

FAST FORWARD

Community Report 2001-2003 ►► THUNDER BAY

Inside:

Quality of Life 2

Our Community Partners 2

Celebrating our
Successes 3

Direction Thunder Bay 4



Mayor's Economic Summit 5



Diversified Economy 6

Annual Indicators Report 6

Regional Networks 7

Regional Innovation Team 7

Looking to the Future 8

Vision for a Superior City 8

Mayor Lynn Peterson, Co-Chair



As the new Co-Chair of Fast Forward, it is my privilege to introduce this report to the community and to acknowledge the work of the former co-chair, Ken Boshcoff, during the years it chronicles. We are pleased to know we can count on Ken's continued support.

As I said in my inaugural address to City Council last month, the building blocks are in place like never before for a concrete action plan to benefit our community. We have:

- Fast Forward, the community devel-

opment plan, which has been endorsed by more than 70 community organizations. It provides us with a vision and a general blueprint.

- the priorities honed by community leaders at the September Economic Summit.
 - an expanding community pride that comes from a series of remarkable achievements including the new hospital, new medical school, Canada's newest aviation training facility, the university's new "fully wired" Advanced Technology and Academic Centre, and this community's designation as a 2003 Cultural Capital of Canada.
 - a strong, cohesive Thunder Bay team at all levels of government, both at the elected and Administrative level, and among community leaders.
- All the conditions are right to move Thunder Bay Fast Forward now and in the future. We look forward to providing you with even more impressive progress reports in the years to come.

Ray Riley, Co-Chair



Fast Forward is the community's vision for the future and it is the voice of the citizens of Thunder Bay. It was created through a public consultation initiative in the late '90s and the outcome was a planning framework complete with strategic directions, goals and objectives.

The role of the Fast Forward partnership and steering committee is:

- to bring together community groups sharing common interests.
- to share information with and among various interest groups.
- to report annually to the citizens on

the community's progress in achieving Fast Forward's goals and objectives, a sort of "How are we doing?"

- to fine-tune and adjust the planning framework to stay abreast of the community's changing needs.
- to champion special projects.

The Fast Forward Steering Committee is not designed nor does it have the capacity to take on the complex array of issues that in our community. So who is going to do it? The community owns Fast Forward, and if we are to achieve success, the community must lead the charge.

Solutions will require desire, intellect, energy and commitment from all sectors. Fast Forward has provided the roadmap: the citizens and organizations of Thunder Bay have to ensure progress down the endless highway to the vision.

What is Fast Forward?

Fast Forward is Thunder Bay's community development plan. Fast Forward grew out of an extensive community planning exercise, in which groups of citizens came together to talk about their ideas about our community. From this exercise, grew the plan for Thunder Bay. Fast Forward has completed the first phase of implementation and it is active and growing within our community.

Fast Forward carries a vision for Thunder Bay in three strategic directions: Quality of Life, Diversified Economy and Regional Networks. Each of these areas has specific goals and objectives associated with them. Over 70 community groups, organizations and businesses have signed on to the plan and have declared their support to ensure that these strategic directions become a reality in our community.

Read on - see what Fast Forward and its community partners have accomplished from 2001 to 2003.

Sign On. Declare Community Support. Get Involved.

Quality of Life:

“Thunder Bay will be a healthy community which will foster and promote its unique quality of life.”

The Quality of Life Committee has been meeting over the past two years and attracts a wide range of partners. It is co-chaired by Paul Filteau of Ontario Healthy

Communities Coalition and Marilyn Gouthro of Lakehead Public Schools. This committee has been very strong in initiating action and in the development of new

projects and initiatives for Fast Forward and for the partnership. Here are some examples:

Excerpt from "It's Time for Risk Watch" by Al Wrightsell, Thunder Bay Fire and Rescue Service Assistant Fire Chief (Chronicle-Journal, June 2002)

The level of safety in any community is related to the quality of life of its citizens. Many organizations are putting significant, progressive efforts into improving the safety of our community. One of the most concerted and significant in terms of a safe community now and in the future, is the Risk Watch Program. Risk Watch is a comprehensive injury prevention program for children in preschool through the eighth grade.

It is designed to help children and families create safer homes and communities by teaching them the skills and knowledge they need to make positive choices about their personal safety and well being. The curriculum components address bike and pedestrian safety, falls prevention, fire and burn prevention, poisoning prevention, choking, suffocation and strangulation prevention, motor vehicle safety, firearms injury prevention and water safety. Classroom teachers deliver the program components as part of the school curriculum and all components are measured.

Excerpt from "Trails on Road to Enhancements" by Doug Smith, Smith Boshcoff Insurance Ltd. (Chronicle-Journal, January 2003)

That the quality of life in Thunder Bay is "Superior by Nature" is clearly reflected within its recreational trail network. Citizens and visitors of all ages and walks of life frequently use the trails in a variety of ways, from walking and jogging to cycling and in-line skating. These trails are not only used for recreational purposes but also for alternative transportation purposes and have a positive impact upon our northern environment.

Fast Forward Thunder Bay has a Quality of Life objective that states: "Alternative transportation corridors will be developed by linking existing trail networks and building new trails." Stakeholders understand that a completed trail network would ultimately connect all areas of our community with the Trans Canada Trails. However, there are financial realities that require a community strategy. The last time significant trail development occurred it was through partnership.

The Thunder Bay Recreational Trails Association has been created as a not-for-profit organization with a vision to improve and expand the Thunder Bay trails system. This association is dedicated to the development, maintenance and promotion of an expanded network of shared-use recreation trails in Thunder Bay and area. As part of the Trans Canada Trail system, Thunder Bay will be linked to trails west and east of the city. These safe trails are to be enjoyed by all citizens and visitors and will lead to an enhanced and unique quality of life.

Excerpt from "Respect and Acceptance of Spiritual Diversity" by Matthew Diegel, Council of Clergy (Chronicle-Journal, December 2002)

One of the central goals of the Fast Forward plan is "Respect and acceptance of spiritual diversity". Included in the background discussion to this goal were the following themes: respect and acceptance of diverse individual spirituality, recognition of, and cooperation between, the diverse organized faith communities, and a greater understanding of both the benefits and problems which religion has contributed to in Thunder Bay and the region.

Our community is developing a greater respect and acceptance of spiritual diversity than it had in the past. Institutional 'pastoral' care, for example, is now becoming 'spiritual care'. This represents a growing emphasis on the individual receiving care than on the background of the caregiver. Spiritual care gives within our hospitals, nursing homes, post-secondary educational settings, and correctional institutions are mandated by the province, and are committed, to walking with clients in their spiritual journey, rather than leading them along certain defined paths. As well, other areas of care giving, such as health and social work, are placing increased importance on spiritual care as part of the totality of care.

'Respect and acceptance of spiritual diversity' is an ongoing process. To move forward as a community, we need to applaud those efforts which support the objective, and to scrutinize those which hinder it. Together, we can help Thunder Bay and region to develop.

Our Community Partners

Association des Francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario
BDO Dunwoody
Bell Canada
Bruno's Contracting
Canadian Pacific Railway Service Area Management Team
CANUSA Travel Information Network Inc.
Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
City of Thunder Bay
Confederation College
Conseil Scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boreales
Tourism and Economic Division, City of Thunder Bay
EcoSuperior Environmental Programs
Fort William First Nation
Four Frogs Permaculture Design
Genesis Genomics
Global RnD
Handicapped Action Group Inc.

Human Resources Development Canada
Lakehead Association for Community Living
Lakehead Public Schools
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
Lakehead Social Planning Council
Lakehead University
LeBrun Northern Contracting
Literacy Northwest
North Superior Training Board
Northernsupplier.com
Northwestern Ontario Development Network
Northwestern Ontario District Health Council
Northwestern Ontario Secondary School Students Association
Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame
Northwestern Ontario Technology Association
NorWest Community Health Centres
Nova-Pro Industrial Supply Ltd.
Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Ontario Native Women's Association
PARO - A Northwestern Ontario Women's Community Loan Fund

Persons United for Self Help (P.U.S.H.) in Northwestern Ontario
Phelps Staffing Resource Centre
Rene Larson Law Office
Skystream Canada Inc.
Smith Boshcoff Insurance Ltd.
TBT Engineering
The Amethyst Group
The Arthritis Society
The Co-operators, Red River Road Branch, Thunder Bay
The Dive Shop
The Lung Association
Thunder Bay Agricultural and Equestrian Corporation
Thunder Bay Art Gallery
Thunder Bay and District Labour Council
Thunder Bay Business Women's Network
Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
Thunder Bay Council of Clergy
Thunder Bay District Health Unit

Thunder Bay Emergency Shelter Inc.
Thunder Bay Executives Association
Thunder Bay Fire Service
Thunder Bay International Airports Authority Inc.
Thunder Bay Police Services Board
Thunder Bay Port Authority
Thunder Bay Public Library
Thunder Bay Real Estate Board
Thunder Bay Regional Hospital
Thunder Bay Safe Communities
Thunder Bay Ventures
Tom Jones Corporation
Travelodge Hotel Airline
United Way of Thunder Bay
Valbay Hotel Ltd. (Valhalla Inn)
Victoriaville Centre Board of Management
Wardrop Engineering Inc.
YES Employment
Zero Waste Action Team

Celebrating our Successes

How does one know when a process such as Fast Forward has been successful and that it is truly making a difference? It is a challenging question because the results of broad planning exercises can be hard to measure. Here are some of the examples of Fast Forward's impact.

1. When the ideas, values and directions of the plan begin to inform other work.

- The Regional Networks strategic direction calls for building collaborative relationships with regional communities and organizations. Relationships are now much more effective, and working partnerships have been established among the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, Northwestern Ontario Development Network, and the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce.

- The City's Tourism and Economic Development Division has identified as their first goal in their business plan, "To direct the Division's resources towards proactively achieving the economic diversification goals of the Fast Forward Community Development Plan."

- The implementation plan called for the establishment of an advisory committee to Thunder Bay Telephone to "assist in the identification of ideas and opportunities to serve the best long-term interests of the community."

Such a committee has been formed.

2. When a large number of groups and agencies are ready to support the initiative.

- The list of over 70 partners in Fast Forward is a clear indication of the many influential groups within the community who are lending their support to ensure the success of our community development plan.

3. When the planning process helps to build relationships between and among groups which have not always acted as allies.

- The process involves a wide variety of organizations, is non-competing, and is cross-sectorial. As a result, many people have come together to work who may never have collaborated before. As Fast Forward is altruistic by nature, often times organizational gains become secondary.

- The multi-media project has joined human and financial resources of over twenty organizations solely for the promotion and betterment of our community.

4. When people use the insights from the planning process to influence the work they do.

- Some Fast Forward partners have indicated that they now see new opportunities for partnerships and cooperation with other organizations and sectors with who they were previously unfamiliar.

5. When the plan is recognized by senior governments as the community's direction.

- Members of the Fast Forward Partnership met with Secretary of State, Andy Mitchell in February 2000. The Partnership outlined the process and direction indicated that Fast Forward is Thunder Bay's blueprint for the future. Mitchell indicated that FedNor would use Fast Forward to shape his agency's support for the community.

6. When the plan shapes the work of organizations with complementary mandates.

- Thunder Bay Ventures requires that any individual or group seeking Ventures support show how its project supports the Fast Forward Directions.

- The City of Thunder Bay will be using Fast Forward and the Mayor's Economic Summit report as the basis for the City's Strategic Plan.

- The City of Thunder Bay makes active reference to the Fast Forward plan by having its logo on their letterhead.

- The City of Chatham-Kent refers to Fast Forward as the model for their community plan.

7. When the plan is something that has never been done before.

- This is the first community plan in the history of Thunder Bay.





Steering Committee

The steering committee for 2001-03 was comprised of:

Ray Riley, Co-Chair
Mayor Ken Boshcoff, Co-Chair
Paul Filteau, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Ian McCormack, Confederation College
Derik Brandt, City of Thunder Bay
Marilyn Gouthro, Lakehead Public Schools
Blair Smith, BDO Dunwoody LLP
Brenda Reimer, Lakehead Social Planning Council
Royden Potvin, Thunder Bay Ventures
Margaret Wanlin, Thunder Bay Ventures
Lisa Beckwick, Fast Forward



Congratulations Thunder Bay!

The citizens of Thunder Bay have a lot to be proud of, including:

- ▶ The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is scheduled to open early in 2004.
- ▶ The College is a Centre of Excellence for both Forestry and Aviation, and the new Aviation facilities at the Airport are open.
- ▶ Lakehead University's new Advanced Technology and Academic Centre is open for business.
- ▶ We have one of Canada's highest participation rates in volunteerism.
- ▶ The Northwestern Ontario Medical School will be accepting applications for 2005.
- ▶ Thunder Bay Violence Prevention Action Coalition has been formed and has pulled together community partners to work towards making Thunder Bay a safer place.
- ▶ Thunder Bay was named Cultural Capital of Canada 2003.
- ▶ Our community is a City of Festivals – Dragonboat, Children's, Fringe, Summer in the Parks, Bluesfest, Arts Alive and more.
- ▶ We have top-notch sports – the Chill, Bordercats, Thunderwolves.
- ▶ Our new Magnus Theatre provides entertainment for all ages.

Direction Thunder Bay

Direction Thunder Bay

Going the Distance: A Multi-Media Promotion



The Direction Thunder Bay promotional toolkit is designed to help spread the word that Thunder Bay is a great place to live, work, study, visit, do business and invest. Fast Forward Thunder Bay and 18 other community partners have produced Direction Thunder Bay, which consists of a CD Rom, 14-minute Video, PowerPoint presentation and quarterly eNewsletter.

This multi-media package showcases the real opportunities we have to offer. A powerful combination, the tools are being used by community ambassadors to:

- encourage businesses to invest here
- invite tourists to visit
- convince students to come and study, and
- entice people to locate here.

Every person in Thunder Bay has an important role in the success of our community. We have contact with friends and family elsewhere. We talk to others on a plane, at a convention or a meeting. With each encounter, we make an impression about Thunder Bay. Direction Thunder Bay gives us the tools to promote our community. We keep in touch with Thunder Bayites when they go to school or to work in other communities – and hopefully remind them of our city and region.

If you are involved in recruiting for your business or organization, or are going out of town for business and want to show off Thunder Bay, talk to the communications staff at your organization if you are a partner or contact the City's Tourism & Economic Development Division to borrow a Direction Thunder Bay kit (CD, 14-minute video and powerpoint presentation) at 625-3960 or email develop@city.thunder-bay.on.ca

eNewsletter

'Find Yourself in Thunder Bay' is published quarterly by the City of Thunder Bay in partnership with Fast Forward Thunder Bay. It's a voice for success stories about our enterprising people and exciting happenings in Thunder Bay. The newsletter is one cornerstone of the Direction Thunder Bay program, which keeps in touch with people from Thunder Bay and people who are thinking of coming here.

If you, your family or friends are interested in viewing or subscribing to this free eNewsletter, visit: www.thunderbay.ca/direction



Community Partners

- Bowater Canadian Forest Products Inc.
- Confederation College
- City of Thunder Bay
- Employment Resource Committee
- Fast Forward Thunder Bay
- FedNor/ Industry Canada
- Lakehead Public Schools
- Lakehead Social Planning Council
- Lakehead University
- North Superior Training Board/ Comité de formation du Nord Supérieur
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
- Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
- Thunder Bay Hydro
- Thunder Bay Physician Recruitment and Retention Council
- Thunder Bay Port Authority
- Thunder Bay Real Estate Board
- Thunder Bay Regional Hospital
- Thunder Bay Telephone
- Thunder Bay Ventures

www.city.thunder-bay.on.ca/direction

E-Newsletter #1.

Find yourself in Thunder Bay!

Visit our free opportunities newsletter.

FEATURE: Cultural Capital

Thunder Bay's designation as one of five 2003 Cultural Capitals of Canada is "an incredible honour for our community and a recognition of the great things that happen when people come together," said Mayor Ken Boshcoff after he received the news from Heritage Canada Minister Sheila Copps. "Arts and culture are a dynamic force attracting visitors to our community and creating a sense of pride." The honour also brought funding to support the Great Rendezvous 200th Anniversary Celebrations at Fort William Historical Park and a unique blend of projects to celebrate our Arts & Heritage.

Events:

In Thunder Bay, winter means maximum fun. Dependable snowfall brings ideal winter sport conditions from November to April.

Want to see some of the world's best curlers? They're in Thunder Bay for the **Continental Cup**. November 27 - 30 Fort William Gardens

Plan to attend the New Year's Eve Family Frolic **Fort William Historical Park** December 31.

Are you a student in the medicine or health care field? Tour the new Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre as part of this year's Mayor's Reception. December 28. For more, Email: Sharon.Nummikoski

If ever there were a time to visit Thunder Bay, it would be 2004. Plan now. For visitor information www.VisitThunderBay.com or call **1 800 667-8386**

New Faces

Welcome Back, Rick!
Rick Potter, Academic Director Aviation Centre of Excellence
rpotter@confederation.on.ca

Rick brings with him over 30 years of experience in aviation, starting out as a bush pilot in Northern Ontario and then becoming an Air Traffic Controller. Rick worked in nine different air traffic control units before moving into management with Transport Canada, later NavCanada. Retiring as the General Manager of Airport Operations for NavCanada in Central Canada he was responsible for 24 separate facilities across three provinces. Well known for his former role as Chair of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, Rick commuted to Ottawa for a time before returning to Thunder Bay full time as the first Academic Director of Canada's newest aviation training facility. **His greatest joy still is flying.**

The college's new Aviation Centre of Excellence, conveniently located at Thunder Bay International Airport, opened for classes in Fall 2003.

ace
Aviation Centre of Excellence

FRONTLINE: ATAC Goes the Distance

The revolutionary new **Advanced Technology and Academic Centre (ATAC)** at Lakehead University and opened this Fall. What makes the centre so revolutionary? All ATAC classrooms are wired to integrate computer, multi-media, and network technologies, as well as linked to distance education facilities to allow education at Lakehead to be interactive with surrounding and global communities.

For information on MORE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THUNDER BAY, visit www.city.thunder-bay.on.ca or call us at: **1 800 668-9360**

'Find Yourself in Thunder Bay' is published quarterly by the City of Thunder Bay in partnership with Fast Forward Thunder Bay. It's a voice for success stories about our enterprising people and exciting happenings in Thunder Bay. The newsletter is one cornerstone of the Direction Thunder Bay program, which keeps in touch with people from Thunder Bay and people who are thinking of coming here. Contact the City's Tourism & Economic Development Division at 807 625-3960 for more information or to borrow or buy a Direction Thunder Bay CD, 14-minute video, or complete kit.

Mayor's Economic Summit

Priorities Turned into Action

Mayor Ken Boshcoff convened an Economic Summit for the City of Thunder Bay on September 30, 2003. Over eighty people from the community attended, representing small and large business, major institutions, not-for-profit organizations as well as the City and provincial and federal governments. The purpose of the Summit was to reflect on the results of recent planning initiatives and to determine priorities for action. The City's Tourism and Economic Development Division in cooperation with Fast Forward Thunder Bay coordinated this event. It is to be followed by a regional forum to be held in February 2004.

Over the past while, there have been a number of plans to revitalize Northern Ontario's economy or address long-standing issues. These include:

1. Ontario Smart Growth: Shape the Future
2. Coalition of Northern Mayors: Embracing the Future
3. Building a Balanced Economy: Fair Wage Proposal
4. Industry Canada: Canada's Innovation Strategies
5. Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce: The State of the Economy
6. North Superior Training Board: Local Area Plan
7. Three Provincial Part Platforms: Northern Solutions
8. Fast Forward Thunder Bay: Community Development Plan
9. International Environmental Technology Centre: Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities

Although many of these have been formed on common



ideas and solutions, it is important to identify the priorities for action and the individuals and organizations who will champion these priorities.

At the Summit, the focus was on six main areas: infrastructure, natural resources/environment, human resources, innovation/entrepreneurship, general issues and tourism. Ideas were generated and criteria were developed to assess the strengths of each of the ideas in order to select priority issues. The assessment criteria included the need to: build on historic competencies, garner local and regional support, respond to global drivers of change, utilize local resources, create jobs, be innovative, create wealth, and allow for step-by-step development.

The participants identified 6 key opportunities for the City of Thunder Bay:

1. Zone Pricing for Electricity in Northwestern Ontario. The goal is to create a competitive environment to attract and maintain industry by pricing electricity in Northwestern Ontario based on the cost to produce it (i.e. lower than elsewhere in Ontario). This initiative would require a clear implementation plan leading to a policy change by government.

2. Develop and implement a strategy for developing the value-added forest products sector.

3. Develop a strategy to increase trades training, apprenticeships and mentoring in order to enhance, maintain, and increase skills to match industry needs with a focus on youth and people re-entering the workforce. In order to do this, the community must be coordinated, focused and committed to working together in this direction.

4. Incubate and invest in businesses generated at Confederation College and Lakehead University. This would involve community partners such as the City, education, government, and business working together to develop facilitation mechanisms and an investment gap strategy.

5. Develop a strategy for using the medical school and the hospitals as economic engines. This could be done by leveraging assets from the medical school, college and university and with the support of our community.



6. Develop a regional tourism plan. This would include research and long-term planning for the region and for the various sectors, and the involvement of a variety of partners in Northwestern Ontario.

Follow-up will continue on each of these items in the months ahead. By working together as a community, we can focus our collective energies on priorities and projects that will make a difference.

taking care of business

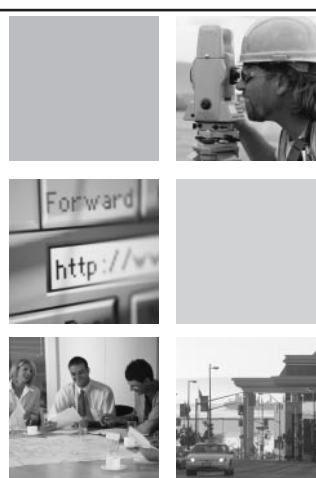
What is business retention and expansion?

br+e is a City of Thunder Bay Tourism & Economic Development volunteer - driven initiative that promotes job growth by helping local businesses identify concerns and barriers they face by addressing and evaluating their needs.

How br+e works?

br+e trains volunteers to conduct confidential surveys with local business owners and managers to pin point business concerns, and development opportunities.

The results from these surveys will be reviewed and summarized by a Task Force, who will then identify key issues facing our local business community. An action plan will be developed from the results and presented to the community at a public meeting. Implementation teams will then be established to put the strategy in motion. br+e and the City of Thunder Bay - we are taking care of business.



br+e business retention + expansion

CITY OF **Thunder Bay**
Superior by Nature

Tourism & Economic Development

For more information on br+e, call the Tourism & Economic Development Division of the City of Thunder Bay at 625-3960 or email develop@city.thunder-bay.on.ca

Tourism & Economic Development gratefully acknowledges the support of
The Chronicle Journal dougallmedia

Diversified Economy

"Thunder Bay will create a positive climate for businesses, institutions and employees, in order to develop a diversified, growing economy driven by a world class information technology network and a highly skilled and developed human resource base."

There are encouraging signs of economic diversity occurring in Thunder Bay. Biotechnology, education, medicine, forestry and aviation are emergent clusters of

activity and growth. One of Fast Forward's attributes is that the Partnership brings groups of people together to deal with these multi-faceted community and regional

opportunities. The following are some examples of our community initiatives:

Excerpt from "PARO Nurtures Women in Business" by Rosalind Lockyer of PARO (Chronicle-Journal, July 2003)

A vibrant contributor to Thunder Bay and region's economic diversity, PARO, a partner with Fast Forward, is a catalyst and nurturer of many regional initiatives. One of the largest peer lending organizations in Canada, PARO has helped hundreds of businesses get started and supports a regional network of 30 groups, constantly partners with many organizations including five Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC). PARO, Latin for "to make ready, to prepare, to provide", started in 1995 as a women's community loan fund. Today PARO, supports close to 700 members, and continues to grow small businesses by providing women with training, small loans, plus opportunity for marketing, networking and mentoring. PARO provides group training in Thunder Bay and the region, plus offers "on-line computerized opportunities" for those who find it difficult to visit the training centres.

Excerpt from "Musings on the Forestry Industry" by Ray Riley, Fast Forward Co-Chair (Chronicle-Journal, August 2003)

One of the Strategic Directions of Fast Forward is Diversified Economy. Contained within that strategic direction are goals for community economic development and the promotion of a forest region of excellence.

A cycle of change within the Industry has begun, with the softwood lumber tariff being the immediate driver. We may see a second cycle of change as Industry accommodates itself to the realities of a tighter wood supply. The Industry that eventually emerges will by definition be better able to compete globally – this will probably demand larger mills and leading-edge technology. While the revitalized primary Industry will unfortunately provide for fewer jobs, the opportunity to more than replace any lost employment is there for the taking at the secondary manufacturing level. However, success at the secondary level requires vision and leadership.

Striding Forward Conference (May 2002)

Fast Forward Thunder Bay and the Northwestern Ontario Technology Centre were partners in organizing the Striding Forward conference held in May 2002. This event focused on how to create vibrant and healthy communities for people to live, work and play. Gerald Offet, President of Prince George Development Corporation and Austin Beggs, Marketing Manager with Saskatchewan's Innovation Plan, shared their communities' experiences as they faced economic hardships, corporate downsizing and government cutbacks, and how they turned their difficulties into opportunities. Over 80 local and regional community leaders participated in this conference to share their knowledge and expertise while discussing common issues and challenges facing Canadian communities in general, and Thunder Bay specifically. The goal of Striding Forward was to stimulate new thinking on directions and opportunities for our environment.

Annual Indicators Report

A series of indicators has been developed to measure our progress as a community on an annual basis. Many communities are finding indicators to be helpful in answering the question: "Are our efforts moving us toward achieving our goals?" The Fast Forward partnership believes that our indicators are an important aspect of the annual progress report to City Council. These indicators provide an overall picture of the status of Thunder Bay's sustainability in terms of its quality of life and diversified economy. The indicators include a range of information about economic, environmental, social conditions, health and demographic data in our community, which can then be used to make judgements about whether the community is making progress towards our goals. Evidence of positive advancement is important to substantiate past expenditures on initiatives and creating support for new ones. Evidence of a lack of sustainability can provide a catalyst for community groups to take action and to demand more action from local government, other levels of government, or the private sector. Members of the community can also use the

indicators report to educate themselves about trends and evaluate how their own actions may improve sustainability.

To provide the Indicators Committee with a framework for the selection process of indicators, the following principles have been utilized:

1. Indicators must be recognized as accurate, objective and reliable.
2. Indicators must be regularly available from secondary sources.
3. Indicators must measure some aspect of the Fast Forward plan.
4. Indicators must measure something around which community action can be taken.

Selecting the individual indicators and how they are reported is not a simple process. There are many different factors to consider, but we hope the annual indicators review will provide the impetus for growth and change in our community.



Regional Networks

“Thunder Bay will work with its partners in Northwestern Ontario to develop mutually supportive relationships, which will strengthen the region.”

Strengthening regional networks involves building relationships and partnerships with people and organizations

throughout Northwestern Ontario and working together for the betterment of all. The following are some exam-

ples of proactive, capacity building partnerships:

Excerpt from "Regional Networks and Training Boards Play Crucial Role" by Frank Pullia, North Superior Training Board Co-Chair (Chronicle-Journal, June 2003).

The North Superior Training Board / Comité de formation du Nord Supérieur mandate is to direct the planning and the delivery of federal and provincial training programs to make job and skills training more accessible, effective and responsive to local needs. The goal of the Board is to help identify the skills in our community which can translate into jobs. The role of training boards is becoming more crucial in light of issues such as youth out-migration, an aging population, downsizing and restructuring in the resource-based economy of the north, and the transition to a knowledge-based economy. All of these issues are now coming to bear on the Northern economy and while, in the past, the main role of the training boards was one of training for new jobs, we are now also dealing with adjustment issues at the broader community level (i.e. shut-downs, plant closures, layoffs, etc.). A crucial part of the new role is to identify emerging issues and through partnerships with other community-based agencies, take proactive action.

Excerpt from "Regional Networks Lead Through Learning" by Ian McCormack, Vice-President, Confederation College (Chronicle-Journal, November 2003).

One of the goals of Fast Forward is to enhance the quality of life of our people and organizations through life long learning and the creation and enhancement of learning resources and facilities. The achievement of this goal and the realization of Fast Forward's vision will be in part done through regional partnerships that will create capacity, strength, and result in education and learning partnerships that are learner-centred and relevant to the people of Northwestern Ontario and Thunder Bay. Such partnerships are growing across our community and our region and are encompassing school boards, Confederation College, Negahneewin College of Indigenous Studies, Lakehead University, aboriginal learning institutions and education providers nationally and globally. These partnerships are forward looking and rooted in tangible results.

Through visionary, learner-centred partnerships that bring together our education capacity and focus it on the economic and social future of our community, the opportunities for life long learning for the people of the Northwest will be extraordinary.

Information Technology Successes Recognized (May 2002, 2003)

As part of Canada's Information Technology (IT) Week celebrations the Northwestern Ontario Technology Association, the Northwestern Ontario Technology Centre and Fast Forward Thunder Bay created the Community Information Technology Hero Award to recognize local and regional individuals who have assisted their communities in a significant way through the use or application of information technology. This celebration of innovation and community spirit has honoured seven people over the past two years.

In October 2002, Gaylen Duncan, President of the information technology Association of Canada delivered a presentation on the future of Information Technology and the opportunities for economic diversification in Thunder Bay. The number of IT firms in Thunder Bay has increased significantly from 57 companies in the year 2000 to 145 in 2002. Much of this success can be attributed to strong collaborative efforts in this sector.

Regional Innovation Team

“In the new, global knowledge economy of the 21st century prosperity depends on innovation, which, in turn, depends on the investments that we make in the creativity and talents of our people. We must invest not only in technology and innovation but also, in the Canadian way, to create an environment of inclusion, in which all Canadians can take advantage of their talents, their skills and their ideas.”

*The Right Honourable Jean Chretien,
Prime Minister of Canada*

Innovation is vital to the growth and development of the Northwestern Ontario economy and to its regional, national and international competitiveness. As a result of this need to foster innovation, the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Team was formalized in the spring of 2003. Fast Forward acts a catalyst in bringing key players from the region together to:

- Develop a seamless approach to support the process from innovation to commercialization
- Foster collaboration among the key players

- Customize innovation objectives to meet the needs of Northwestern Ontario
- Link with groups which can lobby for support
- Build on existing strengths and institutions in the region
- Maintain connections with provincial, national and international developments in order to leverage this knowledge for the benefit of the region
- Identify and take on specific projects.



“The Northwestern Ontario Innovation Team fosters innovation and recognizes its importance to the growth and development of our economy.”



**Thunder Bay
Ventures**
Community Futures Development Corporation

- *Access to Capital
- *Strategic community planning & development
- * Business Counselling and Information Services

Through **FAST FORWARD** our community development plan, city and regional networks formed and have realized the following accomplishments:

- Northwestern Ontario Investment Pool
- Bio-tech-Education-Medical Cluster
- Aviation Centre of Excellence
- Artisan sector development
- Waterfront development steering committee
- Regional support and leadership
- Local Economic Development Support

For more information see www.tbventures.on.ca
Box 10116, 1294 Balmoral Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T6
807-768-6650 Fax: 807-768-6655 Email: tbventur@tbventures.on.ca

Looking to the Future

Fast Forward is continuing to pull together community partners to think, plan and take action together. Fast Forward will work to encourage partners and community agencies to implement our community development plan in order to make our quality of life, diversified economy, and regional networks into stronger realities for our communities. During the past two years of implementation, Fast Forward has made significant progress. During the next two years, the plan is to ensure that the momentum that has been created is not only maintained, but taken to the next level.

The guiding principles for Fast Forward will continue to be:

- ▶ The City of Thunder Bay is part of, and works in partnership with the region of Northwestern Ontario
- ▶ Thunder Bay is a tourism gateway for the North
- ▶ Innovation is vitally important to our future
- ▶ Community pride is critical to our success
- ▶ Collective cooperative action does make a difference
- ▶ A community culture which values sustainability.

Doug Henton, President of Collaborative Economics and author of "Grassroots Leadership" delivered the keynote address at Fast Forward's Community Leadership Conference in September 2002. In his address, Doug Henton stated that, "Civic entrepreneurs are a new generation leaders who forge new, powerfully



productive linkages at the intersection of business, government, education, and community. We need to build vital, resilient economic communities in turbulent times." Fast Forward is a model of how we can create these linkages to build and maintain a vital community here in Thunder Bay.

Fast Forward will be helping our community to think ahead, to identify challenges and opportunities, and to learn from the experiences of others. We will continue to encourage community pride, celebrate our successes, and share the Thunder Bay message with citizens both at home and far and away. We will work to follow up on the recommendations of the Mayor's Economic Summit and to ensure that our community's priorities are turned into action.

Vision for a Superior City

On the extraordinary shores of Lake Superior, Thunder Bay, rich in people and resources, connects to the region of Northwestern Ontario and to the world. Affordable and accessible quality of life, respect for diversity, safe neighbourhoods and economic opportunities make Thunder Bay a healthy community in which to live, work and play together.

Contact Us:

Fast Forward Thunder Bay
c/o Thunder Bay Ventures
Box 10116, 1294 Balmoral St.
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T6

Tel. 807.768.6650
Fax. 807.768.6655
Email: fastforward@notc.on.ca
www.fastforwardthunderbay.com

Lisa Beckwick,
Fast Forward Coordinator

We need your help to promote Thunder Bay!

'Find Yourself in Thunder Bay' is published quarterly by the City of Thunder Bay in partnership with Fast Forward Thunder Bay. It's a voice for success stories about our enterprising people and exciting happenings in Thunder Bay. The newsletter allows us to keep in touch with people from Thunder Bay, who are now living elsewhere, and people who are thinking of coming here. For a free subscription, please visit:

www.thunderbay.ca/direction and

email this address to others who might be interested. Together, we can let the world know that Thunder Bay is a great place to live, work, and play!



Thunder Bay
Ventures
 Community Futures Development Corporation

CITY OF
Thunder Bay
 Superior by Nature

FedNor 

Canada 

FAST FORWARD
 THUNDER BAY