

# 2022 Annual Report

## Atikokan Economic Development Corporation



**APRIL 20, 2023**



Federal Economic Development  
Agency for Northern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement  
économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario





# Atikokan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
A Community Futures Development Corporation

**April 2023**

2022 was a year which was about getting business back to normal as the Covid-19 pandemic looks to be getting under control and hopefully the worst is behind us.

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation continues to work with the collages at the Town of Atikokan to try to prepare for the increased demand for housing, education, senior services, social services, tourism, short term accommodations and the growth of business. We also continue to further relationships with the First Nations and Upsala which are in our service area through the partnerships with the Employment Centre. Aspen Court Senior Living complex (Community Living) is now fully occupied which filled a need for senior living in our community.

On the industrial side Resolute Forest Products continues to employ over one hundred people with the addition of new Ukraine employees which have filled a vital void in their work force. Many are being supplied accommodations at the Old Atikokan Hotel with help from Resolute Forest Products and the AEDC. Ontario Power Generation is awaiting an extension for Atikokan Generating Station for multiyear long term power purchase agreement with the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO). It will ensure that the OPG and the Biopower Sustainable Energy Corp. plants stay operational which are vital to Atikokan in the future. There are also numerous active mining sites that are being explored in the immediate areas which could lead to a large-scale mining project in the future. The main being the Agnico Eagle Mines Limited (Hammond Reef) and the Nuinsco Sunbeam Gold Property which with the higher gold price will help the viability of the projects. The Pump storage project for the old mine sites from Cassandra Energy could become a viable option for a very large-scale project in Atikokan if support from the Ontario Provincial government and the IESO can be garnered. The Waasigan Transmission Line Project is another project that will supply safe and reliable power to the region to meet the growing demands for electricity for new projects in Northwestern Ontario. It will also be of great economic benefit to Atikokan and area when the construction phase is being completed. We will continue to advocate for this and other large-scale projects as viable and responsible community building blocks for a prosperous future for Atikokan and catchment areas.

Congratulations to the staff at the AEDC for the outstanding work. You play a crucial role in the development of new and older businesses in the Atikokan and catchment area's and in the continuing success in the AEDC. I am pleased to extend my most sincere appreciation to all the volunteers and the staff who have committed countless hours to ensuring 2022 was another successful year for the AEDC.

**Dave Homer, AEDC Chair**





## Town of Atikokan

Box 1330, 120 Marks Street  
Atikokan, Ontario P0T 1C0  
807-597-1234 807-597-6186(fax)  
[www.atikokan.ca](http://www.atikokan.ca)

Office of the Mayor  
807-597-1234 ext.235  
Administration/Accounting  
807-597-1234  
Community Services  
807-597-1234 ext.223  
Public Works  
807-597-1234 ext.231  
Fire/Building  
807-597-1234 ext.228

April 14, 2023

Thank you from the Town of Atikokan!

On behalf of the Town of Atikokan, I would like to thank the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation for continuing to step up and support our citizens who are showing their entrepreneurial spirit. Small business is the lifeblood of all communities and Atikokan is fortunate to have a strong advocate for businesses in the AEDC. The AEDC's commitment to supporting business, as well as their community spirit, has made them an integral member of our community.

The AEDC is becoming the hub for all things Atikokan. The Atikokan Employment Centre, which is operating through the AEDC, is a perfect complement to business development. A one stop-shop for people looking to create employment or find employment.

The Town also benefits from the AEDC's strong tourism focus as they continue to keep their finger on the pulse of the tourism industry. This effort is proving to be an invaluable resource for the service-based industries in our area. In addition, support provided for groups such as Friends of White Otter Castle, Path of the Paddle and our own Atikokan Bass Classic help forge Atikokan as a vibrant community.

With the reduction of volunteer service clubs in our town, the AEDC has stepped in to help keep local traditions and events alive and build community spirit while staying true to their mandate of economic development.

And last, but truly not least, the support shown for the Ukrainian refugees is a feel-good story that all Atikokanites, heck, all Canadians should feel pride in. It's not just an AEDC initiative, it's really a humanitarian effort led by Garry and his staff. Their time and effort go well beyond their scope of work or job description. It's an effort that's making a difference in dozens of lives. Well done my friends.

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation is always there where an idea, any idea, big or small, can be met with enthusiasm and support.

Yours Truly,

Rob Ferguson  
Mayor

# Community & Committee Reports

## INVOLVEMENT AND UPDATES

### TOURISM ATIKOKAN

---

The year started off with Covid still looming over people's travel plans, as there was still an unsteadiness of what to expect with travelling. That didn't stop Tourism Atikokan from promoting all the wonderful outdoor activities that locals and others could enjoy, from the snowmobile trails to the Outdoor Ice Fishing Challenge, downhill skiing and local walking and snowshoeing trails.



In early 2020 Tourism Atikokan found out they were successful in their 2019 Canadian Experiences Fund Program grant application through FedNor. This grant covered a variety of initiatives including refreshing and printing of town maps and promotional booklets, brushing around and installation of 11 new highway signs, and the production of a series of short promotional videos. In January of 2021 we received some sneak-peak footage from Apple Wagon Films of the summer footage that was captured in 2020. In March of 2021, we

captured the winter filming scenes that were needed, and with quick planning, as spring decided to come early and melt a lot of snow. Tourism Atikokan is still waiting for MTO to designate us a new sign location for the last remaining tourism highway sign, but due to restrictions they are unable to travel. In 2022, we wrapped up the signs around the town of Atikokan to replace the old tourism logo, and we partnered with the Town of Atikokan and received funding from Destination Northern Ontario to replace the Welcome Sign. In the fall of 2022, we took down the existing sign, and plans are to have the new sign design and built and installed by fall of 2023.

Tourism Atikokan opened the Travel Information Centre (TIC) on July 4th and greeted 816 people before it's closure on August 26<sup>th</sup>. The TIC saw a shorter season compared to 2021 but had more visitors compared to the previous season. We saw an increase in people per day, and this could be a result of people starting to travel again this summer as the pandemic started to settle, and people were less fearful of traveling across the country and travel internationally. We increased our 10 visitors a day in 2021 to 21 visitors a day in 2022. The AEDC hired two summer students for 8 weeks through the Canada Summer Jobs Grant to staff the TIC, plus a senior student for 16 weeks which assisted in the longer season. The senior student also spent the summer assisting with the Atikokan Come Home Reunion and other various events throughout the summer.

The Atikokan Come Home Reunion was an idea created back in 2020, but the event was delayed until 2022 due to the Pandemic. This event was put on by a local volunteer board. Over 420 people from across the country attended the Reunion which was held over the Canada Day weekend. Events that took place included a vintage car club car show, there were artisans on Main Street, a Canada day dance,



Reunion dance, a parade on Canada Day and the Museum was open on the weekend to display their exhibits.



## ATIKOKAN'S CELEBRATION WEEK

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR AUGUST 5-13, 2022



FRI <b>5</b>	MON DAY GET OUT 10:00am - 12:00pm	THURS <b>11</b>	RICKS MEETING 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
MON <b>8</b>	ARCH & K&N FORMING 10:00am - 12:00pm	FRI <b>12</b>	BEST FISH COOKING 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
TUES <b>9</b>	STANDARD LUNCHEON - JUNIATA VALLEY 12:00pm - 1:00pm	FRI <b>12</b>	DAYTIME MEMORIES 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
TUES <b>9</b>	A&J ADULT BEHAVIOUR NIGHT 8:00pm in the Legion Pre-registered only 10:00am - 12:00pm	FRI <b>12</b>	CIVILIAN BLOOD - MIDSAT 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
WED <b>10</b>	STANDARD LUNCHEON - JUNIATA VALLEY 12:00pm - 1:00pm	FRI <b>12</b>	ARCH & K&N F&F F&F 10:00am - 12:00pm 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
WED <b>10</b>	ARCH & K&N 10:00am - 12:00pm	FRI <b>12</b>	CIVILIAN BLOOD - MIDSAT 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
THURS <b>11</b>	MIDWINTER TALK & BOWLSALE SALE 10:00am - 12:00pm 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome	SAT <b>13</b>	SAT TOWN MEMORIES 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
THURS <b>11</b>	ATIKOKAN LUNCHEON - F&F 10:00am - 12:00pm	SAT <b>13</b>	TOWN TALK 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome
THURS <b>11</b>	PARADE OF BOATS 10:00am - 12:00pm 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome	SUN <b>14</b>	BIG TENT CLEAN UP 10:00am in the Legion All topics welcome

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

<p><b>Food &amp; Beverage Events</b></p> <p><b>ATIKOKAN CLUB</b> will host "Thank You Dinner" on <b>Monday, August 8th</b> at the <b>ATIKOKAN Legion</b>. The menu will be <b>Roast Beef, Potatoes, Green Beans, and Dessert</b>. The cost is <b>\$10.00 per person</b>. Reservations are required. Please call <b>Donna</b> at <b>508-888-1111</b> for more information.</p>	<p><b>Little Falls Golf Course</b></p> <p><b>HOURS OF OPERATION:</b>          10:00am - 12:00pm          1:00pm - 5:00pm          6:00pm - 8:00pm          For more information, please call <b>508-888-1111</b>.</p>
<p><b>ATIKOKAN MOTORCYCLES</b> (located near the <b>ATIKOKAN Legion</b>) will be open on <b>Monday, August 8th</b> from <b>10:00am to 5:00pm</b>. The cost is <b>\$10.00 per person</b>. Reservations are required. Please call <b>Donna</b> at <b>508-888-1111</b> for more information.</p>	<p><b>ATIKOKAN Historical Museum</b></p> <p><b>HOURS OF OPERATION:</b>          10:00am - 12:00pm          1:00pm - 5:00pm          6:00pm - 8:00pm          For more information, please call <b>508-888-1111</b>.</p>

**AUG 27**

**ATIKOKAN MOTORCYCLES** (located near the **ATIKOKAN Legion**) will be open on **Monday, August 27th** from **10:00am to 5:00pm**. The cost is **\$10.00 per person**. Reservations are required. Please call **Donna** at **508-888-1111** for more information.

**AUG 27 & 28**

**ATIKOKAN Annual Meeting** (located near the **ATIKOKAN Legion**) will be held on **Monday, August 27th** and **Tuesday, August 28th** from **10:00am to 5:00pm**. The cost is **\$10.00 per person**. Reservations are required. Please call **Donna** at **508-888-1111** for more information.

Other events took place this winter and summer including Atikokan Bass Classic, Atikokan Mudslingers 4X4 Mudfling event, the Women's Bass Tournament, Motocross races, Snowarama, Sno-Ho Poker Derby and the Annual Christmas Parade.

The border opened to American travelers at the end of summer 2021, which meant 2022 was the first full summer where Americans were travelling into Canada and staying at tourism outfitters in the area. Although resorts didn't see pre covid numbers, they had higher occupancy than in the previous two years.

Tourism Atikokan continues to maintain a strong online presence through their social medias some of the most popular posts being the schedule of events poster for the Bass Classic Week and promoting the 2022 Ice Fishing Challenge.

## ANNUAL ATIKOKAN CHRISTMAS PARADE

The AEDC was successful in hosting the Annual Christmas parade in 2022. The theme was Christmas Movies. Lots of businesses partook in the theme, with the winner being Resolute, with their rendition of Polar Express. While the parade took place, we did not have a visit with Santa after the parade, and we did not host a tree lighting ceremony, in part with Covid regulations. We did have a great turn out this year for both the number of parade floats as well as the community to come watch the parade.

Next year the community will need to find a solution to the Annual Christmas Tree and lighting it, working with RBC is the best solution to having a permanent tree in place already located downtown.



## REGIONAL RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUND (RRRF)

The AEDC assisted seventeen businesses with a total of \$563,774 through the RRRF program. So far, the AEDC has had three businesses pay off their RRRF loans and take advantage of the 25% forgivable portion. The remaining businesses have until December 31, 2023, to take advantage of this forgivable portion. After this date the RRRF loans will turn into 100% loans with a low fixed interest rate of 5%. We are expecting that the majority of our RRRF loans will pay off the 75% portion by the end of the year to capture the forgivable portion.

## **FOREST SECTOR**

---

This sector overall performed very well throughout the year. Both lumber and wood panel prices started the year quite high and rose to near record prices over the summer months. As most of the wood harvested in this region is processed into lumber and wood panel products, all-consuming facilities fared well financially.

Labour supply issues continue to be the greatest concern across the sector. From mills, to transportation, to harvesting, to silviculture, a labour shortage impacted all activities. One company, Resolute, was very successful in addressing their mill labour issues by integrating many Ukrainian refugees into the workforce. The company has provided support for these workers from immigration to orientation. New arrivals are supported in securing all necessary documentation to live and work in Canada and are provided subsidized housing and transportation. They are also supported in their efforts to acquire sufficient English language skills to secure permanent residency (a key objective for all the newcomers).

Atikokan BioPower experienced several setbacks during the year but had overcome most by year end. The business continues to be very dependent on sales to Ontario Power Generation and are optimistic for a new contract on execution of a new power purchase agreement for the Atikokan Generating Station. BioPower has continued to experiment with new pellet products and endeavour to expand their market share for domestic pellets.

Boundary Waters Forest Management Corporation (BWPMC) has passed the developmental learning curve and has become a dependable and responsible forest management entity. There is a broad-based membership on the board of directors with almost no turnover. The current manager has proven himself to be very talented and resourceful and his knowledge and experience pay dividends in terms of efficiency and long-term planning.

The AEDC provided financial support to BWPMC for the completion of a biomass availability study that was released in 2022. As a result of the study findings, several companies have expressed interest in exploring the development of manufacturing facilities in the region. As more than half of available biomass is in the eastern portion of the forest, Atikokan is well positioned for any development. The AEDC is in discussion with a major player in the pellet market and promoting our area as a host location.

## **ENERGY SECTOR**

---

We all hoped that there would be a new power purchase agreement signed for the Atikokan Generating Station in 2022, but alas, it was not to be. Notwithstanding this disappointment, an agreement seems imminent, and the Minister of Energy has directed the Independent System Operator to negotiate agreements with several generators, including Atikokan.

On a few occasions, it seemed that the Steep Rock Power pumped-storage development was gaining traction with the Province of Ontario. Each time the spirits of the proponents were dashed. To their credit, the investors and developers remain undeterred and continue to seek out channels around, over, under, or through the barriers placed in their way. The AEDC will continue to work with, and advocate for, this multi-billion-dollar investment for our region.

## ATIKOKAN COMMUNITY EVENT STAGE

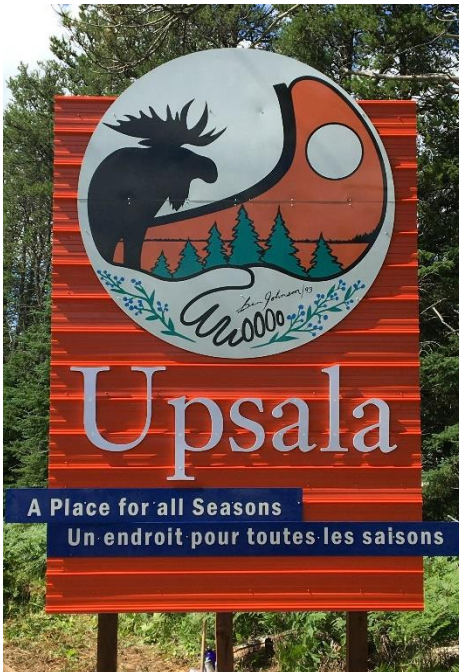
---

The AEDC was successful in 2020 with a FedNor application, under the Northern Ontario Development Program and received 100% funding to purchase a custom event stage for the community of Atikokan. This stage will be used by different community groups to host different events, as well as groups from our service area including Lac La Croix, Seine River and Lac Des Mille Lac First Nations. The community and the AEDC greatly thanks FedNor for their support of a community stage to help increase our stage presence at different events.



## UPSALA & LAC DES MILLE LACS AREA

---



Upsala celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Celebrations were held throughout the year. MPP Kevin Holland made an appearance to present the community on this accomplishment,

Upsala saw the installation of one of its gateway signs. This sign has received lots of positive feedback and will help in getting the area recognized.

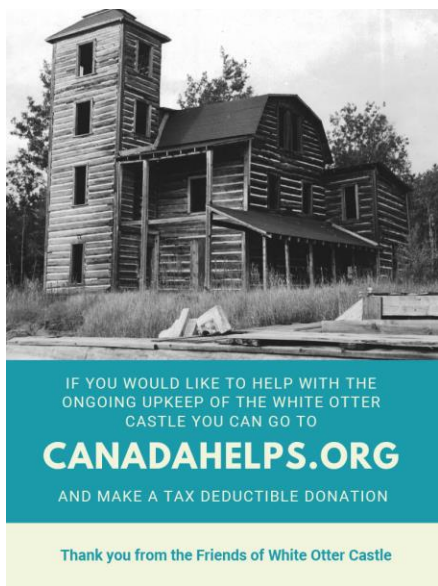
Summer saw lots of traffic. Tourism is still one of the major economies for this area.

Lac Des Mille Lacs saw a changeover in ownership at one of the resorts. This brings new preceptive to the tourism industry.

Upsala saw one of its businesses close. Though, unfortunate, this allows the opportunity for a new business to enter our community.

## FRIENDS OF WHITE OTTER CASTLE

---



The Friends of White Otter Castle continue to preserve and highlight the importance of Jimmy McOuat and the White Otter Castle.

In 2022, the remaining portions of the FedNor and NOHFC grants wrapped up with the completion of the marketing videos (both winter and summer), new signage in and around the castle and advertising in the Sunset Country Publication. By the end of the year, both grants were able to be paid out in full and the group looks towards their next project. More work needs to be completed on the castle, so the friends will continue to look for more funding to complete these tasks.

The Friends continues to have a strong partnership with Ontario Parks, as we continue to work with them on the overall yearly maintenance as well as working with them on larger projects. 2023 will see an expansion of the dock system as well as getting the sprinkler system installed. The Friends will continue to look for

funding for the maintenance and sustainability of the White Otter Castle.

## THE PATH OF THE PADDLE ASSOCIATION (by Lise Sorenson)

---

2022 was a good year for POPA. We managed to complete the portage maintenance postponed in 2021 due to the high risk of forest fire.

The funds carried over from the Ontario Trillium Foundation project in 2021 were used in 2022 to complete portage trail maintenance south of Dryden, between Kekekwa and Upper Manitou Lakes. A few extra campsites were also added on Kekekwa and Harper Lakes. One new portage was created on Kekekwa Creek. Closer to Atikokan, portage and campsite maintenance were completed on the Turtle R. between 622 and White Otter Lake. The portage from the Turtle River to Smirch L. required a significant reroute around a beaver pond. Nice to have that problem resolved, as it had been extremely challenging for paddlers for 3 years! Signage and wayfinding markers were updated wherever portage maintenance was carried out.

The big news of 2022 is that David Jackson, along with wife Leah and 2 friends from Wales, paddled the entire Path of the Paddle from Manitoba to Thunder Bay: over 1000 km! Spectacular images and video footage of their trip can be viewed on the Path of the Paddle Association website and Facebook page. Voyageur Wilderness took good care of the group as they passed through the Atikokan area. In November, David hosted "an Evening of Adventure" at Sleeping Giant Brewery where he and Mike Ranta shared tales of their paddling adventures with a full house of attendees.

New for the 2023 season, Path of the Paddle will be offering digital interactive maps on the website. Paddlers will be able to zoom in for a whole new level of detail, that will take the guesswork out of navigation.



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

---



Stepping out of the pandemic in 2022 the Heart of the Continent Partnership continued the bi-monthly calls with the steering committee and land managers and participating agencies.

Topics included projects that we have worked on, are working on and future endeavors that include:

- Bike the Heart – a series of rides throughout the Heart of the Continent and the possibility of working with “Ontario by Bike” a provincial program to connect trail systems for cycling tourism.

- Tourism in the region after coming out of a pandemic.
- Discussed the possibility of a 3<sup>rd</sup> science symposium considering the success of our 2016 and 2019 events.
- Our Dark Sky Initiative, continued stewardship of our dark sky areas, education to public and visitors, and possible growth to help other agencies, municipalities, areas that are interested in applying for and obtaining Dark Sky Status.
- Recruitment of new people and agencies.

Along with a continued presence on social media, HOCP helped organizations, businesses, and clubs to share what is available to those that would like to visit the region, and for all of us that work and live here. HOCP showcases the events that are within the area like the Scotties Tournament in Thunder Bay, projects such as the Nature Conservancy property purchases, ceremonies like the Commemorative Postal Stamp of George Morrison (American Artist from the Grand Portage Band). Along with shouting out for big events we help small businesses in the region to get the word out about what they have to offer. New updates on our National Geographic Geotourism site continue to trickle in and as we refresh the site, we will drive some online traffic by Facebook or Instagram. By the middle of 2022 Land Managers continued to collaborate while the tourism summer season was in full swing. They were able to share Problem issues with borders reopened, high water conditions, over or under use of tourism areas, and what has helped each individual agency.

What was also clear was a need to re-connect face to face. It was very beneficial to re-connect with the Fort William Historical Park managers and staff, and work towards hosting a HOCP Gathering in Thunder Bay at Fort William HP

The Gathering topics included but not limited to:

- **Sister Sites Arrangement** – Resigning the Sister Sites Arrangement – Quetico, La Verendrye Provincial Parks, Voyageurs, Grand Portage, Superior National Forest, and Minnesota Department Natural Resources NE looking to continue the mutually beneficial cooperation of the 5.5 million acres of public land managed by these agencies. Trevor Gibb – Quetico Park Superintendent has agreed to going over the 2016-2021 arrangement.
- **Science Symposium** – HOCP Science symposium for spring of 2023.
- **Darks Sky Initiative** – Work being done, PBS documentary, and possible new applications worked on for additional HOC dark sky areas. \*\*\* If we can have our meeting at FWHP, maybe we can have our dark sky initiative at their observatory.
- **HOCP** – post-pandemic - direction for our partnership.
- **Cross border Tourism** – promoting the region.

- **Fort William Historical Park** – 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and return of the Great Rendezvous – how HOCP will participate.

The November Gathering at Fort William Historical Park was very successful. We have received some great feedback via email and social media posts – Although we were missing some key people that were also scheduled to talk, the spontaneity went well with others filling in, Christian Carl – Superintendent Sleeping Giant PP, Ryan Mackett- Lakehead Conservation Authority, Gary Davies filled in on the planned Science Symposium. Fort William Historical Park General Manager, Patrick Morash presented on the Fort and its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary 2023 year in events. Our Keynote Speaker was Rob Hyde, Lake Superior – Lake-wide Management.



The evening presenters included our Dark Sky Land Managers, David Jackson Photojournalist on the Path of the Paddle, and Travis Novitsky presented on the PBS Documentary Northern Nights, Starry Skies.

Bob DeGross, Superintendent Voyageurs National Park said the gathering showed a great example of people hungry to get back together to rekindle the interest in Heart of the Continent Partnership, including himself. We were also able to recruit some new interest and Steering Committee members including Julie Rosenthal – Professor Lakehead University and Patrick Morash, General Manager -Fort William Historical Park.

Our Steering Committee members consists of representation from:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Thunder Bay Tourism                    | • Fort William Historical Park              |
| • Ontario parks                          | • Grand Portage National Monument           |
| • Lakehead University                    | • International Falls/Rainy Lake CVB        |
| • Superior National Forest               | • Arrowhead Regional Development Commission |
| • Voyageurs National Park                |   |
| • Minnesota Department Natural Resources |   |

The Heart of the Continent region reaches from Duluth MN to Thunder Bay through the Atikokan/Quetico area to International Falls/Fort Frances. The region includes Sleeping Giant, Kakabeka Falls, La Verendrye, Turtle River/White Otter and Quetico Provincial Parks in Ontario, Canada. In the USA it includes Grand Portage National Monument, Voyageurs National Parks, the Superior National Forest, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the beautiful Minnesota State Parks in NE Minnesota. The Heart of the Continent truly is an interconnected region that together shares one of the largest expanses of managed public greenspaces in North America and combined has one of the largest managed dark sky areas along with vibrant gateway communities.

## COMMUNITY FUTURES ONTARIO (CFO) & COMMUNITY FUTURES NETWORK OF CANADA

---

The Executive Directors continues to serve as Chair of the Management Information Systems (MIS) committee of CFOntario. The primary responsibility of the committee is to ensure the integrity and functionality of the loans management software and ensure it remains relevant and appropriate as technology progresses. The committee has been very successful in fulfilling that responsibility.

As digital ne'er-do-wells up their game and cyber-attacks become more common, data system security has become a very real concern. The MIS committee is actively engaged in ongoing threat assessment and exploring data and system security measures on behalf of the membership. Several measures have been implemented already and additional actions are likely to be forthcoming.

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & AWARDS

---

In 2022, the AEDC's staff started to participate in training and professional skills and development with the return of larger conferences and training after a few years of them being cancelled due to Covid-19. Training included the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, EDCO conference, CFO National Conference, DNO's Best Practice Mission, and the Northwest CF Network meetings.

Community Development Advisor Katie Hannon continues to work towards obtaining the Ec. D designation by collecting her designated points. Garry completed Valeyo training. Melanie completed Bookkeeping Essentials through Sage University, All-Inclusive Bookkeeping through Simply Training, Insurance Recertification and Secure Advantage Training through Valeyo, and RBC's ACH Processes training. Board and staff also partook in Strategic planning in March 2022.

AEDC Office Administrator Annette Bryk and Administrative Assistant Melanie Hachey continued to participate in building skills to facilitate the in-house delivery of bookkeeping and loan services. Such programs include FaaSBank, Sage and Valeyo Insurance.

## 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!



## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

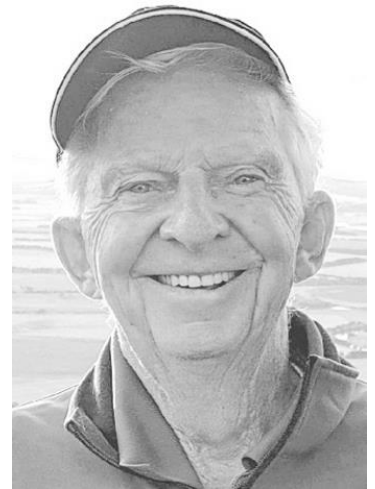
When I first decided to start a small business, I had a hard time figuring out where to start. I approached the AEDC for information on where to begin and they guided me through the process step by step and ultimately loaned me the start-up money for my business. I would highly recommend that anyone interested in starting a business take this avenue, the staff are very professional and genuinely care about their clients and the community.

-Jon Lusignan- Lusignan Contracting

### **BOARD RECOGNITION- JACK PIERCE (In Memory)**

We would like to express our deepest thanks to Jack Pierce, whose years of experience helped steer the AEDC with strong, passionate leadership to build our business community. In the fall of 2022, Jack passed away, who at the time was serving on the Investment Fund Committee, Public Relations and the Board of Directors for the AEDC.

Jack has been involved with community and economic development since the conception of the Industrial Development Committee which was formed in the 70's. He also represented numerous other committees during this time right until his passing. Jack has provided personal business experience and leadership to the AEDC, as well as to the many businesses that he assisted through the Investment Fund Committee. Our everlasting thanks to Jack Pierce for his dedication to the AEDC and the community of Atikokan.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

METRICS FOR SUCCESS (JAN 1 TO DEC 31 2022)

## Atikokan Economic Development Corporation

General Inquiries	↓ 159
In-Depth Counselling and Information Services Interviews	↓ 51
New CED Projects	↓ 4
Number of Community-Based Projects in Progress	↑ 57

## Atikokan Employment Centre

In-Person Visits	↓ 1115 (-1652)
Electronic Visits	↓ 30,449 (-3041)

## Social Media Accounts

Website	AEDC	↑ 18,532 Visitors (+2539)
		↑ 27,327 Actions (+2530)
	VisitAtikokan.ca	↓ 23,163 Visitors (-1862)
		↓ 51,000 Page Views (-5685)
Facebook	AEDC	↑ 747 Visits (+68)
		↑ 685 Likes (+140)
		↑ 9187 Post Reach (+2310)
	Tourism Atikokan	↓ 1176 Visits (-827)
		↑ 2266 Likes (+384)
		↓ 54,415 Post Reach (-153,079)
Instagram	@tourismatikokan	↑ 813 Followers (+54)
		↑ 416 Posts (+198)
		↓ 8407 Post Reach (-27,210)

\*Facebook metrics changed in 2018 to reduce organic engagement and reach



### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022, 60 meetings and seminars were held at the AEDC offices by non-profit groups and businesses!

# 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:

- ❖ 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.;
- ❖ working with the Town of Atikokan and community groups, planning to the future;

2022 was another busy year in terms of loan disbursement, as some businesses changed ownership while others needed assistance due to the pandemic. During 2022, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$201,347 towards new loans. In total, 10 loans in the amount of \$278,275 were refinanced, amalgamated and/or disbursed to clients in a wide range of sectors. We continue to work with traditional lenders to transition loan clients to their services as per our mandate, but uptake from those institutions has been a challenge.

Since 1988, Atikokan Economic Development Corporation has dispersed more \$18 million in Atikokan and the surrounding region.

With the AEDC, six 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, Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corp, Chukuni CDC (Red Lake).

Atikokan currently has 14 of these regional investments totaling \$588,628 in that portfolio. This partnership allows the AEDC to consider investments of more than \$350,000 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: Tami Stinson, Elizabeth MacKay, Kim Cross, Jack Pierce, Dave Homer, Dave Elder, Brian Stimson, Gord Knowles and Jerry Laskowski



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

YEAR	BUSINESSES STARTED	BUSINESSES MAINTAINED		JOBS CREATED	JOBS MAINTAINED	
		<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>		<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>
2018	2	17		14	57	
2019	2	8		14	38	
2020	4	14		76	39	
2021	5	6	17	18	26	42
2022	5	6		4	8	

### INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO BALANCE

YEAR	LOANS ISSUED		LOAN AMOUNT		REPAYMENTS	PORTFOLIO BALANCE	
	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>
2018	23		\$930,284		\$541,180	\$4,184,734	
2019	12		\$559,587		\$545,161	\$4,189,933	
2020	23		\$1,741,340		\$717,723	\$5,124,746	
2021	15	16	\$899,434	\$471,032	\$617,785	\$5,306,766	\$550,274
2022	13		\$316,935		\$812,601	\$5,195,072	\$490,274

### INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

SECTOR	AMOUNT OF LOANS ISSUED IN 2022	CURRENT # OF LOANS IN PORTFOLIO		CURRENT AMOUNT OF LOANS	
	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>	<i>Regular Loan</i>	<i>RRRF Loan</i>
Hospitality	\$17,588	8	0	\$672,514	
Agriculture	--	0		--	
Mining	--	--		--	
Service	\$118,346	27	7	\$1,616,342	\$285,274
Tourism	\$9300	7	2	\$1,160,543	\$120,000
Manufacturing	--	1		\$107,053	
Transportation	--	6		\$379,076	
Retail	\$160,000	15	3	\$1,139,039	\$85,000
Forestry	\$11,700	3		\$97,182	
Culture & Arts	--	--		--	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$316,934</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$5,171,747</b>	<b>\$490,274</b>

# Atikokan Employment Centre

## ANNUAL REPORT

BY BRAD BEYAK, EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR

### Labour Market

Since last year in the winter of 2022, the labour market in Atikokan and Northwestern Ontario has remained very strong. Employers across most sectors continued to experience challenges with finding appropriate employees to move forward with their business activities.

At the Atikokan Employment Centre, we have seen somewhat of a decrease in service requests from potential program participants/clients especially in the first half of our fiscal year. It is felt this resulted from the lingering impacts of the pandemic which yielded some degree of uncertainty for both employers and job seekers alike. Moreover, with decreases in community interactions and service provider events, the number of opportunities to interact and participate in typical outreach activities remained relatively stagnant. However, with our focus on relationship renewal, we are now back to a more “normal” pattern of consistent outreach activities across our area.

The labour market in Atikokan continues to experience churn. Some of these results as individuals elect to pursue alternate occupations/careers, older workers continue to retire, and increased employment opportunities become available. There continues to be significant interest in mining activities and the employment opportunities that this sector generates have increased.

Statistics Canada reported an unemployment rate of 5% in the month of March 2023 remaining at record low levels. The average unemployment rate for Canada is around 7% to 8% according to CEIC.

The unemployment rate for Northern Ontario has been tagged at 8.0% (Statistics Canada). Note however, this region covers a vast area, from Fort Severn/Hudson Bay in North to the Canadian/US border in the South, from the Manitoba border in the West, and to the outskirts of North Bay in the East, excluding both the Thunder Bay, ON and Sudbury, ON metropolitan areas.

To provide a more of district level perspective of the current labour market, in March 2023 there were 1840 job postings in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts after 26 job boards were surveyed by the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (Job Demand Report, March 2023). The average number of job postings across both districts in 2022 was calculated to be 1956 per month.

Of the 1840 jobs posted in February 2023, 962 jobs were deemed to be “newly advertised” in the current month. 302 of these job advertisements were in the Rainy River District, with Fort Frances, Emo, and Atikokan, ON advertising the greatest number of opportunities at 114, 94 and 65 postings, respectively. Most postings across the region were for Retail Salespersons followed by Social and Community Service Workers. Regardless, New Gold Inc. and Lake of the Woods District Hospital advertised the greatest number of jobs in the month of March 2023. The top skills identified in job advertisements were communication, interpersonal, organizational and customer service skills. Key job requirements included criminal reference checks and regular access to a vehicle and knowledge of Microsoft office. The importance of having a valid driver’s license and access to a vehicle in our area

continues to be important for job seekers given the lack of public transportation in our smaller communities.

As a result of the Rural Northern Immigration Pilot, Atikokan has seen an influx of Ukrainian immigrants to the community. Resolute Forest Products and the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation, Atikokan Literacy Incorporated and the Atikokan Employment Centre have been leaders in employing, housing, assisting, and welcoming these newcomers to the community. Notably, many of these individuals hold University level training and/or professional degrees for various vocations. However, the professional certification processes in Canada continue to present a delay for these individuals being employed in a career associated with their educational background.

### **Our Services**

With our ongoing support from Employment Ontario, funded through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, The Atikokan Employment Centre continues with our main objectives of connecting workers and employers, assisting those transitioning from either education to employment, underemployment to education/skill development and/or and assisting employers with their ongoing employee recruitment efforts.

In our resource and information area we continue to see a considerable number of community and area residents contacting us for assistance in their search for employment, navigating social services, and information regarding income support programs. We continue to see an upward trend of being contacted directly by residents of Ontario, United States as well as Internationally regarding employment opportunities that exist in our community/region. Through our website and social media accounts, we continue to promote Atikokan employment globally.

The Atikokan Employment Centre also continues to be regularly contacted by area employers who are seeking employees, assistance with recruiting personnel for their business and advertising job opportunities digitally. We have also continued providing employers with guidance on accessing Service Canada programs and accessing questions regarding the Employment Standards Act and ongoing training initiatives taking place in the region.

With the strength of the current labour market, the Atikokan Employment Centre posted 486 employment opportunities for local and area employers. This also includes a few remote or virtual employment opportunities that are open to those residing anywhere in our catchment area. We have also focused on highlighting regional job opportunities that may be of interest to local applicants as many of these openings provide accommodation/meals in conjunction associated with one's employment.

As indicated previously, the tight labour market across Canada has also impacted employers in our area and region. The strong labour market has resulted in a few new residents relocating to the community. Notably, Resolute Forest Products has been a leader in hiring new employees from outside the community. It is estimated that they have hired at least 30 individuals over the past year who previously did not reside in the community with many being originally from Ukraine.

With new faces in the community and given the current labour market, local businesses no longer have the luxury of "knowing" who they are hiring. It is hoped that employers will continue to welcome new employees who best match their internal work culture and continue to train new employees with the intent of building the skills and abilities that are required. This remains a real opportunity for both employers and any potential demographic that is currently underrepresented in the labour market.



In the last year, the Atikokan Employment Centre has made a concerted effort to provide services and perform outreach activities in-person as able. However, we also continued to provide services virtually/digitally as needed or requested. The pandemic, in a sense, has increased our reach and supplemented our overall accessibility by further expanding our ability to communicate with potential program participants, employers and other service providers in our region and across Ontario.

### **Area Services and Support**

The Atikokan Employment Centre remains focused on providing employment related information and employment services within our catchment area. This includes Atikokan and area, Seine River First Nation, Lac La Croix First Nation, and other underserved areas such as Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation and the community of Upsala. Staff continue in their efforts to build relationships with and visit these smaller communities with the intent of providing information about the potential advantages of accessing our services and promoting employment as a significant contributor to one's overall health in consideration of the social determinants of health.

Thanks goes out to all community representatives that we have worked with, both in Atikokan and throughout our catchment area. Your continuing support of our programs provides an opportunity for residents to secure employment, develop marketable skills and further their careers.

In the coming year we are looking forward to further expanding our relationship building activities with communities in our area. If able, we intend to continue with the employment of designated outreach workers in these underserved areas.

Notably, the Atikokan Employment Centre is working to hire an intern that will focus their efforts in promoting Atikokan employment opportunities and highlighting all that the community of Atikokan has to offer and connecting potential new residents to appropriate services. This position is being supported through a grant provided by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.

Once again, the Atikokan Employment Centre thanks Employment Ontario, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and specifically Kimberly Williamson and Tarran Rankin representatives with MLITSD for their ongoing support, guidance and problem solving. Our ongoing communication and involvement with representatives of MLITSD helps to ensure our services and financial contributions are effectively assisting area employers and residents.

### **Website Use**

In the current year, we have once again had over 30,000 visits to our website. This is approximately an 18 % decrease from the previous year. Although somewhat lower, it is thought this shift in website access represents a decrease in use of digital technologies that coincide with the changes in pandemic restrictions. Moreover, with the strong labour market there are significantly less job seekers who may be using digital technologies to search for employment. Regardless, digital access over the last year greatly exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Moreover, the actions taken by users while accessing our website have increased beyond 85,000. This result indicates increased exploration of the information being presented on our website by the users of the website. Posting employment opportunities and events on our website continues to be a great tool for both employers and other service providers in our area. Additionally, employment opportunities posted on our website are digitally selected for inclusion on a regional job board being managed by the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB). This provides employers with increased reach and advertising when electing to post their employment opportunities with the Atikokan Employment Centre.

Most website users continue to be most interested in searching for local jobs and employment opportunities. Traffic on the website tends to be highest between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm with weekdays continuing to be the most popular days of the week to search for employment. Website access using smartphones continues to be the preferred method to digitally interact.

Most website users accessed the site from Canada. Provincially, Ontarians visited the website most often. Users from Ontario were most often located in the Thunder Bay coverage area or Toronto (Old Toronto) area. Visits from Sudbury and Kenora were also seen at higher levels.

Internationally, accesses were highest from the United States of America with visitors being most likely residing in Buffalo NY, Portland OR, Los Angeles CA or Chicago, IL. Users accessed the website from most continents, but Europeans tended to visit most often. Specifically, accesses from Germany, France and the United Kingdom occurred most frequently.

### **Resource and Information Centre**

In person visits to the Atikokan Employment Centre's resource and information centre were somewhat lower than anticipated in the current year. Again, with pandemic restrictions earlier in the year and related uncertainty, it is suspected that some individuals continued to limit face to face contacts. With the strong labour market there were less job seekers actively pursuing employment.

Visitors to the resource centre are usually seeking advice/guidance regarding job application processes, employment searching, and/or computer/office equipment use. Visitors may also request specific information regarding programs, further details regarding potential training/educational opportunities and associated funding, information on available local services and/or assistance in completing Employment Insurance reports or related applications. The Atikokan Employment Centre has had approximately 2000 recorded in person visits over the past year. Thank you to Raven Barr for continuing to serve in our Resource and Information Centre, receiving and directing visitors, responding to telephone enquiries, and providing the needed information for those contacting the Atikokan Employment Centre for assistance.

### **Service Canada**

During the era of Covid, Service Canada representatives no longer visited the community monthly as they had in past years. However, in the current year, the Atikokan Employment Centre once again began to host representatives from Service Canada monthly for in person services. Typically, the Atikokan Employment Centre provides this Federal agency with private office space, an appropriately secured internet connection and reception services at no cost to better support the Atikokan residents and address their needs.

We look forward each month to have Service Canada representatives accessing our site and addressing concerns/questions of community members regarding their programs including Social Insurance Numbers, Canada Pension Plan Benefits, Employment Insurance, Old Age Security Benefits, Guaranteed Income Benefits, and Immigration processes. Moreover, passport application services will now be available during these Service Canada outreach sessions.

### **Employment Services Program**

Through the delivery Atikokan Employment Centre's Employment Services program, accessed by those who are unemployed or under employed, direct services were provided to 103 program participants. Through our Employment Services program these individuals required a higher level of support in their search for appropriate employment or for accessing education/skills development opportunities.

The services provided include career exploration, career counseling, labour market analyses, resume creation, interview preparation, support on job search activities, training placement services, formal training, and referral to educational or necessary community-based services.

Of the 103 program participants, 11 participated in work training placements with an incentive being provided to the associated employers. In total we disbursed close to \$32,000.00 to local employers as the result of their participation in training placements. Additionally, we were able to support 8 program participants to acquire needed items for their employment or reimbursed their fees for training related course work/applications. In total we paid out close to \$1400.00 for these items or services. Thank you to Cindy Geurts for heading up this program and providing her expertise to those seeking assistance in their search for employment or attempting to change careers.

### **Better Jobs Ontario**

The Better Jobs Ontario is a new program that has replaced what was formerly known as Second Career. This program provides program participants with funding to support retraining of up to one year in duration and not exceeding a total of \$28,000.00.

In the current year, interest for accessing this program was seen from individuals wanting to training for AZ/DZ Truck Driver Training, Aesthetician Education, Home Inspection Certification, Heavy Equipment Operation Training, Addiction and Community Services Certification and Administration Assistant Training.

Better Jobs Ontario can be accessed by individuals who have been laid-off from employment or by individuals who have had challenges in securing employment for 6 months and are part of a lower income household. Notably, this program financially supports tuition, books, digital devices, travel, living away from home expenses, childcare and may provide up to \$500.00 per week for basic living expenses.

With the strong labour market and employers' openness to providing training on the job, many potential program participants enquiring about Better Jobs Ontario tend to focus their efforts on pursuing employment opportunities.

### **Youth Job Connection**

The Youth Job Connection programs provided through the Atikokan Employment Centre is designed to support individuals 15 to 29 years-old who are experiencing challenges in accessing the labour market.

Participants in the Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection Summer programs are required to complete 20 to 90 hours of pre-employment training that is designed to increase their suitability and marketability for employment. While completing the pre-employment, program participants are paid a stipend that is equivalent to being paid minimum wage. The stipend provided in this program does not impact any income support being provided to the individual through the Province of Ontario.

Pre-employment training can be customized to each participant's desired career path. Typical pre-employment training includes education on occupational health and safety, workplace wellness, resume



preparation, work performance and conduct, professional skills, accessibility, leadership, and customer service.

Participants are also potentially eligible to receive up to \$1000.00 of financial support to purchase or access services that are required to support their employment. This can range from transportation support, childcare expenses, clothing for work or an interview, the purchase of a digital device, costs associated criminal reference checks or acquiring a driver's license to tools needed during their employment. Funding is also available for acquiring formal skills and/or specific workplace certifications such as Smart Service, Food Safety, Chainsaw Operation, Boat Operator Licensing or Working at Heights.

The Atikokan Employment Centre dispersed over \$57,000 to provide supports directly to participants and employers when involved in or hosting work training placements. Youth Job Connection programs were accessed by 30 individuals who met the associated criteria for registering.

Thank you to all employers who participated in YJC program who assisted with the development of our future work force. Also, thank you to Northern Lakes K-12 School and Lac La Croix School for their work in increasing awareness of the Youth Job Connection programs and allowing us to visit. Lastly, thank you to Denine Andrews with the Atikokan Employment Centre for leading this youth-oriented employment initiative.

### **Inter-Agency Group**

The Atikokan Employment Centre has continued to host and coordinate the activities of the area's inter-agency group. The Inter-agency group is comprised of faith groups, area educational, social services, protective services, and health care providers. The regular monthly meetings continued to provide a forum for service providers to update programs and exchange information regarding new initiatives. It also provides an opportunity for the various groups to attend to discuss methods to fully collaborate in the delivery of services to the community and area residents. Cindy Geurts, with the Atikokan Employment Centre has continued to be the main contact and coordinator of this group and she is thanked for making these sessions a valuable resource for all who attend and arranging for the lunches provided to participants.

### **Employment Ontario Transformation**

The Ontario Government continues to transform Employment Ontario and the services it delivers across the province. Specifically, The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) continues in its' work to transform the Employment Ontario Service System Manager role. To date, most areas and regions have experienced significant change associated with the initiation and involvement with the transformation processes. However, the areas of metropolitan Toronto and the region of Northern Ontario have been the exception to this point time as the result of requirements/intricacies of service delivery in these areas. It is anticipated that announcements concerning the initiation of the transformation process and the associated "Requests for Qualification" for Northern Ontario catchments will be initiated in the very near future.

The Provincial Government's intention is to transform Employment Ontario by contracting out the management of service delivery. This strategy will create a limited number of Service System Managers responsible for overseeing the delivery of employment related services in designated catchment areas on behalf of the Provincial Government. If interested, the Service System Manager selected in each region through a request for proposal process, may also elect to deliver the employment related services

themselves in that region. This will include the delivery of employment related services on behalf of the Ontario Disability Support Program and employment services delivered by Ontario Works.

In the latest round of selected Service System Managers, the municipalities of Durham, Windsor/Sarnia and London were selected in their respective regions and will be delivering services internally. Additionally, a consortium overseeing services in the areas of Kitchener, Waterloo and Barrie was selected as the Service System Manager. The consortium in these areas includes 3 private companies, Serco Canada, Deloitte Inc. and Thrive Career Wellness Inc.

Lastly, the Service System Manager selected in the Ottawa area is also a consortium led by an international company, APM Group Pty, and includes WCG International Consultants Ltd. It is noted that WCG is a Canadian Subsidiary of APM. WCG is also currently the Service System Manager in the York and Peel regions.

Service System Managers have not been selected for Northern Ontario as part of the Employment Ontario transformation process. The Northwestern Ontario service delivery area will start at the Manitoba border, run north to Hudson Bay, run south to United States of America Border and east to the area of White River, ON. Previously, the Northern Ontario Service Delivery Association comprised of municipalities in the area had indicated an intent to submit a proposal to become the Service System Manager. It is thought that Confederation College may also be interested in serving as the Service System Manager for Northwestern Ontario.

At the Atikokan Employment Centre, we remain focused on the delivery of quality employment services and remain open to partnering with any appropriate agency, consortium or business that will be serving as the Service System Manager in our area. Currently, we are in discussions with several other groups regarding potentially submitting or supporting a proposal. Our goal is to ensure that Atikokan has employment related services that are accessible in person, in our community and have extensive knowledge of the needs, nuances, and labour market conditions of our area and/or region.

Staff at the Atikokan Employment Centre take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our community partners including educators, social service and healthcare providers, businesses, and employers who continue to support and utilize our programs. Without our community partners, our efforts to promote and facilitate employment, provide relevant training opportunities, increase skill building opportunities and fully understand labour market needs and requirements would be greatly reduced.

Sincerely,

**BRAD BEYAK**

# 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.*

### Community Development Advisor

**Katie Hannon**

B.T.M.

*Business planning and counseling, loan disbursement, 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

**Melanie Hachey**

*Reception and customer relations, banking, accounts payable/ receivable, correspondence, recordkeeping, community information.*



Absent from Photo- Annette Bryk & Chris Stromberg

## 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 Geurts**

**Denine Richard**

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

### Resource & Information Clerks

**Christy Tattrie & Raven Barr**

**Debilyn Nelson-Albert (Upsala Outreach Office)**

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

## AEDC's In-Office Partner

Heart of the Continent Partnership Coordinator **Chris Stromberg**

Tourism Development Intern

**Waverley Dovey (Left March 2022)**

Tourism Development Intern

**Jordan Ekstrom (Joined Nov 2022)**



# AEDC Board of Directors

We wish to thank the 2022 Board of Directors and community volunteers of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation. Your tireless dedication and commitment - to not just the AEDC, but to our community as a whole - allows us to operate as an effective organization.

**DAVE HOMER**  
CHAIR

**TAMI STINSON**  
VICE-CHAIR

**MARY MAKARENKO**  
TOWN COUNCIL REP  
(UNTIL OCT)

**GORD KNOWLES**

**ROB FERGUSON**  
TOWN COUNCIL REP

**VIC PROKOPCHUK**  
MEMBER EMERITUS

**CLEO WOLSIFFER**  
UPSALA R.D.A.  
REPRESENTATIVE

**DARCY WHITECROW**  
SEINE RIVER F.N.  
REPRESENTATIVE

**LESLIE KERR**  
(OCT-DEC)

SECRETARY/TREASURER  
**ROB POTTS**  
(UNTIL SEPT)

**GORD MARTIN**  
TOWN COUNCIL REP-  
(NOV -DEC)

**DAVE ELDER**

**BRIAN STIMSON**

**JACK PIERCE**

**SHANNON RIDING**

**JERRY LASKOWSKI**

## AEDC Committees

### INVESTMENT FUND COMMITTEE

**DAVE ELDER**

**JACK PIERCE**

**TAMI STINSON**

**DAVE HOMER**

**LIZ MACKAY**

**KIM CROSS**

**GORD KNOWLES**

**JERRY LASKOWSKI**

### FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION/AUDIT COMMITTEE

**CLEO WOLSIFFER**  
CHAIR

**TAMI STINSON**

**DAVE HOMER**

**BRIAN STIMSON**

**MARY MAKARENKO**

### PUBLIC RELATIONS & NOMINATING

**JACK PIERCE**

**BRIAN STIMSON**

### AD HOC COMMITTEES – AS REQUIRED

# Looking Ahead

What will 2023 look like in the AEDC service area? Even the most learned prognosticators would have a challenge with that question! It clearly is something akin to predicting the weather, but let's take a stab at it.

In light of the fact that we have had several phone calls from contractors connected to the Waasigan project looking for sites and services, it is likely that we will see increased traffic and economic activity resulting from the development of this new transmission corridor.

The arrival of many Ukrainians in 2022 that are now somewhat settled and anchored in Atikokan will probably lead to the arrival of family and friends as work opportunities and immigration paths develop. With this increase in residents, there will be additional pressures on housing which may lead to new residential developments.

MPP Kevin Holland's support for the pumped storage development at the former Steep Rock and Caland mine sites is generating (pun intended) some activity in offices at Queen's Park. The offices of the Ministers of Natural Resources and Energy have been directly engaged in discussions with the proponents and seem sincerely interested. Will this be the year?

As 2023 will see the first true post-Covid season for tourism, we are likely to benefit from a robust year due in part to pent-up demand. Many of the operators in the region have upgraded their offerings and are poised to reap the fruits of their investments. The biggest challenge to receiving and serving guests will be the region's ongoing labour challenges.

There are opportunities; there will be challenges; together we will succeed and prosper!

## Reaching the AEDC

COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS? IDEAS? GET A HOLD OF US!

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ATIKOKANEDO](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ATIKOKANEDO)  
[WWW.TWITTER.COM/ATIKOKANEDO](http://WWW.TWITTER.COM/ATIKOKANEDO)



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



[aedc@atikokaninfo.com](mailto:aedc@atikokaninfo.com)  
[www.atikokaninfo.com](http://www.atikokaninfo.com)



214 Main  
Street West



PO Box 218  
Atikokan, ON  
P0T 1C0