

VIII. FUTURE PROSPECTS

8.1 Tourism

8.1.1 Canoe Heritage Centre

The Township of Atikokan has submitted the concept of a Canoe Heritage Centre as a project for funding assistance from the Northern Ontario Heritage fund Corporation.

The Canoe Heritage Centre will be a themed interpretation, activity/demonstration facility where visitors will have the opportunity to explore the history and heritage of the canoe and actively engage in projects and activities related to the art and science of canoeing and canoe tripping. The centre will offer a unique learning experience, designed to capture the interests and engage the participation of canoe novices and aficionados.

The Canoe Heritage Centre will be the cornerstone and the catalyst to the thematic marketing of Atikokan as the “Canoe Capital of Canada” and possibly to the eventual integration of the canoe theme into the town’s motif as well as its retail, service and manufacturing base.

Due to research suggesting the lack of immediate support, this project is currently on hold. However, the Canoe Heritage Centre remains a goal for Atikokan in the future.

8.2 Recreation

8.2.1 Waterfront Development

A citizens committee continues to develop trails and recreational uses along the Atikokan River, which winds its way through the community to Apungsisagen Lake.

8.2.2 Cross Country Skiing

A newly formed group is developing a trail network to challenge even the most avid skier and provide satisfaction to the novice.

8.2.3 Northwestern Ontario Snowmobile Trails Association

This regional group is continually developing and upgrading a 450 km network of trails which are tied into the Trans Canada Trail System. Marketing efforts are attracting snowmobilers from all over Canada and the U.S.

8.3 Economy

8.3.1 Soapstone Quarry

A large deposit of high quality soapstone has been discovered near Atikokan. A quarry to extract this resource is planned for the near future. New soapstone occurrence, owned by Northern Soapstone has excellent carving grade material.

8.3.2 Mining

Recent projects in the area, such as the Pentland Firth gold project and Sawbill Bay Area, show strong potential for large tonnage low-grade open-pit potential. The Atikokan Resources Inc.'s new high-grade silver base metal discovery in the Lumby Lake area shows new potential for volcanic massive sulfide deposits.

8.3.3 Telecommunications

As the result of efforts put forth by the North-Western Regional Telecommunications Committee (NWRTC), Atikokan has recently had new fiber optic lines and advanced switching equipment installed. These aggressive efforts have opened the door for the area Health Care Providers, Educational Services and private businesses, by allowing them the infrastructure needed to further pursue key options such as video conferencing.

After completing a significant amount of planning and analysis, approval was received to form a Regional "Not-For-Profit" buying consortium to provide economical digital telecommunications infrastructure to all users in the 807 Area Code. The 807 NorthWest Network will be hiring a Project Coordinator to facilitate this.

The AEDC has also been successful in securing funding partnerships with the municipalities of the Rainy River District Municipal League, Thunder Bay Mobility and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, in an effort to provide cellular service for the Highway #11 corridor and up Highway #71 to Sioux Narrows.

8.4 Strategic Plan Summary

A Community Strategic Plan was completed and adopted by The Township of Atikokan Council in 2002. The purpose is to have a document which guides and assists us to meet the present and future needs and desires of the population. It includes current and future social, economic, political, cultural, technological and environmental issues.

Another Community Strategic Plan is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2006.

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