

2003 - A REVIEW OF CLIENTS, ACTIVITIES AND MORE!.....

BOARD OVERVIEW:

The Board Members of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation include 3 women and 12 men. There is also a member from the Seine River First Nation community as a representative on our Board. Our Chair is Dave Elder, Vice Chair Dave Bjorkman, Secretary/Treasurer is Bill Beyer. Directors at large are Jay Leather, Miles Brown, Dennis Brown, Wayne McAndrew, Vic Prokopchuk, Elvin Rydberg, Dr. Ken Sawchuk, Delores Veran, Andrew Johnson from Seine River First Nation and Mary Makarenko and Charlie Viddal as representatives from Township Council.

STAFF

We have 4 full time positions in the office and we also contribute half the wages of the Chamber of Commerce Office Manager in return for receptionist duties and other help as required. There is also a FedNor Intern who will be working for the Canoe Heritage Committee as a Project funded position.

SHARING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

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

\$ To Seine River First Nation to assist with an economic development forum. (\$5,000)

\$ To Friends of White Otter Castle (a joint project with AEDC and Patricia Area Community Endeavors) to hire a consultant to develop a blueprint that addresses issues such as financial, physical and human resource requirements; and leadership for the organization. (\$5,000)

\$ To Atikokan Youth Sports Facility to help cover the costs of purchasing a rink board system that is made of weatherproof materials designed to provide minimal maintenance and maximum longevity. (\$5,000)

HUGELY HELPFUL!

“The money we secured through the AEDC was instrumental in allowing us to leverage the rest of the money needed for the boards at the rink. The staff also assisted us with our grant application; they were hugely helpful!”

-Wayne Smith

“Last year, the merchants got together to plan a Christmas campaign. The AEDC contributed money towards the advertising expenses, provided us with a meeting room, and their staff photocopied and cut our ballots for us.”

-Linda Manford

\$ To Northwestern Ontario Junior Achievement towards expenses related to delivering entrepreneurship programs to young people in the Atikokan and Upsala area. (\$3,000)

\$ Atikokan Youth Centre to assist with the purchase of equipment and furniture for the Graffiti Pit. (\$2,914)

\$ To Downtown Atikokan Renewal Committee to help

cover the costs of purchasing trees and materials to beautify the downtown core. (\$4,825)

\$ To Friends of Quetico Park to assist with the purchase of a twenty-four foot trailer to transport four Voyageur canoes. (\$5,000)

\$ To Atikokan Horticultural Society to improve the grounds at the Atikokan Museum Log Cabin. (\$5,000)

\$ To Sunset Country/NWOTA for a tourism Ontario marketing regional initiative with five other CFDC's. (\$5,000)

\$ To Winter Community Tourism Marketing Consortium to assist with a three-year winter marketing campaign. (\$5,000)

\$ To Atikokan Chamber of Commerce to assist with regional newspaper advertising to attract visitors at Christmas time. (\$1,578)

\$ To Atikokan Sno-Ho Club for handicapped access washrooms at the Chalet. (\$3,000)

\$ To Atikokan Chamber of Commerce to partner with Sno-Ho Club for snowmobile trail signs promoting the services available within our community. (\$5,000)

“Friends of Quetico Park have been pleased that the Voyageur Canoe trailer was not only used in events in Atikokan which are directly related to the Canoeing Capital of Canada theme, but in events which raise our profile outside of the community. Thanks again to the AEDC for the funding.

- Sally Burns



FINANCIALLY SPEAKING...

During 2003, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$790,538 towards new loans. In total, 32 loans were refinanced, amalgamated or disbursed for total activity of \$994,275.

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY AND BALANCE			
Sector	12 months ended 12/31/03		Current
	Number	Amount	Number
Hospitality	6	\$239,000	10
Mining	0	0	2
Service	6	325,083	17
Tourism	5	128,828	8
Aquaculture	0	0	1
Manufacturing	1	10,000	7
Transportation	4	36,020	6
Retail	4	161,080	13
Forestry	6	94,264	13
Agriculture	0	0	0
Total	32	\$994,275.00	77

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation's Investment Fund Portfolio has grown substantially over the past seven years to a high of \$3.5 million dollars with a total of 77 outstanding loans.

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

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

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

The Self Employment Benefit Program offered by Human Resources Development Canada and provided to the community by our office is also a very successful and popular program. Each year, our office processes approximately 15 clients through the SEB program. Most clients work hard preparing a business plan and doing market research for their business idea. Approximately 50% of the SEB clients who started their own business are still in business today.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES		
Sector	12 Months to 12/31/03	Since Inception
Hospitality	0	3
Mining	0	0
Service	9	39
Tourism	0	5
Aquaculture	0	2
Manufacturing	1	9
Transportation	0	3
Retail	0	15
Forestry	0	5
Agriculture	0	0
Total	10	81



KEEPING



OUR STAFF RUNNING.....

Test yourself!

Atikokaninfo.com.....Have you checked it out lately?

We are continually updating our website. It contains a great deal of information about our community.

Test yourself....which of the following are part of our website, and which are components we are working on that we hope to feature there very soon?

- Weather conditions/alerts _____
- Upcoming events this month _____
- Photos _____
- Highlights _____
- Guest Book _____
- Community Profile _____
- E-mail directory _____
- Realty Listings _____
- Quick Links (add your event to our calendar) _____
- Area maps on line _____

(answer at bottom of page 7)

► A great deal of staff time throughout the past year was spent dealing with the layoffs and eventual closure of Proboard along with the unstable conditions at Atikokan Forest Products. This office helped to establish a Long Term Economic Recovery Committee to help the community weather the economic storm caused by the instability of the forest industry throughout Canada. Finalizing a contract between Human Resources Development Canada; the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and the AEDC to provide an Action Centre for the displaced workers was accomplished late in the year. This new Centre will hopefully provide alternatives and support for the workers to contemplate. Providing information and consulting with the Receiver for Proboard Ltd., the media and the displaced workers, as well as presenting a financial case for the

economic benefits of re-opening their doors, was time-consuming; however, we are optimistic for new owners early in the New Year.

► The AEDC supported the efforts of a local committee who initiated a project to deliver a 3-day career planning workshop for women. The support consisted of staff time and board approval for a \$5,000 contribution. The conference was a great success, with over 75 women participating. The information that was provided regarding career, self-employment and training options will be beneficial for those women who attended from throughout Northwestern Ontario.

► Northwestern Ontario Junior Achievement was initiated in June 2000 with two representatives from the AEDC office supporting the effort. The AEDC was also instrumental in the hiring of a Regional Executive Director, facilitated volunteer training sessions, and delivered several in-school programs within Atikokan and Mine Centre. It was a real benefit to the students to be able to participate in these business and education planning programs.

► Landing the contract as host community for Raid the North Extreme 2003 was originated through the AEDC office. Staff time was contributed from December 2002 through to April 2003, at which time the overall responsibility for the project was transferred to the Township. The

staff were extremely helpful in assisting with funding applications and attending the meetings as committee members. The event injected approximately \$100,000 into the local economy and provided international exposure for our community through the media coverage. The event was also instrumental in the creation of the Atikokan Adventure Race, which will be held for a second year this May.

“The AEDC has been involved with The Bass Classic for years. They assist with the promotion, and are there to discuss ideas and give encouragement. Last year they helped us to purchase a weight scale. They pay postage for us, do our photocopying, and provide us with a meeting room.”

-Linda Manford

► The Canoe Heritage Committee hired Jill Lewis on a FedNor Youth Intern Program to help the community develop the “Canoeing Capital of Canada” theme. Initially, the committee had looked towards developing a Canoe Heritage Interpretive Centre but have since changed their focus. As of late, the Canoe Heritage Committee has concentrated its energies on developing a clear vision for the establishment of recreational facilities and supportive tourism infrastructure along the south side of Highway 11. This is the area adjacent to the northern boundary of Quetico Park.

The committee was also instrumental in preparing a funding application to hire a Tourism Recreation Corridor Developer. The successful candidate will work for the Township, and assume the responsibility of managing the community’s existing recreation facilities. In addition, he/she will work towards creating and improving outdoor adventure opportunities offered in the area. Approval of funding from Fednor is still pending.



Several smaller initiatives have also been undertaken. Namely, a Used Canoe Sale will be held on Saturday May 1st, in conjunction with the Annual Auto, Home and Leisure Show. Individuals and businesses will have an opportunity to sell, buy or swap used canoes and kayaks. The AEDC assists this committee by providing a staff liaison, subsidizing rent, access to equipment such as photocopier and fax machine, and administrative assistance as required.

“Without the AEDC, The Canoe Heritage Committee would not operate. It would not have been able to hire an employee. In my opinion, one of the AEDC’s greatest strengths is its’ ability to nurture community groups to enable them to meet their goals.”

- Jill Lewis

- ▶ Our staff organized many seminars throughout the year for the general public; they were well attended. They included:
 - Computerized Accounting Systems
 - Marketing your Merchandise
 - Starting a Successful Business
 - Simplifying Workplace Safety & Reporting Requirements
 - PST & GST/HST – What is it all about?

“On behalf of the DARC Committee, we express our appreciation for the assistance we receive from the AEDC. Financially we have benefited. We also receive administrative support which is critical since we are all volunteers. We are especially grateful for the assistance, guidance, and nudging we receive from the staff. Without their knowledge of funding opportunities, and background to past initiatives, we would be hard pressed to move forward. Their commitment is much appreciated!

-Catherine Reilly

- Legal Concerns in Organizing your Business
- Finding the Balance between Business & Life
- Financial Management in your Business
- E-Business – What Works, What Doesn't
- Cutting Through the Red Tape

▶ Activities for Information Technology Week were arranged by our staff and took place in May, 2003. The purpose was to profile Atikokan's accomplishments in

the technology field. Exhibitors included the Atikokan High School, CANUSA Information Systems, Atikokan Public Library, Cellular Service/High Speed Access, and the Government Information Centre. Two seminars were offered; information regarding the Big Online Database containing fund raising information, and a presentation from Chamber representatives in the region discussing e-commerce benefits. If visitors preferred the Open House approach...there were opportunities there, too! Participants could take in the displays at the Public Library, or enjoy the students showcasing their talents in projects, art, and music at the Atikokan High School.

▶ **Community Project Assistance –**

The Downtown Atikokan Renewal Committee, with the help of the United Native Friendship Centre and the 100th Birthday Committee, hired a gardener to clean, maintain and develop the mini parks located in the downtown core. These funds were flowed through the AEDC office and a report was filed with the funders.

“Through the Trillium Foundation, our Canoe Club received money to organize a dozen or so events within the community supporting the canoeing theme. Some school programs, races, events for the handicapped, and activities at the Intergenerational Centre. Without the AEDC to be our bookkeeper, it would not have been possible.

- Robin Reilly

- ▶ The Atikokan Canoe Club received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support and promote the club's canoe heritage activities to increase participation by residents and tourists alike which in turn helped to establish the community as the Canoeing Capital of Canada.

► **Local Committee wins Award of Rural Excellence!**

Kudos to the volunteers of The Atikokan Community Sports Facility! Our staff nominated them for this award presented by The Foundation for Rural Living. It is designed to recognize and celebrate volunteers who, through their projects, meet community needs and improve the quality of life in rural Ontario. Two delegates from the committee had the honor of attending the awards ceremony in October, 2003 in Huntsville, Ontario. The volunteers received a commemorative artistic glass award, and a cash contribution to a charity of their choice.



The Atikokan Employment Centre has again had a very successful year. Our staff there has worked on various community projects, partnered with many organizations to improve our services, and have secured a contract with HRDC for expanded services.

Completion and submission of applications for the Raid The North project created 3 jobs. We were able to assist in securing adequate funding for our community to host a spectacular event, and some of the profits were spent to create a professional marketing video about Atikokan and our surroundings.

We worked with the Human Resource Centre for Students and held a “Volunteering Counts” contest for students. The purpose was to encourage them to volunteer. The same concept was used for adults and the Volunteer Bureau hosted a similar contest. We logged over 125 volunteer hours, and this had quite a positive impact for the non-profit groups who rely on volunteers for successful events.

With the lay-offs at both Proboard and AFP, we held a *Displaced Workers Seminar* to inform those affected of the services available to them. Those who did attend found the session informative and helpful.

“We would like to thank the AEDC for all the help they have given us at the Centre this year. We have been busy writing funding applications, and have found the staff to be extremely helpful and forthcoming when we needed guidance. They are kind and helpful, encouraging me to persevere. It has also been great to have access to the photocopier. Thank you very much.”

- Jennifer Garrett

This year, our Employment Centre also assisted a great number of groups

“The Atikokan Chamber gratefully acknowledges and thanks the AEDC for their major contributions and assistance. The AEDC covers photocopying and postage costs for the Chamber, they pay half of the wages for the Chamber’s staff person, they provide office space, and receptionist support when the Chamber employee is not available. It is the AEDC’s partnership with The Atikokan Chamber of Commerce which has allowed our organization to continue to function through some very tough economic times.”
- Vangie Bjorkman

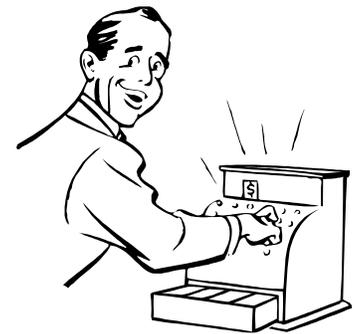
and individuals to develop workplans and submit funding applications through the Job Creation Partnership program. Community projects that are approved create employment, and give the non-profit groups the opportunity to access funds not only for wages but also for overhead expenses.

With funding assistance from the United Native Friendship Centre, our local Employment Centre office hosted a Career Fair for the community. This event has become an annual occurrence and we look forward to hosting it again in the future. At the fair, visitors saw booths from educational institutes, employment assistance agencies, economic development, and other groups with an ability to assist unemployed or underemployed people. For future years, we are hoping to have employers take advantage of this day as an opportunity to recruit employees.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

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

- ☞ High Horse Productions (Patricia Lambkin)
- ☞ Maid-2-Order (Megan Ricci)
- ☞ His ‘N’ Hers Hairstyling (Carol Parent)
- ☞ Brew ‘N’ Cork (Monique Ribey)
- ☞ Thurier Shuttles (Trevor Thurier)
- ☞ Atikokan Construction Ltd. (Geoff Stanger)
- ☞ Anthony’s Automotive (Norman Anthony)
- ☞ Cabin Check-Up Doctors (Teresa Hainey/Paul Swain)
- ☞ Mano’s Food Service (Wendy Urbanowicz)
- ☞ Ye Olde Metal Shop (James LaChance)



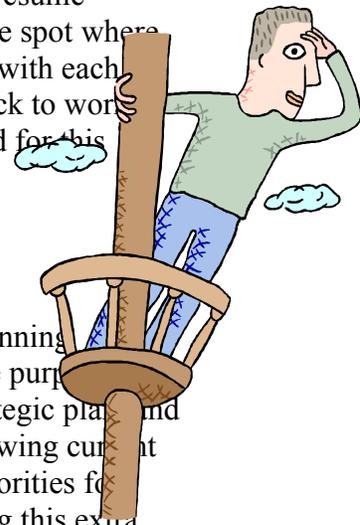
The AEDC has been very helpful to the Beaten Path Ski Club for the last few years. They have helped us finance a groomer, and more recently, they administered funds we secured through Human Resources Development Canada. With the program, we were able to create employment and have our trails planned and cleared. The AEDC was a big help; we couldn't have done it otherwise.

-Arlene Robinson

□ *Literally available at your fingertips...*

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

□ With the assistance of the AEDC, a local Labour Adjustment Committee has been formed and the Action Centre has been established in the Voyageur Mall. Its' purpose is to assist displaced workers with resume writing, job hunting, and to be a comfortable spot where people feel welcome to stop in and interact with each other. Our hope is that everyone will be back to work very soon and there will no longer be a need for this centre!



LOOKING AHEAD...

◆ The AEDC Board of Directors met for a strategic planning session/retreat at Quetico Centre on September 6, 2003. The purpose of the session was to re-examine priorities, establish a new strategic plan and strengthen the management team. Objectives included reviewing current and past activities impacting the AEDC, and establishing priorities for future action. We thank our Board Members for volunteering this extra time to prepare an up-to-date document providing leadership and guidance to the staff.

◆ The AEDC, Atikokan High School, Quetico Centre, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and the business community have embarked on an ambitious pilot project. Their aim is to improve the Atikokan economy, as well as better position us as the Canoeing Capital of Canada. AHS has successfully implemented a world renowned Outdoor Experiential Education Program called *Outers* for nearly 40 years. This program is absolutely unique and one of Atikokan's great gems. This committee is developing an aggressive plan to promote the program both nationally and internationally. The strategy is to attract tuition students from around the world to come and live in Atikokan and participate in our project which will be known as *Quetico Adventure School*.



This initiative has a number of partners, both in principle and financially, and this list is continually growing. The goal is to stimulate economic activity by building on something that is already a success. It is the hope of this committee to further promote our existing *Canoeing Capital of Canada* theme, and contribute to the economic stability of Atikokan now and for the future.



How did you do?

(Answers to Quiz from Page 3)

If you checked off every option, you are correct!

Currently, the AEDC website contains all of the information listed.

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

AEDC is indispensable!

*“The AEDC assisted with the funding proposal to hire an employee to make Canoefest a reality. The office was indispensable for assisting us with the planning and implementing. We had use of their telephone services, equipment, furniture, and staff resources when it came down to “crunch time”. They also contributed financially towards our marketing expenses. Canoefest attracted visitors to town, and was a fun extension of the **canoeing theme** for our locals. In addition, we created a website which helps to promote Atikokan.”*

-Dawn Lessard