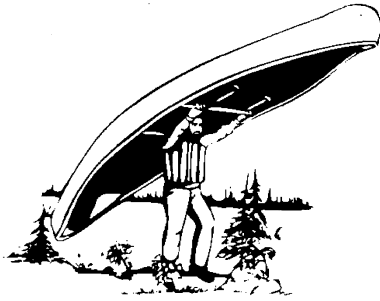


## 2004 – ACTIVITIES AND MORE!.....



Canoeing Capital of Canada: Atikokan, Ontario

### **BOARD OVERVIEW:**

The Board Members of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation are a diverse and dynamic collection of 4 women and 11 men. One of these members is from the Seine River First Nation community as a representative on our Board of Directors. Our current Chair is Dave Elder, Vice Chair is Dave Bjorkman, and Secretary/Treasurer is Bill Beyer. Directors at large are Miles Brown, Dennis Brown, Wayne

McAndrew, Vic Prokopchuk, Elvin Rydberg, Dr. Ken Sawchuk, Delores Veran, Andrew Johnson from Seine River First Nation and Mary Makarenko and Charlie Viddal as the two representatives from Township Council. Jan Lewis and Ann Ralph are new Board members elected at the 2004 Annual General Meeting,

### **STAFF:**

We have 4 full time staff positions in the office: Garry McKinnon, our Executive Director; Dawn Hayes, Administrative Assistant; Linda Braun, Community Development Advisor and Marg Thurier, Office Administrator. The Corporation also contributes half the wages of the Chamber of Commerce Office Manager in return for receptionist duties and other help as required. Our office also administers the Atikokan Employment Centre with a contract from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Our contract with HR&SDC allows us to have 1 full time position there as well as 1 part time position.



### **KEEPING OUR STAFF busy.....**



- ▶ A great deal of staff time throughout the past year and a half was spent dealing with the layoffs and eventual closure of Proboard, along with the unstable conditions at Atikokan Forest Products. With the assistance of the AEDC, a local Labour Adjustment Committee was formed and an Action Centre established in the Voyageur Mall. Its' purpose was to assist displaced workers with resume writing, job hunting, and to be a comfortable spot where people felt welcome to stop in and interact with each other. In June, the Labour Action Centre successfully closed its doors fulfilling its mandate to put displaced workers back on the job. AEDC played a significant role in securing the financial package for Fibrattech Manufacturing Inc., the new owners of the plant.

*"The Local Initiatives Program is a wonderful grant to give assistance for tangible uses that will benefit everyone in the community, as well as ensuring community groups have the equipment they need to do a quality job. The Atikokan Economic Development office and its programs are extremely valuable in all the services it offers to community groups that I'm involved with as well as all the business guidance I have received."*

*- Ange Sponcia,  
Producer*

► Since the Ontario Liberal Government stated that they were committed to shutting down the coal fired power plants in Ontario by 2007, our office has created an Energy Ad Hoc committee to demonstrate to the government that clean coal technology can deliver affordable, clean power at the Atikokan Thermal Generating Station with emissions equal to or lower than gas fired plants. This committee continues to explore other alternatives to the shut down of ATGS.

► January of 2004 saw the beginning of two significant projects designed to enhance the economy of Atikokan. Staff resources are assisting committees to promote our Outers program to the world. Students, both nationally and internationally, are invited to take their Grade 11 or 12 year at Atikokan High school to experience the program while receiving their school credits. This unique curriculum is designed to foster



leadership, confidence, self reliance and self esteem. To date they have one student signed up for September.

2005 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the highly successful Outers program with a major celebration set for July 11-17, 2005. Outers returning to the community will be treated to a variety of events taking place all week. There will be events for the entire family to enjoy, culminating in a Reunion Dinner and Dance with special presentations and the unveiling of The Outers film.

► In the fall of 2004 Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, visited the community and met with Town officials, the Chamber of Commerce, The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation and other interested groups. An Atikokan-Quetico Park Task Force was set up with different representatives from the community to determine a strategy for increasing the economic benefit to the Township as a result of the proximity to Quetico Park. Our Chair currently sits on the Task Force and represents the AEDC's concerns. The AEDC would like to see an Ontario Parks commitment to long term funding for a comprehensive multi-media marketing plan promoting Atikokan, the surrounding communities and the Quetico and Turtle-White Otter parks.

*"The AEDC has always been very supportive of the Canoe Heritage Committee from its beginning back in the 90's. Without the administrative assistance and leadership provided by Garry McKinnon in the initial stages and Linda Braun during the last few years, the committee would not have progressed to where it is today. A comprehensive report titled "Northwood's Adventure Country Management Plan," commissioned by the committee was recently released. This plan will assist the entire community in enhancing tourism related activities to attract more tourists. The co-operation of the AEDC made this all happen. The efforts of the entire staff are sincerely appreciated."*

*- Mayor Dennis Brown, Chair*



▶ The AEDC continues to support the goals of PARO, a business network committee geared to assisting women in business. Currently, the group is revitalizing a PARO circle group in Atikokan designed to support women entrepreneurs. This group meets monthly with women business owners of the community.

▶ The AEDC board has made revitalizing the Voyageur Mall a priority. Our staff has facilitated weekly meetings with the Voyageur Mall Merchants Association and continues to aggressively work on recruiting a pharmacy to re-locate to Atikokan.

▶ The Canoe Heritage Committee focused their efforts on hiring a consultant to complete a feasibility study on recreational facilities and supported tourism infrastructure along both sides of Highway 11 and along Highway 622. This is the area adjacent to the northern boundary of Quetico Park and the area close to Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park. The final report is now complete, laying the groundwork for the committee and the community to move forward in attracting new visitors. We continue to offer staff resources to this project.

▶ Several smaller initiatives have also been undertaken. The Downtown Atikokan Renewal Committee have strategically placed a number of used canoes and paddles in the downtown area and the entrance to the community has been landscaped and replanted to re-enforce our “Canoeing Capital” theme. The AEDC assisted this committee by providing a staff liaison, access to equipment such as photocopier and fax machine, and administrative assistance as required.

▶ Throughout the year, our staff organized many well attended seminars for the business community as well as the general public. They included:

- Effective Supervision in the Workplace
- Global Position System (GIS)
- Starting a Successful Business
- Volunteer Profile
- PST & GST/HST – What is it all about?
- Stress and the Holidays

▶ ***Big Online Database*** containing fund raising information is a tool we promote to non-profit organizations requesting funding opportunities. A computer is available at the AEDC, Atikokan Employment Center and the Atikokan Public Library in order to access the program online.

**WORTH WHILE EXPERIENCE**

“The economic development office staff have been extremely helpful with all of our needs. We have worked with the staff on a number of projects and have met with tremendous success. The AEDC has played a significant role in promoting the community vision and the economic development that surrounds this vision. Without their support many of the worthwhile economic development initiatives that have taken place in Atikokan would have floundered or fizzled out. It has and will continue to be a very worth while experience working with the AEDC.”

- Darryl Gannon  
Atikokan High School

## SHARING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

The Local Initiatives Program is funded by Industry Canada/Fednor for the purpose of supporting local economic community development projects that contribute to the “Community’s Strategic Plan”. Last year, it was our pleasure to disburse funds to the following groups:

**\$** The AEDC hired Boreal Resource Strategies to conduct a research study that will be beneficial in efforts to establish an additional forest product manufacturing facility in Atikokan. (\$3,800)

**\$** To the Atikokan Chamber of Commerce to partner with existing downtown businesses in a winter wonderland /shop local enhancement and beautification project during the Christmas season. (\$2,300)



(\$5,000)

**\$** To the Atikokan Volunteer Fire Department for community emergency response rescue equipment to enable the department to access snowmobile accident victim along trails that surround our community.

**\$** To Seine River First Nation as a contribution to help cover costs of a community recreation infrastructure project to include an outdoor skating rink, baseball field, and seating system. (\$10,000). These funds will also lever additional funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.



low maintenance fee. (\$10,000)

**\$** To Quetico Adventure School towards expenses related to attending two trade shows to promote the community of Atikokan and this new school initiative. (\$5,000)

**\$** To the Atikokan Bass Classic Committee to assist with the purchase of a new tent for their event. This tent will also be available to community groups for a

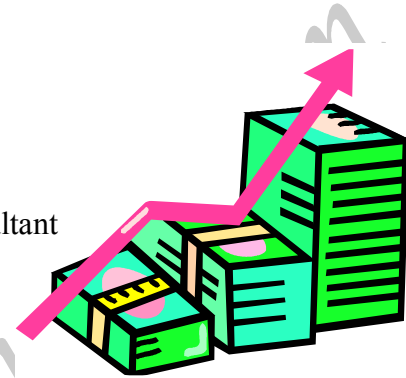
**\$** To the Outers 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Committee to purchase video equipment to secure footage of Outer’s expeditions in the 2004/05 year. The film will debut at the Outers 40<sup>th</sup> celebrations in the summer of 2005 where it will be

available for resale. The film will also be used for promotional purposes for the Outers program and the community itself. (\$3,800)

**\$** To the Atikokan Intergenerational Centre for Arts and Alternatives to provide high quality arts performances through the utilization of a quality projection and sound system during the “Breathin’ in the Wilds Film Festival”. (\$3,800)

**FINANCIALLY SPEAKING...**

At a recent Board of Directors meeting of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation, our FedNor consultant stated that since 1992, FedNor/Industry Canada has invested over \$6.5 Million in the community of Atikokan. This includes Investment Funds, Operating Funds, Project funding, Intern funding, and Local Initiatives Funding.



During 2004, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$722,462 towards new loans. In total, 39 loans were refinanced, amalgamated or disbursed. The 7 Community Futures Development Corporations in Northwestern Ontario also formed a corporate pool for dispensing larger loans to clients in their communities with the help of the other CFDC’s in the group. The amount of investment is a maximum of \$500,000 whereby the Home CFDC can invest their maximum of \$125,000. The other 6 CFDC’s must invest the remaining funds equally amongst themselves. Atikokan currently has 3 of these investments in their portfolio.

<b>INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY AND BALANCE</b>				
<b>Sector</b>	<b>12 months ended 12/31/04</b>		<b>Current Balance</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Hospitality	6	\$235,096	13	\$874,072
Mining	0	0	2	140,124
Service	5	28,098	15	549,917
Tourism	3	88,075	7	533,140
Aquaculture	0	0	1	88,184
Manufacturing	4	229,167	9	578,686
Transportation	5	56,090	4	206,576
Retail	4	16,800	15	657,061
Forestry	12	69,136	13	349,788
Agriculture	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$722,462.00</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>\$3,977,548</b>

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation's Investment Fund Portfolio has grown substantially over the past seven years to a high of \$3.9 million dollars with a total of 79 outstanding loans.

<b>LOAN ACTIVITY 1997 TO DEC. 31, 2004</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Loans Issued</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Repayments</b>	<b>Portfolio Balance</b>
1997	19	\$311,826	\$80,595	\$1,074,220
1998	19	\$512,810	\$142,285	\$1,307,769
1999	25	\$783,816	\$199,300	\$1,598,725
2000	15	\$470,013	\$109,947	\$1,794,593
2001	28	\$884,862	\$253,154	\$2,837,062
2002	26	\$550,434	\$182,942	\$3,040,681
2003	32	\$790,538	\$234,412	\$3,560,527
2004	39	\$722,462	\$591,362	\$3,977,548

Job creation has played a huge part in the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation's activity throughout the years. Each year 10 to 20 new jobs are created with 5 to 10 new businesses being started. Most of these are small businesses with just 1 or 2 employees. An average of 17 businesses and an average of 50 jobs were maintained as a result of either financial assistance or technical & counseling assistance.

If you have suggestions or comments about atikokaninfo.com, we would love to hear from you! Please call us at 597-2757, or email us at aedc@atikokaninfo.com.

<b>BUSINESSES/JOBS CREATED/MAINTAINED BY YEAR</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Businesses Started</b>	<b>Businesses Maintained</b>	<b>Jobs Created</b>	<b>Jobs Maintained</b>
1997	10	4	28	10
1998	7	11	13	30
1999	10	13	21	49
2000	9	14	18	44
2001	6	22	10	80
2002	10	22	21	72
2003	5	32	6	69
2004	6	29	148	203

The Self Employment Benefit Program offered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and provided to the community by our office is also a very successful and popular program. Each year, our office processes approximately 10 to 12 clients through the SEB program. Most clients work hard preparing a business plan and doing market research for their business idea. Approximately 50% of the SEB clients who started their own business are still in business today.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES		
Sector	12 Months to 12/31/03	Since Inception
Hospitality	1	4
Mining	0	0
Service	6	45
Tourism	1	6
Aquaculture	0	2
Manufacturing		9
Transportation	1	4
Retail	0	15
Forestry	1	6
Agriculture	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>91</b>



► **Community Project Assistance** – The Downtown Atikokan Renewal Committee, with the help of the Township and a Job Creation Program contract from HR&SDC, hired a gardener and 3 workers to clean and maintain the mini parks located in the downtown core. There was also substantial work done by

the sign at the Town’s entrance on Mackenzie Avenue.

The Friends of Quetico Park also received a Job Creation Program grant to do more work on the Ski Trails that are being developed along the northern border of Quetico Park. This work will greatly enhance the Cross Country Ski Trail System and encourage winter tourism in a big way.

► The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation increased their office staff by 1 this past summer. **Tiffany Angus** was hired as a summer student with the help of a Summer Student wage subsidy from the Ministry of Northern Development & Mines. She was hired to develop a strategy geared to young entrepreneurs in order to help them start a small business if they were not continuing their education.

*Atikokan - Canoeing Capital of Canada*

“Effective leadership is putting first things first. Effective management is discipline, carrying it out.”  
Stephen R. Covey

► The Atikokan community website **atikokaninfo.com** is continually being updated with more and more information. People inquiring about Township services and amenities are constantly told about our website. Monthly statistics are continuing to grow.

► **Members of Parliament** – Both MP Ken Boshcoff & MPP Bill Mauro have each had lunch meetings with the AEDC’s Board of Directors at which they were made aware of our community’s concerns. This relationship has been very informative and continues to grow as both members make visits throughout the region.

**Talent alone won’t make you a success. Neither will being in the right place at the right time, unless you are ready. The most important question is: “Are you ready?”**  
Johnny Carson

### **The Atikokan Employment Centre**

The Centre has again had a very successful year. As a result of the expanded services offered at the office we were able to create a second part-time position within the office. We anticipate the expansion of this position to full-time next year.

We were able to assist many displaced workers to secure funding to return to post secondary studies. We also assisted in the development of several Job Creation Partnership applications, creating employment opportunities within the community and promoting community development.

As in past years, we worked with the Human Resource Centre for Students and held a “*Volunteering Counts*” contest for students. The purpose was to encourage them to volunteer. The same concept was used for adults and the Volunteer Bureau hosted a similar contest. We logged over 150 volunteer hours, up 25 hours from last year and this had quite a positive impact for the non-profit groups who rely on volunteers for successful events.

With funding assistance from the United Native Friendship Centre, our local Employment Centre office hosted the second annual Career Fair for the community. At the fair, visitors saw booths from educational institutes, employment assistance agencies, economic development, and other groups with an ability to assist unemployed or underemployed people. We also offered training in customer service, WHMIS and Smart Serve to interested parties. The event was not as well attended as the previous year however the training sessions were full and we received



positive feedback from the booth participants. For next year we are considering alternative ways of increasing numbers.

[www.atikokaninfo.com](http://www.atikokaninfo.com)

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

□ We are pleased to have worked with the following clients who opened their doors for business during this past year:



☞ Jeffrey Devine Computer Consulting	(Jeff Devine)
☞ Celebration Center	(Sandra Johnson)
☞ Twyla Carolan	
☞ Resolve It	(Diane Greenier)
☞ Fibrattech Manufacturing Inc.	(Dan Warren)
☞ Steve's Tattoos N Art	(Steve Cunningham)
☞ Mason's Baits & Service	(Henry Mason)
☞ Darrel Chambers Contracting	(Darrel Chambers)

### □ ***Literally available at your fingertips...***

The AEDC staff have compiled a file folder known as "Business Mentoring Tools". It contains different sections of information such as preparing your business plan, finding financial assistance, marketing, research, staff, etc. There are photocopies of articles and suggestions....our clients are welcome to drop in and browse and take along with them any information they feel would be helpful.

### □ ***Local Business places in the top level for the Global Traders Innovation Award.***

The AEDC staff has submitted a nomination for Souris River Canoes recognizing their contribution in the Innovation Sector. The company has been selected as an award recipient for the 2004 Awards. Up to three levels will be given within each category. Awards will be presented in Thunder Bay on April 27, 2005. Good luck to Keith Robinson and his staff.



## KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

Our staff and board members attended a number of informative seminars in the region throughout the year to better serve our clients and the community of Atikokan. They included:

- Eco-North Conference
- Great Rendezvous
- The Exception Assistant Program (TEA)
- Northern Networks Trade Conference

### LOOKING AHEAD...

◆ The AEDC Board of Directors met for a strategic planning session on September 1, 2004. The purpose of the session was to re-examine priorities, establish a new strategic plan, and strengthen the management team. Objectives included reviewing current and past activities impacting the AEDC, and establishing priorities for future action. Some of these priorities are:

- Complete an environmental scan of winter tourism activities and opportunities. Identify and market regional opportunities to operators and potential visitors. Provide mentoring and support to new off-peak tourism enterprises.
- Work with recreation corridor committee to complete feasibility process and identify concrete development opportunities. Develop promotion pieces for consumption locally and outside. Support infrastructure development and monitor progress.
- Continue support of the Friends of White Otter Castle to preserve, protect and promote the castle. Support the Friends and Township of Atikokan in lobby efforts to elevate status of the Turtle-White Otter Parkway to an operating park, with park headquarters in Atikokan.
- Work with other partners to improve the economic connection between Quetico Park and the communities that support the park's operations. Invite park administration to quantify economic impact of Quetico on Atikokan and Lac la Croix. Develop formal communications channels with park administration.
- Develop the potential in the region for retirement living by researching the wants and needs of retirees in other retirement communities. Identify the Atikokan area's strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis those wants and needs. Develop a marketing strategy to sell the strengths.
- Actively support and participate in the private sector's initiatives to develop cottage lot opportunities in the area. Actively lobby for government support for cottage lot development as an economic development opportunity for Northern Ontario.

### ***LOOKS LIKE A BUSY, CHALLENGING YEAR!!***

If you have suggestions or comments about The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation or our website [atikokaninfo.com](http://atikokaninfo.com), we would love to hear from you! Please call us at 597-2757, or email us at [aedc@atikokaninfo.com](mailto:aedc@atikokaninfo.com).