW	
E. – COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS	
F. – FINANCIAL / BUDGET	

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

ECONOMY

The Exploits Valley region (Zone 12) is located in the geographic centre of the Island of Newfoundland. The pattern of economic development in the Exploits region is somewhat different from most of outport Newfoundland and Labrador in that it is based on industrial development and natural resource extraction rather than the fishery. While the coastal communities in the region still depend on the fishery to some limited degree, it is of much less importance to the overall regional economy than in most other regions.

The zone breaks down into three sub-regions, with different but inter-dependant sub regional economies. The coastal region (Botwood, Peterview, Northern Arm, Fortune Harbour, Cottrell=s Cove, Point of Bay, Point Leamington, Glover=s Harbour, Leading Ticks and Norris Arm) is related to the marine environment - fishery, aquaculture, and shipping – with manufacturing emerging in Point Leamington and coastal tourism becoming increasingly important.

The central region (Grand Falls-Windsor, Bishop=s Falls) is the industrial, service and government centre for the region and contains the bulk of the regional population. The pulp and paper mill at Grand Falls-Windsor is the most significant industry but other manufacturers exist as well. Commercial, retail and government services provide most of the employment.

The interior region (Badger, Buchans, Buchan=s Junction and Millertown) is dependent on mining and forestry. The mining sector is experiencing significant growth that has been predicted for the past few years, spurred by the start of production at the Duck Pond mine in early 2007.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistical analysis has become more challenging because of the creation of the Rural Secretariat and the inclusion of the Exploits Valley (zone 12) with the Emerald Zone (zone 11) and the Coast of Bays (zone 13) in the new “Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton” Rural Secretariat zone #5. As such, all provincial statistics for zone 12, other than those identified specifically by the Newfoundland Statistics Agency or Community Accounts, are lumped into Rural Secretariat zone #5. Wherever possible, we will identify zone 12 statistics only.

The Exploits region has a total population of 26,519 (2006 census), down from 26,958 (2001 census), a decline of only 1.6 %. However, the population decline since 1996 is 9.6%, or 2807 people. (From 1991 to 2006 the decline is even greater - 4,127 people, or 13.5%.) The population of 15 plus has declined by 5.1% since 1996, and the Labour Force (15-64 year-olds) has declined by 11.2% since 1996. (Please see Table 1.)

As with most rural Newfoundland communities, the greatest population declines have been seen in the younger age categories, and the Exploits Valley is no different. Table 2 shows that every age grouping up to age 54 is declining, but the population over age 55 is increasing and at significant rates. This will have tremendous impact on, and implications for, the health and social services provided in the region, as well as the level and quality of education (both secondary and post-secondary).

**Table 1:
Selected population comparisons**

	2006	2001	1996
Total Population (EV)	26,519 (-9.6%)	26,958 (-8.1%)	29,326
Population (15+)	22,430 (-5.1%)		23,630
Labour Force (15-64)	18,160 (-11.2%)		20,445

(figure in brackets represents % change from 1996)

**Table 2:
Population change 1996-2006 by Select Age groupings**

	2006	1996	% change
Total	26520	29326	-9.57
0-4	1140	1465	-22.18
5-14	2805	4030	-30.40
15-19	1685	2445	-31.08
20-24	1375	2045	-32.76
25-54	11180	13095	-14.62
55-64	3890	2860	36.01
65-74	2485	2030	22.41
75+	1815	1365	32.97

The Exploits Valley has 19 communities, 12 of which are incorporated and seven smaller, unincorporated areas. Grand Falls-Windsor has just over half the population of the entire region and is the service centre for the region with a catchment area of about 80,000 in central Newfoundland. Other larger towns in the region are Bishop's Falls and Botwood each with populations of well over 3,000. All other communities have populations of less than 1,000.

While the region's overall population declined by 1.6%, there were some communities that experienced growth. Grand Falls-Windsor grew by 1.6% (118 people). The four unincorporated census subdivisions (Buchans Junction, Wooddale, Red Cliff and Cottrell's Cove – Fortune Harbour) grew very slightly. And Norris Arm experienced a growth of 8.1%, or 68 individuals.

From a Rural Secretariat perspective the picture is even bleaker. From 1991 to 2006 the population of zone 5 declined by 19.3%; from 2006 to 2021 it is projected to decline by another 9.1%. Still, these numbers are not as bad as most other Rural Secretariat regions, worse only than the Corner Brook, Labrador and Avalon (St John's) regions.

LABOUR FORCE PROFILE

Up-to-date labour force information for the Exploits Valley is difficult to find. Labour force information from the 2006 census will not be released until spring 2008, and provincial labour force information is released based on Rural Secretariat region, which includes zones 11-13.

Of the total population of the Exploits region (26,519), 11,180 or 42.2% are between the ages of 25 and 54. The Province has narrowed the working population to 25-54 because "youth between the ages of 15 and 24 are generally still in school and not readily available for work". Also, the average retirement age for workers in the province is 59 years and is not expected to increase dramatically.

The decline in the working age population since 1991 has been much slower than that of the total population. However, the rate of decline in the working age population is expected to increase dramatically in the next fifteen years as baby boomers retire and fewer young people enter the labour market. In this Rural Secretariat region, the decline in the working age population was 12.3% between 1991 and 2006; it is projected to be 19.3% from 2006 to 2021. (For the entire province, the decline was 3.1% from 1991 to 2006, but is projected to be 14.6% from 2006 to 2021.)

Most labour force indicators for the Rural Secretariat region are worse than the provincial average – participation rate, employment rate, and unemployment rate in particular (see Table 3). In 2006 the unemployment rate for central and the northeast coast was 19.0%, compared to a provincial rate of 14.8% (historically the regional unemployment rate is higher than that of the province). However the unemployment rate for Grand Falls-Windsor is generally lower than the provincial rate.

This region has a greater percentage of employment in the primary industries, processing and manufacturing, and trades, transport and equipment operators than the provincial averages. But the percentage of workers in management, business and finance, applied sciences, and government (health and education) is less than the provincial standard.

By gender, the largest occupation for females is sales and service followed by business and finance, while for males it is trades and transport, followed by primary industries.

**Table 3:
Selected Indicators by Gender, 2001**

Labour Market Indicator	Females GFW-BV- HB	Males GFW- BV-HB	Females (Province)	Males (Province)
Total Population	25,580	25,135	258,995	249,080
Labour Force status (Pop. 15+)				
Employed	7,120	8,065	91,320	97,500
Participation rate (%)	45.6%	60.3%	52.3%	63.2%
Employment rate (%)	33.3%	39.0%	42.4%	47.9%
Unemployment rate (%)	27.0%	35.3%	19.1%	24.2%
Distribution of Workers by Occupation (2001)	9,750	12,465	112,855	128,640
Management	5.8%	6.7%	6.4%	9.2%
Business, finance & administration	15.9%	5.1%	21.4%	6.5%
Natural & applied sciences	1.0%	4.5%	1.9%	7.6%
Health	8.8%	2.1%	9.5%	2.3%
Social science, education, government service & religion	9.1%	5.4%	9.6%	5.5%
Art, recreation, culture & sport	1.9%	0.7%	2.4%	1.5%
Sales & service	36.8%	12.6%	34.3%	16.0%
Trades, transport & equipment operators	1.9%	0.7%	2.4%	1.5%
Primary industry	5.7%	18.0%	2.9%	11.6%
Manufacturing, processing & utilities	7.3%	8.6%	5.5%	6.9%
Other / N/A	5.4%	4.7%	4.4%	3.3%
Highest Level of Education (Pop. 15+)				
< High School	52.0%	50.8%	42.6%	42.1%
High School dip.	10.9%	8.9%	9.8%	9.0%
Some post-sec.	7.7%	7.3%	9.4%	9.0%
Post-secondary certificate or dip.	23.8%	27.1%	28.7%	30.4%
University degree	5.5%	5.8%	9.6%	9.5%

In 2004 there were 1,615 businesses in the region. Of these approximately 66.4% have less than five employees, an indication of the importance of small business to the region.

LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS

In the spring of 2007, the Service Canada office in Grand Falls-Windsor approached the EVEDC to get a better understanding of the trends affecting the labour market in the Exploits region. Service Canada asked the EVEDC to undertake a research project to determine the factors impacting labour market demand and supply. A Coordinator was

hired “to determine the existing skill sets of residents in order to identify labour force gaps. This information will be used to develop a regional strategy to address these areas of weakness as part of the Strategic Economic Plan of the EVEDC” (project proposal).

The project had two objectives:

- a) To identify the demands of the labour market/force in the Exploits Valley region, both current and future, and determine the skill sets of the residents of the region in order to identify labour force gaps.
- b) To gather information that will be part of a labour market/force strategic plan for the Exploits Valley region. This strategic plan will be incorporated in the EVEDC’s three-year Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and will allow the EVEDC to be proactive in labour market/force matters.

It is anticipated that this Plan will be completed by October 1st 2008 and its recommendations will be included in the Strategic Plan of the EVEDC. Included in this Plan will be updated statistics and labour force information, as well as results of surveys of employers and employees undertaken during 2008. The Plan will profile human resources, labour markets, and actions that will improve the social and economic climate of the region.

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Exploits region is at the geographic centre of the island part of the province, equidistant from Port-aux-Basques in the west and St John’s in the east. The Town of Grand Falls-Windsor is strategically located in the centre of the region, on the Trans Canada Highway and no more than 1 hours drive from any community in the region. Grand Falls-Windsor is approximately one hour from the Gander International Airport.

Botwood is the major shipping port for the region with minerals and paper being the major exports. The port infrastructure is in need of major upgrading (and is addressed elsewhere).

The region is well served by communications infrastructure. The region has cable television, the Steele Communications radio stations (VOCM and K-Rock), a regional newspaper and advanced telecommunications infrastructure. High speed Internet is available throughout the region, having been installed as part of the federal BRAND Initiative in 2004.

CONTEXT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The environmental scan provides background and context for the EVEDC’s approach to regional economic development. The first and most obvious point is the prominence within the region of one municipality, both in terms of population and economic impact. Related to this are the geographic location of this regional centre and the ease of commuting for workers from the surrounding communities. A third factor is the dependence on the service economy, which, while not unlike the rest of the province,

does point out the importance of investing in industry for economic development. Finally, there are the differences in the sub-regional economies that provide both challenges and opportunities for diversified economic development.

The following are the guiding principles for the EVEDC=s approach to regional economic development:

- diversification of the economy
- focus on the competitive advantages of each sub-region
- support for the private sector and creating the conditions for private investment
- focus on small business enterprises and innovation
- benefits to any part of the region benefit the region as a whole.

MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

1. VISION

The Vision of the Exploits Valley Economic Development Corporation is of cooperative communities and individuals with a good quality of life, committed to self-reliance and a positive attitude, leading to the growth of a strong climate for long-term business and employment opportunities.

2. MANDATE

The Exploits Valley Economic Development Corporation will continue to undertake, implement and complete appropriate initiatives as identified in our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Integrated Business Plans (IBP). The Board will partner with the appropriate stakeholders: industry, community, residents, development associations, governments (municipal, provincial and federal), educational institutions, volunteers and others (as appropriate). Depending on the initiative undertaken, the Board will provide support in several other capacities (core functions).

1. Develop and coordinate the implementation of a strategic economic plan (SEP) in the zone supported by an integrated business plan.
2. Develop a strong partnership with municipalities in the zone that incorporates the strategies and priorities of municipalities in the economic planning process.
3. Develop partnerships in planning and implementation with Chambers of Commerce, Industry Associations, labour organizations, post secondary institutions, CBDC's and other zones that advance and support the economic and entrepreneurial environment of the zone.
4. Undertake capacity building and provide support to stakeholders to strengthen the economic environment of the zone.
5. Coordinate and facilitate linkages with federal/provincial/municipal government departments and agencies in support of the strategic economic plan.

The overall objective of these initiatives is to strengthen the economic environment of the zone.

3. BOARD STRUCTURE

Membership in the Corporation is open to any group or business that in the opinion of the Board of Directors is in a position to influence economic development in the region. Examples of membership groups include municipalities, local service districts, rural development associations, Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, business development corporations, and other groups practicing regional economic development.

The Board consists of sixteen members made up as follows (as of October 1st 2008):

Municipal representatives	(6)
- Town of Grand Falls-Windsor	
- Town of Bishop's Falls	
- Town of Botwood	
- Eastern sub-zone	(2)
- Western sub-zone	
Chamber of Commerce	(1)
RDA's	(2)
- Exploits Valley Development Association	
- Red Indian Lake Development Association	
Development Corp's	(2)
- Buchans Development Corporation	
- Central Business Development Corporation	
Education	(1)
Youth	(1)
Tourism (EVTA)	(1)
Members-at-large	(2)
TOTAL	(16)

Resource People	(4)
- Scott Dawe, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	
- Don Mercer, Service Canada	
- Don Frampton, Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development	
- Ellen Foley, Human Resources, Labour & Employment	

Each municipality with a population over 3000 automatically receives a representative on the Board of Directors (Grand Falls-Windsor, Bishop's Falls and Botwood). There are two municipal representatives elected from among the municipalities in the Eastern sub-region (north-east of Bishop's Falls), and one municipal representative elected from the Western sub-region (municipalities west of Grand Falls-Windsor).

Elections are for two-year terms and are staggered so that there are elections each year for approximately half the board. If a vacancy occurs and there is less than 6 months remaining in the term, the seat shall remain vacant until the next AGM.

New members are recruited through public awareness initiatives such as the e-newsletter, forums, workshops and presentations to organizations. New board members receive an orientation package prepared by staff. In 2005 the orientation process was reviewed and a new package and procedure was adopted. Board retreats are held twice a year (fall and spring) to review progress on the annual work plan and to make any necessary adjustments.

At the 2007 AGM the EVEDC adopted an amendment to the Policy manual limiting the number of consecutive terms any individual may serve on the Board. A Board member can now serve two consecutive two-year terms, and shall then be required to take a leave

from the Board. At the 2008 AGM the Board will consider whether to make the CCDC a full voting member as opposed to a resource group.

(A copy of the Board's Policies & Procedures manual is attached in Appendix A.)

4. COMMITTEES

The EVEDC has traditionally had committees for each sector in which the corporation is involved including Tourism (with separate Western zone and Coastal tourism sub-committees), Education, Youth & IT; Mining & Natural Resources; Manufacturing; Municipalities; Transportation / Botwood Port; and Human Resources, as well as separate committees for Purchasing and Policy & Procedures.

For 2008 the EVEDC is restructuring its committees to recognize the time constraints of Board members. Tourism, Natural Resources, Manufacturing, and Municipalities will remain as they are. Because of the nature of its mandate and the variety of issues on its agenda, the former Education, Youth & I.T. committee will be split into two separate committees – one for Education & Youth, and a new Business Opportunities committee – both with new mandates. Human Resources and Policy & Procedures will be combined into one committee, for a new total of seven sub-committees.

The Executive will continue to be responsible for Purchasing and all financial and budgetary issues. Several committees related to the Board such as the Heritage Council, the Port Corporation, and the Flying Boat Festival committee will continue to bring reports to regular Board meetings through the appropriate sub-committee.

The committees will meet monthly to review progress in their sector of the work plan and to prepare a report for the board's regular monthly meeting. Committees are encouraged to have additional representation from the region in addition to board members. Recognizing the other responsibilities of Board members (such as Council meetings, EVTA, development associations, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and other activities), each Board member will be asked to participate on two of the committees, providing each committee with 4-7 members. The Chair will determine the committee assignments.

(A copy of the board's Committee structure is attached in Appendix B.)

5. STAFF

The EVEDC currently has an Executive Director, Administrative Assistant and Economic Development Officer that are included in the Work Plan and funded by ACOA and DITRD. A Receptionist / Communications Clerk is funded from revenue generated through the sub-let of space in the Economic Development Center. Temporary staff has included the Labour Market Analyst (funded by Service Canada under LMP), and the Youth Development Officer (funded by Service Canada under JCP).

In keeping with the changing priorities of the Corporation, in August 2007 the EVEDC changed the job description of the EDO to become more generalist for a variety of sectors and activities within the SEP. The Executive Director and EDO will divide the Work Plan and committee responsibilities according to their individual strengths and experience. It is anticipated that the work will be seamless and interchangeable – staff will be familiar with all initiatives in the Work Plan – so that should one staff person be unavailable another will be able to “pick up the ball” and continue the work.

(Job descriptions for all positions are attached in Appendix C.)

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Throughout its eleven-year existence, the Exploits Valley Economic Development Corporation has prided itself on its consultative approach to strategic planning. Whether developing a new three-year SEP, or compiling annual Work Plan updates, the EVEDC has always undertaken a variety of consultations with its stakeholders – municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, sector groups, and others.

In developing the new SEP for 2008-2011, the EVEDC held several consultation sessions with municipalities, sector groups and other stakeholders. The first of these sessions was done with *municipalities* through a series of three community consultations; the first in Badger for the western sub-zone, the second in Grand Falls-Windsor, and the third in Point Leamington for the eastern sub-zone (including Bishop’s Falls). (A summary of all consultation sessions is included in Appendix E.)

In general the community representatives support the work of the Corporation. The feedback about the Visitor Intercept Master Plan (“signage strategy”) was especially positive, as communities expressed willingness to participate with financial and human resources and with equipment and in-kind. During the consultations several other opportunities and issues were discussed:

- There is a need for Supplier Development sessions for mining companies and for companies such as Abitibi, Newfoundland Power, and others.
- The potential for post-secondary education, and for training in technical skills, is not being utilized.
- Potential exists for an RV Park and museum development in Badger.
- Work on the Western sub-zone tourism developments, in particular the snowmobile trails, needs to get moving.
- The work of the regional Heritage Council was commended.
- The EVEDC should continue to work on the Ocean View Park tram.
- The region should have a greater presence from the provincial Mining division, and the EVEDC was encouraged to continue to work toward securing a Mining specialist position in Grand Falls-Windsor.
- Concerns still exist about the future of Abitibi-Bowater, and the Corporation was encouraged to work with the mill to improve their long-term stability.
- The region does not have much awareness among government officials in St. John’s; the EVEDC was encouraged to work with other local groups (such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor) who are trying to address this concern.
- The Bishop’s Falls SEP has several initiatives that complement the work of the EVEDC, and the Corporation should work closely to help the Town of Bishop’s Falls implement its plan.
- The region has a list of infrastructure requirements, from road improvements to marinas and docks that the Corporation can assist in the lobby effort.

The second set of consultations was done with *tourism operators in the Western sub-zone* to discuss implementation of the Western Zone tourism strategy. A session was held in February 2008 at which operators and government officials discussed tourism development requirements of that part of the region. The EVEDC has incorporated that feedback into this SEP. (Notes from that session are attached in the Appendix.)

The third consultation was a *Manufacturing roundtable* held in May 2008. The session was convened to get feedback from the manufacturing sector on action items that the EVEDC could include in its SEP. The participants were so pleased with the quality of the discussion they agreed to make the roundtable a regular quarterly occurrence and rotate the session among various manufacturers throughout the region. (The notes of this session are also attached.)

The fourth consultation session was an *Agriculture roundtable* that was held in April 2007. As with the Manufacturing roundtable, this session was organized to gather input from Agriculture producers and stakeholders on action items for the EVEDC SEP. Many of the suggestions from that session were included in the 2007-08 Work Plan, and where applicable have been carried over to this new SEP.

On November 22-23, 2007 the Board and the *Harris Center of MUN held a workshop* to “identify future opportunities within the Zone in which Memorial University could become involved”. The workshop identified 42 opportunities, and through two follow-up sessions (March 3rd and May 20th, 2008) the initiatives were prioritized and identified as realistic and achievable for inclusion in the Board’s SEP. The entire Workshop report is available at

http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/Regional_Workshops/exploits_valley_rw/EV_Regional_Workshop_Report.pdf.

The Board also held its *annual fall retreat* in Buchans at which time priorities were discussed and evaluated. This session included several “break-out” sessions (done by sector sub-committee) in which the Board members discussed priorities and action items for each sector. The sub-committees discussed their Terms of Reference, the Work Plan for the Committee and whether it was realistic and achievable, the make-up of the committee and there was anyone who should be added to the committee, and the committee’s meeting schedule.

At the Board’s *spring planning retreat* (held at the Mount Peyton Hotel in Grand Falls-Windsor on June 16th), the Board discussed the progress on the Work Plan as well as whether any priorities should be adjusted, or de-emphasized entirely. The Board agreed to some fine-tuning, and agreed to a timetable for adopting the new SEP in the fall.

SECTORS OF OPPORTUNITY / WORK PLAN

In the past, priority sectors identified by the Board included Tourism, Heritage & Culture, Mining & Dimension Stone, Transportation, Information Technology, Fisheries, Manufacturing and Agriculture. Some of these sectors received more attention than others, while others had very little activity (Fisheries, Manufacturing) or involved activities of a support nature (IT, Agriculture).

For the Strategic Economic Plan 2008-2011 the priorities have shifted. Throughout the past 12-18 months the Board and staff held extensive planning sessions retreats, and meetings with stakeholder groups – municipalities, government agencies, provincial and regional bodies, and others – and received valuable feedback and input into the priorities of the region (see previous section). In addition, the REDB's have heard that the priorities of the funding partners have shifted and that money for traditional priority sectors, such as tourism, is no longer as available as it once was. The focus has been shifted to sectors that have greater job creation potential.

Tourism, Culture & Heritage will remain important for the Board because work is still ongoing in this sector. The emphasis in Tourism will be on three key initiatives – completion of the western zone strategy, implementation of the signage strategy, and follow-up on opportunities arising from the 2007 Flying Boat Festival International. The focus in the Heritage sector will be on the implementation of recommendations from the regional archaeology strategy and the continuation of the work of the Exploits Heritage Council.

Ongoing work in other sectors will continue.

- For 2008-09 the Board will be undertaking the e-commerce initiative that is designed to improve the commercial uptake of the Broadband network.
- The divestiture of the Port of Botwood will continue to be the focus of the Transportation sector, particularly as the Exploits Valley Port Corporation receives positive word about its application process. The Corporation anticipates work to “ramp up” on this initiative before the end of 2008.
- The Mining sector continues to expand in the central region. With the start of production at the Duck Pond mine and word of a potential mine for Messina Minerals by 2010, the EVEDC is prepared for explosive growth in this sector.
- In Education & Youth, the EVEDC will continue to work with the Central Newfoundland Post-secondary committee to increase the availability of post-secondary course offerings in the region. In 2009 the Corporation will complete the Youth Attraction and Retention strategy for the region, while providing input into the provincial strategy. The EVEDC will also facilitate the formation of the first Exploits Valley Youth Council.
- In Manufacturing, the Corporation plans to piggyback on work being done by the Provincial Manufacturers' Association and the Province's manufacturing sector champion located in Grand Falls-Windsor to revitalize the regional Manufacturing committee and form a Manufacturing Roundtable / Co-operative

with private sector representation to facilitate partnership opportunities for local firms.

However, the most significant change in the EVEDC work plan will continue to revolve around the Natural Resources sector, most notably in Agriculture. Tremendous opportunities exist in this region for Agriculture, and the Board has begun to work closely with groups such as the Federation of Agriculture and the Blueberry Co-operative to capitalize on these opportunities. Our stakeholders have identified Agriculture as the sector with the greatest potential for this region, and the Board will be working to maximize that potential.

An overview of the relevant sector opportunities follows.

NATURAL RESOURCES / AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Opportunity: To identify opportunities to expand the growth of the regional Agriculture sector.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW / RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

The Agriculture industry in Atlantic Canada has been growing by leaps and bounds. In 2005 the agriculture and agri-foods industry generated farm cash receipts of \$1,340 million and \$922 million in exports. Based on the success of companies such as McCain Foods, Cavendish Farms and Oxford Frozen Foods, exports of frozen foods increased by 90% between 1996 and 2005.

Atlantic Canada is home to the world's largest fruit farm, the world's largest producer of frozen French fries, the world's largest supplier of frozen wild blueberries, and North America's largest carrot producer, among other interesting facts. The region boasts the lowest business cost environment within the G7, excellent transportation infrastructure, advanced research facilities, a skilled and capable work force, and a strategic location for exporting including year-round transportation links to major international markets. Agriculture is the region's fifth-largest employer (approximately 18,000 people) and includes over 530 processing plants.

In Newfoundland & Labrador the industry exhibits tremendous potential that has yet to be realized. The total number of farms in the province declined from 643 in 2001 to 558 in 2006, while the number of operators also declined over the same period (from 780 to 715). Most farm types declined, with the exceptions being potato, fruit and tree-nut, nursery and tree production and hay farming. Meanwhile farmers were getting older; the median age went from 50 in 2001 to 53 in 2006. The only age cohort that showed an increase was the "55 and older" while farmers under 35 decreased by 18.2% and from 35-54 decreased by 20.6%.

The provincial agriculture industry generates approximately \$500 million in sales at the farm and processing levels combined. The industry employs over 6200 people, and every acre of farmland in this province equates to 4.5 work-weeks. The industry features some significant strengths in the dairy, egg, chicken, vegetable, small fruit, and fur sectors with relevant opportunities for the Exploits region. Specific local opportunities exist in dairy (secondary processing and industrial milk), fur (including feed kitchens), Life sciences (including nutraceuticals and bio-fuels), small fruits (such as blueberries and cranberries), Vegetables, Meat production and Agri-tourism.

GAP ANALYSIS

On a provincial scale, awareness of and support for the agriculture industry has been slow in coming. But in 2008 the situation appears to be improving. In the 2007 and 2008 Budgets, the Provincial Government enacted a lending program for farmers and allocated investments for the cranberry industry and for research & development. Money has also been made available to address the impact of Aleutian disease mitigation in the fur industry.

Additional allocations were made in the 2008 budget for the ongoing Agriculture and Agri-foods Development Fund, the Provincial Agri-foods Assistance Program (PAAP), and the provincial cost-sharing contribution to the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF). Funding is also available through the variety of existing government programs in other departments, such as Business, Innovation & Trade, and through federal sources such as ACOA, Agriculture & Agri-foods Canada, and the federal co-operative secretariat.

The Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Agriculture (NLFA) is excited about the potential for the development of the sector, based on the level of funding support available. However they have also identified several provincial policy initiatives that must be addressed in order for this potential to be realized. These include policies around agriculture land use planning, food security, food sustainability, agriculture health and wellness products, environmental stewardship, and the link between rural economic development and agriculture.

In assessing the potential for Agriculture in the Exploits Valley, the EVEDC held an Agriculture Roundtable of local producers and stakeholders to gather feedback and identify gaps that the Corporation could address. As part of the Roundtable the EVEDC conducted a SWOT analysis.

The collective feedback to the SWOT analysis on the Agriculture sector was that the region had significant strengths in this sector. There is substantial leadership and experience vested in local farmers and government officials. The sector is well-organized locally, with some active younger farmers entering the industry. The quality of the land base is exceptional, and Wooddale is particularly strong for its farms, land and research capabilities. The infrastructure supporting the mink industry is strong, particularly the feed kitchen. And the presence of the College of the North Atlantic and their delivery of training programs helps address a provincial weakness.

The weaknesses identified by the groups were mostly of a provincial nature. The aging of farmers (a provincial demographic across all sectors); land use issues such as lack of land availability, reliance on and dominance by one private user (in this case Abitibi) and problems associated with the timber exchange policy; lack of available training programs and human resources; and poor provincial leadership in policy areas. More localized weaknesses included the perception that farmers are “affluent”, the tendency to focus on negative issues (such as the Peter’s River watershed) and the loss of the Farmer’s Co-op and the regional Agriculture office in Bishop’s Falls.

There were numerous opportunities identified by all three groups, particularly from the Federation of Agriculture’s perspective. These have been categorized as follows:

- 1) Land inventory – It was suggested that the EVEDC pursue a cross-zonal land use inventory – similar to the hardwood inventory project – to identify and prioritize land for agricultural (and other) uses.
- 2) Mink – Existing infrastructure and tremendous potential in international markets.

- 3) Life sciences – Using the experience of people such as Dr. Michael Bland and Dick Oram, and the research capability of Wooddale, it was felt that life sciences and nutraceuticals presented tremendous opportunities for this region.
- 4) Promotion – The EVEDC should take an active role in promoting the availability of funding programs (federal and provincial), training opportunities, and emerging market potential. Career Fairs, promotion in high schools and colleges, and awareness in newsletters and other media are some activities that were also suggested.

Constraints or challenges for the provincial and local agriculture industry include public perception and lack of awareness of the value and potential in agriculture; low government priority for investment; lack of provincial R&D program and agri-food policy; poor agriculture land use policy; few skills development programs to support agriculture education infrastructure; and a lack of red meat infrastructure (slaughterhouses, inspection).

In general, the feedback from local producers supported that of the NLFA, and provided a strong basis for the EVEDC's Agriculture Action Plan.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local agriculture producers / Agriculture Roundtable, College of the North Atlantic, Wooddale, Abitibi Bowater, other REDB's, NLFA, Blueberry Co-operative, provincial Departments of Natural Resources, Business, Innovation, Trade & Rural Development, and Government Services, ACOA, federal Agriculture & Agri-foods Canada, the federal co-operative secretariat.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

Based on the feedback gathered it was felt that the EVEDC's role in the agriculture sector should include the following:

- a) Work to address the land issues
- b) Lobby the provincial government on appropriate policy issues
- c) Promotion and education of the local Agriculture industry
- d) Assist industry in accessing funding
- e) Support for the local industry
 - i. Facilitate linkages between industry and government
 - ii. Identify resource supports for industry

In addition, linkages with the Federation of Agriculture should be maintained and strengthened, and the participants in the Agriculture roundtable expressed interest in continuing on an ad hoc basis.

Specifically, the EVEDC Agriculture Action Plan will consist of the following:

1. Work with other REDB's to have the Provincial Government create a Provincial Land Use Planning policy that is complementary to the needs of all stakeholders and user groups (Year 1 & 2).
2. Promote and assist the local agriculture industry in all manners, such as identifying funding sources, supporting succession planning, encouraging new entrants, and identifying appropriate training programs (Years 1-3).
3. Participate in and actively support the work of the provincial Blueberry Co-operative (Years 1-3).
4. Continue to organize the Agriculture Roundtable meetings on an annual basis, with the next one to take place in November 2008 (Years 1-3).
5. Support the development of a cranberry farming operation in Grand Falls-Windsor (Years 1-2). Stephen Newhook has proposed to obtain a lease for 95 acres of Crown Land to establish a cranberry farm to the northwest of Grand Falls-Windsor. The EVEDC will be working with him to develop his business plan, identify capital sources, access funding, and navigate the regulatory regime so his farm becomes operational.

TOURISM, CULTURE & HERITAGE

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF TOURISM SECTOR¹

Provincial Data

- For 2007 (calendar year) there were an estimated 490,100 non-resident visits to NL, a decrease of 1.3% from the previous year. Non-resident tourism expenditures for 2007 were estimated at \$357.4 million – a decrease of 2.2% from the previous year.
- The small decline in non-resident visits can be attributed to a decline in air visitors, which offset the increases in non-resident visitation via automobile and cruise. This can be attributed to a decline in air access and a reduction in the number of low-cost seats. However, it is interesting to note increases in traffic at the airports in Deer Lake (+18%) and Gander (+14%), among others.²
- Marine Atlantic ferry passenger traffic increased by 3% from 2006 with a total of approximately 415,700 passengers. Non-resident auto visitors increased by 5% to approximately 127,500, which represents the first significant upward trend in this mode of transportation since 2002. Increases include visitors from Ontario (+12%), the Maritimes (+3%) and Western Canada (+6%). Ontario and the Maritimes comprised the target market for the 2007 advertising campaign.
- According to Cruise Newfoundland and Labrador, the total number of port calls in 2007 was 102, down slightly from the previous year's 105; however 45 different communities received at least one port call compared to 35 in 2006. Additionally, with larger ships and greater capacity/load factors, unique cruise ship visitors (counted as one regardless of number of ports visited) increased by 16% from the previous year to a total of 28,700.
- Based on a 93% return rate of information, Provincial roofed accommodation occupancy rates increased by 4 points when compared to 2006. Central region in particular reported an increase of 2 points. The occupancy rate in Central was 39.4% for 2007, up 2.4% from the previous year, and the average daily rate in 2007 was \$84.41, up 5.1% from 2006.
- Requests to the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation for travel guides and related information increased by 27% from the previous year, and visits to the newly designed NL Tourism website increased by 88% when compared to 2006.
- Looking forward, there are several challenges facing the tourism sector, most of which are not unique to NL. Among these factors are: increased gas prices, higher Canadian dollar, increased airfare and ferry costs, the elimination of the visitor GST/HST rebate, Canada Border Service regulations, and a weakening US economy. Despite these challenges, the Conference Board of Canada forecasts tourism growth for NL to be 2.1% in 2008. This is based on a healthy provincial economy, increases in domestic travel in Canada, and increasing awareness of NL as a unique destination for travellers (Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2008).

¹ Please note that all statistics (excluding regional site statistics) have been sourced from: Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (2008). "Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation Backgrounder Year-End Provincial Tourism Performance 2007 and Early Tourism Outlook 2008". Accessed July 30, 2008 from:

<http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/publications/2007/2007%20Provincial%20Tourism%20Performance.pdf>

² These two airports have been highlighted due to their relative close proximity to communities in Zone 12.

Regional Data: Zone 12

Venue	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change ³
Mary March Museum	7102	8965	8100	8061	7993	6221	6402	+2.9%
Logger's Life Museum	2882	3486	4191	4511	3996	3215	3237	+0.7%
N.D. Junction V.I.C.	10936	12670	11611	9711	9011	8762	10,506	+13.0%
Exploits Valley V.I.C.	8835	10012	9509	9138	7700	7600	7452	-1.9%
A.N.D. Company Dinner Theatre	1244	1600	2400	2116	2637	2425	4386 ⁴	+80.8% ⁵
Buchans Miners Museum	700	1300	389	1000	200	200	225 ⁶	+12.5%
Beothuk Village	2500	3000	2750	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Salmonid Interpretation Centre	29,000	28,700	31,000	24,000	20,661	19,008	17,122	-10.0%
Sanger Memorial RV Park	N/A	2261 Site Nights	2288 Site Nights	2547 Site Nights	2565 Site Nights	2706 Site Nights	2497 Site Nights	-7.0%
Norris Arm Heritage	1500	1000	700	700	765	900	960	+6.7%
Abitibi Mill Tours	N/A	331	422	400	589	300		
Glovers Hr. Giant Squid	402 ⁷	922	3000	3000	1705	1825		
Oceanview Park	N/A	N/A	5200	5720	3350	3100	5000	+61.3%
Botwood Heritage Centre	4980	6986	7617	7979	8675	8500	10,169 ⁸	+19.6% ⁹
Jack Ward Memorial General Store	N/A	N/A	N/A	1800	3240	2900	1800	-37.9%
Indian Point, Millertown	N/A	N/A	N/A	200	800	Data un-available	310 ¹⁰	N/A

³ Indicates the percentage change from the 2006 season to 2007.

⁴ Total represents attendance by meals served. In 2007, a second evening show was added, with attendance of 912 patrons. Additionally, the main stage show and lunchtime show sold exceptionally well in the 2007 season, with total attendance of 2796 and 678, respectively.

⁵ Large increase is likely due to the inclusion of an additional, new show as well as exceptional sales for the other two shows.

⁶ Total number of people who signed the guestbook at the museum. Exact number of visitors is unknown, but estimated to be 10-15% higher.

⁷ Half of season.

⁸ This represents total number of visitors to the Botwood Heritage Centre and the newly opened Botwood Flying Boat Museum which was opened in August, 2007.

⁹ Increase takes into account the opening of the new Flying Boat Museum in August, 2007 (statistics for new museum and existing Heritage Center are combined), and also the first annual Flying Boat Festival International.

Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Centre	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	2000 ¹¹	138		
Bishop's Falls Rail Station Heritage Museum	N/A	N/A	N/A	1004	507	365	159	-54.7%
Peterview Heritage Centre	200	129	212	131	169	253	101 ¹²	-60.0%
Point Leamington Heritage Interpretation	N/A	N/A	700	600	450	700	754	+7.7%

¹⁰ Total number of people who signed the guestbook at the site as site was un-staffed. Exact number of visitors is unknown.

¹¹ Year of the 2005 Grand Falls-Windsor Centennial Celebration for the town of Grand Falls-Windsor.

¹² Total number of people who signed the guestbook at the centre.

TOURISM OPPORTUNITY #1: Implement the Regional Tourism Visitor Interception Master Plan developed by TRACT Consulting.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

With funding from ACOA and the Provincial Government, TRACT Consulting was hired to create a Regional Tourism Visitor Interception Master Plan. The final report was delivered to the Board in March 2007 and results have been communicated to municipalities and various stakeholders.

In May 2007, the EVEDC submitted funding applications to ACOA and the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural development to implement the Phase I recommendations from the Visitor Interception Plan. This application was subsequently administratively closed due to a provincial signage review.

GAP ANALYSIS

Areas of the province visited by non-residents are greatly influenced by how visitors travel here (air versus auto). In 2004, the Exit Survey showed 9% (7% in 1997) of non-resident travel parties surveyed visited the Exploits Economic Zone. From this survey sample, 18% of non-resident parties that arrived by auto also visited Exploits, while 5% of those that arrived by air also visited Exploits. Clearly, the Exploits region is highly dependant on auto traffic to maintain its share of the provincial tourism market. Therefore an effective vehicle intercept and signage strategy is crucial in order to maintain and/or increase the tourism market share.

The Exploits region has not been included in previous efforts by the Department of Tourism to identify a touring theme. In the 1990's the Department enlisted a consultant to identify themed touring routes for all regions of the Province; at the time the Exploits Valley Tourism Association was in the midst of creating and adopting a regional tourism marketing strategy – "Exploits Wild and Free" – and asked the Department to include this strategy in the provincial plan at a later date. However the Department felt this marketing strategy did not provide an appropriate image or logo (such as "Viking Trail" or "Kittiwake Coast") and the region has been off the tourism map (literally and figuratively).

The Visitor Interception plan is therefore very important for the EVEDC. The creation of a consistent theme through the usage of similar imagery throughout the region is essential to identifying the Exploits Valley as a tourism destination. As such, efforts to implement the strategy will likely have a positive impact on visitor interception. For instance, in 2003 signage was erected for eight attractions as part of the Exploits Coastal Tourism Development Projects. While an immediate positive impact on tourism visitation in the Exploits Coastal Region was noted, this work was done in the absence of a comprehensive regional strategy such as the one proposed by TRACT Consulting.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Key partners in the implementation of the Visitor Interception model include: municipalities, tourist attractions/destinations, businesses, development associations, Exploits River Management Association (ERMA), ACOA, Service Canada, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Department of Works, Services and Transportation, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

1. Continue to express interest in being selected as a pilot region for the implementation of the new provincial signage model (ongoing).
2. Partner with municipalities and attractions to implement components of strategy not subject to provincial jurisdiction (i.e., community welcome signs, off-site directional route markers within municipal boundaries, etc.) (Year 1-3).
3. Work with partners to secure funding to implement components of strategy that are not subject to provincial jurisdiction (Year 1).
4. Continue to promote the Visitor Interception Strategy and encourage the use of recommended imagery, etc. among organizations and the business community and in regional marketing initiatives (ongoing).

TOURISM OPPORTUNITY #2: Implement recommendations in the Western Zone Tourism Development Strategy.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

In 2004, the EVEDC prepared a tourism destination strategy for the Western Sub-Zone¹³ of Zone 12. Consultations were conducted with municipal councils, stakeholder groups and the general public and the resulting tourism destination strategy, “Exploits Wilderness Drive,” was adopted in March of 2006. This strategy matched existing adventure tourism products with adventure tourism sector markets where growth potential was identified. Sectors identified in the strategy for development included: canoeing and kayaking on the Exploits River and Red Indian Lake, snowmobile and winter tourism development, trail development for ATVs, museum development, community hiking and walking trail development, remote camping development, recreational fishing development and recreational boating development.

In February 2008, a meeting/consultation session was held in Buchans. Those in attendance included operators, representatives from municipalities, development associations and the EVEDC, and representatives from federal and provincial funding partners. The consensus from this session was that the sub-zone needs further marketing/branding to encourage visitation, and that this region of the province offers a valuable outdoor/adventure tourism product, particularly to those who are interested in outdoor activities such as snowmobiling. Access to the Buchans Plateau (facilitated by construction of two small bridges and some trail development) would enable an extension of the ski-doo season for at least one month after ski dooing is finished everywhere else in the province.

GAP ANALYSIS

Much of the recent research in tourist preferences indicates that there is an increasing interest in “experiential tourism” as opposed to visiting static displays such as museums. Activities associated with experiential tourism may include adventure and/or outdoor tourism. While museums and heritage centers are important assets in the preservation of local history and may serve as valuable complements to experiential activities, they are not the *primary* drivers that entice a tourist to visit/stay in a particular region. This trend is reflected in many of the activities that are currently supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

Developing and promoting an *experience* is an approach that is aligned with the amenities of the Western Sub-Zone. This region is home to numerous first-class operators, is surrounded by scenic country and wildlife and is strategically located at the start of the long-range mountains. With these amenities, the EVEDC feels that this region has promising potential to become a centre for adventure tourism in NL. The promotion of these types of initiatives is consistent with the experiential tourism trend.

¹³ Western Sub-Zone includes communities of Badger, Buchans Junction, Millertown and Buchans.

The feedback on this initiative is that any tourism marketing in the Central region will be put on hold pending the formation of the Central Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). The EVEDC will continue to work with the tourism stakeholders, ACOA and the Department of Tourism to get this organization “off the ground”.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Strategic partners for this initiative include local tourism operators and business owners, development associations, municipalities and local service districts, snowmobile federations, ACOA, Service Canada, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, and the Central DMO.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

1. Focus on the development and promotion of experiential tourism opportunities in the Western-Sub Zone with the goal of increasing traffic to the region. This goal will be undertaken by the following actions:
 - a. Working with local operators, business owners and municipalities to devise opportunities for packaging and joint marketing (Year 1).
 - b. Working in conjunction with the Central DMO to ensure the Western Sub-Zone is appropriately branded and outdoor/adventure tourism activities are highlighted (Years 1–3; multi-phased implementation).
 - c. Implementation of relevant components of the Visitor Interception Plan to help increase visitation in the Western Sub-Zone (Year 1 and ongoing).
 - d. Organize and schedule a Tourism Packaging workshop for operators in central Newfoundland (Year 1).

2. Work with the municipalities and business communities to implement recommendations from the Snowmobile Trail Development Report from September 2007 (Years 1–3; multi-phased implementation).
 - a. Improve the trail system and construct the necessary bridge infrastructure to provide ski-doo access to the Buchans Plateau (Year 1-2).

TOURISM OPPORTUNITY #3: Follow-up on opportunities arising from the Flying Boat Festival International and the Aviation Tourism Initiatives.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

The “Flying Boat Heritage Tourism Development Committee” was formed with representation from the Towns of Botwood and Norris Arm and the EVEDC in 2003 and subsequently incorporated in 2005 as the “Flying Boat Festival International Committee”. This committee’s objective was to develop the unique Flying Boat Heritage of the region into a tourism product. A three-pronged approach was adopted by the committee that included the re-enactment of the first transatlantic flight, the development of a Flying Boat Festival, and the development of a base of aviation heritage attractions for visitors to enjoy year-round.

In 2003, a consulting team was hired to prepare a strategic plan so that the aviation heritage could be managed into successful tourism products. The strategy listed 53 recommendations including the development of a Flying Boat Museum in Botwood (which was opened in August, 2007), a Fox Moth Museum in Norris Arm and a flying boat docking station (both opened in July 2008), a festival site in Norris Arm, and several aviation exhibits. Other key recommendations included promoting the 70th anniversary re-enactment transatlantic flight and the organization of an international Flying Boat Festival, both of which took place in 2007.

The 2007 Flying Boat Festival International was an overwhelming success. Visitation to both Botwood and Norris Arm increased significantly from previous years and the opening of the Botwood Flying Boat museum and the Norris Arm Fox Moth museum and completion of the Norris Arm festival site were resounding successes. A significant highlight of the 2007 Festival was the visit by a delegation from Ireland, including the Member of Parliament for the Foynes region, the Chair and another member of the Limerick County Council, the Curator of the Foynes Flying Boat museum, two members of the Irish media, and a six-member band from the Foynes area. (The re-enactment flight, an initiative of a separate committee that operated at arms’ length from the Flying Boat Festival committee, did not take place due to mechanical problems.)

In 2008, the Second Annual Flying Boat Festival International was undertaken, again with great success. Additionally, on July 31, 2008 the Fox Moth Heritage Centre (complete with floating docks) was officially opened in Norris Arm.

GAP ANALYSIS

The consulting team cautioned the committee that there were not enough accommodations in the region to host a festival in July and August. The consultants reported only 85 rooms likely to be available in the Exploits region on any given weekend and another 215 rooms in the Lewisporte/Gander area. However accommodations were blocked during the 2007 Festival and many residents opened their

homes and cabins to visitors and relatives. Data has not yet been collected for the 2008 Festival.

Many of the initial priorities for the Aviation Initiatives have been pursued and/or accomplished – i.e., construction of Botwood Flying Boat Museum, Norris Arm Festival Site, Fox Moth Heritage Centre (and floating docks), and the continuation of the annual Flying Boat Festival International. Accordingly, there is a need to build on these successes and re-prioritize initiatives to ensure maximum return on efforts in aviation tourism initiatives.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Strategic partners for these initiatives include: the Flying Boat Festival International Committee, ACOA, Service Canada, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, the Ireland Business Partnerships, the EVTA, the Gander Airport Authority, and partners from Ireland - Foynes Flying Boat Museum, the Limerick County Council, and the Shannon-Foynes Port Authority.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

1. In consultation and partnership with the Flying Boat Festival International Committee, prioritize the remaining initiatives referenced in the “Aviation Tourism Initiatives Final Report” and attempt to implement those that are feasible in order to broaden the base of flying boat aviation attractions, and provide support for the organization of future Flying Boat Festivals (Years 1-3).
2. In conjunction with the Ireland Business Partnerships, research economic opportunities with Ireland, including Irish tourism market (demographics, attractions, amenities, expenditure levels, etc.), contact with an Irish carrier, formation of a partnership with the Gander Airport Authority, development and promotion of local tourism packages, and meetings with government officials including IBP, Department of Tourism, and Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development.

MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing Opportunity: Form a regional Manufacturing Co-operative, with the involvement of the regional Manufacturing sector and the support of the Manufacturing Sector Specialist (DITRD) and the Manufacturing Human Resource field worker (CME)

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

The manufacturing sector was a priority in the EVEDC's early years, with a strategy developed focusing on the potential of Bishop's Falls and a partnership with the Bishop's Falls Development Corporation (BFDC) to implement the Exploits Manufacturing Initiative plan. However when the BFDC folded in 2003 the sector lost its priority and other initiatives in other sectors became more prominent.

Now the EVEDC is re-focusing its efforts in this sector. Efforts have been made by the Manufacturing Sector Specialist of DITRD (co-located in the EVEDC office) to secure sub-contracts from Alberta for local manufacturers in the oil industry. There may be a role for the EVEDC to play in facilitating partnerships to provide this work. There may also be other areas of potential identified through meetings with the Sector Specialist and with the provincial branch of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME).

The CME has entered into a three-year provincial pilot project entitled "Steps For Success: Starting From The Ground Up" in partnership with the Random North Development Association (RNDA). The initiative is funded by the Government of Canada under Human Resources and Social Development Canada's Workplace Skills Initiative and was formally launched on May 25, 2007 in St. John's.

The purpose of the project is to increase Human Resource capacity within the provincial small and medium sized manufacturers and value added processors, test models to develop the skills of current employees and provide a supportive environment for manufacturers to address HR needs. The objective of the project is to increase global competitiveness and improve employee retention for sustainability and growth. Six Human Resources Field Workers have been selected and are working in each region of the province, including the Central region representative from the EVEDC office. In this respect, the project complements the work of the EVEDC in the Labour Market project, outlined elsewhere in this document.

Using the resource people from DITRD and CME / RNDA the EVEDC wants to explore opportunities in the Manufacturing sector, particularly the potential to form a Manufacturing Co-op, similar to those that have been formed in other regions such as Kittiwake and the Northern Peninsula.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF SECTOR

Manufacturing is a \$3.1 billion business in Newfoundland and Labrador directly employing the equivalent of 17,200 people on a full-time basis, province-wide, producing over 10,000 products. Every dollar of manufacturing output in Newfoundland &

Labrador generates \$2.54 in total economic activity (the largest economic multiplier of any sector). For every \$110,000 worth of product made in Newfoundland & Labrador, one full-time job and another one and half spin-off jobs are created.

Provincial manufacturing shipments for the first half (January – June) of 2007 were valued at \$1,392.7 million, up 44.6% from the same period in 2006.

GAP ANALYSIS

The Canadian manufacturing sector is being challenged by the high value of the dollar, by increasing costs of production, and by wave after wave of competition from Asia. Another challenge is the shortage of qualified, skilled labour entering the industry. In the Exploits region, there is a lack of cohesion and coordination among the companies in the manufacturing sector. Both DITRD and the CME have staff located in the EVEDC office that are working to address challenges facing the local manufacturing sector.

On May 20th 2008 the EVEDC hosted a roundtable for Manufacturers located in the Exploits region. The attendees participated in a SWOT analysis of the local and provincial manufacturing sectors. Throughout the far-reaching discussion it became clear that the EVEDC should perform the following roles in support of the sector:

- 1) Information distribution to the local manufacturers (notes from meetings, information from CME, marketing opportunities, program information, etc.)
- 2) Information distribution and linkage between the CME and local manufacturers
- 3) Facilitation of one-on-one meetings between local manufacturers with complementary interests who may be able to do business together or pursue joint marketing opportunities, and would include sessions such as supplier development forum
- 4) Organizing quarterly Manufacturing Roundtable meetings to provide updates on Corporation activities in the manufacturing sector and to provide networking opportunities for local manufacturers; these sessions will be combined with facility visits and tours wherever possible.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local manufacturers / Roundtable members, Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development and Manufacturing Sector Specialist, CME (NL) and Human Resources Field Worker, ACOA, HRL&E, NL Federation of Co-ops, and municipalities.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

1. Manufacturing committee meetings including the DITRD sector specialist and the CME HR field officer (monthly).
2. Roundtable sessions (twice annually) and Co-op formation (Fall 2009).
3. Identification of opportunities for networking, marketing and information exchange, and facilitation of those opportunities (ongoing).

EDUCATION & YOUTH

Education & Youth Opportunity #1: Formation of a Regional Youth Council.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

The EVEDC is one of the few REDB's in the province that does not have a regional youth council. While the Corporation has had a Board member representing Youth since the Board's inception, there has never been a mechanism for electing or selecting that member; usually a young person who met the Board's criteria put his or her name forward and was accepted (or not) by the Board.

From May to October 2008, the EVEDC employed a Regional Youth Development Officer whose responsibilities were as follows:

- Forming a Steering Committee consisting of individuals from the region to provide resources to the YDO in attempting to form the Exploits Regional Youth Council.
- Researching "best practices" of other zonal youth councils for the purpose of forming the Exploits Regional Youth Council.
- Researching sample constitutions and by-laws for the purpose of creating a Policy Manual including a set of by-laws to be adopted by the Youth Council upon formation.
- Formulating an activity plan outlining the focus for the first six months of the Youth Council's existence (November 2008-March 2009).
- Produce monthly progress reports for EVEDC

The Youth Council will be made up of 12 youth representing all 19 communities in the zone from Buchans to Leading Ticks who are between the ages 15 and 30. There will be 3 geographical representatives, 6 High School representatives (each high school in region), 1 Post Secondary Representative, 1 Ex-Officio Member, 1 Past President. From the 12 members the Council will elect an executive including a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. The President will become a member of the Board of Directors for the EVEDC as a Youth representative providing a "voice" on community economic development matters of concern.

GAP ANALYSIS

The creation of the Youth Council would accomplish two goals. First, it would provide a democratic mechanism for the election of a Youth representative to the EVEDC Board. And second, it would provide Youth in the region with a means to have input into regional economic development.

A report from the Canadian CED Network entitled "Youth in Community Economic Development" (September 2006) conducted a review of youth involvement in CED. The report examined where CED was being done and led by young people in their communities across Canada and developed profiles to encourage and engage youth in social and economic development.

The report also identified challenges and barriers to youth participation and recommended three “best practices” for youth inclusion in CED. This information will be incorporated into the regional Youth Attraction & Retention strategy (Opportunity #2) and will be used by the Youth Council to formulate its activities and plans.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners include the FINALLY, the Rural Secretariat (local, provincial and federal), municipalities, local Boys & Girls Clubs, Y2C, high schools, Central-Nova School District, post-secondary institutes, Service Canada, and HRL&E.

ACTION REQUIRED / IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

Year 1 (Commencing November 1, 2008)

- Steering committee meetings leading to formation of Youth Council by November 2008
- Provide updates at EVEDC Board meetings
- Provide input into Youth Retention & Attraction Strategy; adopt strategy when completed
- Implement an Action Plan focusing on getting to know the youth council, the economic zone, and activities identified in Retention & Attraction strategy.
- Volunteer Profile Booklet – Profile organizations that need volunteers in the region; distribute to schools and other Youth organizations.
- Design Youth Council Logo
- Organize Youth Forum 2009 (AGM) – determine theme, promote Youth Council, REDB awareness

Year 2

- Election of Youth Council executive (fall)
- Continue to implement Retention & Attraction Strategy and Action Plan initiatives
- Update action plan and implementation at EVEDC Board meetings
- Profile and promote young entrepreneurs in the region
- Partner with HRL&E (Grand Falls-Windsor) to compile a job search database for use in schools
- Organize Youth Forum 2010 (AGM) – Education & Job Theme

Year 3

- Election of Youth Council executive (fall)
- Continue to implement Retention & Attraction Strategy and Action Plan initiatives
- Update action plan and implementation at EVEDC Board meetings
- Organize Youth Forum 2011 (AGM) – Activities & Services Theme

Education & Youth Opportunity #2: Completion and implementation of a Youth Attraction & Retention strategy.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

In December 2005 the Rural Secretariat of the Government of Canada in partnership with the Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick provincial governments and various federal departments organized an Atlantic Forum on Rural Repopulation in Moncton. The **general objectives** of the dialogue were to enable participants to discuss and examine concrete solutions and avenues for collaboration; think about what their rural communities could become with a successful repopulation strategy; and think of ways their communities can show leadership in this area.

From this Forum came a report entitled “Rural Repopulation in Atlantic Canada”. This report identified some of the challenges facing rural communities when it comes to attracting and keeping young people and it included examples of what some small communities in Atlantic Canada have done to attract and retain young people. This report has served as a stimulus for the EVEDC to research and develop our own Attraction and Retention strategy for young people.

In addition to the Rural Repopulation report, the EVEDC has gathered several other documents and strategies related to youth and economic development. The EVEDC has established, and will be solidifying linkages, to the Association for New Canadians and the provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Department of Human Resources, Labour & Employment). Both of these groups are responsible for implementing the provincial Immigration strategy, and the EVEDC plans to incorporate relevant sections of this strategy into our Youth Attraction & Retention strategy.

In the 2008 budget, the provincial government announced \$1.38 million “to implement a Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy to encourage young people to stay, live and work in the province.” This strategy will be done through the Department of Human Resources, Labour & Employment by staff people who already have familiarity with the EVEDC. The Corporation has already established contacts and a working relationship with the staff responsible for the provincial strategy.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The statistics are daunting – the population of young people in this region is declining, the work force is aging, the number of available workers is shrinking, the average age of our residents is getting older. If something is not done to address these demographic shifts, by 2021 we will be facing a population crisis (according to the Rural Secretariat).

Economic spin-offs from a growing youth population drive the economy. The construction activity in the Exploits region for the past 5-10 years has been driven in part by the activity at the Duck Pond mine; young families of mine workers moving into the region, buying, building or renovating homes and making purchases associated with

young families. However, this activity has been complemented (and even surpassed) by that of “young retired” people moving into the region to be close to amenities such as medical care, shopping and affordable housing.

Continued economic activity is dependant on growth in the youth (18-35) population. But how do we stem the “out-migration” and become a preferred location for youth?

GAP ANALYSIS

There are numerous reports on youth and community economic development and many strategies for attracting and retaining immigrants. The EVEDC currently has nothing on either of these areas, and no mechanism for implementing any strategy. It is our intent to have the Youth Council develop and implement the Youth Attraction and Retention strategy, with direction and guidance from the EVEDC Board and staff.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners include the Office of Immigration & Multiculturalism, Association for New Canadians, local multicultural groups, FINALLY, the Rural Secretariat (local, provincial and federal), the Department of HRL&E, and the regional Youth Council.

ACTION REQUIRED / IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Year 1 (Commencing November 1, 2008)

- Gather input from Youth Council and incorporate into Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy
- Finalize and present Strategy to partner organizations (Youth Council, EVEDC, etc.)
- Identify initiatives for an Action Plan for the Youth Council using the Strategy as a guide; begin implementation
- Update progress at EVEDC Board meetings

Year 2

- Continue to implement Retention and Attraction Strategy and action plan focusing specifically on job creation initiatives
- Profile and promote young entrepreneurs in the region
- Partner with HRL&E Regional Office in Grand Falls-Windsor to help compile a job search database to hand out to schools in the region.
- Update progress at EVEDC Board meetings

Year 3

- Continue to implement Retention and Attraction Strategy and action plan focusing specifically on youth services & activities (i.e. recreation)
- Update progress at EVEDC Board Meetings

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Business Opportunity #1: Promote and facilitate e-business within small businesses in the Exploits Valley.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

In 2003, the Exploits Valley was one of seven projects in Newfoundland & Labrador included in the first round of the federal government's "BRAND" project. "BRAND" – Broadband for Rural and Northern Development – connected all nineteen communities in the region to high speed Internet and included a business plan with targets for residential and commercial high-speed uptake. In the BRAND Business Plan for the region, the targeted uptake for commercial broadband was 97 businesses; however, by the fall of 2006 only 29 had taken advantage of this service.

In 2007, with support from ACOA and the Exploits Regional Chamber of Commerce, the EVEDC enlisted a consultant to identify reasons for the underwhelming level of broadband uptake and attempt to address them. The result was a comprehensive report entitled "E-commerce and Internet Use" that the EVEDC adopted in February 2008.

The consultant undertook a comprehensive survey of businesses and residences in the Exploits region to determine Internet usage habits. While 97.7% of respondents are using high-speed Internet, there were some results that indicate areas for improvement. For example, only 49.4% use the Internet for banking. Less than 60% of business respondents use the Internet for ordering supplies and inventory, and less than half use the Internet for tracking supplies and deliveries. The response rates for all questions indicate potential to increase the usage of high-speed Internet.

Currently there are no training programs readily available in the Exploits Valley aimed at small business whereby they can increase their technological capabilities and thereby capitalize on their use of high-speed Internet as a business tool. Also, there is very little information and support available locally for businesses that are utilizing the Internet as a tool for sales and marketing.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF SECTOR

The potential for e-commerce in this region is tremendous, partly because so few businesses are maximizing this opportunity. The Exploits Valley's geographic dispersion makes e-commerce a logical option for businesses in the region, especially those in smaller outlying communities, in their efforts to market and sell their products. Tourism operators, regionally and provincially, have recognized significant benefits from using electronic commerce and could provide a template to be used by non-tourist businesses. Successful e-commerce projects in support of the craft industry have been implemented in other zones, and this information can be accessed to provide a blueprint for the EVEDC to follow.

GAP ANALYSIS

The e-commerce report laid out a comprehensive plan for the EVEDC to address the gaps. The Plan identified training programs and sources, as well as a proposed training schedule to implement in year one. The intent is for the EVEDC to support the Chamber of Commerce and the private sector in the delivery of the training and in promoting the use of the Internet as an effective business tool.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The strategic partners include the Exploits Regional Chamber of Commerce, Aliant, NATI, other service providers, Student Connections / MUN, Department of Tourism, EVTA, DFAIT and other RED Boards.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

The EVEDC has adopted the recommendations in the E-commerce strategy and will work to implement all of them. The two main priorities are the following:

1. In partnership with the Exploits Regional Chamber of Commerce, implement a training program for businesses that wish to learn more about e-business solutions. The EVEDC and the Chamber have created a schedule of ten training events that will be offered to the business community starting in October 2008. (Year 1, fall – winter).
2. Also in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, organize an IT Expo / Trade Show to enable networking among regional business owners and various representatives from the I.T. sector (Year 1, spring).

Business Opportunity #2: Assist in the establishment of an electronic waste recycling business.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

The electronic recycling project undertaken by the EXCITE Corporation is currently in its fourth incarnation (the current project, funded by Service Canada, will conclude on October 31st 2008). The three previous projects removed 45,000 pounds of hazardous waste from the landfills of central Newfoundland. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Central Waste Management committee on how to expand the project and perhaps make it self-sufficient; more research is required on this initiative.

In the spring of 2007, a report on Atlantic Canada electronic waste was released. In it, the report recommended provincial strategies to address the tons of electronic waste being dumped into landfills on an annual basis. At the time, the IT Development Officer of the EVEDC did preliminary work on linking the e-waste recycling projects to this strategy, and was in the process of preparing a proposal to the provincial government that would see the EVEDC take the lead on this initiative. However, the provincial government indicated it was not prepared to move on the provincial strategy and the proposal was put on hold. (Subsequently the funding for the IT Development Officer's position expired and he found work elsewhere.)

The EVEDC has always believed that commercial potential exists for electronic recycling on a multi-regional basis. We have received support in this effort from the Central Waste Management Authority, and have had positive discussions with E-Waste Consultants of Canada – the mainland company that has received the previous shipments of non-recyclable materials – about establishing an electronics recycling business in Grand Falls-Windsor.

GAP ANALYSIS

There still is no plan in place to address the electronic waste being disposed of into the regional landfill sites. The EVEDC has experience in addressing this issue, and has contacted the provincial government and offered to be a partner in such an initiative. However, the Province has indicated that the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board will be the lead agency on this initiative and nothing has been forthcoming.

There is currently one business in Mount Pearl that undertakes some form of electronic recycling. E-Waste NL accepts used computer equipment, recycles salvageable components and sells those components to the general public. However, little is known of how they dispose of the “un-salvageable” components, as there is no electronic recycling done in the St. John's area.

Likewise, the provincial Department of Education has a “Computers for Schools” program in which they accept used computer components and donate salvageable material back to schools. However this is done by school board staff largely on a

volunteer basis, and there is no knowledge of what is done with the “non-salvageable” materials.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The partners on this initiative include E-Waste Consultants of Canada, the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, the Central Waste Management Authority, the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, Service Canada, Eco-Action / federal Department of Environment, and other REDB's and municipalities.

ACTION REQUIRED

Assist E-Waste Consultants of Canada in establishing an electronic waste recycling business in Grand Falls-Windsor; this will include researching other jurisdictions to determine factors affecting commercial viability, identifying an appropriate location, sourcing employees, preparing funding applications, liaising with government agencies (MMSB, DITRD, ACOA, and Service Canada, among others) and coordinating logistics.

Business Opportunity #3: To identify the demands of the labour market in the Exploits Valley region, both current and future, while determining the skill sets of the residents of the region in order to identify labour force gaps.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

In January 2007 the EVEDC started a project to identify the demand of the labour market in the Exploits Valley region. A comprehensive report was drawn up discussing the effects of the labour market on the region, and recommendations were made to the EVEDC so that the issues identified in the report could be addressed and worked on throughout the coming years. The labour market is constantly changing and the information in this report will have to be updated on a regular basis so the EVEDC can continue to work on the recommendations to help prevent these labour force gaps.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

As the focus on the labour market/force has grown in the last few years, so too has the response from the private and public sectors, with increasing job openings and no skilled workers to fill these positions. With the increased need for skilled trade workers educational institutions have been offering additional courses geared towards attracting potential students to the skilled trades. Knowing these gaps exist can help the labour market in determining the next steps towards preventing a downturn in the job market.

GAP ANALYSIS

There are currently no plans to continue with the labour market project after it concludes in early August. With labour market statistics changing so often the EVEDC will need to update the report frequently in order to continue to identify labour market gaps in the region. The EVEDC has been involved in many innovative projects over the years and keeping this project in progress would be another accomplishment for the Corporation.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The partners are Service Canada, the Chamber of Commerce, HRL&E and educational institutes (secondary and post-secondary).

ACTIONS REQUIRED

1. Finalize LMA report, submit to Service Canada, discuss it with partners, and release it to the general public (fall, 2008)
2. Update regional labour market information on an annual basis (Years 1-3).
3. Meet with HRL&E quarterly to coordinate planning and avoid overlap and duplication (Years 1-3).
4. Organize and promote training and information sessions based on feedback from the stakeholders involved with this specific project (Year 1-3).

Business Opportunity #4: To implement a second round of activities to follow-up on the Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) initiative.

RESEARCH COMPLETED TO DATE

In the spring of 2002 the EVEDC was the first REDB to complete the BR&E process in its region. This extensive project involved volunteers from the business community and support from various levels of government and resulted in the identification of several “red flag” issues and the implementation of a series of activities that supported the retention and growth of businesses in the region.

In the spring of 2008 the EVEDC was contacted to initiate a second round of activities. A one-day workshop of regional stakeholders was held on April 2nd to explore specific areas that needed to be addressed, and action items and activity “leads” were identified. These activities are being incorporated into the EVEDC SEP, to be completed with the support of our partners.

OVERVIEW

At the April 2nd workshop the following three issues and initiatives were identified as priorities:

A. Human Resources: Develop a sustainable human resources plan

- Mentoring session through Genesis Centre to new and existing businesses
- Invite Kevin Pomeroy of Entrepreneur Forum to speak to our businesses
- Identify rewards and recognition within our companies
- Invite businesses in area to HR workshops
- Work with career development agencies like WISE
- Tap into aging/retired workers
- Identify retention and recruitment issues within our population like the Canadian Association of Retired Persons
- Promotion of ongoing training in organizations and skills development
- Encourage employers to think outside the box – flextime, rewards and recognition, incentives
- Encourage specific training by local institutions (CNA, private institutions)
- Red seal certification
- Retaining trades people who need experience
- Promoting our strengths (ie. lower cost of living) while demystifying the illusion of moving elsewhere (wages, purchasing power, quality of life)

B. Business Development: Create and move towards a favorable environment

- Promotion of existing programs and services of funding partners
- Set up informal networking environment with businesses and new entrepreneurs
- Use the Manufacturing Insights Session to get the business community involved

- Get businesses involved in a steering committee and the whole process
- Expand existing businesses through marketing, involve mentoring programs like Genesis, promote technology to businesses, develop partnerships like the co-op developer's network, use the supplier development initiative through INTRD
- Search for existing mentor programs or create new programs
- Use trends in technology such as LEAN, exporting, and e-commerce
- Create a better business climate by partnering with municipalities and businesses
- Lobby for infrastructure improvement
- Develop an informal partnership with stakeholders (town, chamber of commerce, government), and community leaders (volunteers, retirees, church groups, etc.). Initiate sessions such as breakfast meetings to bring these groups together
- Educate existing businesses about diversification and opportunities
- Bring partners together to discuss ways to get through the red tape
- Improve communications between partners using informal sessions

C. Communications and Promotions: Increase promotion of businesses, opportunities and partnerships

- Issues of labour shortage and lowering costs affect many businesses; technology may help based on challenges that are identified within businesses
- Promoting quality service verses price to encourage local shopping
- Continue marketing via stakeholders such as chamber, towns, etc
- Ensure consistent message is being communicated by all partners
- Meet regularly to keep all partners informed
- Work jointly to market region
- Use chamber events and supplier development forums as an opportunity to market, network and share information
- E-newsletters
- Promotion of government programs via various venues
- Make use of CME sessions
- Implement e-commerce strategy
- Increase frequency and regularity of press release distribution
- Send regular delegations to meet with provincial decision-makers (civil servants, politicians). Ensure there is a consistent message
- Delegate conference and trade show attendance, share information gained at these events at regular meetings
- Promote local success stories
- Establish media network for provincial communication

From this extensive “brainstorm” list, the group selected one initiative to plan and implement from the list of possibilities. The following three initiatives were selected:

1. Communicate findings from EVEDC's Labour Market Study Pertaining to “What Employee's Value in Employer of Choice” (Human Resources)

2. Set up informal network for promotion and networking of existing program and services and get business community involved (Business Development)
3. Increase promotion of businesses, opportunities and partnerships (Communications and Promotion)

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The partners are the Chamber of Commerce, Aliant, DITRD, ACOA, CME, municipalities, industry associations, BDC, and CBDC.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

1. Hold BR&E Group Follow-up Meeting (fall 2008)
2. Schedule meetings for the three sub-committees to begin implementation of their respective initiatives (fall 2008).
3. Establish schedule of informal “partners” meetings (fall 2008)
4. Communicate findings of Labour Market study through media release (fall 2008)
5. Schedule information sessions to discuss labour market results (spring 2009)

OTHER SECTORS / AREAS OF SUPPORT

The EVEDC has a number of initiatives – past, current, pending or proposed – for which we play a “supporting” role. Those projects are identified because they are important to our regional partners and we may have a role to play in them as this Plan progresses. They have not been included in the sections above because they are either stand-alone activities, or because no definite activities have been identified in the short-term. These activities are as follows:

Natural Resources

1) Mining sector

The mining industry in Newfoundland and Labrador produces more than a dozen mineral commodities that contribute to our economy and quality of life. Since 2004 there has been a 479% increase in the value of the province’s mineral shipments with 2008 shipments forecasted at approximately \$3.9 billion, up from \$673 million in 2004.

Direct employment in the Newfoundland and Labrador mining industry is projected to be 4,028 person years in 2008, a 30% increase from 2004. In line with increases in global metal prices and local mineral production, the level of exploration investment in the province has increased dramatically. In 2007, approximately \$138 million was spent in Newfoundland and Labrador on mineral exploration and deposit appraisal, up from \$101 million the previous year. This total is expected to be around \$133 million in 2008. In central Newfoundland, mining activity is expected to continue at a rapid pace. Some of this activity includes:

- **Anaconda Mining Inc.** (formerly Anaconda Gold) commenced mining and milling on the Pine Cove Gold Mine located six kilometers northeast of Baie Verte in May 2008. The mine is projecting production of 13,000 ounces of gold in 2008. At a production rate of 350-500 tonnes/day it is anticipated that the mine will have a life of fifteen years.
- **Atlantic Barite Limited** reactivated the Buchans Barite plant, which operated in the 1980's, to produce barite for offshore drilling mud from the tailings of the former base metal mine. The company produced a trial product batch in 2005, and began production in 2006. The plant has the capacity to produce 15,000 - 25,000 tonnes of barite per year, with a mine life of 15-20 years. The operation employs approximately 20 people seasonally.
- **Aur Resources Inc.**, operators of the Duck Pond mine approximately 30 km. south of the former Buchans mine in Central Newfoundland, completed construction and started production in January 2007 and shipped their first concentrate from Turf Point, St. George’s Bay in April. In 2007, Aur Resources produced approximately 28 million pounds of copper and 51 million pounds of zinc in concentrate, and once fully operational, the mine is expected to annually produce 41 million pounds of copper, 76 million pounds of zinc, 574,000 ounces of silver and 5,000 ounces of gold over the eight-year mine life. Annual employment at the mine is anticipated to average 192 people.

- **Beaver Brook Antimony Mines Inc.**, located near Glenwood, re-activated its mine in April 2008. There are 96 employees currently working at the site and the mine has an expected life of seven to ten years.
- **Crew Gold Canada Ltd.** acquired the Nugget Pond Processing Facility on the Baie Verte Peninsula from New Island Resources in October 2006. The company uses the facility to process ore from their Nalunaq Gold Mine in southwestern Greenland. Ore shipments began in February 2007 and in April the company re-commissioned the Nugget Pond mill and poured the first gold bar from Nalunaq ore. The re-activation of the Nugget Pond mill created 30 full-time positions, and the life of the Nalunaq mine is estimated to be 10 years based on present reserves.
- **Hi-Point Industries (1991) Ltd.** is a peat moss processing company and is the original producer of the oil absorbent "Oclansorb". The company also produces horticultural peat, mainly for export markets. The Bishop's Falls operation employs 15-20 people seasonally.
- **Terra Nova Granite Inc.** currently supplies black gabbro from the Mount Peyton area for its plant at Jumper's Brook, near Bishop's Falls. Terra Nova is focusing on the production of monuments, countertops and architectural landscaping products for domestic markets.

Also, several companies have undertaken exploration activities in central Newfoundland:

- **Messina Minerals** has reported significant results on their Boomerang and Domino deposits in the Tulk's West, Skidder and Long Lake areas and released new estimates on these properties. They will be spending in excess of \$6 million in drilling and exploration in 2008.
- **Mountain Lake Resources Inc.** has reported results of drilling on the Bobby's Pond deposit (with Cornerstone Resources), and will be conducting airborne surveys followed by a drilling program on their Valentine Lake gold property (with Richmond Mines Inc.).
- **Royal Roads Corp.** has continued the drill program on the Daniels Pond deposit and other targets in the area that were started in 2007.
- **Prominex Resource Corp.** has received an interim report on their drill data for Tulk's Hill, which recommends additional drilling to obtain more reliable data.
- **Celtic Minerals Ltd.** is undertaking exploration programs on a number of base metal properties in central.
- **Crosshair Exploration** continues a drill program on the Golden Promise project, under option from Paragon.
- **Golden Dory** has extensive exploration activities in the Exploits Valley region.

Experience indicates there is very little the EVEDC can do to encourage or even support mineral exploration activity. It is once a project moves into a mine development that the Corporation can be effective, as it has been with Aur Resources and Duck Pond. In the meantime the Corporation will continue to monitor the projects, become familiar with the players in the industry, and promote the region as a center of mining excellence. The EVEDC will continue to facilitate meetings between mining companies and local

partners (Councils, Chamber of Commerce, government officials, etc.), and continue to organize and facilitate Supplier Development Workshops for the mining sector.

2) Forestry sector

Any discussion of Natural Resources in central Newfoundland has to include consideration of the forestry sector. The forestry has been one of the main employment sectors in the Exploits region for over one hundred years. While Abitibi-Bowater accounts for much of this employment, loggers and sawmill operations are also substantial contributors and are impacted by the goings-on at Abitibi.

Atlantic Canada's forest industry is contracting as a result of intense global market pressures. Between 2004 and 2006 the number of firms in Atlantic Canada's forest industry dropped by 11% while the industry shed more than 8,000 jobs. This 24% decline in employment is more than double the 11% drop nationally. Despite these losses, the forest industry remains a crucial part of Atlantic Canada's economy, currently accounting for about 15% of international merchandise exports and contributing 4.5% of total GDP in 2005. Atlantic Canada's forest industry also faces several domestic challenges including some of the highest wood fibre costs in the world, a shrinking wood supply, increased competition for woodlands for environmental purposes, an aging workforce and labour shortages. Improving productivity, developing new products and markets, adopting new technologies and strengthening skill levels will play a key role in the industry's response to these challenges.

The challenges facing the forest industry have an impact on three areas of importance to the EVEDC – agriculture, land use issues and Abitibi-Bowater. The agriculture sector has co-existed with the forest sector for years with not much growth opportunity for agriculture. If that sector is to realize its potential, particularly in areas such as small fruits, the forest sector will have to be supportive. In addition, any land use issues in the region – and in the province – will have to include discussion of the forest sector.

The situation with respect to Abitibi in late 2008 is very grave and will have significant impacts on regional economic planning. Abitibi has proposed job cuts of over 170 employees, meaning the mill will never again have the economic impact that it once did. However, the EVEDC will work closely with Abitibi, the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, the Chamber of Commerce and the federal and provincial governments (and other stakeholders) to address the impact of any job losses and put plans in place to help the employees and affected businesses rebound.

It has been suggested that the EVEDC identify specific initiatives to assist in this effort. As the situation is very fluid, this is difficult to do. However, the EVEDC proposes to undertake the following:

- To assist the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor with any recovery / planning efforts in the event of significant lay-offs or mill closure, including participation in any "task force" or proposed industrial adjustment committees;
- To contact REDB's in areas affected by lay-offs and closures in the paper industry (zones 6, 7 and 8), and also contact communities affected by large-scale

- layoffs such as Stephenville, Harbour Breton and Lewisporte to discuss activities they undertook to address their situations.
- To apply for capacity building funds to facilitate planning sessions with the towns and sub-zonal groups affected by any layoffs or closure.

3) Aquaculture activities

In 2007, the aquaculture industry in Newfoundland & Labrador produced 8,300 tonnes of product with an export value of \$40 million. Both of these numbers represent significant declines from 2006, attributable to changes in harvesting schedules for salmonids and the decline in production volume and the appreciation of the Canadian dollar. Both of these declines are anomalies as production in salmonids and mussels is expected to increase.

Grand Falls-Windsor is strategically located between the majority of mussel aquaculture in Green Bay and Notre Dame Bay, and the salmonid aquaculture in the Coast of Bays. (Both areas provide the bulk of the province's aquaculture production.) In addition, the Aquaculture division of the provincial Department of Fisheries & Aquaculture is located in Grand Falls-Windsor and is a tremendous resource for information on the industry. The EVEDC has been fortunate to have a representative from the Aquaculture division sit on the Natural Resources sub-committee, and he has been a tremendous resource for the committee and Board. The EVEDC will continue to work closely with the Aquaculture division to support opportunities as they arise, including supplier development sessions.

4) Reintroduction of Atlantic salmon into Rattling Brook

The Corporation continues to support the work of the Town of Norris Arm and Newfoundland Power to have Atlantic salmon reintroduced into Rattling Brook.

Tourism / Culture & Heritage

1) Formation of Destination Marketing Organization (D.M.O.)

The EVEDC has supported the efforts of the EVTA and its members to form a DMO similar to organizations on the east and west coasts. To date progress has been delayed, but the Corporation continues to support the initiative. The EVEDC has offered office space and support services for the DMO staff, once they are hired.

2) Revitalization of the Mary March Regional Museum and the Loggers' Life Exhibit

This item has been in the EVEDC Work Plan for a number of years and had been conditional on funding from government sources. In the 2006 budget the provincial government allocated funds for this work, but to date the only activity has been some meetings to identify space requirements. The Rooms Corporation has held consultations with tourism stakeholders in the Exploits region, including the EVEDC, and we will continue to work with the Rooms Corporation to see this work get done.

3) Exploits Heritage Council

Originally formed by the EVEDC as a means to coordinate joint marketing and training efforts for the region's heritage sector, the Heritage Council now functions on its own

without financial or human resource support from the Development Corporation. EVEDC members continue to sit on the Heritage Council and provide information and updates on the Council's activities. The EVEDC will continue to provide its support for the Heritage Council in general, and for the following Heritage Council initiatives in particular:

- a) Grand Falls-Windsor Log House Heritage Center
- b) Wigwam Point archaeology
- c) Regional Archaeology strategy

Transportation

1) Support for Port of Botwood divestiture

The EVEDC was a founding partner (along with the Town of Botwood) in the Exploits Valley Port Corporation. The main goal of the Port Corporation is to secure divestiture of the federal Port facility in Botwood to the Port Corporation. The EVEDC will continue to support this initiative until it comes to its conclusion.

2) Marine Atlantic lobby

The EVEDC continues to support Municipalities Newfoundland & Labrador (and NLREDA) in their lobby of the federal government with respect to the Marine Atlantic ferry designation as an essential service.

3) Improvements to Roads infrastructure

The EVEDC will continue to support its municipal members, the EVTA and the Chamber of Commerce as they lobby the provincial government for funding to improve the roads infrastructure in the region.

Education & Youth

1) Central Newfoundland Post-secondary committee

The EVEDC will continue to be a very active member of the Central Newfoundland Post-secondary Committee with its goal of expanding post-secondary offerings in central Newfoundland. The EVEDC supports this work because research has shown that areas with a strong post-secondary presence are having the most success in retaining and attracting youth, and this is a key part of our Youth Attraction & Retention strategy.

Municipalities

1) Town of Bishop's Falls strategy

In 2007 the Town of Bishop's Falls completed a community social development strategy that involved numerous stakeholders (including the EVEDC) and got a tremendous amount of feedback and buy-in from residents. The EVEDC supports the initiatives outlined in this strategy and will provide whatever resources it has available to assist in its implementation. As this strategy was being developed, the Corporation committed to meet with the Bishop's Falls Town Council to identify 3-4 specific initiatives that the EVEDC can become involved with.

2) Town of Grand Falls-Windsor strategy

The Town of Grand Falls-Windsor adopted an economic development strategy to cover the three-year period 2005-08. The EVEDC supports the work outlined in this strategy and any efforts the Town may take to follow-up on this document, including specific input into the “Grand Falls-Windsor Riverfront Development Plan” and support for the EXCITE Corporation.

3) Integrated Community Sustainability Plans

As a condition of receiving federal “gas tax” funding, municipalities are required to submit an ICSP. The REDB’s, through NLREDA and MNL, are in discussions to help coordinate with MNL, municipalities, and federal agencies, training and awareness sessions to facilitate capacity building for the completion of these Plans. Also, REDB’s may help research funding and partnership opportunities for municipalities in the completion of these Plans.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The proposed activities for the EVEDC over the next three years are listed below. Each has a proposed timeframe attached (ie. Year 1) and each is also identified as being “high”, “medium” or “low” priority.

Natural Resources Opportunity: To identify opportunities to expand the growth of the regional Agriculture sector.

- Work with the REDB’s and the Provincial government to create a Provincial Land Use Planning policy (Year 1 & 2) – High.
- Promote and assist the local agriculture industry in identifying funding sources, supporting succession planning, encouraging new entrants, and identifying appropriate training programs (Years 1-3) – High.
- Participate in and actively support the work of the provincial Blueberry Co-operative (Years 1-3) – High.
- Organize Agriculture Roundtable meetings on an annual basis, with the next one to take place in November 2008 (Years 1-3) – High.
- Support the development of a cranberry farming operation in Grand Falls-Windsor (Years 1-2) – High.

Other Natural Resources Opportunities:

- Reintroduction of Atlantic salmon into Rattling Brook (ongoing) – Low.
- Aquaculture activities (ongoing, including supplier development forum in Year 2) – Medium.
- Mining sector (ongoing; supplier development sessions, one per year) – High.
- Forestry sector:
 - o Assist the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor with recovery & planning efforts in the event of significant lay-offs or mill closure, including participation in any industrial adjustment committees or task forces (Years 1-2) – High;
 - o Contact REDB’s and communities in areas affected by lay-offs and closures in the paper industry specifically (zones 6, 7 and 8), or by large-scale layoffs in general (Stephenville, Harbour Breton and Lewisporte) to discuss what actions they took to address their situations (Year 1) – High.
 - o Apply for capacity-building funds to facilitate planning sessions with the towns and groups affected by any layoffs or closure (Year 1) – High.

Tourism Opportunity #1: Implement the Regional Tourism Visitor Interception Master Plan developed by TRACT Consulting.

- Lobby government to be selected as a pilot region for the implementation of the new provincial signage model (ongoing) – High.
- Partner with municipalities and attractions to implement components of strategy not subject to provincial jurisdiction (i.e., community welcome signs, directional route markers within municipal boundaries, etc.) (Year 2-3) – Medium.
- Work with partners to secure funding to implement components of strategy that are not subject to provincial jurisdiction (Year 1-2) – High.

- Continue to promote the Visitor Interception Strategy and encourage the use of recommended imagery, etc. among organizations and the business community and in regional marketing initiatives (ongoing) – High.

Tourism Opportunity #2: Implement recommendations in the Western Zone Tourism Development Strategy.

- Work with local operators, business owners and municipalities to devise opportunities for packaging and joint marketing (Year 1) – High.
- Work in conjunction with the Central DMO to ensure the Western Sub-Zone is appropriately branded and outdoor/adventure tourism activities are highlighted (Years 1–3; multi-phased implementation) – High.
- Implement relevant components of the Visitor Interception Plan to increase visitation in the Western Sub-Zone (Year 1 and ongoing) – High.
- Organize and schedule a Tourism Packaging workshop for operators in central Newfoundland (spring 2009) – High.
- Work with municipalities and the business community to implement recommendations from the Snowmobile Trail Development Report from September 2007 (Years 1–3; multi-phased implementation) – High.
- Improve the trail system in the Western sub-zone and construct the necessary bridge infrastructure to provide ski-doo access to the Buchans Plateau (Year 1-2) – High.

Tourism Opportunity #3: Follow-up on opportunities arising from the Flying Boat Festival International and the Aviation Tourism Initiatives.

- In consultation and partnership with the Flying Boat Festival International Committee, prioritize the remaining initiatives referenced in the “Aviation Tourism Initiatives Final Report” and attempt to implement those that are feasible in order to broaden the base of flying boat aviation attractions and provide support for the organization of future Flying Boat Festivals (Years 1-3) – Medium.
- In conjunction with the Ireland Business Partnerships, research economic opportunities with Ireland, including Irish tourism market (demographics, attractions, amenities, expenditure levels, etc.), contact with an Irish carrier, formation of a partnership with the Gander Airport Authority, development and promotion of local tourism packages, and meetings with government officials including IBP, Department of Tourism, and Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development (Years 1-2) – Medium.

Other Tourism Opportunities:

- Formation of Destination Marketing Organization (ongoing) – High.
- Revitalization of the Mary March Regional Museum and the Loggers’ Life Exhibit (Years 1-3) – High.
- Exploits Heritage Council (ongoing) – Low.
 - o Grand Falls-Windsor Log House Heritage Center (Year 1) – Low.
 - o Wigwam Point archaeology (Year 1) – Low.
 - o Regional Archaeology strategy (Year 1-2) – Medium.
 - (All three of these to be revisited at the end of Year 1.)

Manufacturing Opportunity: Formation of a regional Manufacturing Co-operative.

- Manufacturing committee meetings including the DITRD sector specialist and the CME HR field officer (ongoing, Years 1-3) – High.
- Identification of opportunities for networking, marketing and information exchange, and facilitation of those opportunities through the Manufacturing Roundtable sessions (ongoing) – High.
- Formation of a regional Manufacturing Co-op (Fall 2009) – High.

Education & Youth Opportunity #1: Formation of a Regional Youth Council.

- Steering committee meetings leading to formation of Youth Council (Fall 2008) – High.
- Provide updates at EVEDC Board meetings (Years 1-3) – High.
- Provide input into Youth Retention & Attraction Strategy; adopt strategy when completed (Year 1) – High.
- Implement annual Action Plans focusing on activities identified in Retention & Attraction strategy (Years 1-3) – High.
- Volunteer Profile Booklet – Profile organizations that need volunteers in the region; distribute to schools and other Youth organizations (Year 1) – Medium.
- Design Youth Council Logo (Year 1) – Medium.
- Organize annual Youth Forums/AGM (Years 1-3) – High.
- Election of Youth Council executive (fall, Years 1-3) – High.
- Implementation of Retention & Attraction Strategy and Action Plan initiatives (Years 2-3) – High.
- Profile and promote young entrepreneurs in the region (Year 2) – Medium.
- Partner with HRL&E (Grand Falls-Windsor) to compile a job search database for use in schools (Year 2) – Medium.

Education & Youth Opportunity #2: Completion and implementation of a Youth Attraction & Retention strategy.

- Gather input from Youth Council into strategy initiatives (Year 1) – High.
- Finalize Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy (Year 1) – High.
- Promote and circulate strategy to regional stakeholder groups, provincial government (Years 1-2) – High.
- Implement annual Action Plans using strategy as a guide (Years 1-3) – High.
- Update action plan and progress at EVEDC Board meetings (Years 1-3) – High.

Other Education & Youth Opportunities:

- Support for Central Newfoundland Post-secondary committee (Year 1; revisit issue by end of Year 1) – Medium.

Business Opportunity #1: Promote and facilitate e-business within small businesses in the Exploits Valley.

- In partnership with the Exploits Regional Chamber of Commerce, implement training for businesses that wish to learn more about e-business solutions;

- Implement schedule of ten training events that will be offered to the business community starting in October 2008. (Year 1, fall - winter) – High.
- Also in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, host an IT Expo or Trade Show to enable networking among regional business owners and various representatives from the I.T. sector (Year 1, spring) – Medium.

Business Opportunity #2: Assist in the creation of an e-waste recycling business.

- Research other jurisdictions to determine factors affecting commercial viability, identify an appropriate location, source employees, prepare funding applications, liaise with government agencies (MMSB, DITRD, ACOA, and Service Canada, among others) and coordinate logistics (Year 1) – High.

Business Opportunity #3: To identify the demands of the labour market in the Exploits Valley region, both current and future, while determining the skill sets of the residents of the region in order to identify labour force gaps.

- Finalize LMA report, submit to Service Canada, discuss it with partners, and release it to the general public (Year 1) – High.
- Update regional labour market information on an annual basis (Years 1-3) – High.
- Meet with HRL&E regularly to coordinate planning and avoid overlap and duplication (Years 1-3) – High.
- Organize and promote training and information sessions based on feedback from the stakeholders involved with this specific project (Year 1-3) – High.

Business Opportunity #4: To implement a second round of activities to follow-up on the Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) initiative.

- Hold BR&E Group Follow-up Meeting (fall, Year 1) – High.
- Schedule meetings for the three sub-committees to begin implementation of their respective initiatives (fall, Year 1) – High.
- Communicate findings of Labour Market study through media release (Year 1) – High.
- Schedule information sessions to discuss labour market results (Year 1) – High.
- Establish schedule of informal “partners” meetings (Year 1-3) – High.

Municipalities Opportunities: To provide support for municipalities in the region through the implementation of existing strategies, or the development of new strategies

- Town of Bishop’s Falls strategy (Years 1-3) – High.
- Town of Grand Falls-Windsor strategy (Years 1-3) – High.
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (Year 1) – High.

COMMUNICATIONS

In the Monitoring and Evaluation process (2005) the need for a Communications strategy for the Board was identified as a priority for improvement. With the assistance of ACOA's communications workshop process, a strategy for the EVEDC was developed.

The EVEDC's primary means of communicating with its members, the media and the general public is through e-mail and fax. Notices of meetings, minutes, correspondence, reports, and just about everything to do with the Board's operations is distributed through e-mail. An electronic newsletter is prepared and distributed on a monthly basis by the Receptionist / Communications Clerk, with e-mail notifications of changes to the web site also posted frequently. The EVEDC e-mail database currently exceeds 500 addresses including government, municipal, private sector and non-profit representatives.

In December 2007 the EVEDC obtained funding from the federal Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade (DFAIT) to revise its website. The condition of receiving the funding was that the web site had to have an investment attraction component (which is being developed as this document goes to print). The new website is also more user-friendly for Board members and visitors, with minutes and revisions to the Work Plan being posted regularly. The EVEDC website – www.exploitsvalley.nf.ca - undergoes monthly review and updating, and is still recognized as one of the best websites among the twenty RED Boards.

Press releases are prepared and distributed to the local radio stations and newspaper as the occasion requires. The EVEDC has a positive relationship with the local media and regularly sends updates on its initiatives for public consumption.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation of the Plan will be carried out through three main methods – regular sub-committee meetings, monthly Board meetings, and regular meetings with the partners, including the semi-annual and annual reporting mechanisms.

The EVEDC Board meets on the first Monday of each month, starting in October after the AGM in late September. The seven sub-committees also hold regular monthly meetings, and present a report of their meeting at the monthly Board meeting. At both of these levels the items in the IBP and SEP are discussed and updated, with reports on activities presented by the EDO and Executive Director at the sub-committee and Board meetings.

The EVEDC will hold quarterly meetings with its funding partners, ACOA and DITRD, to discuss progress and update initiatives. The semi-annual and annual meetings will be more formal in nature, with written reports as required under the terms of the Statement of Work. These two meetings will also include representatives from the more senior levels of both ACOA and DITRD, along with the full Executive of the EVEDC, while the other two quarterly meetings will be less formal in nature and will include just the local field office representatives of both organizations.

The semi-annual and annual reports will include updates on the status of each initiative in the Integrated Business Plan as well as revisions of timelines and priorities (if necessary) and explanations of any delays or changes to the IBP. The format for both of these reports will be proscribed by ACOA and DITRD.