

2005 – OFF AND RUNNING!!!!!!.....

KEEPING OUR STAFF BUSY.....

► In the fall of 2004 Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, visited the community and met with Town officials, the Chamber of Commerce, The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation and other interested groups. An Atikokan-Quetico Park Task Force was set up with different representatives from the community to determine a strategy for increasing the economic benefit to the Township as a result of the proximity to Quetico Park. Meetings took place in early 2005 where discussions on the townships 11 recommendation were finalized in a report which was delivered to the Minister in early summer. The AEDC would like to see an Ontario Parks commitment to long term funding for a comprehensive multi-media marketing plan promoting Atikokan, the surrounding communities and the Quetico and Turtle-White Otter parks. The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation also resolved not to endorse or support the Atikokan/Quetico Recommendation Review Team's findings, or recommendations, if clearly defined, sustainable and achievable economic benefits are not apparent for Atikokan and the area.

► In 2004 the Honourable Dwight Duncan declared that the Liberal government would shut down all coal burning energy producing stations by the end of 2007. Since then the Executive Director has continued to participate in the Mayor's Ad-Hoc Energy Committee. The principle activity of this group has been to attempt to secure agreement from the Province of Ontario to reverse their decision to close the Atikokan Thermal Generating Station (ATGS). The committee has also worked with several enterprises interested in refuelling the existing plant, applying new technology in the existing plant, building generation facilities complementary to the existing plant, and also



companies interested in developing completely separate generating facilities. Most of these activities are ongoing and some have more promise than others. The AEDC staff have also been busy relaying hundreds of letters from the community to all the members of Ontario's Parliament concerning the closure of OPG's Atikokan Station.

► LVL Project –Boreal Resource Strategies was engaged to conduct a Research Study using under-utilized wood species to develop a Forest Product Opportunity (LVL). As a result of this study, the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation put forward a proposal to FedNor and the Northern Ontario Heritage Corporation for supplying matching funds to hire a consultant to prepare a proposal to research the opportunity for a laminated veneer lumber (LVL) manufacturing facility in the Atikokan area which would utilize

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previously underutilized species. The feasibility report addressed issues of raw materials supply, current and projected market for LVL, cost competitiveness, proposed financing, and profitability. This study clearly shows that there exists an opportunity for the town of Atikokan and region to take advantage of its traditional resources and create long term, full time employment through direct and secondary manufacturing processes that are created by producing LVL, or laminated veneer lumber.

“I found Biz Kids event fun. I liked how we did activities and learned stuff at the same time. Best part was learning about taxes and eating donuts. Will I use the information I learned sometime? Yes, I want to start my own business someday, so I will remember what I learned.”

Sarah Belanger

▶ Biz Kids – During the summer of this year, 10 children from the community participated in a week long business camp designed to give them a basic overview of business and entrepreneurship. They took part in exciting, interactive games and presentations from local merchants. The campers choose a business that they might like to start at the beginning of the week and worked towards “Market Day,” which was held at end of the week. If the camper had a profitable business, he/she could keep the money made that day!

▶ 2005 marked the 40th year of the highly successful Outers program with a major celebration held July 11-17, 2005. The committee received 2 Job Creation Program grants for 2 workers to help out with the organizing and implementing of the festivities.

One was sponsored by the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation and the other by the Township of Atikokan. Outers returning to the community were treated to a variety of events taking place all week. There were events for the entire family to enjoy, culminating in a Reunion Dinner and Dance with special presentations and the unveiling of The Outers film.. ***The AEDC has also taken a leadership role in the development of the Quetico Adventure School and in the development of the Outers 40th reunion.***

▶ Quetico Adventure School continues its marketing and fund raising efforts. As an integral part of Atikokan’s goal to become a tourism community, QAS will directly effect our economy through community exposure, direct purchasing by students, and job creation/maintenance of school staff and QAS co-ordinator. The committee is actively pursuing opportunities through Aboriginal students relocating to Atikokan in the coming year. Construction of a new Outers building will begin in the summer of 2006.

▶ The Charleson Recreation Association was formed with guidance from AEDC staff. This collaboration includes all users of the recreation area and will hopefully become a significant tourist attraction for participants and spectators alike. Groups include; motocross, Atikokan Sno Ho Club, mountain biking, horse club, Ride for Sight, and 4 x 4 races. Development of the site is now taking place in conjunction with the Township of Atikokan.

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- ▶ Multi-use trail development has become a priority for the community as another tool in our “tourism toolbox.” AEDC staff are represented on a committee working with MNR and Abitibi Consolidated to identify various development opportunities for non-motorized vehicles.

- ▶ Throughout the year, our staff organized many well attended seminars for the business community as well as the general public. They included:
 - Maggie Milne Presentation - Superior Customer Service
 - Counterfeit Currency and Fraud
 - Protection Against Shoplifting & Robbery

SHARING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

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

- § The AEDC hired Boreal Resource Strategies to join Raute Wood, a leader in veneer/plywood and LVL equipment, on their European Wood Safari. This tour which occurs every 4-years, provided the occasion to visit forest product mills (veneer/plywood/LVL) in Europe. (\$5,000)

- § To the Township of Atikokan to hire Patricia Lambkin to produce a short Video against the closure of Ontario Power Generation Plant in 2007. This video was then distributed to many government and media people in hopes of reversing the decision of the Liberal government. (\$5,000)

- § To the AEDC to hire a company to do a marketing blitz at the Voyageur Rendezvous in Alberta to promote Atikokan to the area. This marketing blitz occurred just prior to the Outer’s 40th Reunion and helped to promote the Reunion to the rest of Canada. (\$3,852)

- § To the Atikokan Amateur Radio club to assist with re-establishing a radio repeater station in Atikokan. This will also help to establish Atikokan as an APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System) node, which allows amateur radio operators using GPS-equipped radios to report their positions automatically over the Internet. (\$1,350)

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\$ To Beaten Path Nordic Ski Club to purchase skiing packages for rental purposes to children who want to try cross country skiing through the school program. (\$5,000)

\$ To the Atikokan Township for a research study to do a television series entitled “Postcards from Atikokan”. (\$5,000)

\$ To the Atikokan Sportsmen’s Conservation Club to rent a vehicle for students to monitor the progress of walleye fry that were transplanted into 3 area lakes. (\$1,560)

\$ To the Atikokan Public Library for equipment & furnishings for the Library Lounge to create a more enticing environment for visitors to enjoy while reading their books. (\$3,400)

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING...

During 2005, our office disbursed new investment funds of \$422,428 towards new loans. In total, 20 loans were refinanced, amalgamated or disbursed.

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY AND BALANCE

Sector	12 months	Current		
	ended 12/31/05	Balance		
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
Hospitality	5	90,822	13	\$835,206
Mining	0	0	2	101,799
Service	1	28,000	16	534,487
Tourism	1	1,100	7	456,982
Aquaculture	0	0	2	70,000
Manufacturing	1	25,000	6	400,991
Transportation	4	61,020	7	222,280
Retail	5	165,000	14	630,349
Forestry	2	51,486	13	419,125
Agriculture	0	0	0	0
Research & Development	1	62,500	1	62,500
Total	20	484,928	81	\$3,733,719

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The 7 Community Futures Development Corporations in Northwestern Ontario also formed a corporate pool for dispensing larger loans to clients in their communities with the help of the other CFDC's in the group. Atikokan currently has 5 of these investments currently totaling \$433,136 in their portfolio. The AEDC's Investment Fund Portfolio has grown over the past years to a high of \$3.7 million dollars with a total of 81 outstanding loans.

LOAN ACTIVITY 1997 TO DEC. 31, 2005				
Year	Loans Issued	Amount	Repayments	Portfolio Balance
1997	19	\$311,826	\$80,595	\$1,074,220
1998	19	\$512,810	\$142,285	\$1,307,769
1999	25	\$783,816	\$199,300	\$1,598,725
2000	15	\$470,013	\$109,947	\$1,794,593
2001	28	\$884,862	\$253,154	\$2,837,062
2002	26	\$550,434	\$182,942	\$3,040,681
2003	32	\$790,538	\$234,412	\$3,560,527
2004	39	\$722,462	\$591,362	\$3,977,548
2005	20	\$484,928	\$252,834	\$3,783,889

Job creation has played a huge part in the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation's activity throughout the years.

BUSINESSES/JOBS CREATED/MAINTAINED BY YEAR				
Year	Businesses Started	Businesses Maintained	Jobs Created	Jobs Maintained
1997	10	4	28	10
1998	7	11	13	30
1999	10	13	21	49
2000	9	14	18	44
2001	6	22	10	80
2002	10	22	21	72
2003	5	32	6	69
2004	6	29	148	203
2005	2	20	8	191

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Each year 10 to 20 new jobs are created with 5 to 10 new businesses being started. Most of these are small businesses with just 1 or 2 employees

The Self Employment Benefit Program offered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and provided to the community by our office is also a very successful and popular program. Each year, our office processes approximately 10 to 12 clients through the SEB program. This year (2005), although there was a lot of interest shown in the program, only 2 clients continued on with the process of signing on for the benefit program. The office staff is currently preparing a new proposal for the delivery of the SEB program by having one staff person dedicated to that delivery. Approximately 50% of the SEB clients who started their own business are still in business today.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES		
Sector	12 Months to 12/31/05	Since Inception
Hospitality	1	5
Mining	0	0
Service	1	46
Tourism	0	6
Aquaculture	0	2
Manufacturing	0	9
Transportation	0	4
Retail	0	15
Forestry	0	6
Agriculture	0	0
Total	2	93

► **Community Project Assistance**

► The Atikokan Economic Development corporation will occasionally act as a proponent for individual community groups and non-profit organizations who do not have the capacity or the ability to supervise and maintain an individual who has been employed by them under the Job Creation Program through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada or by funding secured from the Federal or Provincial governments. In 2005 the following organizations took advantage of our services and facilities:

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- ✎ The Atikokan Bass Classic Tournament Committee applied for and received funding with a Job Creation Program contract from HR&SDC to conduct a feasibility study on increasing the numbers for their tournament and bringing the weigh in portion of the tournament into the community.
- ✎ The Outers 40th Reunion Committee also received a Job Creation Program grant to help offset costs incurred when planning and implementing the 40th Reunion of the Outers program in July of 2005.
- ✎ Atikokan Sno Ho Snowmobile Club, with funding supplied by the FedNor Intern Program, hired Leslie Yates to produce a marketing plan for the club and a new trail encircling Quetico Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. The AEDC provided some administrative support along with furniture and the use of equipment (ie telephone, fax, photocopier etc.)
- ▶ The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation increased their office staff by 1 this past summer. **Robyn Melanson** was hired as a summer student with the help of a Summer Student wage subsidy from Human Resources & Skills Development Canada. She was hired to update the community profile, liaison with local businesses to revise their promotional material for the tourist information centre, and add content to the AEDC website for non-profit organizations.
- ▶ The Atikokan community website **atikokaninfo.com** is continually being updated with more and more information. People inquiring about Township services and amenities are constantly told about our website. Monthly statistics are continuing to grow.

THE ATIKOKAN EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

The Atikokan Employment Centre has again had a successful year. The purchase of new computer equipment and office furniture has made it much easier for clients. We purchased 5 computer systems. The resource centre now has 3 computers for public access, all with internet access and resume building programs. This is much easier on the clients, because now they very seldom have to wait for computer access. This purchase has also given the employment resource worker her own computer now too.

There were many displaced workers who returned to school. We helped them secure funding for the Skills Development program. As well as this, we also aided in the development of several Job Creation Partnership applications, which created employment opportunities in our community and also promoted community development.

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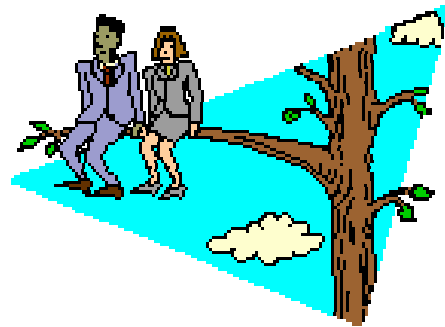
Throughout the summer, we joined efforts with the Student Summer Officer to hold a “*Volunteers Count*” contest. Despite several attempts at advertising and promoting the contest, unfortunately there was no interest generated. Neither the Employment Centre nor the Student Centre had any participants in the contest.

The Atikokan Employment Centre once again hosted a Career Fair for the community. This project was assisted with funding from the United Native Friendship Centre. The fair was held at the Atikokan Native Friendship Centre. At the fair, people visited booths from various educational institutes, employment assistance agencies and other groups with the ability to assist unemployed or underemployed people. As part of the career fair, we also offered a Smart Serve training course, put on by NCDS Career Works from Fort Frances to anyone interested. The career fair as a whole was not as well attended as last year, but the Smart Serve course was full and despite the low turn out, we received positive feedback from the booth participants. We are considering ways of increasing numbers for next year, such as possibly changing the location to generate more traffic, and looking at bringing in a guest speaker.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

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

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| ☞ M & C Motors | (Richard Wood) |
| ☞ Scott Nelson Trucking | (Scott Nelson) |
| ☞ Ringius Originals | (Gord Ringius) |
| ☞ Norm’s Automotive | (Norm Anthony) |
| ☞ Dave’s Appliance Repair & Outdoor Furnaces | (David Bjorkman) |
| ☞ Brown’s Convenience and Auto Service | (Dave Brown) |
| ☞ Enchanted Florist | (Karen VanDoorne) |



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LOOKING AHEAD...

- This autumn and early winter, a consulting firm has conducted a comprehensive community strategic plan and economic development plan process in Atikokan and final plans will be submitted early in the new year. The AEDC anticipates that there will be adjustments to our own plan in response to these reports. The AEDC has been actively engaged in a number of planning activities in addition to the community strategic and economic development planning process being lead by Wm. Lees and Associates in collaboration with Quadra Consulting. Staff and board members have been participating in the Quetico Park review team which provided advice to the Minister of Natural Resources regarding changes to the operation of the park to increase economic benefit to Atikokan.
- We were also active partners in the development of the Corridor Plan which was intended to develop a strategy for increasing commercial activity along a stretch of Highways 11 and 622 that would bring economic growth to the region. Undoubtedly, the AEDC will be required to readjust and refocus repeatedly throughout the year.
- We will continue our support of the Friends of White Otter Castle as they continue to preserve, protect and promote the castle. The Friends and the Township of Atikokan will have our support as they lobby to elevate the status of the Turtle-White Otter Parkway to an operating park, with park headquarters located in Atikokan.
- The AEDC will develop the potential in the region for retirement living by researching the wants and needs of retirees in other retirement communities and identify the Atikokan area's strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis those wants and needs. In time we will also develop a marketing strategy to sell those strengths.
- The staff will complete an environmental scan of winter tourism activities and opportunities. By identifying and marketing regional opportunities to operators and potential visitors, we will continue to provide mentoring and support to new off-peak tourism enterprises.
- The AEDC Board & staff will actively support and participate in the private sector's initiatives to develop cottage lot opportunities in the area. They will continue to actively lobby for government support for cottage lot development as an economic development opportunity for Northern Ontario.

LOOKS LIKE A BUSY, CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD!!!

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BOARD OVERVIEW

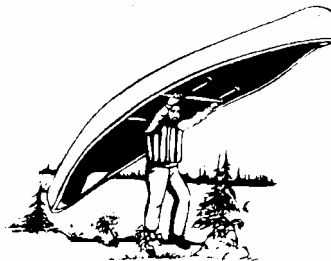
The Board Members of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation are a diverse and dynamic collection of men and women. Our current Chair is Dave Elder, Vice Chair is Dave Bjorkman, and Secretary/Treasurer is Bill Beyer. Directors at large are Miles Brown, Dennis Brown, Wayne McAndrew, Vic Prokopchuk, Elvin Rydberg, Dr. Ken Sawchuk, Jan Lewis, Sally Burns, Andrew Johnson from Seine River First Nation and Mary Makarenko and Charlie Viddal as the two representatives from Township Council.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND COMMITTEE

This committee is comprised of 3 members from the community at large consisting of Elizabeth MacKay, Robin Johnson and Cecil Leif. The balance of the committee is comprised of Dr. Ken Sawchuk as Chair, Elvin Rydberg and Sally Burns.

STAFF

We have 4 full time staff positions in the office: Garry McKinnon, our Executive Director; Dawn Hayes, Administrative Assistant; Linda Braun, Community Development Advisor and Marg Thurier, Office Administrator. The Corporation also contributes half the wages of the Chamber of Commerce Office Manager in return for receptionist duties and other help as required. Our office also administers the Atikokan Employment Centre with a contract from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Our contract with HR&SDC allowed us to have 2 full time position there in 2005. Lisa Marusyk was off on Maternity Leave while Jodi McAllister and Annette Bryk were on staff at the Employment Centre.



Canoeing Capital of Canada: Atikokan, Ontario

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