

# 2013 Annual Report

## Atikokan Economic Development Corporation



### **“PROGRESS IN ACTION”**

Atikokan Generating Station upgrades to operate on biomass



# Town of Atikokan

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April 30, 2014

## Thank You from the Mayor and Council

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

As we all know economic development is one of our main issues in Atikokan as we need more jobs and people to pay for the services local residents want and deserve. The Atikokan Economic Development Office has certainly helped in this area.

During the past year we continued to see progress with the conversion of the OPG plant to wood biomass, the preparation by Rentech of the old Fibratech facility to make wood pellets, and the construction by Resolute of the former site at Sapawe to make a lumber mill. In addition the Osisko Hammond Reef Gold project continues to move forward with the EA process. We thank the AEDC office for their efforts in helping all these initiatives.

Other services such as having access to capital through the Community Investment Fund, and administering the Atikokan Employment Centre are valuable services the AEDC provides for Atikokan and area residents.

Also AEDC efforts 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 this past year to develop strategic plans that enable both groups to move forward in the same direction. We are especially pleased with the efforts of the AEDC in attempting to get more seniors' apartments in Atikokan as well as assisting with other services for seniors.

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

Yours truly

Dennis Brown  
Mayor





# Atikokan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
A Community Futures Development Corporation

**April 30, 2014**

It was once again a very busy year for the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation, as the community continues to move forward.

Atikokan's large-scale projects continue to show promise and all are progressing forward, albeit at different rates. Ontario Power Generation's Atikokan station is about to reach the conclusion of its transformation to utilizing biomass fuel, and the project was a major boom for businesses and the dozens of residents who have been employed in the upgrades; the AEDC will look to AECON, the firm in charge of the project, for their feedback on what the community did and did not do successfully, so we are ready for the next large project that comes our way.

Atikokan Renewable Fuels was purchased by Rentech, and the upgrades at the old Fibratech mill are almost complete; wood is piling up, jobs are being posted and the project appears to be moving ahead as planned. While market instability and consolidation efforts have hampered both Osisko Mining and Bending Lake Iron Ore's efforts to move into operational status, there is a growing sense of hope it will proceed sooner rather than later. Resolute Forest Products continues to construct a mill site at Sapawe that will provide high-wage employment and valuable spin-off opportunities in logging and hauling; given the forestry industry was all but dead less than five years ago, it's been a remarkable turnaround, and a testament to the belief private industry has in Atikokan and its future.

In 2013, the AEDC and Town continued to work as a cohesive unit with regular joint meetings and collaboration on a number of projects, as well as short- and long-term strategic planning. We continue to try and 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.

We continue to strive to better the whole of our catchment area; in particular efforts in Upsala have continued to strengthen thanks to the collaborative efforts of their dedicated volunteers, as well as the Employment Centre and AEDC staff. Both the AEDC and the Employment Centre have worked hard to ensure there are programs and services available in the entire service area, and the communities have responded positively. First Nations have a strong voice on our Board, and our relationship with Seine River is at its best in years.

I am pleased to extend my most sincere appreciation to all of the volunteers and staff who have committed countless hours to ensuring 2013 was a successful year for the AEDC.

Dave Elder,  
AEDC Chair



# Committee Reports

## INVOLVEMENT AND UPDATES

### ATIKOKAN BIOMASS GENERATING STATION



OPG is very near to completion of the \$170-million Atikokan GS biomass conversion project. Atikokan has benefited from the many construction jobs that created employment for locals as well as travelers from outside of the community. Economic benefits have been realized by Atikokan retailers during construction and most rental accommodations have been full. Initial test burns and commissioning of the converted plant are anticipated in 2014.

### FOREST PRODUCTS

Atikokan Renewable Fuels was purchased by Rentech Inc. of Los Angeles, California. The new owners continued with the redevelopment of the former Pluswood Mfg. facility into a wood pellet manufacturing plant. Rentech has a contract to provide 45,000 tonnes of wood pellets to the Atikokan Generating Station annually. All surplus production will be railed to Quebec City for shipping to Great Britain. The pellet plant is expected to be in full operation in 2014.



*The first truck of wood unloaded at Rentech, 2014.*

Resolute Forest Products announced their intention to construct a \$60 million sawmill on the former Atikokan Forest Products site. Much of 2013 was consumed with site cleanup and preparation for construction in 2014/15. A planer will be the first phase of construction, followed by the construction of the mill and dry kilns. In the fourth quarter of 2014 the Atikokan mill will start to receive rough, dried lumber from the Resolute Ignace mill for planing and shipping. By mid-2015, lumber production will commence at Resolute Atikokan.

## MINING AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

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This sector continues to show a great deal of promise for our region. The AEDC continues to attend the annual Prospectors and Developers of Canada convention to represent our communities and gather industry intelligence. We work with the Town of Atikokan to market the community to enterprises that supply and service the mining industry.

## PATH OF THE VOYAGEUR (by the Path of the Voyageur Committee)

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An extremely dedicated group of volunteers have been working on the Path of the Voyageur Project for several years now. The goal for that committee was to promote our region and its features, the history, and present day activities.

Currently, two very strong tourism initiatives are developing within our region: The Heart of The Continent Project and Trans Canada Trail. Both have excellent resources and committed participation from the communities involved. Duplication is costly and redundant. For this reason, The Path of the Voyageur committee have recently disassembled, confident that those committees are well positioned to meet the original objectives of the project.

The Board Members of The Path of the Voyageur Committee have worked tirelessly on this initiative: Robin and Catherine Reilly (before they relocated from Atikokan), Angela Sharbot, Jon Lewis, Linda Braun, Mayor Dennis Brown, Derek Kowalchuk, Garry McKinnon, and Paula Sanders.

Particularly, we acknowledge the Chairperson, Marlene Davidson, who has been such a strong advocate of this undertaking. She has travelled and made many, many presentations. Marlene has placed hundreds of phone calls, reviewed numerous funding applications, attended too many meetings to count, and took every opportunity she could to promote this concept. We thank Marlene for her incredible persistence. Also, congratulations that this endeavor has become a part of larger projects that have great momentum.

The committee acknowledges the communities, steering committee and government representatives that have participated during the past years, both monetarily and with staff involvement.

We wish the best of luck to the Heart of the Continent and Trans Canada Trail projects, and will continue to support those strategies in every way possible.

## PATH OF THE PADDLE

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The Path of the Paddle is a regional tourism initiative comprised of representatives from Atikokan, Thunder Bay, Dryden, and Kenora. The Atikokan Committee is comprised of seventeen community volunteers (Chairperson Michelle Savoie), and we also have representative on the Regional Chapter Committee (Vic Prokopchuk and Paula Sanders). It is a



part of the Trans Canada Trail, which is one of the world's longest networks of multi-use recreational trails. Once fully connected it will stretch nearly 24,000km from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic, linking nearly 1,000 communities and all Canadians. The goal is to have this continuous route developed coast to coast by 2017.

The Path of the Paddle is an incorporated, non-profit Association responsible for over 900km of that trail. Board



Members and local volunteers are working diligently to have a continuous connection from Thunder Bay to the Manitoba border. The Path of the Paddle follows the 'original highways' and allows paddlers to experience northwestern Ontario's beautiful wilderness, communities, and parks. The amazing volunteers are paddling and meeting with communities/stakeholders/aboriginal partners to finalize the route, clearing portages, planning and building bridges, and designing signage. The Ministry of Natural Resources is providing extensive map work and guidance for the water route as an in-kind contribution.

This committee is also concentrating on the development of promotional items for the trail to educate the general public about safe travel within our beautiful area, and to generate revenue for ongoing expenses. A strong marketing strategy will be implemented to attract enthusiasts worldwide.

Positive impacts of this initiative include capacity building, collaboration, national pride, job creation, and special events planning. Local outfitters, guides and camp operators along the trail will see increased traffic. Small businesses such as canoe and kayak manufacturers, restaurants, souvenir stores, hotels will all benefit from this undertaking. When travelers come to our trail, they will also take in other tourism destinations such as Old Fort William, the White Otter Castle, and many other historical, cultural, & geographical gems in our area.

The project is an incredible celebration to connect 33 million Canadians of all ages to our outdoors, active living, heritage and traditional ways of travel.

"AEDC has assisted the new organization, Path of the Paddle Association, with much needed guidance and partnering for funding applications, fulfilling executive role for core steering committee, providing meeting space and many other administrative duties for the project to move forward. This initiative includes building and promoting the trail system in Northern Ontario that is a part of the Trans Canada Trail – 24,000 km from the Atlantic to the Pacific; a very exciting undertaking!"

- Ange Sponchia, PoP Consultant

## HEART OF THE CONTINENT

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.

"Atikokan and the AEDC have been an immeasurable help in getting the Heart of the Continent Geo-tourism Initiative off the ground.

AEDC staff have been a part of the Design Team for the Initiative from the start and can be counted on for their knowledge and hard work."

- Frank Jewell, HOCP Chair  
Commissioner, St. Louis County, Minnesota

2013 proved to be a very eventful year, as we took a central role in the design and implementation of a cross-border geo-tourism website collaboration with National Geographic. The user-driven, open-funded \$250,000 project will highlight the natural geography of the region and the events, people and places that make it a unique tourism destination, and is slated to launch in late 2014. We hold a prominent position on the project Design Team, and are being relied upon heavily as a main

Canadian connection on the project, in addition to spear-heading a media relations subcommittee. During 2014, we expect to see a number of training sessions with representatives from National Geographic, leading up to the launch of the website [traveltheheart.org](http://traveltheheart.org) in late 2014. To date the project has received attention from media outlets, politicians and the commercial sector in both the US and Canada.

Further involvement continues in the Heart of the Continent; a local steering committee directs local representatives to keep apprised of the work of the group. We were successful in assisting to bring in Fort Frances to the committee and the geo-tourism project; it is hoped their involvement will allow us to focus on getting local content to the site. Quarterly meetings in Canada and the US are regularly attended, 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. It is hoped that Atikokan will secure the rights to host a quarterly meeting in 2014; the last such occurred in 2011 when the Heart of the Continent had less than a dozen members – today over 75 are active in the organization. None of this would have been possible without the vision of former Quetico Superintendent Robin Reilly, who was instrumental in the formation and the progression from a small special-interest group to one that pushes for environmental, economic and social reform.



Thanks to local steering committee members for the efforts this past year: Dennis Brown, Marlene Davidson, Linda Braun, Chris Stromberg, Garry McKinnon and Gord Knowles.

### SOFTWARE PROCUREMENT & DEVELOPMENT (by OACFDC Board of Directors)

Ontario CFDCs extend a special thanks to the AEDC Board for making Garry McKinnon available to us to oversee the provincial MIS Committee. Garry has masterfully kept the group's technology discussions and major software project on track through the research phase, the selection of suppliers, and now the development, testing, implementation and training on state of the art software. His tenacity and laser focus throughout the project has had a lasting impact on how CFDCs manage their organizations. Thank you to the AEDC!

### 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!

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

The Self-Employment Benefit Program (funded by The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) is administered by our office and offered to residents within our service area. It is a very successful program, as it provides financial support and monitoring to new entrepreneurs engaging in business start-up.

““We were very impressed with the level of professionalism experienced when dealing with the AEDC staff on the Atikokan housing studies and other engagements. We were pleased to have had the opportunity to work with a progressive and forward thinking organization that clearly has the best interests of the community in mind.”

- Franco Crupi, Economic Developer  
Crupi Consulting Group

### SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

SECTOR	YEAR ENDED DEC. 31/13	SINCE INCEPTION
Hospitality	--	7
Service	2	63
Tourism	--	6
Aquaculture	--	2
Manufacturing	1	11
Transportation	--	6
Retail	--	26
Forestry	--	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>127</b>



## BUSINESSES & JOBS CREATED/MAINTAINED

YEAR	BUSINESSES STARTED	BUSINESSES MAINTAINED	JOBS CREATED	JOBS MAINTAINED
2008	15	12	21	82
2009	3	12	4	42
2010	4	8	11	40
2011	3	18	11	31
2012	5	8	13	6
2013	6	12	18	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>233</b>



"Working with the AEDC and participating in the SEB program has helped me to prepare a comprehensive business plan and provided me with many new business contacts and resources. I appreciated the help that the AEDC staff were able to provide in finding answers to my questions and helping me find information and financial resources through a variety of programs. The income provided through the SEB program has given me the extra time and resources needed to take my business from an idea to a functioning entity. I look forward to working with the AEDC again in the future.

Elizabeth Fiore, Calm Lake Bread Co.

## FROM A FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE...

During 2013, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$468,378 towards new loans. In total, 20 loans were refinanced, amalgamated and/or disbursed.

Since 1988, Atikokan Economic Development Corporation has dispersed more than \$12.7 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 \$670,524 in that portfolio. This partnership allows the AEDC to consider investments in excess of \$150,000 by sharing the risk with five other partners (up to a maximum loan of \$500,000).

"The assistance I received from AEDC was crucial in purchasing my business in 2005. This in turn preserved nine existing jobs in Atikokan. I must commend the AEDC staff and board for the excellent work they are doing."

Richard Wood, M&C Motors Ltd.

## INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO BALANCE

YEAR	LOANS ISSUED	LOAN AMOUNT	REPAYMENTS	PORTFOLIO BALANCE
2009	16	\$489,489	\$329,159	\$4,315,278
2010	18	\$411,335	\$421,120	\$3,677,491
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

"The AEDC has helped a lot. They kept my business alive for more than a year. I was able to buy tools and machinery to make me competitive. The staff showed me how to make a business plan, how to keep my books, so I knew if I was winning or losing. They showed me that I should direct my energy in another direction and that is the other part of my business. I could not make a go of making furniture, but doing fences, making play centres for children, doing decks, house reno's and a few labour jobs can keep me going. I have a lot more experience in making a stronger business. Thank You."

**Dave Hanson, Handcrafted by Dave Hanson**



All funding applications received by the AEDC are reviewed by our Community Investment Fund Committee. This committee is comprised of up to four members from the community at large, and three members from the AEDC Board, all of whom have extensive business experience.

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.

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation lost an iconic member of the Corporation's Investment Fund Committee on November 22, 2013. Cecil Leif was a stalwart member of this important committee for over twenty-five years. His down to earth perspective enabled Cecil to always consider the human side of any business plan the committee considered. He always kept focus on the reasons Canada provided investment funds to the AEDC, and his entrepreneurial spirit enabled him to appreciate the passion our investment clients had for their business concept. Cecil, you will be missed!

## INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

SECTOR	AMOUNT OF LOANS ISSUED IN 2013	CURRENT # OF LOANS IN PORTFOLIO	CURRENT AMOUNT OF LOANS
Hospitality	\$137,278	7	\$374,109
Agriculture	--	1	\$34,933
Mining	\$75,000	2	\$175,195
Service	\$205,100	17	\$647,538
Tourism	\$25,000	5	\$264,191
Manufacturing	--	4	\$252,822
Transportation	--	8	\$339,198
Retail	\$26,000	12	\$703,451
Forestry	--	4	\$151,160
Research/Development	--	1	--
Culture & Arts	--	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$468,378</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>\$2,942,597</b>



### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2013, more than 235 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 as their central headquarters during the summer months.



# Atikokan Chamber of Commerce

## ANNUAL REPORT

BY MIKE MCKINNON, PRESIDENT

The Chamber of Commerce enjoyed some modest success in 2013-14, and looks forward to another year of slow but steady progress for Atikokan.

We hosted four significant events during the year. In September, we welcomed Northwest Legal Clinic lawyer Sallie Hunt for a well-attended presentation on the changes coming to the non-profit corporations act in Ontario. And in February, we hosted Roger Barber of Resolute Forest Products, Bill Curtis of Rentech, and Darcey Bailey of OPG, in an informal evening gathering we called 'Atikokan Welcomes Back the Forest Industry'. We learned a lot about all three projects.

We also hosted a pair of retail events, an Atikokan showcase in September, and a Christmas Crackers photos with Santa event in late November.

Our membership was down slightly, at 70.

Our annual meeting was highlighted by an invigorating presentation by Thunder Bay speaker Sandi Boucher, who also hosted a special workshop the next day, 'Empowered by Change: Believe. Learn. Act.'

Congratulations to our award winners: Picture This Home Décor (Business Excellence Award), Chuck Learning (Entrepreneur of the Year), Community Living Atikokan, (Health & Safety Award), Ashley McEvoy (Customer Service Award), and the Atikokan Lions Club (Ambassador's Award).

The awards are made possible by our generous sponsors: Ontario Power Generation, 93.1 The Border radio, the AEDC, TBayTel, and Tramin Industrial Services. Thank you to all of them.

Again, our biggest activity as an organization was operating the tourist bureau, which we do in partnership with the Town. Chamber manager Jolene Wood secured grant support to hire four students working as ambassadors this past summer. Visitation was up slightly somewhat this year; 3,500 travelers signed in. About two-thirds of them were Canadians; over one-quarter of them were Americans.

The bureau is Internet-connected, and we have also established a Wi-Fi hot spot for travelers, so are able to serve them 24/7 from Victoria Day to mid-September. This also allows us to use the bureau as a Chamber office.

Earlier this year we went back for another order of the I Heart Atikokan shopping bags, thanks to the support of Atikokan Foodland.

None of these things would have been possible without our partnership with the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation. It provides low-cost office space, helps us employ our manager, and continues to be a big supporter of the Chamber and our programs.


I want to thank my fellow board members for their commitment in 2013-14, especially vice-chair Val Fraser and treasurer Maureen James. Board members Fred Colvin, Karen Laffier, Wray Clement, Doug Moynihan, and Councillor Mary Makarenko have been faithful to their responsibilities.

During the year, we welcomed two new members to fill vacant positions. Welcome to Jada Siegfried, who assumed the treasurer position effective April 1, and Dave Bjorkman.

Now entering her sixth year as Chamber manager, Jolene Wood continues to grow in the position. It's nice to have an experienced hand! Her commitment, initiative, and flexibility have been integral to our success.

Finally, thank you to the 70 businesses, organizations and individuals - our members - who make the Chamber a reality. Being part of the Chamber is one of the best ways for a business to give back to the community it serves. We are stronger as businesses, and as a business community, when we work together and support one another.

## A Letter of Thanks



Quetico College School is the new kid on the block in the Atikokan area. I am sure many residents were counting the days to when the guy from southern Ontario would pack it in. While the first winter was certainly a challenge, it presented a compressed overview of the challenges that must be met if the venture is to be successful.

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation have helped to weather the, well, weather and come out on top. The staff are always ready to listen, offer suggestions and open up avenues of opportunity with other agencies and individuals in the Northwest. Through constant research, they suggest leads to follow and people to help. They have the heart and brains to empathize with the problems faced by someone not just new to the area but new to the concept of untangling the many threads associated with such a large project.

I thank them for their past assistance and know that I'll be knocking on their doors again soon.

Michael Heaton,

Head of School

Quetico College School



# Atikokan Employment Centre

## ANNUAL REPORT

We are definitely no longer the Unemployment or Employment Insurance Office in Atikokan. In fact, The Atikokan Employment Centre is supported provincially through Employment Ontario and funded through Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). Our mandate at the Atikokan Employment Centre is to provide employment related services to unemployed and underemployed individuals. This includes assisting eligible individuals to access Employment Ontario funded programs. We also serve as a central location to access forms/applications on behalf of Service Canada.

During the last year, we had in excess of 1,200 visits to the Atikokan Employment Centre's Resource Centre from individuals who required assistance in one form or another that was directly related to their employment. The majority of people accessing the resource centre tended to require assistance with job search activities. This included providing assistance in creating or revising resumes, composing cover letters, submission of resumes to potential employers via e-mail or fax, computer use, accessing the internet to search for jobs online, networking, further investigating Employment Ontario programs as well as viewing local and regional job postings.

Other visitors to our site had questions and/or required some form of assistance to access Service Canada benefits and services. It is noted that we have continued to maintain our relationship with Service Canada throughout the last year by hosting

representatives from Service Canada on a monthly basis in order to meet face to face with residents of the Atikokan area. Most individuals accessing this service tended to have questions concerning their Employment Insurance claims, their Canada Pension Plan benefits, Social Insurance Numbers/Cards or Old Age Security benefits. Demand for this service remains strong as Service Canada continues to centralize its services opting to rely more on telephone access and/or computerized communications.

The Atikokan Employment Centre continued to offer career exploration, vocational/career counseling, career planning, training/workshops and training placement opportunities. Assistance was also provided to those wanting to access post-secondary education funded through Employment Ontario's Second Career program. Second Career is an initiative that targets unemployed individuals who want to complete post-secondary college level training lasting up to two years in duration. When this program is accessed the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities it provides funding to individuals for their tuition, books, childcare and possibly living expenses while attending school.

### Thanks from an Employment Centre Client

"The Atikokan Employment Centre is a valuable and instrumental resource hub for adults, students and employers seeking skills training and employment opportunities by providing job searching assistance, including help with using the Internet, career guidance and training workshops.

The staff are courteous and knowledgeable in offering assistance, guidance and training resources in the community that better equips the individual to acquire the necessary skills and training to be competitive in the Canadian job force. Keeping up-to-date job listings posted at the Centre, assisting with resume and cover letter writing, creating email for internet job searching, and specific safety training courses, are just a few of the services provided by the Centre to help with career choices to enter or re-enter the job force.

The Atikokan Employment Centre is a vital community service providing a wealth of information and assistance to current and future employment prospects and successful career planning. "

- Donna Caul



The Atikokan Employment Centre has also served as an entry point for determining eligibility for those entrepreneurs wanting access to the Ontario Self Employment Benefit Program. Over the last year we have had a number of interested individuals who were subsequently referred to the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation to assist with client's business planning needs and start-up of their business.

More specifically, the Atikokan Employment Centre continues to provide workshops and safety oriented training that includes Job Search Strategies, Interviewing Skills, WHMIS, Lock Out/Tag Out, Confined Space, Fall Protection Systems, Traffic Control training, Forklift Operation Training, Chainsaw Safety Training. We have also facilitated clients with accessing Surface Common Core Training, First Aid Training, Smart Serve Training and Safe Food Handling Training.

With respect to placements, local employers have been provided with in excess of \$46,000 in wage reimbursements to hire 18 new employees to participate in work placements. These work placements were directed at providing clients with hands on training, assessing skills and building marketable

employment skills that can be used to launch a career and/or overcome employment barriers. In addition to this training, we have provided direct support of over \$1,700 to clients for the purchase of work appropriate clothing, to assist with transportation costs, and/or purchase work related equipment/tools.

### Thanks from an Employment Centre Client

"I have found the Atikokan Employment Office to be extremely helpful. They assisted me to update my resume, and help me to send it out for job vacancies. They give me a hand doing work on the computer, and I have attended some of the courses they offer. They have been very supportive."

- Joe Duhamel

In the latter half of the year, we started to reintroduce Atikokan employers and social service providers to our services. As the result of this work, we have developed strong relationships with a number of local employers. In fact, we now have employers contacting us directly to assist in their additional human resources needs. We are also receiving referrals from other social service providers in the community asking us to assist their clients with their ongoing employment barriers and needs.

In the last year, we have also developed a partnership with the Atikokan High School making use of the Youth Employment Fund (YEF). YEF is a program that is designed to target individuals 15 to 29 years of age who are not attending school full-time. In this program, up to \$7,800 can be used per participant to have them participate in subsidized work placements that last 4 to 6 months in duration. Program participants are also provided with access to funding (up to \$1,000) that can be utilized to support their ongoing participation in a work placement. This money can be used to address their short-term training needs, work clothing requirements, tools/equipment/supplies, childcare and/or transportation). Using the YEF program with appropriate high school students has translated into the Atikokan Employment Centre providing funding to employers in the form of wage subsidies. This fund is able to provide pay to students while they are completing co-op work placements and earning secondary school credits. It is our feeling that when these co-op students are paid, it increases their motivation to attend consistently, improves their on the job performance, instills a real sense of responsibility, increases their interest in school and provides a more realistic work environment to learn in. Moreover, the majority of these students would be considered youth at risk of not completing their secondary education if they were not participating in this program. At this point in time, we have requested additional funding to further assist Atikokan youth in establishing truly marketable employment related skills and abilities. Ideally it is hoped that these work placements may develop in actual apprenticeships or employment for Atikokan's youth population.

A great deal of change has also occurred at the Atikokan Employment Centre including with staffing. Over the last year we have seen two longer term employees leave to other opportunities in our community. As a result, Cindy Simard and myself were left to manage the demands of the Employment Centre until such time that we were able to hire Denine Richard. Currently, Cindy Simard has acquired the vacated Case Manager position and Denine has started in a new role as an Employment Services Support Worker. During the upcoming year we will continue to collectively increase community awareness of our services attempting to fully engage the community in addressing unemployment in Atikokan. Plans are also being made and implemented to further expand employee responsibilities and with the intent of improving services and employment outcomes. Overall, we are anticipating a higher level of success in our work during the upcoming year and maintaining a full complement of staff.



Regular users of the AEDC Facilities include:

- |                            |   |                          |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| - Atikokan Minor Hockey    | - Ringette                                    | - Rainbow Centre Daycare |
| - Atikokan Figure Skating  | - Sno-Ho Club                                 | - Path of the Voyageur   |
| - 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.

## Workshops & Seminars



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, we hosted information seminars on the following:

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| ❖ Information for Trade Show Exhibitors           | ❖ WHMIS Certification        |
| ❖ Self-Employment Benefit Workshops               | ❖ Service Excellent Training |
| ❖ Resume Writing Workshop                         | ❖ E-Mail Creation Seminar    |
| ❖ Cover Letter Writing Workshop                   | ❖ Lockout/Tagout Courses     |
| ❖ Emergency First Aid Training                    | ❖ Smart Serve Certification  |
| ❖ Fall Prevention & Aerial Boom Platform Training |                              |
| ❖ Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity Workshop        | ❖ Traffic Control Training   |
| ❖ Interviews: Your Key to Employment              | ❖ CEDC Mining Presentation   |
| ❖ Marketing 101                                   | ❖ Exporting Workshop         |

# Videoconference Training

In 2013, the AEDC continued to offer a rich selection of videoconference-based workshops and seminars through the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre (CMBSC). A number of new and existing entrepreneurs took advantage of these low-cost, subject-focused courses, and had nothing but praises for their efficiency and professionalism. Many of these courses were well-attended and included participants from all over northwestern Ontario; CMBSC's selection is now almost at the point of offering daily courses on a year-round basis. A special thanks to the CMBSC for their continued efforts in providing this vital educational tool.

Some seminars attended by clients through the CMBSC in 2013 included:

## **Buying a Business**

- Business Opportunities & Ideas – Choosing the Right One
- How to Buy a Business
- Your Business Plan: Getting Started & The Home Stretch
- Selling & Negotiating to Win

## **Financial and Records Management**

- Financial Analysis: What are your Financial Statements Telling You
- Introduction to Income Statements
- Introduction to Balance Sheets
- Cash Flow is King
- Mind your Assets! Managing your Business Records
- Protecting Your Business Records
- Understanding Your Credit

## **Payroll & Taxes**

- GST/HST Seminar
- Small Business Tax Information Workshop
- CRA – Payroll Information Seminar

## **Marketing/Advertising**

- Positioning Your Business for Success: Marketing Essentials
- Search Engine: Optimization and Marketing
- How to Brand Your Small Business
- Pay Per Click Advertising
- How to Get Media Exposure for Your Business
- Marketing Essentials – Positioning Your Business For Success
- Branding Basics
- Survey Design for Customer Research

## **Home Business**

- Starting a Home Based Business
- Profit from your Kitchen Creation

### **Thanks from a Local Community Group**

"The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation was very helpful to the Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club this past year in helping us fill out the grants we applied for.

We would like to thank [the AEDC] for all the work [they have] done for us. We were successful in getting one student grant this year."

- Bruce James, Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club

### **Thanks from a Seminar Participant**

"I would like to acknowledge the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation and the excellent resource they have been for me this year. When making the decision to become a potential business owner they were there every step of the way.

In particular I found the business seminars they offered to be a great resource. They were very informative, answered many of my questions, but more importantly covered issues that I hadn't considered.

For anyone contemplating business ownership, or currently owns a business, I would recommend using the AEDC and all the resources they have to offer."

- Jana Anderson



## **HR – Personnel**

- Effective Employee Relations
- Interviewing Skills
- Employee Relation Problem Solving
- Writing Clear Job Descriptions
- Positive Employee Relations
- Recruitment and Selection
- Time Management & Goal Setting
- Performance Management

## **Social Media**

- Pinterest for Business: Getting Ready for the Holiday Selling Season
- Facebook for Business
- What You Need to Know Before you Develop your Website
- Social Media for Business
- A Freelancer's Guide to Social Media
- What's New in Social Media
- Are you Ready to be an Entrepreneur?

## **Productivity**

- Microsoft Word 2007
- Microsoft Excel 2007
- PowerPoint 2007

## **Customer Service**

- Customer Service 101
- Critical Elements of Customer Service

## **Others:**

- Developing Proposals
- Self-Employment Resources for People with Disabilities
- CBSA Customs Workshop
- Basics of Exporting
- Through the Gallery Doors – The Business Side of Art
- Writing Winning Arts Proposals
- Common Business Mistakes & How to Avoid Them
- Pricing through the Supply Chain

### **Thanks from a Regional Development Group**

“The Northwestern Ontario Development Network (NODN) is a network of economic development professionals from across northwestern Ontario. NODN has benefited from the participation of AEDC staff for many years. Not only are they active participants in the network but they have served as Board members and as part of the executive. AEDC staff are seasoned professionals who assist in not only operating the network, but in communicating the issues and needs of small communities in the Northwest. We look forward to the continued involvement from AEDC as the network enters a new phase in its development.”

- Judy Sander, Treasurer, NODN

# Meet the AEDC Staff

## **Executive Director**

**Garry McKinnon**

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

## **Senior Community Development Advisor**

**Paula Sanders**

*Business planning and advice, self-employment consulting, marketing and promotion, liaison with community groups and organizations.*

## **Community Development Advisor**

**Gord Knowles**

*Business planning and advice, loan compliance, self-employment counseling, 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**

**Brad Beyak**

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

## **Atikokan Employment Centre Case Manager**

**Cindy Simard**

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

## **Atikokan Employment Centre Employment Service Support Worker**

**Denine Richard**

*Employment Centre reception, maintain jobs board, assist with job searches.*

## **Chamber of Commerce Executive Director**

**Jolene Wood**

*(the AEDC contributes towards the wages for the position)*

*Relief reception, monthly community calendar, assistance with AEDC events, business relations.*

# Looking Ahead

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR...

The Board of Directors and staff of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation participated in a facilitated strategic planning exercise. To frame the work and to focus the thinking to be done, a modified environmental scan proved to be particularly useful for recent additions to the board as it reinforced the orientation material and assisted them to “connect the dots” and provided a valuable refresher to the veteran members.

Upon completion of the above, the group turned their attention to identifying the key “big-picture” strategic goals they would like to see the AEDC involved in. Every goal was vetted by the entire group and fully discussed. At the conclusion of the vetting, a simple democratic voting process was used to determine the top priorities. The following four goals emerged as the clear leaders:

1. Infrastructure
2. Corporate Image
3. Tourism
4. Steep Rock Rehabilitation

Another democratic voting exercise determined the prioritized objectives for each goal and again there was rather clear separation between the higher and lower ranking groups. These objectives were reviewed and discussed given their appropriate priority based on the following considerations:

1. Does it fit the AEDC mandate?
2. Could someone else do it better?
3. Does the AEDC have the required resources?
4. Will it make a difference?
5. Are we the lead, a partner, or a supporter?
6. When will it start/end?
7. What are the measureable outcomes?
8. What do we drop to make time, etc?

The resulting strategic plan will guide the Board and staff in their decision-making, priority-setting, and activities for the foreseeable future.

## Reaching the AEDC

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



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