

2016 Annual Report

Atikokan Economic Development Corporation



“Atikokan Will Always Welcome You Home”

“Waiting for Summer” by Tyler Sklazeski (*Instagram facing_north*).

Posted on Tourism Atikokan’s Facebook, this photo taken in Quetico Provincial Park reached over 45,000 people.



Town of Atikokan

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February 2017

Thank you from Mayor and Council

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

I want to also congratulate the AEDC for all the awards it has won as an organization and also to the staff who have won individual awards in the past year. I know Garry McKinnon and Gord Knowles have received special awards and Katie Hannon was strongly involved in the Tourism Atikokan "Project Wild" that was recognized in 2016 by the Economic Developers Council of Canada.

Atikokan is very fortunate to have such dedicated, progressive thinking staff and we thank them very much for this.

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. We know there is very little, if any, unemployment in our town at the time of this being written.

Having access to capital funds, 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 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 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



Atikokan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
A Community Futures Development Corporation

April 19, 2017

Atikokan continues to see positive changes over the past year, as well as a prelude to changing times in the business practices of our entrepreneurs.

Resolute Forest Products continues to employ over 100 at its Sapawe mill, keeping skilled, well-paying jobs in the community. Similar results are seen at Rentech, as they continue to provide high-pay employment to the community; however we continue to cautiously watch and work with them as their operations and their role in the industry are evolving. Both firms continue to engage both us and the community as we strive to build long-term partnerships. Atikokan's ability to show itself as a safe, desirable location to live makes it an attractive destination - a town that fosters new families as workplace demographic shift with retirement and relocation.

Ontario Power Generation's Atikokan station continues to perfect the process of clean burning biomass fuel; the project continues to move forward the technology holds 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. Both the Canadian Malartic Partnership and the Cassandra Energy project continue to percolate under the surface; hope remains that shifting global markets and government cooperation will move both projects back into full-scale development. We will continue to advocate for this and other large-scale projects as viable and responsible community building blocks.

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 with the Employment Centre. Tourism development continues to be one of our key focuses, as does stemming the tide of regional outshopping and outsourcing.

Congratulations to the staff of the AEDC, who have received countless awards over this past year for their work in the field – your contributions to the community and economic development are well deserved and speak highly to the work being done here. I am pleased to extend my most sincere appreciation to all of the volunteers and staff who have committed countless hours to ensuring 2016 was a successful year for the AEDC.

Jim Turner, AEDC Chair



Community & Committee Reports

INVOLVEMENT AND UPDATES

TOURISM ATIKOKAN

We continued our work with the Tourism Atikokan project, although in a far more nuanced manner due to the life stage of the project.

Tourism Atikokan was extremely fortunate to receive funding from the federal government to host a Tourism Ambassador for the summer months.

Brenna Nephin worked on developing programs, assisting summer tourism programs and modernizing some of our office during July and August; her work ethic and attitude were commendable and we look forward to what 2017 brings Tourism Atikokan as it looks to grow its footprint with practical, cost-effective ways to deliver value to the community.



ABOVE: KATIE HANNON, GARRY MCKINNON AND GORD KNOWLES DISPLAY THE EDAC MARKETING AWARD FOR BEST ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN WITH SOME EXAMPLES OF THEIR WORK

Tourism Atikokan's efforts continue to receive tremendous feedback. In September 2016, the AEDC received a coveted Economic Developers Association of Canada marketing award for Best Advertising Campaign, which was run in conjunction with Shout!Media of Thunder Bay. This is the first national economic development award for the organization and was then complemented by the awarding of not just one but two Economic Developers Council of Ontario marketing awards in February 2017. The awards were given to the AEDC for Best Regional/International Collaboration, and for Best New Technology, for the www.visitatikokan.ca website. This is the second time the AEDC has been awarded the Regional Collaboration prize in the past three years, as we received it in 2014 for our work with the Heart of the Continent Partnership; it's a sign of AEDC's focus on developing projects with our friends both regionally and internationally in order to achieve results that give us the most value for our limited dollars.



ABOVE: MCKINNON, HANNON AND KNOWLES WITH THE TWO EDCO MARKETING AWARDS WON IN TORONTO IN FEB 2017

The success and process of the tourism program was highlighted as AEDC staff were asked to present a 90-minute workshop at Community Futures Ontario's annual conference in Kenora in September 2016. Community Development Advisor Katie Hannon facilitated a panel discussion and presentation with Senior Community Development Advisor Gord Knowles, the City of Thunder Bay Tourism's John Cameron, Sunset Country's Gerry Cariou, and TNO TEN Coordinator Karen Peacock to highlight some of the tribulations and potential for community economic development that can be found by CFDCs taking the lead as tourism champions. The event really highlighted the success of Atikokan and the CFDC-driven model, and was an excellent opportunity to showcase Atikokan to a provincial audience.

In 2017 the AEDC will look to collaborate with other local stakeholders to forge ahead with its Tourism Development Committee, a grassroots effort of government leaders, not-for-profit organizations and for-profit businesses to establish best practices and engage in tourism projects that benefit the whole of the community - cost effectively and with group input. The work will be augmented by funded summer students and leveraged funds in order to increase the capacity of tourism delivery methods that will continue to grow the influx of dollars into the community through tourism initiatives.

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"It was a pleasure working in partnership with Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (ADEC) on its recent regional tourism development project. Building a tourism organization and presence "from the ground up" is no easy task but thanks to the enthusiasm and innovation of the team, along with guidance from our colleagues in North Bay (with whom we had partnered earlier on a similar project), much was accomplished. We congratulate the AEDC team on its many successes with this important initiative."

*Pat Forrest, Initiatives Coordinator
Tourism Northern Ontario*

FOREST PRODUCTS

2016 was a good year for the forest industry in the Atikokan area. With both Resolute and Rentech ramping up to full production, employment levels in the area increased substantially. The demand for fiber to feed the mills resulted in additional opportunities for log harvesters and for local transportation companies and allowed a large number of workers to return to gainful employment. Logs and dimensioned lumber moving between the Resolute mills in Ignace and Atikokan added to the employment and economic activity in this sector. These levels of activity in the forest sector have not been experienced in this area for a number of years.

ENERGY SECTOR

The largest 100% biomass fueled generating station in North America continues to be operated in Atikokan by Ontario Power Generation. The short-term future of the plant is secure to the extent that there is a power purchase agreement in place for another seven years. Community leaders need to start work immediately to secure the plant's future beyond the current contract.

A consortium of designers, builders, financiers and indigenous partners continue efforts to establish a pump storage facility in the abandoned iron mines. Time and politics will tell if these efforts bear fruit.

SENIORS' HOUSING

Interest in housing options for our senior population continues to be of import to a significant number of locals. The AEDC is in the process of securing hard numbers for the infrastructure to service development on Legion Point. Concurrently we are investigating alternate locations and engaging in dialogue with developers interested in a market rent option.

THE PATH OF THE PADDLE ASSOCIATION (by Pam Cain, General Manager)

The Path of the Paddle Association is an incorporated non-for-profit driven by volunteers who are completing the Trans Canada Trail in northwestern Ontario. Named for renowned film maker and paddler Bill Mason, the 1200 kilometer water trail will travel from Thunder Bay to Manitoba.

Five trails are currently identified and include the Animikii trail traversing from Fort William Historic Park to the International border at Pigeon River, the Omimi Trail through the Boundary Waters to Quetico Provincial Park and Atikokan, the Maukinak from Turtle River-White Otter Park to Dryden, the Migizi heading to Rushing River Provincial Park and Kenora and the linoO Oowan traveling along the Winnipeg River to the Manitoba Border to join the existing TCT land trail (Borders to Beaches) at Whiteshell Provincial Park.

In the communities of Atikokan, Dryden, Kenora and Thunder Bay volunteers are behind the completion of this unique trail that will become a premier tourism product for the northwest.

As the Path of the Paddle Association completes a two year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant in 2017, this past year saw student Trail Ambassadors Hadley Burns and Paul Schram join 2015 travelers former General Manager Carrie and husband Jon Nolan and student Trail Ambassadors Brynley Hanson-Wright and Eric Bertram. They tell their adventures as they paddled the entire trail as 'Trail Travellers' on www.pathofthepaddleassociation.com.

In 2016, the Atikokan trail section including part of the Quetico Trail and the Maukinak Trail was deemed complete. One can travel from town to Nym Lake via the Atikokan River, and to Plateau Lake and Fire Lake from Nym Lake. Heading towards Dryden one can travel from town on the Atikokan River to White Otter Lake via the Eye River, Dashwa Lake and Clearwater West Lake. Trails Officer Lise Sorensen and the trail crew from Atikokan are now assisting in the final 80 kilometers of development on the Maukinak Trail from White Otter Lake to Dryden.

Atikokan is represented on Path of the Paddle's Board of Directors by Regional Trail Committee Chair Michelle Savoie and Board Director Peter Sorensen. The Atikokan Regional Trail Committee promotes the Path of the Paddle and engages the community with such events as the International Reel Paddling Film Festival. In 2017, the committee is planning to participate at community events and create a series of activities to celebrate the opening of the Trans Canada trail and Canada's 150.

The Path of the Paddle is engaging an intern in partnership with the Heart of the Continent Partnership this coming year. Located in Atikokan through funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund the intern will identify stakeholders and community partners and assist in bringing information on the trail to help visitors and residents experience the Path of the Paddle.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION OF ATIKOKAN

Near the end of 2016, the Atikokan Economic Development created the Young Professional Association of Atikokan. This AEDC project started in the late fall with the ultimate goal of providing a place for social, professional, economic and community development through events, training opportunities and networking for young professionals under the age of 40. After research and guidance from other YPN's, the AEDC was able to host an inaugural YPN meeting which received great support from the professional community. From this meeting, the AEDC determined its importance and continued with the development of this professional development association.

In December an interim board was formed to see the association through the next six months as well as adopting by-laws; YPAA now similarly is structured the same as other networks across the country. Until June of 2017, the association hopes to formalize by holding a first annual meeting to reach out to new members, host and/or partner with different events for our members and help newcomers to Atikokan to become aware and familiarized with the different organizations and events happening in Atikokan.

A Facebook group has been created to help spread awareness of the association as well as local events, which has close to 60 members.

FRIENDS OF WHITE OTTER CASTLE

A renewal meeting was called for in the beginning of 2016 for the Friends of White Otter Castle in an effort to revitalize the organization. With plans to host a public information session and general meeting a month later the organization faced the question: is there enough interest to carry on with the Friends? The purpose of the annual meeting was to attract a new executive to launch another restoration of the almost century old log castle.

The Annual General Meeting in April led to an election of nine directors, representing Atikokan, Ignace, Dryden and Thunder Bay. Actions that came out of the meeting included pursuing fundraising opportunities, setting clear goals for the year and creating a strategic plan. During the strategic planning stage the committee has drafted a 30 year maintenance plan and budget for the renovations needed.

The Friends of White Otter Castle also worked with Scott Ellery and Ontario Parks to formalize an agreement with the Turtle River- White Otter Lake Provincial Park. Any time the government enters into a relationship where an outside party is taking some responsibility, an agreement is necessary.

The Friends of White Otter Castle have created a Facebook page in hopes to help attract attention towards the castle and have also developed a website that will go live in the beginning of 2017.

The Castle is part of our heritage, culture and social fabric and has a special place in many people hearts, not just those who sit on the organization.

TOURISM NORTHERN ONTARIO (TNO)

In 2016 Senior Community Development Advisor Gord Knowles was appointed to serve on Tourism Northern Ontario's (TNO) 13C Advisory Committee, where he provides input with other industry stakeholders to share industry trends, regional market intelligence, and present options to the TNO Board of Directors to best serve the needs of all tourism stakeholders in northern Ontario. The council meets at least twice per year in person, and teleconferences as needed. AEDC continues to build an extremely solid relationship with TNO, from local and regional officers to having direct outreach with the organization's executive director, to ensure the tourism needs of the community are recognized and proactive steps are taken to ensure Atikokan is front and centre of all new and existing initiatives. AEDC has been a strong proponent of the Tourism Excellence North (TEN) program, completing basic training to serve as program ambassadors in 2016 and working with Karen Peacock and the entire TEN team to ensure it creates maximum impact and is a well-utilized tool in our client's toolbox. AEDC will continue to be a key partner of TNO as it moves forward with its mandate to bolster the region's tourism capacity for its businesses and residents.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

During the week of October 16-22, 2016 the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation celebrated Small Business Week by hosting many workshops and webinars in honour of our local small business owners. Throughout the week the AEDC partnered with many local and regional service providers including:

The Atikokan Employment Centre
Atikokan Chamber of Commerce
Ministry of Natural Development and Mines
BDC Canada
CPA- Chartered Professional Accountants
CEDC- Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission
PARO Centre for Women Enterprise
Nexus Credit Union
Investors Group
Tbaytel

With 44 participants participating in seven different events throughout the week, Small Business Week was a big success for our community. Sessions included webinars, workshops and social evenings for business owners to partake in. A social evening was organized on the Monday night for business owners to learn about the business services available within the community and region. This event was sponsored in part by Tbaytel as well as the Employment Centre and the AEDC. Participants were asked to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to our local food bank and the registration fee was then donated to the Atikokan Youth Initiative's Centre. Throughout the week, for every session attended participants were eligible to enter into our Small Business Week draw. Kathy Brigham was the winner of our prize; a mini iPad! Participants completed satisfaction surveys for each event they attended, allowing us to monitor what events were successful and others that could use changes for the following year.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR KATIE HANNON PRESENTS LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER KATHY BRIGHAM WITH THE GRAND PRIZE FROM AEDC'S 2016 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK SEMINARS

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

The Heart of the Continent Partnership remained extremely active, pushing ahead with a number of projects while also beginning to plan for the future with some new endeavours.

The group, through relentless fundraising, grant proposal writing and leveraging of programs on both sides of the border raised sufficient funds to hire a Minnesota-based marketing firm – W.A. Fisher from Virginia, Minnesota to create social media buzz and build a base on which to push our content out to larger audiences, both at home and around the world. The marketing campaign proved successful with visitation to the website and Facebook up and our highest number of visitors stretching out to the larger cities like Chicago, Minneapolis and Winnipeg. In that same vein, the HOCP created and orchestrated a fundraising marketing team in order to facilitate future projects and ensure budgetary needs are met while we effectively grow the organization.

We were also successful in reviving the HOCP science team and initiated a very productive Symposium in March, which was very well attended and, combined with two Recreation/Tourism Summits, have worked to shift the focus on HOCP from the quarterly meeting format to one more focused on meeting the needs of each of our 'arms' of the organization, so as to not stretch our membership too thin and ensure we all receive the best use of our limited travel budgets. This year the General Quarterly Meetings, now called Roundtable Meetings were held in Voyageur National Park in International Falls, Minnesota in June during their NPS centennial celebrations and in Thunder Bay, Ontario at the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (a new collaborating organization).



IEDC CHAIR BARRY MATHERLY (LEFT) AND GREG HITCHIN, CHAIR OF THE IEDC AWARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENT AN EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOLD AWARD TO THE AEDC'S GARRY MCKINNON AND GORD KNOWLES, FOR ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEART OF THE CONTINENT'S GEO-TOURISM PROJECT TRAVELTHEHEART.ORG. THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED AT IEDC'S AWARDS PRESENTATION IN CLEVELAND, OHIO THIS PAST SEPTEMBER.

A reorganizational retreat was also held, in which we created a list of tasks for the next two years that includes re-signing of Sister Sites Arrangement (an agreement among land managers to work together) and to revive the natural resource branch of HOCP and host bi-national land managers meetings that will include but not limited to cross border projects, invasives, geotourism initiative, SAE and science partnership. After much back and forth, the organization motioned to register trademark the name and logo Heart of the Continent. Additionally, the steering committee recruited Lori Dowling Hanson to join the Steering Committee - and with it, increased MNDNR involvement - and recently recruited Andy Hubley, Director - Arrowhead Regional Development Commission and Pam Cain, who works as the General Manager of the Path of the Paddle Association. These additional voices really grow the organization's ability to network and pursue projects that represent the whole service area of the Heart. As the organization grows and the membership evolves it remains vital to mentor and invite new voices to the table to ensure we are able to meet any new challenges head on, while maintaining the large body of work we have already committed to taking on.

2016 was an exciting year as the Geo-tourism project continued to receive accolades, this time from the International Economic Developers Council. In September it was announced that the AEDC and HOCP were jointly awarded a prestigious Excellence in Economic Development Gold Award, one of only 24 categories, for Special Purpose Website for traveltheheart.org. This led to great exposure of the site and

really increased awareness of the project, as other areas of North America explore our partnership with great interest.

On the US side of efforts were also recognized on a grand scale, as the geo-tourism site was recognized as one of five federal efforts to be awarded a prestigious Beacon Award in 2016. Presented by the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) for outstanding successes in harnessing the power of technology to improve public recreation experiences and federal recreation program management, traveltheheart.org was one of the winners were selected from efforts of four US federal agencies. Nominations are made by federal agencies and are judged against the award criteria, which are: innovative use of technology for visitor services or recreation management; use of partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit organizations; efforts to share news of creative solutions within the agency; and community support for the work of this initiative.

In 2017, we look to continue on with some very necessary but rewarding work, including forming a task force to develop a financial sustainability plan. We will also continue to produce and distribute newsletters and redistributed relevant articles such as SNF Superior Research Reader and other relative educational articles to members and subscribers, who find real value in the information presented. And finally we are working in collaboration with the Path of the Paddle Association on our first ever intern, to be hired in early 2017 who will be working out of Atikokan to build both organizations and their capacity to move forward. These are exciting times!

COMMUNITY FUTURES ONTARIO (CFO)

In September of 2016, Garry McKinnon was elected President of Community Futures Ontario. The association represents the sixty-plus Community Futures organizations in this province. As President he is leading efforts to demonstrate that Community Futures Development Corporations have the capacity to deliver additional Federal programs in an effective and efficient manner in rural and small town Ontario.

Garry continues to chair CFOntario's Management Information Systems committee. The committee guides and monitors the development and use of digital information solutions for CF management and to meet our federal partners' reporting requirements. He has consulted extensively with the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association and helped guide them in their quest to find a solution to their members information management needs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS COUNCIL OF ONTARIO (EDCO)

In February 2017 the AEDC's Gord Knowles was elected to serve as the Secretary Treasurer of the Economic Developers Council of Ontario's Board of Directors, his second year of a two-year term on that board. In 2016 he chaired the professional development committee and the scholarship 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 of existence. In 2017 Gord will serve on the executive committee, lead a new finance committee and play an integral role in a new policy committee, in order to modernize the organization, which has grown to be the country's largest economic development body. 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.

The Northern (Spring) Symposium will be held in Thunder Bay in May of 2017, and is being organized and hosted through the professional development committee. The resounding success of the first event in Sault Ste. Marie in 2016 signals a new dawn in northern relations for the provincial organization as it looks to diversify its offerings throughout Ontario.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & AWARDS

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 2016 staff attended annual conferences for the Community Futures Ontario (CFO), the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO), the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) and the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, as well as a number of meetings for regional projects including Superior Country. Staff attended meetings, conferences and professional development in locations including Thunder Bay, Fort Frances, Dryden, Kenora, Sault Ste. Marie, Toronto, Waterloo, Sudbury, and northeastern Minnesota, among others.

In September 2016, Senior Community Development Advisor Gord Knowles received the International Economic Development Council's (IEDC) Young Economic Development Professional of the Year award. The award was presented during the IEDC's annual award gala in Cleveland, Ohio. In January 2017 he was named one of Development Council International's 'Top 40 Under 40 Economic Development Professionals' during a ceremony in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; he was only one of three Canadians to be named to the prestigious biennial list. He also successfully completed the Community Futures Leadership Institute's Basic Certification as a General Manager, and is currently enrolled in the Leadership Development Series offered through the province's colleges. Gord also completed consultations with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and completed training to become a Tourism Excellence North (TEN) ambassador through Tourism Northern Ontario's TEN program.



IEDC CHAIR BARRY MATHERLY AND IEDC DIRECTOR/EDCO CEO HEATHER LALONDE PRESENT AEDC'S GORD KNOWLES WITH THE 2016 IEDC YOUNG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, SEPT 2016

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation and PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise have a long-standing partnership. Over the past year this partnership has strengthened its relations and increased its productivity and have seen an increased growth in clients working with both organizations in accessing training, assistance with applying for and accessing funding, as well as assistance for business start-ups and business looking to expand and grow. PARO and the AEDC are working together to build a better future for the Atikokan community."

*Karen Lynn Evans, Lead Business Counsellor
PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise*

In 2016, Community Development Advisor Katie Hannon completed Year 2 of the Economic Development program through the University of Waterloo and successfully attained her Certificate in Economic Development as she works towards obtaining the Ec.D designation. During the EDCO AGM, Ms. Hannon was announced as the winner of the EDCO Scholarship for the northern region, which awarded her \$1,500 to spend on professional economic development in 2017.

Executive Director Garry McKinnon completed Year One of the Economic Development Program through the University of Waterloo in Thunder Bay. In September, Garry completed Management Recruitment, Performance and evaluation through Community Futures Leadership Institute.

In May, Office Administrator Annette Bryk participated in a two day Sage 50 Accounting training seminar at the Innovation Centre in Thunder Bay. During the remainder of the year, Annette and Assistant Administrator Brigitte Tribe, completed additional Sage 50 on-line training through Sage University. Due to the complexity of the AEDC's accounting system, in-depth ongoing training is required to bring the AEDC and Atikokan Employment Centre's bookkeeping in house, which is the AEDC's ultimate goal going forward.

Staff of the Atikokan Employment Centre completed numerous training courses and professional development opportunities. Brad Beyak and Denine Richard completed Practical Workshop Facilitation Skills Certificate by the Winnipeg Transition Centre. Cindy Wood, Michelle Gushulak and Ange Sponchia completed Life Skills Level One. Denine, Michelle, Brad and Cindy completed Understanding YJC/ YJL and how they fit in the EDO landscape. Denine also completed Interview Skills Coach Workshop, PIPEDA Training, Job Search Coach Workshop, Literacy Northwest Workshop and completed many webinars with Cindy.

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.

Staff continue to attend seminars and courses designed to maintain their designations and build skillsets.

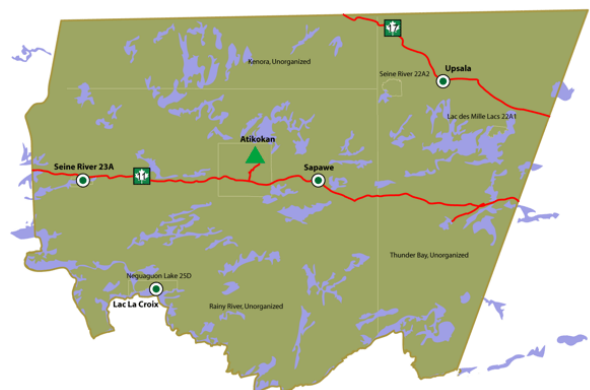
PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"From the beginning of my involvement with HOCP the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation has been a key partner in the collaboration to tell the story of northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario and why people should come to the area to recreate and live."

*Frank Jewell, Chair
Heart of the Continent Partnership and
St. Louis County Commissioner, Minnesota*

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 Community Futures Ontario

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

METRICS FOR SUCCESS (JAN 1 TO DEC 31 2016)

Atikokan Economic Development Corporation

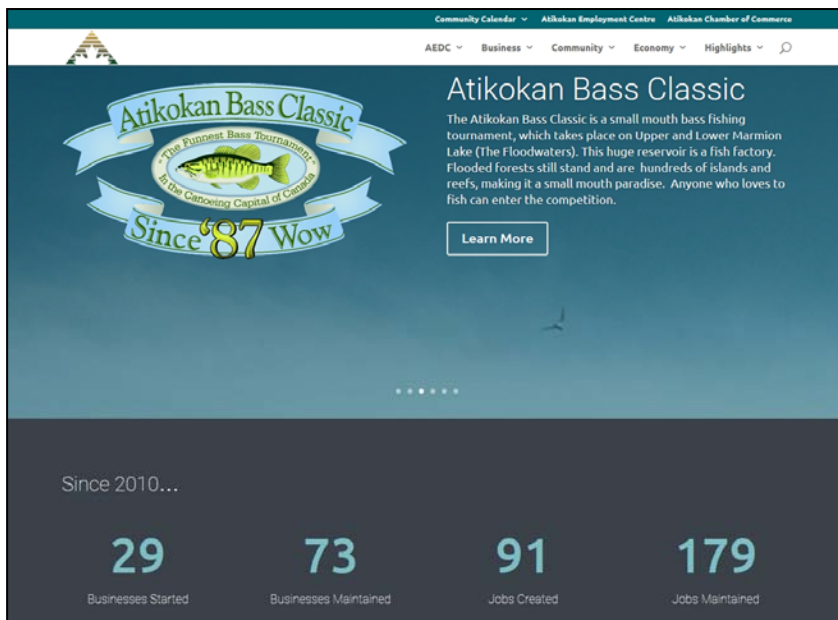
General Inquiries	179
In-Depth Counselling and Information Services Interviews	272
New CED Projects	12
Number of Community-Based Projects in Progress	20

Atikokan Employment Centre

In-Person Visits	↑ 2,450 (+50)
Electronic Visits	↑ 17,279 (+2,279)

Social Media Accounts

Website		↑ 12,234 Visitors (+197)
		↓ 23,241 Actions (-4,452)
Twitter		↑ 142 Followers (+37)
		↑ 33 Tweets (+8)
		↓ 3,629 Impressions (-187)
Facebook	AEDC	↑ 146 Likes (+40)
		↓ 16,176 Post Reach (-13,240)
		↓ 1,427 Engaged (1,202)
	Tourism Atikokan	↑ 1,617 Likes (+547)
		↑ 385,174 Post Reach (+1,335)
		↓ 27,791 Engaged (-1,594)
	AEC	1,617 Likes
		385,174 Post Reach
		27,791 Engaged



Did you know?

In 2016 the AEDC modernized its website www.atikokaninfo.com by moving to the WordPress platform!

LOCAL LOAN DISBURSEMENT

SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT, 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;

It was a tremendous year for investments in our service area, as once again we broke an organizational record and disbursed more funds in 2016 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 2016, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$1,129,989 towards new loans; this marks the second consecutive (and third total) year the AEDC has disbursed in excess of \$1 million in new loan funds, facilitating the need to seek recapitalization payments from the federal government. In total, 18 loans were refinanced, amalgamated and/or disbursed to clients in a wide range of sectors. We continue to work with traditional lenders to transition its 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 \$16 million in Atikokan and the surrounding region.

With the AEDC, five additional CFDCs 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 \$739,042 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).

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.

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
2016	9	6	38	21
TOTAL	38	79	129	200

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
2016	18	\$1,129,989	\$493,235	\$4,266,474

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"In July of 2015 Matt came up fishing with his son Nathan and his friends. Matt stayed back from fishing one day to talk to the owner of Marr's Perch Lake Lodge; he told him that the resort has been on the market but no one wanted to purchase the lodge. The owner told Matt he should buy it; Matt was surprised by the comment but didn't think it was possible in his mind. At first Matt and his wife Christine were unsure about moving that far away, but when Christine and the family came with him to look at the lodge in September of 2015, everyone knew the purchase of the lodge was the right thing to do for the family.

First they had a meeting with the AEDC and a traditional bank to help with financing of the business. Everything was going in the Rapp's favor until 15 days before they were to move to Canada. The bank backed out of the loan, for reasons we still are unsure of. The AEDC and a vendor takeback agreement would now be the only ones helping with the funding of the lodge. We worked with all three of AEDC's business development staff who walked us through the business process, even when we were 10 hours away in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There were times that it was a struggle to figure out if this was the right move or not and things did not always go the way we planned, but with the help of the AEDC staff, investment fund committee and Board of Directors our purchase of Marr's Perch Lodge would not have been possible. AEDC has helped in so many ways between the funding, business training classes, direction on hiring programs and a comfortable place to pass ideas by. We understand the first couple of years would be hard but with the help of the AEDC they make the process easier for small businesses and families to achieve the Canadian dream."

*Matthew & Christine Rapp
Owners, Perch Lake Lodge*

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

SECTOR	AMOUNT OF LOANS ISSUED IN 2016	CURRENT # OF LOANS IN PORTFOLIO	CURRENT AMOUNT OF LOANS
Hospitality	\$174,500	10	\$589,176
Agriculture	--	1	\$34,933
Mining	\$30,000	2	\$108,820
Service	\$498,000	21	\$1,235,718
Tourism	\$191,989	7	\$415,199
Manufacturing	--	3	\$190,859
Transportation	\$90,000	6	\$362,507
Retail	\$145,500	19	\$1,185,041
Forestry	--	2	\$144,221
Research/Development	--	--	--
Culture & Arts	--	--	--
TOTAL	\$1,129,989	71	\$4,266,474



AEDC STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS JOINED MP DON RUSNAK AND FEDNOR STAFF TO ANNOUNCE A \$1 MILLION RECAPITALIZATION TO AEDC'S COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND IN JULY 2016. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE AT AEDC CLIENTS SOURIS RIVER CANOES.

Atikokan Chamber of Commerce

ANNUAL REPORT

BY MIKE MCKINNON, TREASURER AND PAST PRESIDENT

The Chamber of Commerce capped a banner year with its most difficult decision since (temporarily) disbanding in 2008: we will no longer operate the tourist bureau.

Our summer students greeted about 2,500 visitors at the bureau last summer, and our best estimate is that less than two percent of them actually went on to travel the three kilometres into town.

As costs continue to rise - we are paying an ever-greater share of the wages for students working on summer grants - we began to seriously question exactly how much we were willing to spend to attract these 50 or so visitors to town.

We spent at least \$10,000 managing and operating the bureau last year, above and beyond the summer student grants we received for two of the students. The Town contributed \$5,000; the rest came from Chamber membership fees.

We didn't do a great job. With three students (one for 14 weeks and two for eight weeks) and our manager, hours of operation were limited. (Part of the issue is that given the location of the bureau, we do not want to leave a student alone at work.) And the limited staff made training difficult, although for the first time in several years we were able to take a day trip to visit several tourist outfitters and resort operators. The visits were an eye-opener for our students.

A first-rate tourist bureau operation at the junction would cost at least \$25,000 a year. That would give us enough staff to step up training and hours of operation.

And still, we would mostly be operating a comfort station for travelers who have no intention of visiting Atikokan.

This year, we plan to change it up. We will hire one student and work a guerrilla marketing program that will target tourists who are coming into Atikokan, seasonal residents, and regular Atikokanites. Our goal will be to sell them all on our community, with a special emphasis on all that our members have to offer.

We have started brainstorming how we can do this, and are looking at things like info stations around town, social media campaigns, giveaways to random shoppers and visitors, and more. We want to have some fun with this, and get visitors and residents involved in the fun. (Part of the effort will be aimed at helping residents be more tourism friendly. They are our number one ambassadors, after all.)

We believe that for half the money we have been spending on the tourist bureau operation, we can generate more positive feeling about Atikokan among more people.

Watch for it.

We hosted our biggest ever Business Awards gala at the Legion Hall on May 12. Attendance was over 150, the most ever, and the public made 40 nominations for our five awards (34 different nominees).

I am sad to report that our top secret selection committee, the group which reviews the nominations and chooses the winners, totally wimped out. Instead of picking five winners, they picked seven. Sheesh!

Our winners were:

- Rentech Business Excellence Award: **Revive Resale**
- OPG Health & Safety Award: **Anita Lyons, NWHU Health Educator**
- Tramin Ambassador's Award: **Souris River Canoes**

• Atikokan Employment Centre Not-for-Profit Excellence Award

Agency winner: **Atikokan Native Friendship Centre**

Volunteer winner: **Beaten Path Nordic Trails**

- AEDC Customer Service Award

Individual: **Amber Barnard** (pictured right with AEDC's Garry McKinnon and Chamber Board representative Annette Zwicker)



Organization: **Atikokan Employment Centre** (pictured below with AEDC's Garry McKinnon)

We again shared the event with Community Living Atikokan, which annually recognizes a business or organization that goes above and beyond to integrate Community Living members in the work-a-day world.



- Widening Our World Award: **Renee's Cuts 'n Curls**

We livened things up with a homegrown version of the popular Family Feud game, and are happy to report no blood was shed. Team captains Keith Robinson and Sarah Van Der Loo raised \$100 for the AGH Foundation and \$50 for the Legion's benevolent fund, as well as a good deal of laughter.

We completed the process of getting the Chamber's financial house in order, and finished the year with a positive balance, and a small increase in membership.

Last but certainly not least, we say goodbye to Samantha Boyko, our president for the past two years. Outgoing, friendly, and committed to building a stronger community around a healthy business sector, Sam has been a very effective leader. She will be missed.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2016, 215 meetings and seminars were held at the AEDC offices by non-profit groups!

Atikokan Employment Centre

ANNUAL REPORT

BY BRAD BEYAK, EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR

Program growth, increased contact with program participants and several changes exemplifies the services provided by the Atikokan Employment Centre in the past fiscal year 2016/17.

The Atikokan Employment Centre has continued to be financially supported by the Provincial government, however, the name of the Ministry who provides the funding has changed. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is now known as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. Regardless, the Atikokan Employment Centre, being supported provincially, has continued to expand our provision of top quality employment related services and supports. We also continue to get assistance with delivery of programs through the Fort Frances office of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development by working closely with their Employment and Training Consultant, Kimberly Williamson.

As indicated previously, the Atikokan Employment Centre is far from the former Employment Insurance office. The services provided by the Atikokan Employment Centre are not only designed for the underemployed and unemployed of our community, but also support individuals with accessing needed social services, education, training and providing employment related assistance to employers. We continue to be an essential community resource for employers, employees, students, the unemployed, the underemployed and those seeking information regarding services or building their personal skills and abilities, or that of their work force.

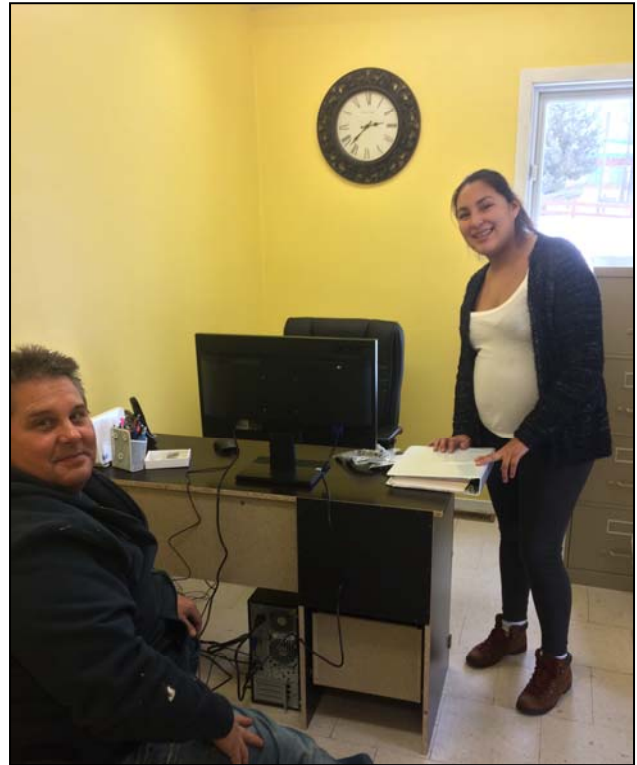
In 2016/17, we had in excess of 2000 in-person visits to the Atikokan Employment Centre's Resource Centre and approximately 17,000 electronic visits via our website. For those accessing our services via our website, 49,000 actions were undertaken by these users. Over 31,000 page views were directly related to viewing information presented under the local jobs category. Interestingly, most visitors accessed the website from the United States with visitors from Canada being a close second. Most visits from Canada arose out of the Toronto, Hamilton, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Montreal and Fort Frances areas. With respect to visits from the United States, most visitors resided in the Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Newark and Los Angeles areas.

Know also that visitors to the Atikokan Employment Centre's website came from most continents and a variety of countries including Brazil, Russia, Australia, Germany, Norway, Singapore and Sweden. Most visits to the website occurred Monday through Thursday, with highest level of traffic on Mondays and Tuesdays. Website visitors tended to prefer viewing information 9:00 am and 10:00 pm. For those that have not visited the website they can access it at employment.atikokaninfo.com to further find information about the Atikokan Employment Centre's programs and services. A direct link is also provided to the "visit Atikokan" website to assist in attracting new workers to our community.

As has been typical in past years, the majority of "in-person visitors" to the Atikokan Employment Centre's resource centre have required assistance with job search activities. Michelle Gushulak continues to be our main contact within Atikokan Employment Resource Centre for job searching activities. Michelle provides valuable information to job seekers and those looking to further build their current repertoire of skills.

The Atikokan Employment Centre is now also providing similar outreach services in the community of Lac La Croix, Ontario. Meagan Atatise, shown here (right) in her new office space, being the newest member to our team, assists residents of Lac La Croix First Nation in the search for employment, education and training at this location. With the cooperation of Lac La Croix First Nation, the Chief (Norman Jordan) and Council members we have been provided with a space that houses public access computers and job search related office equipment. This service is designed to assist the residents of this relatively remote First Nation community to access Employment Ontario services that are facilitated through the Atikokan Employment Centre.

Know that each guest in either of the resource centres 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 with potential employers, further investigating Employment Ontario programs as well as with reviewing local and regional job postings in their search for appropriate employment. Most recently, we have installed the necessary hardware to allow us to fully utilize video conferencing technology within the resource centres. This equipment has been put in place in our attempt to further improve our communication with remote or isolated residents. At this point, we are able to provide a full suite of services anywhere that has computer and internet services.



In 2016/17 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.

In the previous fiscal year, the Atikokan Employment Centre provided support /facilitated involvement in hundreds of course participations that were directed at Occupational Health and Safety, employment readiness, job search related activities, employment related legislation and job maintenance activities. This includes training in the Employment Standards Act, Job Search Strategies, Interview Skills, General Safety Awareness, Worker Health and Safety in 4 Steps, WHMIS, Supervisor Health and Safety in 5 Steps, Lock Out/Tag Out, Confined Space, Fall Protection, Ladder Safety, Traffic Control, Forklift Operation Training & Lift Truck Awareness Training, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Asbestos Awareness, Safe Work Practices, Excellence in Customer Service, Smart Serve and First Aid Training. Many of these courses were provided through access to online services that are completed independently by the training participant. Appropriate users are also able to gain access to employment related "soft skills" training such as leadership training, controlling your emotions, adjusting your work attitude, communication at work, dealing with ambiguity, the fine art of listening, cultural sensitivity, goal setting, dealing with arrogance and workplace entitlement. Free access to these services can be 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 Advanced Education and Skills Development 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 or other courses being offered locally. With the expansion of online education however, Second Career participants can access a host of different certificate and diploma programs online provided by various educational institutions and education providers.

The Atikokan Employment Centre has also continued to provide services through the Youth Job Connection program. The program targets younger community members who are experiencing barriers with accessing the labour market. Our services under the YJC program includes the provision of 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 are available. 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.

In Atikokan and the surrounding area there has been considerable interest in the Youth Job Connection (YJC) program. As of March, 2017 we have had 54 individuals who have participated in the Youth Job Connection Program. We are continuing to seek out and request that employers participate in the YJC program by hosting a suitable work training placements for YJC participants. During this work placement component of the YJC program, the Atikokan Employment Centre provides a substantial reimbursement for wages being paid to participant trainees. Denine Richard continues to take the lead in this program at the Atikokan Employment Centre. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Richard's for her ongoing dedication to the Atikokan Employment Centre and for the important work she continues to complete with the younger residents of our community and area.

The Atikokan Employment Centre also continues to provide services through the Youth Job Link (YJL) program. This program is targeted to address the younger workers with the first employment opportunity who face minimal 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. To date, the Atikokan Employment Centre has assisted 8 individuals through this program. Cindy Wood from the Atikokan Employment Centre continues to be the main contact for potential participants in the YJL program. Thank you Cindy for overseeing this component of our services and for assisting first time workers ready themselves for employment.

Over the last year the Atikokan Employment Centre was also responsible for assessing and administering employer applications to the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant (COJG) program. Canada-Ontario Job Grant

(the Job Grant) provides an opportunity for employers to invest in their workforce, with help from the government. The Job Grant provides direct financial support to individual employers who wish to purchase training for their employees. In Atikokan over the last year, 8 applications were assessed with 6 applications being granted funding for employee training. Employers in the Atikokan are encouraged to utilize this program as it is a means to further develop employee skills, increase productivity and potentially increase the services a business is able to provide.

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 incentives being provided to the employer. Using funding provided through Employment Ontario programs, the Atikokan Employment Centre was able to facilitate the initiation of 39 training work placements in the current fiscal year. Close to \$90,000.00 was provided to employers in wage reimbursements associated with hosting work training placements. Personal supports associated with employment needs (e.g. funding to assist with work clothing purchases, training certifications, transportation, child care expenses) totalled in excess of \$8900.00.

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, numerous employers in our area contacted the Atikokan Employment Centre regarding their human resource needs and/or employee skill development. To assist employers with their search for appropriate employees, we advertised 236 jobs on our website on behalf of employers. With many employers we also assisted with the creation of appropriate job advertisements and further identified employee specific employee needs/requirements.

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. Our focus during each of these visits was to complete outreach activities, market our services and deliver specific employment related workshops. Our efforts in these communities has led to increased services being accessed by First Nation band members and increased our ability to deliver effective services in these communities. As stated earlier, our relationship building activities with these First Nations has led to the establishment of an outreach site and the employment of one of the community members.

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 the programs each offers in the community. Cindy Wood is sincerely thanked for leading this monthly forum, coordinating presentations and arranging for the lunches that are provided to all attendees.

During the last year, the Atikokan Employment Centre also hosted and provided training for our own employees and other related social service providers. Namely, the Atikokan Employment Centre hosted the YWCA to deliver Life Skills Coaching training in Atikokan at Quetico College School. Life skills are defined as psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. There were 10 participants in this training with some coming from Sioux Lookout area. From our own agency, Cindy Wood, Michelle Gushulak, Denine Richard and Ange Sponchia attended Life Skills Coaching training.

Denine Richard and Cindy Wood also successfully completed their Career Coaching Certification Training provided through the Winnipeg Transition Centre in conjunction with the University of Winnipeg and

Humber College. Congratulations are extended for their dedication needed to complete the certification process.

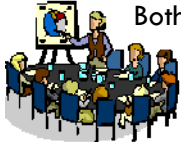
Denine Richard and Brad Beyak also completed Practical Workshop Facilitation Skills Certification training presented in Kenora, Ontario with the Winnipeg Transition Centre. This week long certification course was designed to improve workshop facilitation skills and improve one's ability to address difficult behaviours and situations. Early in the year, Cindy Wood, Michelle Gushulak, Meagan Atatise and Brad Beyak also completed training in Fort Frances that was specifically related to delivery of the Youth Job Connection Program and Youth Job Link program. This presentation was made by Sarah Delicate who is a founding partner of Bell Brown Molnar and Delicate Inc. (BBMD), a consulting firm based in Ottawa Canada. As a consultant, coach, trainer and speaker, Sarah Delicate has worked with 1000's of people across 100's of organizations, helping programs thrive in tough competitive environments. Support was also provided to staff administering the finances of the Atikokan Employment Centre to attend SAGE training. Trips out of town were also made by staff on a number of occasions to attend regional Employment Service provider meetings and events facilitated by the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB).

With respect to purchases made in the last fiscal year, we have purchased a number of computers used for training purposes and updated computers for staff use in our facility. We have also purchased computers and office equipment to appropriately outfit the outreach space at Lac La Croix First Nation. This year we are looking forward to making changes to our work environment that will further enhance accessibility and further increase the flexibility of training environments.

Our team has also grown in the last year with the addition of two new employees who have worked providing temporary contract services. As mentioned previously, Meagan Atatise is now working on a part-time basis as a Resource and Information Clerk at the Lac La Croix outreach site. The other addition to our team is Ange Sponchia who was employed in a temporary position in the last year assisting us with program promotion and marketing activities. With the efforts of these two individuals we are better able to access a wider range of potential program participants in our area. Thank you to Ange and Meagan for introducing area residents and employers to our services. Other staff at the Atikokan Employment Centre has remained relatively consistent with Cindy Wood and Denine Richard continuing in the roles as Case Managers and Michelle Gushulak continuing as the Atikokan Employment Centre's Resource and Information Clerk. With the assistance of Federal funding through the Canada Summer Jobs program we were also able to sequentially hire two students (Taylor Charbonneau and Ashley Nash) during the summer months. Their assistance was greatly appreciated especially during times when permanent staff were taking summer vacations.

On behalf of the residents of the Atikokan area, the Atikokan Employment Centre and the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation, I wish to extend a sincere thank you to Ange Sponchia, Denine Richard, Cindy Wood, Michelle Gushulak and Meagan Atatise for their work and dedication over the last year, promoting, assisting and administering the programs available through the Atikokan Employment Centre and Employment Ontario. Thank you also to the staff at Atikokan Economic Development Corporation for assisting and supporting us in attaining our goals. Milestones continue to be achieved and overall this year has been very successful for the Atikokan Employment Centre in realizing its intended mission. I also note that our efforts have been formally recognized by the Chamber of Commerce and community having received the Chamber's Customer Service Excellence Award. Moreover, it is the first time in the Employment Centre's history that we have been able to fully meet our goals/targets assigned to us by the Ministry of Advance Education and Skills Development.

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:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ◆ Confined Space Training | ◆ WHMIS Certification |
| ◆ Self-Employment Benefit Workshops | ◆ Chainsaw Certification Course |
| ◆ Resume Writing Workshop | ◆ E-Mail Creation Seminar |
| ◆ Cover Letter Writing Workshop | ◆ Lockout/Tagout Courses |
| ◆ Emergency First Aid Training | ◆ Fall Prevention |
| ◆ Forklift Sit Down/Counter Balance | ◆ Job Search Workshop |
| ◆ Man Lift | ◆ Traffic Control Training |
| ◆ Interviews: You're Key to Employment | ◆ Propane Handling |
| ◆ Telehandler ZoomBoom | ◆ Transportation of Dangerous Goods |
| ◆ Excellence in Customer Service | ◆ Employability Skills Discussion |
| ◆ Workplace Violence & Harassment Course | ◆ Business Fundamental Workshop Series |
| ◆ Business Plan Financial Workshops | |



Regular users of the AEDC Facilities includes:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| - Resolute Forest Products | - Rainbow Centre Daycare |
| - Atikokan Interagency | - Sno-Ho Club |
| - Atikokan Figure Skating | - Path of the Paddle |
| - Chamber of Commerce | - Friends of White Otter Castle |
| - Family Health Team | - Atikokan General Hospital |
| - Hunter Safety/Firearms Course Certification | |
| - Young Professionals Association of Atikokan | |

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 Our Team

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.

Senior Community Development Advisor

Gord Knowles

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

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

Community Development Advisor

Katie Hannon

B.T.M.

Business planning and counseling, loan disbursal, CED projects, marketing and promotion, liaison with community groups and organizations.

Office Administrator

Annette Bryk

Contract administration, financial recordkeeping, bookkeeping, loans administration, benefits administration, recording of official minutes.

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 Clerks

Michelle Gushulak

Meagan Atatise (Lac La Croix Outreach Office)

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

Program & Placement Representative

Ange Sponchia

Community outreach and marketing.

AEDC's In-Office Partners

Heart of the Continent Partnership Coordinator

Chris Stromberg

Chamber of Commerce Office Manager

Ange Sponchia

AEDC Board of Directors

We wish to thank the 2016 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.

JIM TURNER, CHAIR

TAMI STINSON, VICE-CHAIR

SAMANTHA BOYKO, SECRETARY/TREASURER

DAVE ELDER, PAST CHAIR

ROB FERGUSON, TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

HAROLD MOSELY, TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

DAN SYNCOX, UPSALA R.D.A. REPRESENTATIVE

DARCY WHITECROW, SEINE RIVER F.N. REPRESENTATIVE

DAVID BJORKMAN

DAVID HOMER

DENNIS BROWN

DR. KEN SAWCHUK

JACK PIERCE

MARY MAKARENKO

ROBERT POTTS

SHANNON RIDING

VIC PROKOPCHUK, BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS

Looking Ahead

OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR...

The future looks quite positive for the Atikokan area!

Employment opportunities are generally quite good and our First Nations have made great gains in employment, particularly at Resolute Forest Products. We will be watching closely as our neighbours to the south evaluate and potentially open the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Softwood Lumber Agreement. Changes in one or both of these agreements could have major impacts on the dimensioned lumber market and the resultant impacts on harvesting and transportation. These impacts could be positive or negative.

Our region has experienced a couple of good years for the tourist sector and we have enjoyed some ownership turnover in operations. New owners have brought new ideas and energy to their respective businesses and we expect good results. Again we need to monitor what is happening in the US, and in particular in the US Midwest. As the US economy goes, so goes the tourist industry in northwestern Ontario!

Our retail sector is an area of some concern. There continues to be some erosion of the product offering in the area. This is attributed primarily to two factors; first, the draw of the big box stores in our neighbouring communities, and second, the fact that the local economy has improved and people can afford to travel outside the community for entertainment and sports and they tend to shop while away. We will continue our efforts to support the retail sector in an effort to ensure that enough critical mass remains to service our basic needs.

The AEDC operates on an open door philosophy in work and in deed. No potential entrepreneur is dismissed before their ideas have been fully investigated. Our focus will always be on getting to a positive outcome and we will always ask "Why Not?"

Reaching the AEDC

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



(807) 597-2757
1-888-334-AEDC



aedc@atikokaninfo.com
www.atikokaninfo.com



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Street West



PO Box 218
Atikokan, ON
P0T 1C0

THE AEDC ACKNOWLEDGES THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT WE RECEIVE FROM OUR PARTNERS



Ontario

FedNor



**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Your job is out there. We'll help you find it.

This Employment Ontario
Service is funded by the Ontario
Government