



Training Board

Training Board

Training Board

Four County

Labour Market Planning Board

Serving Bruce Grey Huron Perth

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009



Executive Director's Message

CHANGE! We have been inundated with changes in the economy that have been both rapid and intense. Although we are always in an environment of change, when it becomes a focus, as in these times of economic upheaval, we become somewhat paralyzed. Once we recover from the initial shock, however, we take charge as a community to overcome the obstacles ahead.

Over the 2008-09 year, the Local Boards Network has experienced many changes. These changes included the implementation of the Integrated Local Labour Market Planning (ILLMP) process in seven of the 25 regions across the province. The ILLMP pilots were tasked with testing the concept of integrated planning spanning several ministries and community partners. For the other 18 regions the development, implementation and use of the Labour Market Indicators (LMI) was a tremendous change. This change was wrought with learning curves and bumps, however, a huge benefit for our region which your Local Board took on with vigour. The greatest benefit to the communities of Bruce Grey Huron Perth is the access to local data for each county that provided evidence for focused discussion and targeted action planning. As we continue to witness structural changes in the workforce this process enables consistency in labour market planning.

In 2008-09 the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) invested significant dollars to the enhancement of local labour market information accessibility and this is evident in the robust Trends, Opportunities and Priorities 2009 Report released in March 2009. We would like to thank MTCU for supporting the work of Local Boards and thereby enhancing the task of local labour market development across Ontario.

In the midst of all this change the Bruce Grey Huron Perth Georgian Triangle Training Board (BGHPGT TB) also changed its boundaries. This engaged us in the walk down the strategic planning lane establishing a clear focus as a community partner for labour market development and launching our new name. As of April 2009 the BGHPGT TB became known as the Four County Labour Market Planning Board, a name we felt was more attuned with our work in the community.

Never forgetting the ease at which the work of the Local Board comes through the hard work of the staff I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude. I look forward to continuing to provide support to our community stakeholders, the Board of Directors and staff. Our future is grounded in planning for change. We are 'Planning to keep you working'!

Gemma Mendez-Smith

OUR VISION

The Four County Labour Market Planning Board envisions a skilled workforce with meaningful job opportunities and quality employment in a sustainable and prosperous economy.

OUR MISSION

The Four County Labour Market Planning Board plans and promotes local labour market strategies to meet the challenges of a changing economy.

OUR MANDATE

The Four County Labour Market Planning Board plays a leadership role in the development of innovative labour market strategies by:

- Providing reliable research;
- Identifying labour market challenges;
- Targeting workforce opportunities;
- Promoting skills development; and,
- Raising public awareness of workforce issues.

LABOUR CO-CHAIR MESSAGE

GREETINGS ALL. Another year has passed and the now, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, serving Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth, is actively researching, analysing and attempting to understand the current global economic restructuring, which has had significant impact in our region as well.

Probably the greatest increase in jobs has been in the sectors associated with the counselling and assistance given to the unemployed to retrain and seek different areas of employment. Yes, it would appear that many of the better paying jobs, with benefits, are being lost and replaced with temporary service sector jobs. It is a time of great change; however, with the experience and knowledge that is to be found in the numerous partner groups and economic development organisations affiliated to the local board, we feel that we shall better understand and respond to the current economic downturn.

We trust that all of you will assist us, with your comments and input to the forthcoming TOP consultations, to be held throughout the region. (TOP – Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report – regarding the local Labour Market Development). Please contact our Executive Director, Gemma Mendez-Smith, if you have comments or information of any new trend or initiative in the labour market in your area. Thank You.

Charlie Nixon

BUSINESS CO-CHAIR MESSAGE

EACH YEAR, it seems, brings challenges and change and the past year has certainly been one of challenges and change.

A major change is in the name of the organization, which now more accurately reflects the area we serve and the work we do. For many of our community partners, and indeed some of our directors, the new name will take some time before it rolls as easily off the tongue as “Training Board” used to.

A massive change, which was a shock to everyone, was the huge downturn in the stock market which had very serious knock on effects in manufacturing and construction among many other sectors. The ongoing effect is that although there seems to be some recovery, hundreds of jobs have vanished, many of them probably forever. Even the most currently available Labour Market Statistics do not tell the whole story. Within the Board area a number of major companies are now out of business and finding employment has become a huge challenge for many people. Our board continues to look for ways to assist employers and employees meet the challenges they face.

In common with other volunteer organizations we continue with the challenge of maintaining a full slate of directors. Although we understand when a director decides to retire we are always sorry to see them go. Equally we are always pleased to welcome new faces, with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the board.

This coming year, largely due to a three year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, together with generous support from some of our community partners, the board has been able to move forward with a project idea that has been in the idea stage for several years. It is exciting to see the *Skills Opportunities Showcase* project, which has the potential to have a positive effect on many lives, move forward.

No matter how hard the board works, how many great ideas they have, how committed they are to the organization they are unable to function effectively without support staff. We are indeed fortunate to have excellent staff, ready and willing to take on the new tasks and challenges that our new community role may bring.

Whilst some view change negatively we view change as an opportunity to grow and develop within the community as we endeavour to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Rosemary Rognvaldson



How We Serve You...

OUR KEY FUNCTION in the community is two-fold. Firstly, we engage in community consultations focused on local labour market data. In an effort to engage community stakeholders in a strong planning process leading to a solid Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) Report the Labour Market Indicators were developed for use in the consultative process. It provided a platform for planning discussions across the region. The result is a Trends, Opportunities and Priorities report which enable the Local Board, in consultation with community stakeholders, to set out the second part of our service to you. An action plan for addressing local labour market issues where projects and collaborations for success are identified.

As we continue to enhance our data collection and analysis processes the onerous task of Labour Market Development can be tackled with a community focus that builds momentum through strategic thinking and action. In the 2008 consultations and the subsequent 2009 TOP report, key issues impacting labour market development were identified. Educational Attainments, Small and Medium Enterprise Support and Worker Transition and Up-Skilling were the three issues that rose to the top through our stakeholders consultations. Realizing that these issues stem from two significant Ontario labour market trends: 1) Employers are creating jobs for persons with post secondary qualifications and 2) An unquenchable demand for labour force renewal, it is important for our region to focus on the building of a labour force that meets the demands of employers and is able to transition in this ever-changing labour market. By working together with our community partners we are 'planning to keep you working'.

Collaboration – The Magic is in the Thinking

COLLABORATION is not a new concept, in fact, it is ubiquitous. Collaboration is not magic but it certainly creates the environment for magic to happen. As resources continue to contract, the need to think about collaborating becomes more critical and necessary. Collaboration that increases our community's labour market development initiatives on an on-going basis has become crucial for success.

In our community there is the thinking that collaboration is necessary and good and cannot be achieved without an active collaboration agenda. The Local Board, in an effort to attend to this agenda, acts as a catalyst for developing collaborations with business, labour, educators and service providers and is able to see many specific goals achieved. We have witnessed the introduction of the Specialist High Skills Majors through the Boards of Education in our region that provide students with a broad range of experiential skills and

knowledge before they enter the workforce. However, this program cannot be successful without the involvement of community partners in areas of business, labour, education and services. Businesses collaborate with service providers to enhance the skills of their workforce, creating another win for workforce development.

Community centricity is about letting stakeholders decide the local issues, impacts and how they want to address these issues. The TOP planning process provides one outlet for this kind of development of stakeholder driven activities, creating the platform for collaboration, success and magic.

In the 2008 TOP Report, while many initiatives were discussed, the Local Board collaborated with several community partners to undertake six core partnership activities.



Partnership Report Card – Making the Grade

PROJECT TITLE: Two-Day Agricultural Career Symposium 2008

TOP TREND: Youth Out-Migration

Description: There is a belief that there are few job opportunities in rural communities and youth are out-migrating. Through this two-day Career Symposium event youth were able to learn about Agricultural career possibilities in our region. They also learned about Agricultural Apprenticeship opportunities in greater detail. This was a partnership with Bluewater District School Board, Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board, Saugeen Economic Development Corporation, Georgian College, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA)- Bruce Grey, Passport to Prosperity and University of Guelph.

Output: Approximately 144 individuals attended the event hosted at the University of Guelph. There were 21 presenters, three tours, hands-on workshops and 11 displays including post secondary options. Students gained insight into agri-business career opportunities and were able to network with other students interested in the Agricultural Sector.

PROJECT TITLE: Merging with the Green Economy Symposium 2008

TOP TREND: Lack of Economic Diversification

Description: The Renewable Energy sector is growing in our region. Workforce development and employment opportunities are many and individuals are looking for ways to merge with the Green Economy. This one-day symposium was planned to connect sector employers with the workforce and general public. A cross-section of representation from employers, government, education and general public were in attendance. Workshops were offered on several topics within the sector. This was a partnership with the Centre for Applied Renewable Energy, Huron Business Development Corporation and Huron County.

Output: Over 135 individuals attended this inaugural event. Two Plenary and four Breakout sessions were featured. Topics included Training for the Green Economy, Renewable Energy as a Rural Economic Driver, Accessing Venture Capital, Governments and the Green Economy and Small Scale Green Economy.

PROJECT TITLE: SPOKES Development in Bruce & Grey Counties

TOP TREND: Marginalized Workforce

Description: The TOP Process identified the need to increase the skills of low income earners. Once trained, these workers could find higher paying jobs. SPOKES is an on-line training tool for learners who may experience barriers including, but not limited to, transportation. SPOKES online training was offered at strategic locations throughout Bruce and Grey and by partnering with Social Services transportation to these locations was made possible. Partners included Avon-Maitland District School Board, Bruce and Grey Counties, Ontario Works, elearnnetwork.ca, Fanshawe College, Georgian College, Huron Business Development Corporation and Saugeen Economic Development Corporation.

Output: Approximately 33 individuals participated in 44 online courses. Enquires into other online training options increased and as a result two additional training sessions were introduced. As learners became comfortable with online learning, they registered for additional courses.



PROJECT TITLE: Skilled Trades Awareness Symposium 2009

TOP TREND: Skilled Trades Shortages

Description: A Skilled Trades' Awareness Symposium was held in March in Owen Sound as part of the Career Outlook Grey Bruce event hosted by Georgian College. The symposium aimed to engage youth and members of the public who may be interested in new career options or looking at entering a skilled trade. This was a partnership among Georgian College, Bluewater and Bruce Grey Catholic District School Boards, Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation, Business Enterprise Centre Owen Sound & District and Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce.

Output: Eight hundred plus individuals attended this event including students, recent college graduates and laid-off workers. Twenty-two businesses and 13 organizations had display booths. Attendees were exposed to a variety of important information about entering a skilled trade, including training and apprenticeship options, labour market information and employers needs. Apprenticeship information packages were distributed.

PROJECT TITLE: Growing Your Opportunities Bruce Grey Huron Perth

TOP TREND: Lack of Economic Diversification

Description: The lack of regional-level strategies challenge overall economic development and social capacity has remained underdeveloped. Two two-day workshops with farm business owners and entrepreneurs were held to assist in the development of new opportunities in the agricultural sector. Value Plus™ Quest for New Farm Value is a program developed by Canadian Farm Business Management Council and delivered through partnerships between OMAFRA and community partners. Partners included OMAFRA, Canadian Farm Business Management Council, OFA – Bruce Grey Huron Perth, Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation, Saugeen Economic Development Corporation, Grey Agricultural Services and Huron County.

Output: This event was a success with 37 individuals and 18 businesses participating in the workshop. Participants explored case studies of innovative rural and farm business ideas and opportunities. Discussions were held on the possibilities of implementing new and innovative ideas in the area to stimulate the agricultural economy and best practice methods were examined.

PROJECT TITLE: Promotional Materials in Employer Language

TOP TREND: Requirements for Higher Levels of Education

Description: An information brochure targeted at employers to address the issues of educational requirements was developed. A need to ensure that employers recognize the differences in non-traditional adult credentials was noted. A brochure showing "What's the Difference?" among Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), Academic and Career Entrance (ACE), Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES), General Education Development (GED) and Essential Skills was coordinated into one tool for easy access and comparison by employers. Partners included QUILL Learning Network, Employment Ontario, Conestoga College, Georgian College, Scroll, Adult Learning Centres Grey-Bruce-Georgian and the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading.

Output: Approximately 55 businesses participated in presentation sessions across Bruce Grey Huron Perth and Collingwood. Another 100 brochures were mailed to businesses across the same region. Employers who attend the sessions found the information very useful and indicated that they plan on using the information in the future. QUILL Learning Network will continue to present and distribute this resource to employers over the next several months.



What's is happening in 2009-10

HURON PERTH CAREER SYMPOSIUM

Host a Regional Career Symposium for Huron and Perth Counties. This two-day event will be held in Seaforth and will heighten awareness of local career opportunities and the employer's needs in both educational and skill requirements. Over fifty exhibitors will attend with the expected audience to be members of the public and students. It is expected that over 2,000 students will attend.

MEDQUEST BRUCE GREY

The Local Board has been instrumental in bringing together partners to address the need for a second Medical based week-long camp in Northern Bruce Grey. Youth will explore the local careers in the Healthcare field. They will job shadow, and participate in hands-on activities in the Health Sector, which includes a one-day mock disaster.

WORKER PORTABLE SKILLS KIT

With community partners we will develop a tool-kit that will assist workers to identify and market portable and transferable skills. We will make presentations to learner groups and distribute tool-kits across our region.

VIRTUAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This is a two-phase project that will identify business champions or mentors willing to offer expertise and tips online to area businesses in priority subjects such as Human Resources, Financing Resources and Customer Relations. Phase two will see the development of a Virtual Mentorship Portal to assist with small business management tools. Marketing materials will also be developed for use with the Website.

POST-SECONDARY TRAINING LOAN PROGRAM

Explore and develop parameters for a pilot Microloans program for low/no income earners to assist with access to training/skills development programs. This discussion paper will identify loan qualification criteria, assessment tools and loan granting organization(s).

BREAKFAST SESSION – BENEFITS OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR YOUR WORKFORCE

To encourage employer engagement in up-skilling their current workforce a minimum of one breakfast session will be held in the board region. This session will host an authority speaker on the benefits of essential skills and lifelong learning for a workforce. Local success stories will also be highlighted.

FIRST NATIONS SKILLS INVENTORY

This project will provide a current inventory of skills and training accomplishments and needs whereby gaps can be identified. Also, identification of relevant training services within the First Nations communities will promote the development of a healthy workforce and provide First Nations people an opportunity to become a strong partner in the local solution for workforce development.



Celebrating 10 Years of School to Work Partnerships

THE PASSPORT TO PROSPERITY PROGRAM has been creating opportunities in the Bruce Grey and Collingwood areas for a decade now. In 2009-10 we are moving into a new delivery model. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to H. Marshall Draper, Marshall Services, for his dedication to the delivery of the program over the past ten years. The Local Planning Board will be delivering the program through our staff complement. Passport to Prosperity, affectionately referred to as PtoP, is an Ontario-wide program that promotes and highlights the benefits of school to work partnerships between education and business. The program is hosted by the Four County Labour Market Planning Board to recruit employers to partner with schools in the provision of invaluable experiential learning opportunities that ultimately lead to student success. Employers can participate in the moulding of their future workforce by providing job shadowing, career talks, mentoring and cooperative education placements for the Specialists High Skills Major program. Our theme for the coming months is "It's all about the students and helping them to succeed – as an employer you are part of that success." To find out more about the program or how you can participate please contact Kay Uitvlugt at (519) 881-2725 or kay@planningboard.ca. You can also find information at www.employerregistry.ca.

SOS – THE CRY FOR HELP

There has been a recurring distress call in our region over the past 11 years. There is a lack of access to local labour market information. In an answer to that SOS the Local Board applied for and received Ontario Trillium Foundation funding in the amount of \$195,200 to develop 'labour market information on wheels.' The Skills Opportunities Showcase (SOS) is a mobile unit that will feature local labour market information from key employment sectors and employment and training programs for the four counties. This is a tremendous move forward for a rural community that has long sited the difficulties of getting information due to lack of broadband and transportation. Very soon you will be able to find that information literally, in your back yard. Look for the SOS Mobile Unit at a location near you. If you have any questions or to have the unit featured at your event please contact Patricia Morgan, SOS Project Coordinator, (519)-881-2725 or patricia@planningboard.ca.

RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

As change is inevitable, regrettably, we have to say goodbye to some valuable members of our Board of Directors. To Jo-Anne Cameron, Education & Training Director and Catherine Durrant, Business Director we express deep appreciation for your dedication to the work of the Local Board and labour market development. Without the tremendous generosity of our Board of Directors we cannot continue to be a successful organization.



Four County
Labour Market Planning Board

Serving Bruce Grey Huron Perth

Proud Member of :



Local Boards
Network

Champions of Ontario Labour Market Solutions

Funded by:

**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Ontario.

Contact information:

111 Jackson St., S,
Suite 1, Box 1078,
Walkerton ON N0G 2V0,
TF: 888-774-1468,
P: 519-881-2725,
F: 519-881-3661,
www.planningboard.ca
E: info@planningboard.ca

BOARD MEMBERS

Business: Rosemary Rognvaldson (Co-Chair)
Cavell Fraser, Dave Hemingway,
Jayne Parker, Sue Yost

Labour: Charlie Nixon (Co-Chair)

Jill McIlwraith, Gary Weaver

Education & Training: Donna Jansen

Equity: Megan Braithwaite, Pam Keeshig,
Dwayne Long

MTCU Representative: Lauri Cunningham,
Consultant

STAFF

Gemma Mendez-Smith, Executive Director
Kay Uitvlugt, Project Coordinator
Sherry Olson, Administrative Coordinator
Patricia Morgan, SOS Project Coordinator