

# **2015 Annual Report**

## **Atikokan Economic Development Corporation**



*Photo by Alan Gauthier-Poelman*

### **“SPREADING THE MESSAGE”**

**AEDC TAKES ON CENTRAL ROLE IN BUILDING COMMUNITY TOURISM**



**APRIL 25, 2016**





**April 25, 2016**

# Atikokan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
A Community Futures Development Corporation

Atikokan's rise from the dark days of industrial recession has been swift, and the results have been noticeable for both the Town of Atikokan, and the Economic Development Corporation.

Resolute Forest Products successfully completed construction of its Sapawe mill, adding a number of skilled, well-paying jobs to the community. Most jobs are local, and have begun to draw new members into our community as specialized skills are developed. Similar results are seen at Rentech, as they continue to provide high-pay employment to the community.

Executives at both firms continue to engage both the community and our office as we strive to build long-term partnerships that will benefit all. Atikokan's ability to show itself as a safe, desirable location to live and grow make it an attractive destination and we expect to bring in numerous new families over the next years as the both location's workplace demographic shifts with the retirement of existing employees.

Ontario Power Generation's Atikokan station continues to perfect the process of clean burning biomass fuel; the project continues to move forward as anticipated and the technology holds great promise as a marketable item to foreign investors. Local operators at the plant continue to adapt to the new technology with great skill and pride in their work.

Canadian Malartic Partnership continues to percolate with the global markets; hope remains that a completed positive environmental assessment will quickly move the project back into development. We will continue to advocate for this and other large-scale projects as viable and responsible community building blocks, when necessary.

We continue to work with the Town Council and staff try to prepare for an increased demand for homes, education, senior services, social services and the growth of business, both commercial and industrial, and our efforts to assist the Town whenever possible in these matters remains a top priority. The same can be said of the AEDC's catchment areas; in particular, much has been done to further the relationship with the First Nations through both the AEDC and the Employment Centre.

I am pleased to extend my most sincere appreciation to all of the volunteers and staff who have committed countless hours to ensuring 2015 was a successful year for the AEDC.

**Jim Turner,**  
**AEDC Chair**





# Town of Atikokan

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February 2016

## Thank you from the Mayor and Council

On behalf of Atikokan Town Council and staff, I would like to once more thank the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation Board and staff for their ongoing support in community and economic development initiatives that benefit the citizens of Atikokan.

By working with many groups including Atikokan Town Council, the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation is able to help sustain and expand employment through community economic development initiatives. This is crucial for our entire community and area.

Having access to capital through a Community Investment Fund at the Atikokan Economic Development Office for businesses is very important especially at a time when it is becoming more difficult for the private sector to acquire such capital from other sources.

The support of the Local Initiatives Fund contributions were important to the success of our many local organizations. Those organizations also relied on the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) for support and advice and benefit greatly from access to facilities and equipment that the AEDC willingly makes available. It is hoped the AEDC will be able to get back funding from the federal government in 2016 for the Local Initiatives Fund so that our community can benefit from it again.

The Atikokan Employment Centre, which is administered by the AEDC, is also an essential service to the workers and their families in Atikokan.

Other AEDC services such as those provided to the local Chamber of Commerce, the Energy Committee, and tourism related activities all help to make for a better Atikokan. Special thanks for meeting with Atikokan Town Council and staff on several occasions this past year to discuss and plan for common issues.

Congratulations on another successful year. Your efforts in community and economic development are necessary and very much appreciated.

Yours truly

Dennis Brown  
Mayor



# Community & Committee Reports

## INVOLVEMENT AND UPDATES

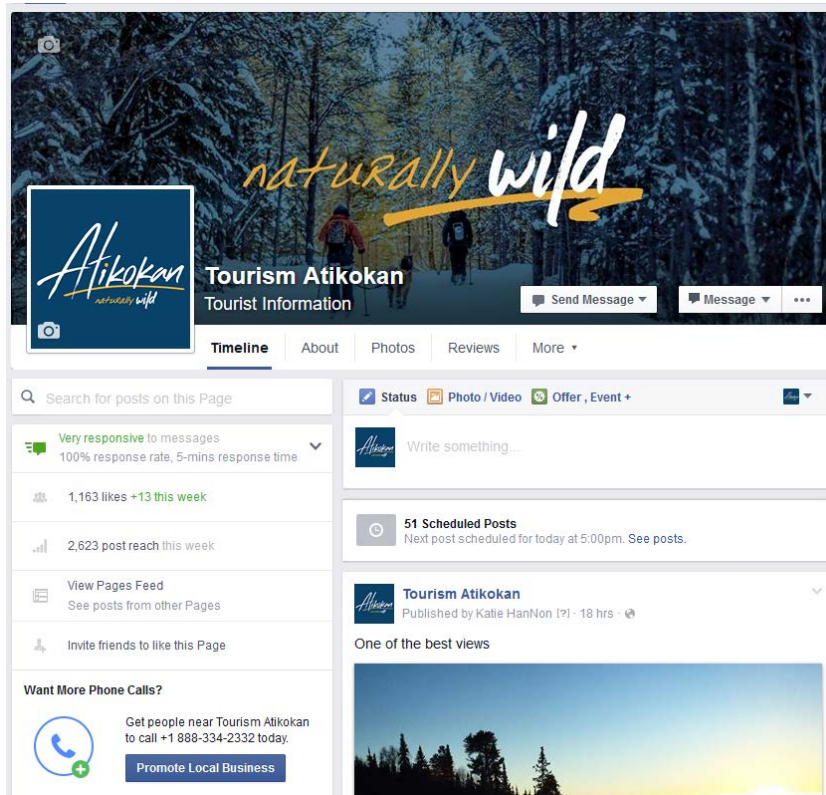
### TOURISM PILOT PROJECT – “TOURISM ATIKOKAN”

In 2015, the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation launched an initiative to bolster community tourism and build self-sustaining tourism tools for local providers to use at their discretion. Partnering with the Town of Atikokan and Tourism Northern Ontario, “Tourism Atikokan” was launched as a one-year pilot project that set out to complete five basic tasks and prove its viability moving forward. They were:



ATIKOKAN ADOPTED NEW TOURISM BRANDING AFTER WORKING WITH A DESIGN FIRM AND CONSULTING NUMEROUS STAKEHOLDERS. THE RESULT WAS A FRESH, CLEAR, MODERN TWIST ON ATIKOKAN.

1. Foster and develop industry collaboration and networking opportunities
2. Produce a ‘How to do Tourism’ workforce program development kit
3. Develop and implement Atikokan Tourism Branding and Marketing
4. Construct and deliver a ‘Visit Atikokan’ website ([www.visitatikokan.ca](http://www.visitatikokan.ca))
5. Produce a four season guidebook that highlighted community events.



AEDC was proud to complete all of the above tasks, on time and on budget, in addition to taking on a number of other tourism-based initiatives on behalf of the municipality. AEDC created a ‘Tourism Atikokan’ Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/TourismAtikokan](http://www.facebook.com/TourismAtikokan) - this site is now the fifth most subscribed Atikokan-based Facebook page and the most active in terms of engagement (likes, comments, shares). Social media statistics for the project were as follows (as of March 15, 2016): 1,163 page likes;

57,131 video views (of seven videos); 473,681 total cumulative post reach; and 19,633 total

likes, comments & shares of posted materials. The site has engaged fans from all over the world, including Canada, United States of America, France, Pakistan, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Philippines, Australia, Albania, Brazil, United Kingdom, Colombia, Norway, Spain, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Poland, Thailand, El Salvador, Mexico, Chile, Afghanistan, Congo, Senegal, Libya, New Zealand, Denmark, Bulgaria, Belgium, Palestine, Bangladesh, Netherlands and the United Arab Emirates. All of this was done in a period of eight months and using less than \$500 in marketing and advertising, a testament to the strength of social media.



Additional action items included creating a short promotional video for Little Falls, in collaboration with OACFDC and Endless Films Inc. – the video, which cost less than \$8 to produce and distribute, received over 12,000 views and reached 47,000 worldwide users. A second promotional video using a GoPro camera attached to a volunteer's head during a paddle

down the Atikokan River was viewed over 2,100 times and reached over 5,800 people, and had no cost attached. Over 700 photos were commissioned for the Atikokan Bass Classic week, collaboratively funded with Tourism Thunder Bay. Tourism-based advertisement packages were put together for print media and social media, as well as social media pieces and seasonal backdrops for us to use. A much-needed update to the Community Map was done in collaboration with Mike Sorenson and 5,000 were ordered. Staff attended tourism events for the Northern Ontario Tourism Association, the North of Superior Tourism Association, the Heart of the Continent and the Central Canada Outdoors Show. In addition, we were able to sponsor Phase 2 Marketing of the National Geographic Website, sponsor the Reel Paddling Film Festival held in Atikokan in March 2016, purchase promotional bags for the Atikokan Bass Classic, purchase advertisement space in the Atikokan High School yearbook, and regionally in both Northwest Outdoors magazine and the NOSTA Map Guide, in addition to purchasing local promotional items (mugs, pens, posters, decals, etc.) and posters.



It is hoped that the relationships forged and the value received by the partners in this project are sufficient to warrant the continuance of the Tourism Atikokan project; though the program was created and run through the AEDC, we feel that its results were truly a collaborative effort. The next steps would be to engage local outfitters and begin to establish working relationships on delivering the tools we have created for them to a wider audience, allowing them to use them to increase their traffic, and make improvements based on 'real world' use. Complementary tools will be established if and when funding permits.

At 1,265km long, the Path of the Paddle serves as the Trans Canada Trail connection in northwestern Ontario and is, in fact, five percent of the expansive Trans Canada Trail. Spanning waterways from Thunder Bay to Manitoba, this water trail is a tourism product developed and supported by the Path of the Paddle Association, driven by volunteers from the communities of Atikokan, Dryden, Kenora and Thunder Bay.

The Path of the Paddle Association, an incorporated, non-profit organization, received an Ontario Trillium Foundation two-year grant enabling the hiring of General Manager Carrie Nolan. This past summer she, as well as two student trail ambassadors, paddled the entire

trail. To read about these adventures see 'Trail Travellers' on [www.pathofthepaddleassociation.com](http://www.pathofthepaddleassociation.com).



PATH OF THE PADDLE TRAIL AMBASSADORS PAUL AND HADLEY WITH PETER AND CATHY BURTON OF ATIKOKAN

Atikokan is represented on Path of the Paddle's Board of Directors by Regional Trail Committee Chair Michelle Savoie and by new Board Director Peter Sorensen. The Atikokan trail sections include part of the Quetico Trail from town to Nym Lake via the Atikokan River, Plateau Lake and Fire Lake to Nym Lake and part of the Maukinak Trail that goes from town on the Atikokan River to White

Otter Lake via the Eye River, Dashwa Lake and Clearwater West Lake.

This past year was outstanding in terms of trail completion on the 100km of Atikokan trails. Trails Officer Lise Sorensen created work plans that were executed by Paul Ducette and Gavin Morito-Karn. Their work, along with volunteers from the Stewardship Rangers and Atikokan High School's Outers Club, created or improved 27 portages and 48 campsites. Quetico Provincial Park is heralded as a world class canoeing destination, and rightfully so, but those from the area know that the beauty and paddling opportunities don't stop at the Park Boundary. It is exciting to see a path created for canoeing and camping from the Park, through town and on to White Otter Lake and beyond.

In addition to offering a fine canoeing trail, Path of the Paddle, with the help of the AEDC and its Tourism Atikokan project brought the international Reel Paddling Film Festival to Atikokan for a fun evening of paddling inspiration. Path of the Paddle Association is also working towards offering promotional materials in the form of a guidebook and map series to help visitors and residents experience our trail in a safe and happy manner.

The Association is also looking forward to celebrating Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday with the Grand Opening of the entire 24,000km Trans Canada Trail on July 1, 2017. For Atikokan to be a part of this trail has the potential for numerous benefits such as increased traffic for local outfitters, guides and camp operators, canoe and kayak manufacturers, restaurants, souvenir stores and hotels. We're excited for Atikokan to take advantage of being on this outstanding water trail both through personal recreation pursuits and through small business opportunities!

## THE HEART OF THE CONTINENT PARTNERSHIP – AEDC Participation

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The Heart of the Continent Partnership is a cross-border coalition of stakeholders working together on international projects that promote economic, cultural and natural health of the lands on the Ontario/Minnesota border.

2015 proved to be a very eventful year, as we continued our promoting the cross-border geo-tourism website collaboration with National Geographic. Local efforts to publicize the project, done with little monetary resources and often via direct engagement with potential sites and in collaboration with local champions, including HOCP staffer Chris Stromberg, earned the AEDC a coveted 2015 Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC) Award of Excellence, in the field of Innovation. This is the second award of Excellence for the AEDC since 2010, and the second award it has received for its work on the geo-tourism project, after we received the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Marketing Award. Garry McKinnon and Gord Knowles accepted the award on behalf of both organizations during the OACFDC annual conference in Orillia in September 2015.



The group has continued to grow thanks to the work of coordinator Chris Stromberg, who has proved to be a calming influence and grown in leaps and bounds as he learns the business side of the organization. The AEDC has worked with both Chris and the HOCP in an advisory and support role to ensure he has the opportunity to move the group forward, and continue to foster that relationship through HOCP's dedicated office within the AEDC.

Further involvement will continue in the Heart; a local steering committee meets periodically to direct local representatives to keep apprised of the work of the group. AEDC will continue to partake in quarterly meetings in Canada and the US, which allow for unprecedented networking and the sharing of ideas with not just regional partners, but those in northern Minnesota, who share not only a common vision, but common obstacles to success. We will continue to play a key role on the steering committee and devote time and resources to projects as required.

## ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CFDC (OACFDC) BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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In 2015 Garry McKinnon served as vice president of the Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations, a position he was elected to by his peers across the province. Garry chaired the Management Information Systems Committee of the OACFDC and in 2015 the committee was successful in implementing a new software system for most of the northern Ontario CFs. As a result of his work with the entire process of procuring a new system, he has been asked to act in an advisory capacity to the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations as they embark on a similar endeavour.



## FOREST PRODUCTS

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The forest sector continues to be a major driver in the Atikokan area economy. 2015 saw the substantial completion of both the Resolute Forest Products state of the art sawmill at Sapawe and the Rentech biomass pellet plant in Atikokan. Resolute has eighty-six employees working on site and their materials handling contractor, Dallon, has approximately twenty additional workers. Rentech employs twenty-four directly with an additional three contract workers.

The completion of the two mills in Atikokan/Sapawe resulted in Rainy Lake Tribal Contracting to open an office and transportation hub in Atikokan. Dallon also hired a number of equipment operators to offload trucks and load rail cars at the rail yard at the south end of White Street. Other transportation service providers have also increased their employment and harvesting operations have ramped up to meet the demand of these mills. For example, Rentech advises that “there are 30 different wood harvesting contracts currently” and “155 different truck drivers in our system hauling wood.”

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS COUNCIL OF ONTARIO (EDCO) BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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In February 2016 the AEDC's Gord Knowles was elected to the Economic Developers Council of Ontario's Board of Directors for a two-year term, the first person from northwestern Ontario to sit on that board since 2010. Gord was elected to chair the professional development committee, a committee he has been active in since its 2014 inception, on the eve of both Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the EDCO's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well as acting as a key liaison for northern and youth-related matters. Gord is also chairing the scholarship sub-committee, which awards three \$1,500 scholarships to EDCO members – the weighted preference to new and remote practitioners ensures it is highly sought after as it enters its third year. The board meets eight times in person annually, in various locations in Ontario, and the organization serves over 1,100 economic development and municipal members through networking, events, professional development and awareness campaigns.

## EDCO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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We continue to play an active role in working with the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) as they strategize relevant training and professional development sessions for the next two years.

Now being chaired by AEDC's Gord Knowles, we have been active in pushing for the unique needs of both northern and rural EDCO members, and been working on developing region specific programs that address the needs of rural communities, such as Aboriginal engagement and tourism development. Given it is time to update changing and growing membership, we will once again play an integral role in establishing an EDCO-wide members survey that catalogues needs and breaks down results by a region and experience.

The scholarship committee was successfully launched and now is a self-sustaining committee that requires just a few to operate.

One of the key objectives within the first year will be to hire and mentor a northern-based intern to promote northern economic development projects in collaboration with other provincial and regional like-minded groups, such as the EDCO Spring Symposium, a northern Ontario professional development conference to be held annually each May.



The committee is comprised of Gord Knowles (chair), Jennifer Ladouceur (vice-chair), Mislal Balogun, Rebecca Breedon, Myles Buck, Jonathon Condratto, Carlos Delgado, Meredith Forget, Eric McSweeney, Jim Miller, Deb Mountenay, Kelly Stahl and Mark Steffler, with ongoing support from EDCO's Executive Director Heather Lalonde & Past Presidents. A special thanks to past committee chairs John Regan and Alison Newton for their exceptional work in building a solid foundation for the P.D. Committee, and their continued involvement.

### **HEART OF THE CONTINENT PARTNERSHIP (by Chris Stromberg, Project Coordinator)**

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2015 was a very productive year for the Heart of the Continent Partnership. The year started with hiring a new coordinator and moving the organization's home base from Minneapolis into the Heart of the Continent to Atikokan Ontario. A grand launch of the new National Geographic geo-tourism website was formally launched in March at three locations: Duluth, Grand Portage, Minnesota and Thunder Bay, Ontario with a full media attendance and public turn out. Since formal launching HOCP has created a marketing team that will be fundraising and working with two Minnesota based firms on a formal global marketing campaign.

General membership meetings were held in June at Sunny Cove Camp in Fort Frances, Ontario and in October at Lutsen, Minnesota. In March HOCP hosted a Science Symposium in International Falls, which was very well attended and laid the seeds for a number of exciting new initiatives. A complementary Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Summit the previous day served to create and expand partnerships that will work towards sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities.

Key people and organizations have continued to move this partnership forward and we are proud to see what has been accomplished. Funding the operation and to take on all the opportunities that we foresee our organization as the ideal entity to tackle could stretch our operation funding and manpower. To that end, a re-organizational retreat was planned for February and a number of stakeholders attended to assess where we are at and where we want to be in the next couple years.

Along with continued fundraising for marketing campaign to promote our Geotourism Initiative we will be launching the new improved version of National Geographic, Traveltheheart geotourism site. It will have a new improved "Phase II" wide screen look, will make it easier to navigate and will improve mobile cell functionality as well. We are hoping that our on-going efforts to brand the area and will be adopted by all tourism organizations, communities and public lands within the border lakes region.

### **OACFDC YOUTH COMMITTEE**

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The OACFDC Youth Committee's future remains somewhat questionable. A number of variables exist for this, including the low number of youth involved in Community Futures, the rather 'revolving door' nature of their positions within CFs as interns and contracted positions, and the difficulty in establishing value to the CFs to allow time for youth to participate in these activities. Gord Knowles currently chairs this committee, and in 2016 plans to work with the OACFDC's new Communications Director and its Board and staff to evaluate its relevance and survey OACFDC members to assess needs and projects which might fit a new direction.

## PROFESSIONAL & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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AEDC's staff continued to develop their skills through additional professional development, in an effort to increase our capacity to assist clients and better our understanding of economic development as it relates to community building. In 2015 staff attended annual conferences for the Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC), Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO), the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC), and the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, as well as the Annual General Meeting of the North of Superior Tourism Association (NOSTA) in Nipigon. Staff attended meetings, conferences and professional development in locations including Thunder Bay, Fort Frances, Dryden, Kenora, Hamilton, Toronto, Stratford, Waterloo, Sault Ste. Marie, and northeastern Minnesota, among others.

In February 2016, Community Development Advisor Gord Knowles received the Economic Developers Council of Ontario's Young Professional Influencer of the Year award. The award, the first of its kind, was presented during the Governor General's Dinner during EDCO's Annual General Meeting in Toronto, and was based on the "impact of this individual's contributions on their peers, industry and/or their community, and their contributions to the advancement of economic development as a profession."



In 2015, Gord Knowles completed his Certificate in Economic Development, awarded jointly from the University of Waterloo and the Economic Developers Association of Canada. Joint-AEDC/Sno-Ho intern Katie Hannon attended Year 1 of the Economic Developers Course in Waterloo, and will be attending Year 2 in June 2016 as a part of her internship with NOHFC. Following a research paper and successful completion of the program she will attain her Certificate in Economic Development and begin the road to Ec.D designation. Staff will continue to attend seminars and courses designed to maintain their designations and build their skillsets, including webinars on Faasbank and other mandated software.

Staff of the Atikokan Employment Centre completed numerous training courses and professional development opportunities. Denine Richard attended course training in Job Find Talk; Communicating with Tact, Diplomacy & Professionalism Conference; Career Planning Coach; Resume Development Coach; Clear Writing Workshop; ASIST Training; Safe Food Handling; Conference for Women; Human Resources; Customer Service; and Communications. Cindy Wood completed Youth Job Connection (YJC) training, in addition to the aforementioned courses. Manager Brad Beyak completed Life Skills Training, YJC training and Canada-Ontario Job Grant Training.

### ATIKOKAN SNO HO CLUB (by Katie Hannon, Intern)

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This season the Atikokan Sno-Ho Snowmobile Club had the pleasure of continuing their contract for an Intern through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. A partnership was formed with the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation, the Atikokan Sno-Ho and OFSC District 17- NWOSTA to continue the contract into a second year. A stipulation of receiving the Year Two contract is to complete the Certificate in Economic Development offered through the University of Waterloo's Economic Development Program. This is a two- part national certification program consisting of Year 1 (Fundamentals of Community Economic Development) and Year 2 (Advancing Economic Development Opportunities), each involving of a one week course and an associated paper.

This season the snowmobile club participated in Hay Days Grass Drags in North Branch Minnesota on September 12-13, 2015. This event is put on by the Sno-Barons Snowmobile Club every year and sees snowmobile enthusiasts travel from all over North America to be there. The Club also participated in the Northern Tourism Summit hosted in Sault Ste. Marie on November 16-18. This is the second annual Northern Tourism Summit and this year they featured Product Development Symposiums with one being featured on snowmobiling. At both of these events we promoted the local club as well as riding in Northwestern Ontario; OFSC's District 17.

This season was another later start as we didn't receive the frost we needed in order to get the smaller crossings we have frozen. There was also a late start to snow as the majority of our trails were not open until mid-January. We then received warm weather in March that closed the trails earlier than expected. There was a small decrease in permit sales, bringing the club to just under 190 members. This does not include any multi-day permits, special event permits or the "Try Our Trails" promotion (which are free for Family Day Weekend). In the district we also saw a small decrease in permit sales of for classic and seasonal permits sold. This does not include any special events, multi-day permits or Try our Trails promotion.

The Atikokan Sno-Ho makes sure that not only touring riders have a great experience on our trails but that our local club members have the best possible season. We host many events throughout the season including Snowarama, which raised just over \$20,000 for Easter Seals and our annual Poker Derby & Rally Weekend, with over 70 riders joining us to Quetico North for lunch. This year we also had the first Presidents Ride, which travels the NWOSTA Wilderness Loop to cover the district. We had 16 riders start in Atikokan from Fort Frances, Thunder Bay and Atikokan, who travelled to Ignace for lunch before stopping in Sioux Lookout for the night. Picking up riders in Sioux Lookout, the next day consisted of stopping in Dryden to pick up a few more riders, stopping in Vermilion Bay for lunch, and carrying on to Kenora for the night. The third day took riders to Emo, with a stop in Nestor Falls for Lunch. The last day took riders back to Atikokan. From there, riders traveled the remaining distance to get home to their starting destinations. It will take each rider four days to get back to their starting destination, and they will cover 1,000 km of NWOSTA trails.

This season with our new groomer, we traded in our new tracks to receive narrower ones that suit our terrain better for grooming operations. We put on guarding over the windows on the new groomer for protection. We also received new windows in the chalet, from the Charleson Recreation Committee, after they were damaged in the spring time.

The Sno-Ho is committed to opening up our new loop, the White Otter Loop, every year to help increase tourism for the surrounding area. This helps to draw in visitors and provide them with an experience including a full day of riding and seeing the historic White Otter Castle (which is only accessible by snowmobile or boat).

The Atikokan Sno-Ho Club has accomplished a lot in the last year. With the hopefulness of continuing to grow the club would like to see an increase in volunteerism, outside markets (Minnesota & Manitoba) and permit sales.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## METRICS FOR SUCCESS (JAN 1 TO DEC 31 2015)

### Atikokan Economic Development Corporation

General Inquiries	216
In-Depth Counselling and Information Services Interviews	160
New CED Projects	1
Number of Community-Based Projects in Progress	77

### Atikokan Employment Centre

In-Person Visits	2,400
Electronic Visits	15,000

### Social Media Accounts

Website	12,037 Visitors	27,693 Page Views	
Twitter	105 Followers	25 Tweets	3,816 Impressions
Facebook	AEDC	106 Likes	29,416 Post Reach
	Tourism Atikokan	1,070 Likes	383,839 Post Reach
			29,385 Engaged *
			* from Aug 5-Dec 31 2015
	AEC	N.A.	

# LOCAL LOAN DISBURSEMENT

## SELF-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, LOANS & THE COMMUNITY

**Our mandate:** Working in partnership with the people of Atikokan and the surrounding areas, to generate and maintain permanent employment through the creation and support of self-employment initiatives and economic-based community projects.

The AEDC works with local residents to create and maintain jobs by:

- ◆ By providing access to a loan program;
- ◆ Providing technical and advisory support, such as help with their business plan, cash flow projections, staffing issues, training, etc.;



MATT WARREN, OWNER OF WARREN'S LONE PINE MARKET



- ❖ Working with the Town of Atikokan and community groups, planning to the future;
- ❖ Participating in the Ontario Self Employment Benefit Program.

The Self-Employment Benefit Program (funded by The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) was administered by our office and offered to residents within our service area. Although it was a very successful program, as it provided financial support and monitoring to new entrepreneurs engaging in business start-up, it was announced it would be discontinued in mid-2015, and wrapped up operations April 1, 2016. The AEDC was extremely proud to have been involved in this program, and is appreciative in the impact it created for local entrepreneurs; its loss creates a significant barrier moving forward locally and provincially.

### SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

SECTOR	YEAR ENDED DEC. 31/15	SINCE INCEPTION
Hospitality	--	7
Service	1	68
Tourism	--	6
Aquaculture	--	2
Manufacturing	--	11
Transportation	--	6
Retail	--	27
Forestry	--	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>133</b>

In 2015 the community welcomed the final successful completions of the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit program through the AEDC:

- Atikokan Handyman (Gary Gouliquer) *(right)*
- Oakridge Geological Consulting Corp. (Jennifer Gignac)
- Warren's Lone Pine Market (Matt Warren)
- K. Manns Bookkeeping (Karen Manns)
- Boulevard Hair Design (Tanya Stawychny) *(below)*



**CONGRATS AND  
BEST WISHES ON  
YOUR SUCCESS!**

## FROM A FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE...

It was a tremendous year for investments in our service area, as we disbursed more funds in 2015 than any previous year of the AEDC's existence, a testament to the upswing of the community and the role of the AEDC in community lending. While the number of loans remains stable, the average value of loans has increased dramatically as new entrepreneurs seek start-up financing, while young entrepreneurs are purchasing existing businesses. During 2015, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$1,116,076 towards new loans, up 74% from year previous, and only the second time the AEDC has disbursed in excess of \$1 million in loan funds. In total, 20 loans were refinanced, amalgamated and/or disbursed to clients in a wide range of sectors. We continue to work with traditional lenders to transition loan clients to their services as per our mandate, but uptake from those institutions has been a challenge.

Since 1988, Atikokan Economic Development Corporation has dispersed almost \$15 million in Atikokan and the surrounding region.

With the AEDC, five additional Community Futures Development Corporations within northwestern Ontario form a corporate pool for dispensing larger loans: Superior North (Terrace Bay), Rainy River Futures (Fort Frances), Greenstone EDC (Geraldton), Thunder Bay

Ventures and Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation (Kenora).

Atikokan currently has 12 of these regional investments totaling \$707,273 in that portfolio. This partnership allows the AEDC to consider investments in excess of \$250,000 by sharing the risk with five other partners (up to a maximum loan of \$500,000).

### BUSINESSES & JOBS CREATED/MAINTAINED VIA BUSINESS LOANS

YEAR	BUSINESSES STARTED	BUSINESSES MAINTAINED	JOBS CREATED	JOBS MAINTAINED
2010	4	8	11	40
2011	3	18	11	31
2012	5	8	13	6
2013	6	12	18	32
2014	8	11	19	33
2015	3	16	19	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>179</b>

### INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO BALANCE

YEAR	LOANS ISSUED	LOAN AMOUNT	REPAYMENTS	PORTFOLIO BALANCE
2011	26	\$988,900	\$776,059	\$3,890,331
2012	13	\$371,500	\$481,214	\$3,260,853
2013	20	\$468,378	\$499,314	\$2,942,597
2014	20	\$642,032	\$540,749	\$3,093,750
2015	20	\$1,116,076	\$468,806	\$3,629,099

All funding applications received by the AEDC are reviewed by our Community Investment Fund Committee for approval by the Board of Directors. This committee is comprised of up to

four members from the community at-large, and three members from the AEDC Board of Directors, all of whom have extensive business experience and a high regard for community building.

We gratefully acknowledge the following for the many volunteer hours throughout the year that they contribute: Dr. Ken Sawchuk (Chair), Elizabeth MacKay, Kim Cross, Jack Pierce, Tami Stinson and Elvin Rydberg.

### INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

SECTOR	AMOUNT OF LOANS ISSUED IN 2015	CURRENT # OF LOANS IN PORTFOLIO	CURRENT AMOUNT OF LOANS
Hospitality	\$160,000	7	\$441,542
Agriculture	--	1	\$34,933
Mining	\$75,000	2	\$153,127
Service	\$246,829	20	\$891,403
Tourism	\$4,647	5	\$261,107
Manufacturing	--	3	\$210,512
Transportation	\$50,100	7	\$369,818
Retail	\$539,500	17	\$1,111,008
Forestry	\$40,000	2	\$155,649
Research/Development	--	--	--
Culture & Arts	--	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,116,076</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>\$3,629,099</b>



#### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, more than 241 meetings and seminars were held at the AEDC offices by non-profit groups? And that doesn't include the Atikokan Bass Classic, who utilized the Board Room exclusively as their central headquarters from May 25 to August 31.

# Atikokan Chamber of Commerce

## ANNUAL REPORT

BY SAMANTHA BOYKO, PRESIDENT

The Chamber of Commerce has received a facelift in 2015, after receiving the resignation of long time Manager Jolene Wood early in the summer season, the Board of Directors hired a new manager; Ange Sponchia, who has focused her time on revamping the Chambers image in the community.

Ange has worked tirelessly on promoting the Chamber to the community, she has held numerous promotions throughout her first year with us as well the reinstatement of the Community Calendar, which for the first time ever included Coupons for participating members.

There were a few events held in 2015, the shop local program started off the promotions as well as Halloween Madness and Plaid Friday. The reinstatement of the Chambers Facebook page and Twitter account were a great hit, Ange has used these sites to promote local events and advertise a listing of winter hours for local restaurants.

Canada held a Federal Election last year and the Chamber invited all the party members' to come speak at our meetings throughout the fall leading up to the election, John Rafferty and Don Rusnak were the only two candidates to come speak to the Chamber Board.

The Tourist Bureau ran on reduced hours last summer, some repairs, maintenance and improvements were done to the facility itself with the help of the Municipality, a few updates will be undertaken again this year to refresh the facility.

The Bureau has a record of 514 visitors for July and August, this number is low as no records can be found for May and June of last year. The largest number of visitors recorded were from the United States as well as our fellow Canadians, we also saw tourists from Belgium, Australia and France.

The Chamber is once again gearing up for the opening of the Tourist Bureau this summer and is looking for volunteers to help run the facility along with the summer students this would enable us to keep the Bureau open for longer hours and/or seven days a week.

Ange has been busy promoting our annual awards gala which will be held on May 12<sup>th</sup>, we invite everyone to come out and celebrate those who were nominated and cheer for the winners with an Atikokan Family Feud event that is sure to be fun for all who participate.

The Atikokan Chamber of Commerce members and its Board of Directors would like to thank all those who took the time to nominate fellow Atikokanites and Businesses for awards and for taking the time to fill in the questionnaire's for the Family Feud event, the response has been incredible and we are forever grateful, without your participation this event would not be the success it is.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate those winners from the 2015 Awards Event and the sponsors who make this all possible;



Business Excellence Award - Sponsored by Rentech - **Atikokan Foodland**

Health & Safety Award - Sponsored by Ontario Power Generation - **The Outers Program**

Customer Service Award - Sponsored by Atikokan Economic Development Corp. - **Brittany Savoie**

Ambassador's Award - Sponsored by Tramin Limited - **Mike Ranta**

Not For Profit Excellence Award - Sponsored by Atikokan Employment Center - **The Sportsman's Conservation Club**

Widening Our World - Sponsored by Community Living Atikokan - **M & C Motors**

The Atikokan Chamber will be holding its Annual General Meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup>, we invite all interested parties to come out to the AGM and anyone interested in putting their name forward to sit on the Board of Directors can contact an existing Board member or Ange Sponchia for more information.

The Atikokan Chamber wishes to Thank all those business that support us and we look forward to supporting you in the coming year in any way we can.



**ONCE AGAIN A PACKED HOUSE WAS ON HAND UNDER THE TENT TO WATCH THE WEIGH-INS FOR THE 2015 ATIKOKAN BASS CLASSIC. THE ATIKOKAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WAS ONCE AGAIN PROUD TO BE A SPONSOR AND SUPPORTER OF THE BASS CLASSIC'S EFFORTS – WELL DONE TO THE VOLUNTEERS OF THIS HUGELY POPULAR, AWARD-WINNING INTERNATIONAL EVENT!**



# Atikokan Employment Centre

## ANNUAL REPORT

BY BRAD BEYAK, EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR

Another year of exceptional growth in Atikokan. Atikokan has experienced not only considerable growth in employment, but growth in accessibility to employment related services and the number of services available through the Atikokan Employment Centre.

The Atikokan Employment Centre, being supported provincially directly through the Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and Employment Ontario has been able to continue to expand our provision of top quality employment related services and supports. These services are not only designed for the underemployed and unemployed of our community and area, but are also designed to meet the needs of employers. I am now very confident in saying that the Atikokan Employment Centre is truly **not just the EI office anymore**. Rather, it is an essential community resource for employers, employees, students, the unemployed and underemployed looking to increase and improve their personal skills and abilities, or that of their work force.

In 2015/16, we had in excess of 2,400 in-person visits to the Atikokan Employment Centre's Resource Centre in addition to 15,000 electronic visits via our website. For those accessing our services via our website, 52,000 page views resulted with close to 53,000 actions being undertaken by those users. Over 23,000 page views were directly related to viewing information presented under the local jobs category. Most visitors accessed the website from Canada, with the most visiting from the Toronto, Hamilton, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Fort Frances areas. Know also that visitors to the Atikokan Employment Centre's website came from all continents and a variety of countries including the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Australia, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Moldova, Nigeria, Mexico, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, the Ukraine, Austria and Barbados (that's dedication, thinking about work in Barbados!). With respect to the days of the week, most visits to the website occurred Monday through Thursday. The most traffic on the website regularly occurs between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. Evenings are more popular with website users when compared directly to early morning hours. I would recommend that everyone visit our website at [employment.atikokaninfo.com](http://employment.atikokaninfo.com) to further find information about the Atikokan Employment Centre's programs and services.

The majority of "in-person visitors" to the Atikokan Employment Centre's resource centre required assistance with job search activities. These individuals are now welcomed in the Resource Centre by our newest employee, Michelle Gushulak who is competently and enthusiastically performing the Resource and Information Clerk duties. Know that each guest in our resource centre can look forward to receiving staff's assistance when creating or revising resumes, composing cover letters, submitting resumes to potential employers electronically, accessing the internet to search for jobs online, networking, further investigating Employment Ontario programs as well as when reviewing local and regional job postings in their search for appropriate employment.

In 2015/16 the Atikokan Employment Centre continued to host Service Canada's monthly visits to the community in our attempt to assist area residents with a variety of their needs. Those attending Service Canada's outreach visits typically have questions concerning their Employment Insurance claims, Canada Pension Plan benefits, Social Insurance Numbers/Cards or Old Age Security benefits. Demand for this service remains strong as the service is well attended on the second Tuesday (afternoons) and Wednesday (mornings) of each month.

The Atikokan Employment Centre continues to provide and facilitate participation in workshops and safety oriented awareness training including Job Search Strategies, Interviewing Skills, General Safety Awareness, Worker Health and Safety in 4 Steps, Supervisor Health and Safety in 5 Steps, WHMIS, Lock Out/Tag Out, Confined Space, Fall Protection, Traffic Control, Forklift Operation Training & Lift Truck Awareness Training, Chainsaw Safety Training, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Asbestos Awareness, Safe Work Practices, Excellence in Customer Service, Smart Serve and First Aid Training. In the previous fiscal year, the Atikokan Employment Centre provided support /facilitated involvement in over 275 course participations excluding those who completed Warehouse Hazardous Materials Information Systems Training. The Atikokan Employment Centre has also obtained the services of an online trainer who is able to provide a greater variety of online training on our behalf. This includes online training includes an assortment of health and safety training, workplace wellness training, leadership training, accessibility training and customer service training. Free access to this service is provided to all registrants with the Atikokan Employment Centre.

The Atikokan Employment Centre also continued to offer career exploration, vocational/career counseling, career planning, training workshops and training work placement opportunities. Assistance also continued to be provided to those wanting to access post-secondary education funded through Employment Ontario's Second Career program. Second Career is a program targeting unemployed individuals who have been laid off and who are wanting to complete post-secondary college level training lasting up to 2 years in duration. When this program is accessed, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities provides funding to individuals for their tuition, books, childcare and possibly living expenses while attending school. Over the last year, we have had considerable interest in this program with several local individuals accessing this program. Most inquiries regarding the Second Career program result from people's interest in pursuing Heavy Equipment Operator training. We are uncertain regarding the future direction of the Second Career program and how it will work in concert with the Ontario government's recent budget announcements concerning funding for post-secondary college level training.

With respect to other programs, we have seen some initiatives come to completion while others have been introduced. Specifically, the Atikokan Employment Centre's services related to the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit program ended. No longer is the Atikokan Employment Centre receiving funding to assist the unemployed with starting their own business.

In September 2015, programs related to the Youth Employment Fund (YEF) were officially ended. The Atikokan Employment Centre's services related to the YEF program were actually wrapped up somewhat earlier upon completion of the three remaining training work placements that were taking place in the community with local employers. However, this allowed time to fully implement a wind down plan that announced to participants, employers and other stakeholders the end of YEF program and related services being provided by the Atikokan Employment Centre.

About the same time that the Youth Employment Fund program was ending, the Atikokan Employment Centre was provided with funding by Employment Ontario/Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to offer services associated with the Youth Job Connection (YJC)



CANADIAN ARMED FORCES INFORMATION DISPLAY AT THE EMPLOYMENT EXPOSITION IN MARCH 2016.

Program. Youth Job Connection targets younger community members who are experiencing barriers with accessing the labour market. Specifically, the YJC program is designed to serve youth aged 15 to 29 who experience multiple and/or complex barriers to employment by providing more intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities. Our service under the YJC program includes the provision of paid pre-employment training to promote job-readiness, job matching and paid job placements, with placement supports for participants and hiring incentives for employers, mentorship services and education and work transitions supports. Moreover, Youth Job Connection actually consists of two components;

- a) **a year-round component**, which provides intensive employment supports for youth aged 15 to 29 who are not in employment, education or training and who experience multiple barriers to employment.
- b) **a summer component** – Youth Job Connection: Summer which provides summer, part-time and after-school job opportunities to high school students, aged 15 to 18, who are facing challenging life circumstances and may need support transitioning between school and work.

To date, there has been considerable interest in the Youth Job Connection program locally. Note that this program sees eligible participants completing up to 90 hours of pre-employment training for which they receive a stipend equivalent to being paid minimum wage. Pre-employment training activities undertaken through the YJC program can include fundamental job readiness skills workshops or activities, career development /career exploration workshops or activities, personal management (life) skills workshops or activities, job attainment skills workshops or activities, employment-related- skills workshops or activities and lastly job maintenance and career advancement skills workshops or activities. What training is completed by participants is customizable dependent on their own specific needs.

As of the last week of March, 2016 we have 16 individuals currently participating in the Youth Job Connection Program. We are excited to assisting these individuals with moving forward in their careers with the employers in our area. Specifically, we will be continuing to seek out and request that employers participate in the YJC program by hosting a suitable work training placements for YJC participants. Be aware that as part of the employer participation in the YJC program, the Atikokan Employment Centre can provide a substantial reimbursement for wages being paid to participant trainees. Thank you to Denine Richard for heading up this program at the Atikokan Employment Centre. We have full confidence in Ms. Richard's abilities to work with the youth in the community in their attempt to further their personal marketability to employers and further expand their employment potential in the future.

The Atikokan Employment Centre has also been selected and provided with funding to deliver another program, Youth Job Link which is targeted at younger workers. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities indicates that Youth Job Link is available to all eligible youth, including students, focusing on those who face few barriers to employment (i.e.; youth who are self-motivated, self-directed and require minimal assistance finding employment). The program offers a range of non-intensive "light touch" employment services that offer young people an opportunity to gain career management skills, exposure to career exploration activities, and assistance with finding employment, including summer jobs and part-time employment during the school year. We are pleased that Cindy Wood from the Atikokan Employment Centre will be heading up this initiative in the current year. Moreover, we are confident in her ability to make strong ties with the youth in the community who will access this program during their employment search activities and when acquiring appropriate employment opportunities.

Over the last year the Atikokan Employment Centre was also responsible for assessing and administering employer applications to the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant (COJG) as part of funding provided by Employment Ontario and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. In the initial full year of the COJG program one local employer, was approved



to receive financial support through the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant. These monies were used to support training for their employees. Local employers had limited access to the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant as the result of total funds designated to our area. I am pleased to announce that funding for employers using the Canada Ontario Job Grant has increased over ten fold in our area in the current fiscal year. It is hoped that employers will make full use of this program in the current fiscal year to further the knowledge, skills and abilities of their workforce. Know that using the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant employers may be able to access 83.3% of the cost of training up to a maximum of \$10,000 per employee for training.



In the current year, the Atikokan Employment Centre was also responsible for assisting in pursuing, coordinating and managing a considerable number of training placements for clients with the associated incentives provided to a number of local employers. Using funding provided by Employment Ontario, the Atikokan Employment Centre was able to facilitate the initiation of 17 training work placements

in the current fiscal year. Close to \$40,000 was provided to employers in wage reimbursements associated with hosting work training placements.

Building stronger relationships with local and regional employers, social service providers and First Nation groups in our catchment area has continued to be a focus of our efforts. As the result, the majority of employers in our area regularly contact the Atikokan Employment Centre regarding their human resource needs and employee skill development.

We have also visited Lac La Croix and Seine River First Nations to promote our services and we look forward to further developing our relationship with each community. Specifically, we are looking forward to the coming year as we are plan to have resources designated to each community with respect to our services. Having worked directly with community leaders and employees that include a number of former Atikokanites has facilitated in being able to build stronger ties with these communities. Thank you to Becky Groulx, Rachel White, Dave Maynard, Rachel Kabatay, Tyrone Tenniscoe and Dan Warren for their prior and ongoing assistance and support in our efforts to provide a higher level of service in these relatively remote communities.

The Atikokan Employment Centre in conjunction Atikokan Adult Literacy, Northwest Literacy and the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board was able to host sessions designed to increase the understanding of employer training needs and the apprenticeship process. Local employers had the opportunity to provide information to us first hand regarding their ongoing training needs and voice their opinions with respect to the Ontario apprenticeship process. Events were well attended and information/feedback provided ultimately is provided to the Provincial Government.

We also continue to be somewhat of a central point for local social service providers to exchange information regarding their programs and services. The Atikokan Employment Centre continues to coordinate and host these “monthly” inter-agency meetings between area care providers. Cindy Wood at the Atikokan Employment Centre continues to coordinate these monthly meetings that allow attendees a forum to share information and provide details regarding programs. Cindy Wood is sincerely thanked for leading this monthly forum, coordinating presentations and arranging for the lunches that are provided to all attendees.

Most recently, the Atikokan Employment Centre in collaboration with the Atikokan High School hosted an Employment Exposition. The exposition not only provided an opportunity for

employers to discuss and provide information to prospective employees but also served to highlight employer services, business and products. Again education providers and recruiters were seen at this event. We are hoping to further develop this exposition, which may result in the Atikokan Employment Centre partnering with other community organizations interested in coincidently seasonal tradeshow. Thank you to Denine Richard from the Atikokan Employment Centre and Mr. Ed Ojala from the Atikokan High School/Rainy River District School Board for working together and making this event a reality.

With respect to employee training, Denine Richard and Cindy Wood both have obtained Career Coach Certification Training provided through the University of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Transition Centre. As I am writing this report they are attending the last course required to obtain these certifications. Brad Beyak also successfully complete a two week Life Skills Coach Certification course provided by the YWCA out of Toronto and held at Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Training and Education Institute in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Denine Richard has also elected to register in the Office Administration Diploma program at Confederation College and is currently completing course work on part-time basis. Most recently, Ms. Richard has been working on improving her computer skills through the completion of course work designed to increase her understanding of Microsoft Excel, a spreadsheet software application. Employees also attended training in Kenora, Dryden and Thunder Bay provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board, and Northwest Literacy, respectively. These sessions were designed to improve staff's understanding of newly introduced programs and further build on the quality of services being provided.

Lastly, we have been able to further improve our working/public spaces throughout the current year. We have also have updated a number of computers and their peripherals in our office spaces, and purchased computers to provide offsite services and better manage and store the data/information we collect and create. We continue update our meeting spaces and presentation abilities to not only enhance the aesthetics and safety of our environment, but also further improve the appropriateness and flexibility of our business environment. Please note the purchase of new tables, projection systems and chairs that allow us to quickly transform meeting spaces into an appropriate training environments.



Staffing at the Atikokan has remained relatively consistent over the last year with Cindy Wood continuing in her role as a Case Manager but Denine Richard opted to leave her position as the Resource and Information Clerk and is now employed with us as a Case Manager. As the result of this change, Michelle Gushulak agreed to join our team in December, 2015 and is employed as the Resource and Information Clerk. In the last year, we also were able to hire a post-secondary student (Kim Kennedy) to assist during the summer months. She assisted us greatly especially at times of vacations.

Thanks to Denine Richard, Cindy Wood and Michelle Gushulak for their efforts and dedication in continuing our innovative approach to enhancing employment related services in our area. Thank you also to the staff both the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for assisting and supporting us in attaining our goals. Know that this year has been a huge success for the Atikokan Employment Centre and it is the first time in the Employment Centre's history that we have been able to document meeting our assistant service goals assigned to us by the MTCU and use all funding available for services. In the end, this funding is used to support workers and employers in our area.

# Workshops & Seminars



Both the AEDC and the Atikokan Employment Centre are committed to offering ongoing education for our clients and residents within the communities we serve. We encourage suggestions from you if there are topics of interest that you would like to know more about. Last year, our organizations hosted information and training seminars on the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ◆ Resume Building Workshop  | ◆ WHMIS Certification                  |
| ◆ Self-Employment Benefit Workshops                               | ◆ Interview Skills Workshop            |
| ◆ Lockout/Tagout  | ◆ Traffic Control Person               |
| ◆ Cover Letter Writing Workshop                                   | ◆ Lockout/Tagout Courses               |
| ◆ Fall Protection Awareness                                       | ◆ Confined Space Awareness             |
| ◆ Confined Space Entry  | ◆ Asbestos Awareness                   |
| ◆ Safe Work Practices   | ◆ Lift Truck Awareness                 |
| ◆ Excellence in Customer Service                                  | ◆ Oasis Training                       |
| ◆ Transportation of Dangerous Goods                               | ◆ HR Download Training                 |
| ◆ #BuildYourBrand with Storytelling                               | ◆ Selling Etsy                         |
| ◆ PARO Networking   | ◆ Your Social Media Performance Review |
| ◆ Corporate and Personal Branding                                 | ◆ Preparing for a Tradeshow            |
| ◆ Human Resources for Small Business                              | ◆ 5 Top SEO Tips for Entrepreneurs     |
| ◆ Google Analytics  | ◆ Record of Employment on the Web      |
| ◆ Branding and Corporate Identity                                 | ◆ Digital Marketing Strategy           |
| ◆ Measuring Success with Analytics Software                       |  |
| ◆ Succession Planning for Small Business Owners                   |  |
| ◆ Employment Insurance: Special Benefits for Self-Employed People |  |



Regular users of the AEDC Facilities include:

- |                            |   |                          |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| • Atikokan Minor Hockey    | • Ringette                                    | • Rainbow Centre Daycare |
| • Atikokan Figure Skating  | • Sno-Ho Club                                 | • Path of the Paddle     |
| • Chamber of Commerce      | • Relay for Life                              | • Family Health Team     |
| • Canadian Hearing Society | • Hunter Safety/Firearms Course Certification |                          |

As well as meetings, seminars, training and conferences hosted by the AEDC, AEC, Town of Atikokan and numerous non-profits, for-profits and government services.

# Meet the Staff

## Atikokan Economic Development Corporation

### **Executive Director**

**Garry McKinnon**

**B. Comm.**

*General management responsibilities including personnel, financial planning and management, business planning, government relations, technical and advisory services to businesses and organizations.*

### **Community Development Advisor**

**Gord Knowles**

**B.A., Ec.D, CEcD, APEC-CBC**

*Business planning and counseling, loan disbursement and compliance, CED projects, tourism marketing and promotion, liaison with community groups and organizations.*

### **Office Administrator**

**Annette Bryk**

*Contract administration, financial recordkeeping, loans administration, benefits administration, official minutes of board and committee meetings.*

### **Administrative Assistant**

**Brigitte Tribe**

*Reception and customer relations, banking, correspondence, recordkeeping, community information.*



## Atikokan Employment Centre

### **Counsellor & General Manager**

**Brad Beyak**

**B.A., H.B.P.E., MSc., R.Kin**

*Employment program development, employment counseling and community outreach.*

### **Case Managers**

**Cindy Wood**

**Denine Richard**

*Employment Centre client file management, resume and cover letter assistance, data management.*

### **Resource & Information Clerk**

**Michelle Gushulak**

*Employment Centre reception, maintain job board, resume and cover letter assistance.*

## AEDC's In-Office Partners

### **Chamber of Commerce Office Manager**

**Ange Sponchia**

### **Atikokan Sno-Ho Club/AEDC Joint Intern**

**Katie Hannon**

**B.T.M.**

### **Heart of the Continent Partnership Coordinator**

**Chris Stromberg**



# Words of Gratitude

An employee of over twenty years left the community and therefore left the AEDC in 2015. Paula Sanders worked her first day for the organization on November 1, 1988, and toiled diligently from that time, with the exception of a brief interruption to pursue another career interest. At the time of her exit for that period in 2002, councillor and board member Charlie Viddal wrote the following poem:

## Paula

About the Paula we have known,  
And of the work she did each day,  
Knowing how and what to say.  
As with us her thoughts she'd share,  
Selecting words with utmost care.  
The sparkle in her eyes, the gleam,  
Excitement for some brand new scheme,  
She'd lay it out for all to hear,  
And get it done we'd have no fear.  
The patience that she'd have with us,  
Without creating any fuss.  
She'd give us things to do, but then,  
We'd need reminding once again.  
A smile we'd see light up her face,  
Befitting one with poise and grace,  
How gentle that reminder came,  
The best that words could ever frame.  
She'd find the kindest things to say,  
No matter what would cloud the day.  
With cheerful voice away she'd sweep,  
The nasty thoughts that hinder sleep.  
And put us on a proper path,  
Bereft of anger, hate, and wrath.  
Now from us she takes her leave,  
Her magic she'll for others weave.  
To us she leaves the lessons learned,  
And throws the torch she brightly burned.

Although several years have passed since it was written, and Charlie is no longer with us, the sentiments expressed in his poem are no less appropriate. It captures Paula's commitment and dedication as well as her passion for the community and her zeal for life. These characteristics made Paula an outstanding employee and she is missed.

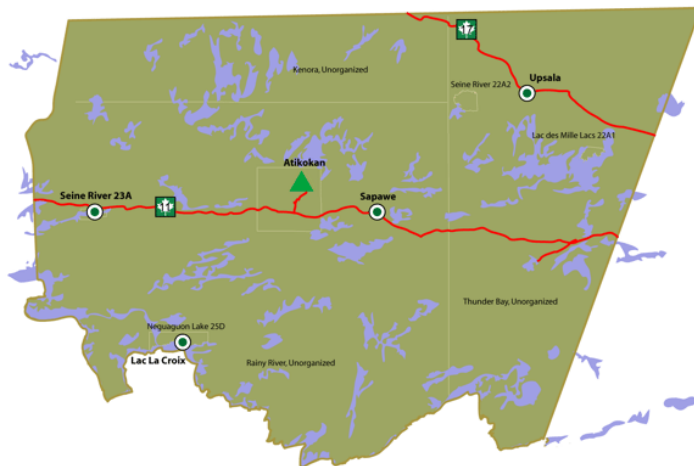
# AEDC Board of Directors

We wish to thank the Board of Directors of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation, whose tireless dedication and commitment - to not just the AEDC, but to our community as a whole - allows us to operate as an effective organization.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b>JIM TURNER</b><br><b>CHAIR</b>                   | • <b>TAMI STINSON</b><br><b>VICE-CHAIR</b>              |
| • <b>SAMANTHA BOYKO</b><br><b>SECRETARY/TREASURER</b> | • <b>DAVE ELDER</b><br><b>PAST CHAIR</b>                |
| • <b>ROB FERGUSON</b><br><b>TOWN COUNCIL REP</b>      | • <b>HAROLD MOSELY</b><br><b>TOWN COUNCIL REP</b>       |
| • <b>DAN SYNCOX</b><br><b>UPSALA R.D.A. REPE</b>      | • <b>DARCY WHITECROW</b><br><b>SEINE RIVER F.N. REP</b> |
| • <b>DAVID BJORKMAN</b>                               | • <b>DAVID HOMER</b>                                    |
| • <b>DENNIS BROWN</b>                                 | • <b>DR. KEN SAWCHUK</b>                                |
| • <b>JACK PIERCE</b>                                  | • <b>MARY MAKARENKO</b>                                 |
| • <b>ROBERT POTTS</b>                                 | • <b>SHANNON RIDING</b>                                 |
| • <b>VIC PROKOPCHUK, BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS</b>        |   |

## OUR SERVICE AREA

The AEDC offers its services to the residents of Upsala, Lac La Croix, Lac Des Mille Lacs and Seine River. We continue to strengthen our relationship with these outlying areas, as we attend meetings together and finance projects within their communities.



Map courtesy of [www.oacfdc.com](http://www.oacfdc.com)

***DID YOU KNOW? The AEDC's service area is over 2,400 square kilometers!***

# Looking Ahead

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR...

For the first time ever, the AEDC has secured a multi-year agreement with Canada. This means operational funding is secure for three years, allowing the corporation to take a longer term approach to projects and activities.



On November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the board and staff participated in a strategic planning process facilitated by Tom Little of CMCS Consulting Services. Tom graphically depicted the 2016-18 strategic directions like this:

1. Infrastructure includes housing, campgrounds, recreational and educational facilities and serviced land. The importance of the infrastructure of Atikokan and area, including aesthetics, cannot be overstated when it comes to economic development. The more extensive the infrastructure, and the higher its quality and appeal, the better it will support business development.
2. Atikokan and area have many attributes and attractions that appeal to tourists. The lakes and rivers make it a logical destination for people seeking the outdoor experience, as do Quetico Provincial Park and other sites like White Otter Castle and the former Steep Rock Iron Mine property.
3. Atikokan needs businesses that are not currently available to it, such as a drug store, and offers a platform for entrepreneurial thinking to create others. Ideas put forward include creating feeder industries for the large firms in the area and encouraging small scale farming.
4. Ensure the ongoing viability of the organization through the development of a succession plan for AEDC staff.

The staff of the AEDC have been charged with the implementation of these strategic priorities, which will be monitored by the Board of Directors.

# Reaching the AEDC

COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS? IDEAS?  
HERE'S HOW TO GET A HOLD OF US



(807) 597-2757

1-888-334-AEDC



214 Main Street West



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[www.facebook.com/AtikokanEDO](https://www.facebook.com/AtikokanEDO)

[www.twitter.com/AtikokanEDO](https://www.twitter.com/AtikokanEDO)

[www.facebook.com/TourismAtikokan](https://www.facebook.com/TourismAtikokan)

[www.visitatikokan.ca](http://www.visitatikokan.ca)

