



# **TOWN OF SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2005**

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## **Executive Summary**

The document provides a brief overview of the history and background of the Town. The Public Participation process involved using a questionnaire with key informants and a series of Town Hall style meetings focused on the Rural Economic Development program. The consultations stressed sustainable development, environmental preservation, focus on tourism, and addressed the need for a light industrial park, improved signage and downtown and waterfront development.

The paper also provided an overview of economic development as a process that facilitates groups in order to make things happen. The role of the Municipality should be that of an 'enabler'. Many of the enabling or capacity building initiatives do not represent direct economic development, however, without the appropriate infrastructure and support system, economic development, business activity, and job creation cannot occur. Therefore, the initiatives and activities in this document reflect the underlying viewpoint that the municipality is largely an enabler and facilitator. This does not preclude the Town's involvement in actively supporting, and nurturing business development.

A competitive analysis was carried out by urbanMetrics.inc. In positioning the Town for prosperity there were four key issues to consider:

- possible labour shortage due to aging workforce and small in-migration of people
- local business experiencing ongoing difficulties associated with recruiting employees
- no planned industrial development
- need for an improved website

A significant portion of the report was dedicated to the discussion a number initiatives and areas for attracting business investment. The document sets out general goals and key performance indicators related to those sectors. Those initiatives include industrial development, downtown revitalization, waterfront development, residential development, agricultural initiatives, tourism and value added quarry product. These initiatives were addressed as a result of consultations and the competitive analysis and suggest action on a number of fronts including; a 1-5 year plan for downtown revitalization, waterfront development and an industrial park; refocusing Warton Willie; support for the festivals and events that take place in the Town and an initiative that would identify potential business interests in value added quarry product. The Rural Economic Development Program does provide funding for initiatives similar to these, provided there is significant buy-in from partners.

The next three sections which include: Business Retention and Expansion; Small Business Start-up and Development and Labour Market Development and Training are linked initiatives. The Business Retention and Expansion section largely discusses the BR+E project that was carried out by Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation (BCFDC). However the notion of supporting business retention and expansion should be a prime activity of the EDO and goes hand in hand with The Small Business Start-up and Development section. This initiative is largely the purview of the Saugeen Shore Small Business Enterprise Centre. This section outlines the role of the Centre and acknowledged that the first year of operation did not meet

expectations. The report makes some suggestion for improving operations, including a MoU and a stronger relationship with the local Chambers of Commerce/BIA. These initiatives along with Labour Market Training initiatives are areas in which a healthy Chamber(s)/BIA can contribute. An active/positive working relationship between the EDO and the Chamber(s)/BIA is a very constructive step towards better and more business development, job creation and promotion of the area. Partnership development that strengthens the Chambers is good for business development and retention.

The section on Business Practices is related to the internal business practices of the Town and makes suggestion for improving investor servicing and getting the message out that the Town is a good place to work, live and play. There are three suggestions for improvement; consolidation of by-laws, staff as 'champions' of the community and a buy locally policy. There are opportunities to get funding regarding the by-law consolidation as this is a finite activity in which Human Resources Development Canada, Job Creation Partnership may assist.

On marketing and communications, the report suggests developing a multi-year, multi-media marketing plan through a grant provided by the Community Information Support Program. The marketing plan would cover issues such as branding, a corporate identity piece, web-site improvements, an annual radio campaign, a new image for other publications in which we advertise, Willie, Sunny and other Festival and events held in the Town.

The section on Partnerships discusses the many and varied partnership opportunities and this economic development plan suggests and supports many partnerships that are helpful and productive for the Municipality. Partnerships allow us to avoid duplication, maximize resources by leveraging projects, joint marketing activity and develop mutual relationships that support economic development initiatives. A rich partnership network allows the municipality to focus on what we can do while our partners focus on other activity. This allows us to be involved in many areas and as such, accomplish more for our municipality than we would otherwise.

The conclusion of the report sets out the priorities for action. Many of the areas for action are based on the results of the consultation and the competitive analysis. The next steps outline the "how to" and recommend the economic development work plan become a key component of a performance contract with the EDO. It will set out the priorities, goals, timetable, and performance measures. Inherent in the work plan will be the key performance indicators of the goals we want to achieve. Developing performance indicators is a way of measuring the success of our plan. There is an expression "*what gets measured, gets done*". Developing key performance indicators at the front end will go a long way to ensure that we accomplish our goals. There are bound to be glitches along the way, there will be timetables that we have no control over and there may be new developments that we want to pursue, but a semi-annual evaluation will allow us to re-evaluate the work plan and take appropriate action. The key, is to work together.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my colleagues in the field for reviewing this document. Your comments have been invaluable and have helped to develop and expand my own perspective. In every instance I have carefully considered your comments and advice and have incorporated your ideas and input wherever possible. To Ruthann Carson for your support and indulgence as you allowed me to proceed at my own pace and trusted me with my own discretion. Also many thanks to Lauren Millier of urbanMetrics inc. for her review and comment. The input from professionals in the field is invaluable and has helped shape my ideas and the focus of this document. This input brings real meaning to the notion of a 'value added' product.

Thank you

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Town of South Bruce Peninsula

## **Introduction/Background**

### **Brief History**

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula (TSBP) is a lower tier municipality in the County of Bruce on the southern portion of the Bruce Peninsula. It was formed in January 1999 with the amalgamation of the former Townships of Albemarle and Amabel (including Sauble Beach), the Village of Hepworth and the Town of Wiarton. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is the gateway to a natural wonderland and home to more than 8,000 full-time residents located in the several amalgamated urban centres and rural areas. The south end of the Municipality starts at Alvanley at Bruce County Road #10/Highway #6 and #21 and the north end stops (at the Town line) just before the Pike Bay side road. Highway #6 runs from one end of the Bruce Peninsula to the other. Lake Huron runs its way up the entire west coast of the Peninsula and Georgian Bay up the east with more than 580 kilometers of beautiful shoreline. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is flanked on the north east by Chippewas of Nawash First Nation and the south west by the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation.

The Municipality owns the Wiarton-Keppel District Airport. The Airport is located in the Municipality of Georgian Bluffs and is managed by a Joint Airport Services Board made up of Council representatives of the Municipality of Georgian Bluffs and the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. The facility has the best infrastructure between Sault Ste Marie and Toronto with the longest, widest and flattest main paved runway (5021 feet long and 150 feet wide). The airport has superior approach lighting and instrumentation and a two storey terminal building with passenger and pilot lounges and facilities. The airport can accommodate small aircraft and large corporate DC9s, 727s, and 737s. The airport is certified by the Ministry of Transport and houses a Weather Canada office that provides reports to recreational boaters and pilots. It has a point of entry status for customs and immigration and operates 24/7, year round. The Joint Airport Service Board that operates the airport has its own economic development plan in place that addresses the utilization of the airport and the airport lands.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula and Wiarton in particular is the home to Wiarton Willie. The phenomenon of Wiarton Willie, the albino prognostication groundhog, and an annual festival to celebrate Groundhog Day has been an activity in the Municipality for 50 years.

The Municipality is home to Sauble Beach. Sauble Beach has been named by MacLeans Magazine as one of the best 10 beaches in Canada and more recently has been named as a Blue Flag Candidate beach. With 11 kilometers of sandy beach, Sauble is the choice of designation for many thousand of visitors each year.

### **Public Participation Process**

Involving the community, political representation and stakeholders was and continues to be an integral component in the development and implementation of this plan. After some initial discussions with other partners in the economic development field, it was recommended that we use a questionnaire format with key informant stakeholders to engage the public. The reason for this course of action was, there had been a considerable amount of consultation in the past year and half and would likely be more in the near future. Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation (Bruce CFDC) had recently completed an in-depth, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, (SWOT) analysis, developed a Strategic Plan for the Town. As well, Bruce CFDC undertook a comprehensive Business Retention/Expansion

(BR+E) survey. In addition, Bruce County was about to initiate a consultation process on Tourism and the County as a premier destination. Therefore, in the fall of 2004 a questionnaire was developed (Appendix I) and sent to approximately 100 people and organizations (Appendix II). The key stakeholders identified were community leaders, people in the economic development field, business people, and tourist co-ordinators. Over the course of the next six months, approximately 20% of the people responded to the questionnaire. The results were recorded and posted on the Town's web-site (Appendix III).

In January of 2005, the Council of the Town of South Bruce Peninsula initiated a series of Town Hall style meetings for the purpose of exploring opportunities under the provincial Rural Economic Development (RED) program (Final Report to Council - Appendix IV). Public participation and community consultation continues to be an on-going process. The Economic Development Officer (EDO) is involved in a number of community committees:

- Bruce Peninsula Community Development Committee – Small Business/Industry/Agriculture/Tourism sub-committee;
- Grey-Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership;
- Wiarton Willie Festival Committee;
- Bruce Grey Festival Network
- Bruce Peninsula Tourism Association

In addition there is on-going liaison between the EDO and the South Bruce Chamber of Commerce, the Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce, Saugeen Shores Business Enterprise Centre, Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation, various federal and provincial government representatives, and staff in Bruce County responsible for tourism and economic development.

### **Results of the Public Participation Process**

Generally speaking, the community consultation process highlighted the need for economic development within the context of sustainable development and environmental preservation. Residents are ardent about the community and want to see the quality of life preserved through a moderate and staged growth plan, with tourism activity as the primary focus. While a diversified economy is ideal, it is recognized that the community is both limited and blessed by its geographic location. Limited with respect to transportation corridors, finite water and sewage capacity and a lack of universal high speed internet access and blessed with beautiful beaches, a world biosphere preserve, pristine waters, great fishing and hiking, to name a few. To that end, tourism is viewed as the major growth sector for the Town. Many residents talked about downtown renewal, waterfront development, improved signage and a light industrial park as desirable features of development.

### **Town of South Bruce Peninsula Goals and Core Values**

The following goals and core values were facilitated and developed by the Council in September, 2002.

#### Goals

1. Support and growth of four season tourism economy
2. Establish an infrastructure priority plan
3. Preservation of environment
4. Fiscal accountability and responsibility

## Core Values

- community acceptable taxes
- communicate and link with the citizens
- equitable services for all
- foster economic growth
- integrity in all aspects of Council and the Town

## Overview of Economic Development

Economic development means many things to many people. It is helpful to begin with a common understanding of the role of the economic development professional. Traditionally, an Economic Development Officer (EDO) is expected to stimulate investment and job creation in the community, but in a practical sense, the EDO is a facilitator who can bring people together to make things happen.

The local economy is made up of firms that serve customers outside the municipality and as such they draw money into the market and expand the local economy. Such firms include manufacturing and agriculture. Other businesses serve the local community and redistribute money within the local economy. Examples include the retail and service sector.

The key to economic growth is that investments, sales and revenue from external sources exceed payments made to sources outside the local economy. Our economic development strategy should consider each industry in the local economy from a strategic perspective. If our goal is expansion of jobs and wealth, we will want to stimulate the fast growing sectors and take advantage of the community's natural competitive advantages to attract new business. However, if our goal is diversification of the local economy, we will want to fill the gaps on the economic structure of the community by nurturing under-represented business sectors to round out the local economy. Most economic development professionals operate on multiple levels as it is important to have a plan that is diversified. Economic diversification leaves an economy less vulnerable to those factors over which we have no control, such as interest rates, the business cycle, trade policy and exchange rates, market swings, rising gasoline prices, 9/11, SARS, BSE, etc.

The role of the municipality in economic development should be that of an 'enabler'. Government intervention is a logical and accepted role for municipalities and is absolutely necessary to "make things happen". This allows the community to *build the capacity* to engage in business development as opposed to actually engaging in business development, which is more appropriately left to the private sector. The municipality is responsible for public works functions such as infrastructure (water and sewage capability), roads/road maintenance, lighting and recreational facilities. The Town also leads and implements, in partnership with Bruce County, the by-law system within the municipality. In order for the local economy to flourish it also needs a strong social service structure, access to health services and high-speed internet capability. It is in these areas that the Town can play a leadership role. Many of the enabling or capacity building initiatives do not represent direct economic development, however, without the appropriate infrastructure and support system, economic development, business activity, and job creation cannot occur. Therefore, the initiatives and activities in this document reflect the underlying viewpoint that the municipality is largely an enabler and facilitator. This does not preclude the Town's involvement in actively supporting, and nurturing business development.

The first step in the enabling/capacity building process is the preparation of a reliable up-to-date Community Profile. A new Community Profile for the Town has been prepared by **urbanMetrics inc.** and will be posted on the Town's website (Nov, 2005). The Community Profile is a comprehensive document that provides relevant data in a highly accessible and readable format with reliable consistent information for potential investors, staff, Councillors and the general public.

### **Analysis/Investment Readiness**

The results of the competitive assessment suggests that the Town is in a relatively good position to grow and prosper over the next decade. A complete report will be provided under separate cover. The analysis carried out by **urbanMetrics inc.** revealed that:

- there is a strong rate of population growth relative to the region as a whole (for the purposes of the competitive assessment, the economic region is defined as the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region. The Region is comprised of Perth County, Huron County, Bruce County and Grey County)
- the proportion of the Town's population that holds a trade certificate or non-university diploma is higher than the Economic Region suggesting that the Town may have some success in developing and attracting business investment that requires skilled and semi skilled labour
- the Town has a comparatively high concentration of labour within the Mining, Oil and Gas extraction; Accommodation and Food service; and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- that the following industry sectors were seen as '*driving*' the local economy:
  - **Wood Industries** – in particular sawmills, planing and shingle mills, sash door and other millwork, wooden box and pallet industries and furniture and fixtures industries;
  - **Construction Industries** – in particular building, developing and general construction, and residential building and development; and
  - **Trade and Contracting Industries** – in particular site work.

In positioning the Town for improved prosperity, there are some key issues that must also be considered:

- The current age structure suggests that the Town may face a shortage of labour in the short term as the aging of the workforce coincides with a very small immigration of people aged 20-24 years;
- Local businesses are experiencing ongoing difficulties associated with recruiting employees for available employment;
- The Town has not planned for industrial development. No industrial parks or designated employment lands exist and there is the perception that stringent planning restrictions have reduced the opportunities for industrial growth in the area;
- The Town's website should be improved in a way that promotes economic development and tourism on a regional basis.

As a result of the competitive advantage analysis, the data indicates that the Agricultural & Related Service Industries and the Mining, Quarrying & Oil Well Industries are "evolving" in the community. This means that these industries are lagging in provincial sector relative growth but leading in local sector growth. What is interesting is that these industry sectors have been selected as areas of development in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. See below the quarry sector and the

agricultural processing plant initiative that will be undertaken by the Grey Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership.

## **Business Attraction and Investment**

### **Goals**

- attraction of new businesses to the municipality
- diversification within existing businesses
- business development seminars

Business attraction is the most visible of all economic development activity. It often consumes most of the operating budget in the development of brochures, exhibits, advertising promotion and web-site development, however, for a small, rural community, the pursuit of business attraction, poses many challenges.

The PC, laptop and more importantly the internet, have changed the way we do business. Research indicates that the relationship between the EDO and potential investors is largely reliant on the use of the internet. A high percentage of U.S. firms routinely use the internet to gather information and short list communities in their site selection search. It is safe to assume that the Canadian environment is no different. Potential clients want and demand instant service of a high quality and sophistication. Potential investors look for data on sites and buildings, workforce information, taxation, cost of doing business and demographics. Investment decisions are based on factors such as proximity to customers and suppliers; labour force availability and cost; available land or buildings; business operating cost, transportation infrastructure, utilities cost and availability. Other soft factors include community receptivity; quality of investor servicing and quality of life. Most communities in Ontario have web sites dedicated to economic development information with the community profile as the key information piece.

While we have a 'state of the art' Community Profile, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's ability to attract investment is limited in that we are not geographically located on major transportation corridors, do not have universal access to high speed internet capacity throughout the Town and currently we have a finite amount of water and sewage capacity. It is clear from the community consultations that only planned, sustainable development is acceptable.

The Town's geography, i.e. size and the fact that it is made up of a number of small, but distinctive communities is another challenge. It would be useful to develop an overall strategy that would see the different areas of the town designated for specific types of development.

Economic development does not happen in a vacuum. Apart from what the Town decides for economic development, it is important to integrate Public Works into the budgeting process of an economic development strategy. This strategy should have clear goals and objectives for 1-5 years out. Economic development initiatives need to be supported by Council and built into Public Works budgets as appropriate.

## **Industrial Development**

Given the limitations of geography, transportation corridors and limited water and sewage capacity there are a number of successful industrial firms located near and around the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. Research tells us that a major predictor of where a firm will locate is the home district of the CEO. Firms such as EPH Tools and Machining, SPI Industries Inc., Shouldice Designer Stone and Caframo Co. Ltd. bear this out. It is very likely that industrial development in the Town will be 'home grown'.

While the Town of South Bruce Peninsula has a state of the art Community Profile and significant amenities, we are not in the position to compete in the market to attract major industrial firms. However, that does not mean that we should 'do nothing'. Over the long term, and as an enabler, the Town should consider an industrial development strategy that would see the purchase of 'employment lands' in existing designated areas. These lands may be designed as an industrial park to support small and or light industry and incubator projects. These lands could be leased for light industrial purposes or the Town may consider a strategy similar to that developed by North Bay in which they sold industrial lots for \$1.00 in order to attract investment. This type of initiative is an example of the enabling effect the Town can have on industrial investment. Without a designated area for industrial development there is little incentive for industrial investment in the Town.

The EDO can and should work more closely with the real estate sector to identify industrial sites, however, marketing properties other than those owned by the Town is best left to the real estate sector.

## **Downtown Revitalization**

Research indicates that downtowns have gone through significant economic changes in recent decades. As a result of shifts in shopping and purchasing patterns, retailing has declined in many downtowns. The decline is largely the result of price-conscious consumers who tended to shop in the malls and big-box retail outlets. In many cases other traditional downtown functions such as government administration and financial institutions have moved, either to the edge of town or to another town as part of amalgamation. However, the good news is, that as the population ages, attitudes are changing and factors other than price come into play. Downtowns are more than just a place to shop. They often have architectural heritage, infrastructure, public utilities, parks and are in prime waterfront locations. The downtown represents the community's image and this image significantly impacts visitors, investors and local citizens.

Downtown revitalization is a high priority for many communities, but with very mixed results. Over the decades downtown revitalization has taken many forms, with fix-up, paint-up schemes, urban renewal, beautification, theming, main street approach, strategic planning approach and building civic capacity approach. Issues and strategies for revitalizing the downtown areas of communities have different complexities depending on size, location, and population make-up. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula has additional issues related to community identity as a result of amalgamation. As described in the 'Town Hall' meetings, we are a "ship of Towns", meaning we have more than one 'downtown' in our geographic make-up. However, that does not mean we should dismiss plans for beautification or not consider theming approaches. If done properly, they can work very well.

During the course of the 'town-hall' meetings initiated by Council early in 2005, downtown revitalization in various forms was brought up by many of the participants, with Wiarton being the focus of the discussions. Downtown renewal is one of those activities that has very high infrastructure costs (born by taxpayers) with economic gains coming in the longer term. The benefit of this type of investment activity is only realized with new commercial business activity and increased construction ultimately leading to job creation and increased sales.

The Wiarton BIA and the South Bruce Peninsula Chamber of Commerce have also been working to make improvements to downtown Wiarton. Perhaps this is an opportune time to consider partnering with the South Bruce Peninsula Chamber/BIA and the Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce in a long range plan for renewal of downtown Wiarton and the Sauble Beach area. An overall plan (5 years) with goals and objectives and a budget (within Public Works Department) that can be realized each year would allow an appropriate planning framework and have more chance for receiving funding from provincial sources. Projects of this magnitude have far reaching implications and involve the community and all levels of municipal and provincial government. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing have a program that can kick start this type of initiative. It is known as *First Impressions*. *First Impressions* is a structured community exchange program that partners communities with similar geography to explore the *First impression* a community conveys to visitors, tourists, potential investors and new residents. It offers a fresh perspective on the community's appearance, services and infrastructure and helps communities learn about their strengths and shortcomings. Other government programs provide funding through partnership arrangements and this can reduce the financial commitment required by the Town, while still being supportive and involved and enabling economic activity. The Rural Economic Development (RED) program is designed specifically for this purpose and in fact, improved signage, in the context of a long range downtown redevelopment plan was the recommendation that came out of the "Town Hall" meetings coordinated by Council early in 2005.

In the summer of 2005, Bruce County initiated a Tourism Oriented Signage Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to define the eligibility, use, design and authority for signage throughout the County. With tourism the major industry and the natural landscape one of the major attractions, protection of the landscape is a priority and will be dealt with as part of the signage, especially given that the tourism industry throughout the County continues to grow. Due to the large number of natural attractions the signage strategy will incorporate eligibility criteria for Commercial Tourism Operators, Non-Profit Paid Attractions/Operators as well as Public Services/Facilities and Non-Paid Attractions and Emergency Services. Guidelines will also be outlined for signage for private and leased property, gateways to the County of Bruce and all municipalities. Consistency is critical in a branding strategy and the signage strategy will include ideas and criteria that the eight municipalities within the County can and should adopt. The County hopes to enhance the experiences of the traveling and local public by creating a consistent, countywide branding initiative. It is important that the Town work closely with the County in the implementation of this initiative. Working with the County avoids duplication and allows us to be a real partner with input while another jurisdiction takes the lead. This project is particularly important as signage was the one initiative that the "Town Hall" meetings identified for action.

## **Waterfront Development**

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is blessed with more than 500 kilometers of shoreline on the waters of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Aside from Sauble Beach and Wiarton, waterfront development largely means cottage and residential development either individually or a developer's residential survey.

Sauble Beach with 11 kilometers of sandy beach has been named as one of the best 10 beaches in Canada by MacLeans Magazine and more recently has been named as a Blue Flag Candidate beach. The Blue Flag program is administered by the Foundation for Environmental Education based in Denmark. The International Blue Flag program certifies beaches against specific criteria related to water quality, environmental management, safety and services and environmental education. This particular initiative is supported by the activity of the Friends of Sauble Beach. It is expected that in 2006, Sauble Beach will be flying the Blue Flag. However, further commercial development at Sauble Beach cannot take place without major infrastructure development. Water and sewage are required for any significant new development to take place.

Warton is home to Bluewater Park. This is the primary public recreation location in the Town with playgrounds, ballpark, tennis courts, boat launch, swimming pool and campground. The area also has an active privately owned Marina that services the boating community. Bluewater Park is an area that is prime for waterfront development as this area has great potential for commercial and residential development. However, any development in the Park should be considered in the context of downtown revitalization. Over the years Service Clubs have undertaken projects to improve park conditions. The Corporation should consider working with the Service Clubs and the Chamber to develop a long term strategic plan (5 to 10 years) with goals, resources and a public works budget to meet those goals set out for each year. Given the 'natural retreat' branding and the community focus and spirit in the municipality, any plans for the park and waterfront development should always consider and maintain public spaces for public use and recreational activity.

## **Residential Development**

In March 2005, Bruce County completed a Housing Study for the County. The purpose of the study was to develop a comprehensive community strategy to deal with affordable housing issues throughout Bruce County. While the data gathered pertains to the entire County, there are important trends that are useful for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula to consider.

- The population of Bruce County is aging steadily and the number of seniors is increasing throughout the area and yet little new housing is geared to meet the range of needs.
- Research indicates that over 95% of all new housing coming onto the market is single detached dwelling suitable for large families, but the analysis shows that household sizes are declining and that one or two person households now comprise the majority of households in Bruce County. In the Town of South Bruce Peninsula virtually all of the building permits (for dwellings) issued in 2003 were for single detached dwellings.
- There is a need for more affordable housing as there are a large number of households with incomes below \$30,000.
- Wiarton alone represents 20% of the people in the County on a waiting list for housing.

- There are other issues such as the need for emergency and transitional housing, supportive housing, and a need to improve the condition of the housing stock.

The County report identifies specific strategies to meet the housing needs of the County, with local municipalities playing a significant role. These issues have a significant impact on the social, health and recreational support services provided by the Town and the County. The report recommends that the County hire an Affordable Housing Coordinator to research and advise on the strategies identified in the report. Once this position is staffed, the EDO should liaise with the Coordinator to identify issues specific to the Town of South Bruce Peninsula and monitor the progress of the strategy in meeting the identified housing needs.

It is also recognized that the Town is a destination for retirees as many 'cottagers' are planning to retire here. This population will create a demand for different/additional recreational services, transportation and health services. As well, this population brings a wealth of experience and talent to the community. These are all important issues to remember as the Town identifies new properties for residential development.

### **Agriculture Initiatives**

Acting on an initiative taken by the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture, Bruce County and the Federation, along with a Bruce County commodity group initiated the *Building Bruce* project. This is a long term project with two phases: Building the Community Capacity Development Plan (a public participation process designed to generate project ideas) and Implementing the Community Development Capacity Development Plan (narrow down the suggestions to 2 or 3 for the development of business plans). Two topics, education and alternative energy were decided on for further investigation. The business plans developed for these two areas are strategy based as opposed to individual business proposals. The business plans focus on the steps required to allow the farm community to make decisions on adopting and implementing these projects over the next 2 to 5 years. The business plans call for establishing local community groups of champions to pursue specific ventures within each of these two areas. The plans underscore the importance of local community capacity to undertake these initiatives. Currently, two committees are being established to champion both business areas with membership from the County's farming community. These committees will be responsible for exploring the opportunities identified in the business plans and they will also begin the process of letting the whole agricultural community in Bruce County know when and how they can become involved. The full report is available on the website:

[www.brucecounty.on.ca](http://www.brucecounty.on.ca)

The Key Informant group identified and rated projects, ultimately narrowing down 83 potential projects to their top 10. Among the top 10 projects was that of agricultural processing plants. Largely as the result of a successful initiative undertaken in Chatham-Kent and due to interest expressed by potential developers, staff in the provincial Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) suggested to the Grey Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership that they initiate a similar project. In the late summer of 2005 both Grey County and Bruce County agreed to support this project with a contribution of \$7,500 from each County with OMAFRA subsidizing it with a contribution of \$15,000 (total project \$30,000.). It is also interesting to note that the food processing industry has been identified as an 'evolving' industry in our municipality in the competitive analysis. The objective of the

project is to develop business plans for specific food processing and food-related suppliers in the Grey-Bruce region and identify barriers and opportunities for retention, expansion and new investment activities. The Grey-Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership (GBREDP) is the lead and will be responsible for managing the consultant's contract. Bruce County is acting as the banker for the project and local economic development professionals will provide assistance as required. Day to day Project Management will be led by the Working Committee of the GBREDP. It is anticipated that the project will begin early in 2006. The advantage of this project is that it was initiated at the suggestion of OMAFRA as their staff are in the field, dealing with prospective investors and OMAFRA staff saw the need for such business plans in Grey and Bruce. OMAFRA will provide the on-going staff support in implementing the business plans once the plans are completed. The business plans will also be available to interested parties in Grey and Bruce.

### **Tourism**

The role of tourism in the municipality cannot be over-estimated. The area has many natural attributes and is a popular tourist destination. Tourism development is the one constant that emerged during the consultations. Tourism is one of our major strengths; it is a significant growth industry. The development of tourism activity and product in the area can stimulate the economy by expanding jobs and wealth. The caution with a tourism only focus is that tourism jobs normally do not provide a living annual wage. The season is short, weather dependent, and the industry is notorious for low paying jobs. While it is an important industry to our economy, we cannot and should not rely solely on tourism as an economic development strategy.

The Bruce Peninsula Tourism Association (BPTA) has identified 14 Core Demand Generators and is in the process of completing a product development analysis for each core demand generator. (see Appendix V). This will be a useful source of information and can be used in the development of a marketing plan for the Town.

The Bruce County Tourism department is well resourced, actively promotes the area and develops new product. The municipality cannot and should not compete with the County in this activity. The municipality can build on the skills and expertise that resides within the County and should look for ways to partner with them on initiatives related specifically to the area such as the development of a multi-use trail that will go from Wiarton to Hope Bay.

The County has a well developed network for marketing and promoting the area, while the municipality has the role of developing and maintaining the infrastructure and services. It is important to build on the County's branding identity as 'Ontario's Natural Retreat'. The municipality can and should continue to engage in product promotion such as facilitating events like Sandfest, Winterfest, the Wiarton Willie Festival and the Purple Valley Maple Syrup Festival, the free-ride bike park and continue to support other events in the Town such as the Rotary Fair, the Agricultural Fair and other service and sports club events. The Town can do this through direct contributions, advertising initiatives and by providing support for these events through the Public Works Department.

The Town is host to one of the best beaches in Ontario with 11 kilometers of sandy beach, and many attractions. The beach was voted the number one beach in Ontario (Toronto Star) in 2002 and in 2004 was named one of the top 10 beaches in Canada (MacLean's Magazine). In the summer of 2005, Sauble Beach was designated as a

Blue Flag Candidate beach. This is an international award and if Sauble is qualified for Blue Flag certification it means that they have met 27 specific criteria on water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety and services. Partners in this process have been the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, the Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Sauble Beach, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Trillium Foundation. With events such as Sandfest, Winterfest, and facilities and attractions such as golf, beach volleyball, Sauble Falls Provincial Park, the Rankin River Canoe route, Sauble Speedway and Sauble Beach Amusements, visitors are able to enjoy the area through a wide variety of accommodations such as motels, hotels, cottages, and campgrounds.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula does not have a widespread cultural industry. However, the Town does have a strong sense of history and rich historical roots. The community values the people and the historical entities that make up this rich history. The Artist's Co-Op, which has a wonderful variety of diverse art products, individual studios and the annual Studio Tour are the primary cultural entities in the Town. Theatre, museums, art galleries and other cultural activity seem to reside largely outside the parameters of the Town. It is important to note that the Town is situated between two First Nation Reserves, on the north east by Chippewas of Nawash First Nation and the south west by the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation. There is significant interest in Aboriginal Culture and we may want to consider developing a partnership, at the staff level, to explore a pilot project that would see the development of Aboriginal tourism product.

The municipality has one of the best beaches in Ontario, an airport with enviable infrastructure, 500 kilometers of pristine shoreline, great hiking, and biking trails and yet the one entity that defines the area, to the general public, is Wiarton Willie. Willie is an albino groundhog that has the reputation of predicting the coming of spring. The popularity of Willie is unprecedented, tens of thousands log onto his website, approximately 500 people come out cold and early in the morning to witness his prediction. Radio, television and the press descend on the town of Wiarton and Willie's prediction is captured by most of the major media in Canada. Wiarton Willie is the one thing nobody else has. He is the one thing that makes the Town of South Bruce Peninsula unique, other municipalities lust for such a phenomenon, and yet, many residents are ambivalent. The Festival has become the largest winter festival in the County and brings in much needed tourist activity in the middle of winter. Willie is trademarked, Willie is celebrated, Willie is visited by tourists in the summer and while the Wiarton Willie Festival will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in February of 2006, with all of the publicity, the Festival is not universally endorsed by the residents, nor is it self-sufficient and the controversy lingers. There are concerns about who should produce and sell Willie product; there are concerns regarding too much focus and too many resources for a groundhog. Many residents do not like being associated with a groundhog, believing it to be demeaning. Given this wide variety of opinion on the benefits of Wiarton Willie, the real gains that the Wiarton Willie phenomenon could reap have not been fully realized.

The Town has been supporting the activity of the Wiarton Willie Festival Committee for many years, and in fact, so much so that it is almost impossible to determine where the Town's responsibilities end and the Committee's begin. More recently funding for the Festival activities have been rolled into Sauble's Winterfest to create the Mid Winter Festival. Currently Winterfest is completely run by the Sauble Chamber with the promotion being subsidized by the Town. Since both Festivals run on consecutive

weekends it is relatively straightforward to join the two activities in one promotional advertising campaign.

The Wiarthon Willie Festival Committee on the other hand is chaired by Town staff, has representation from the Town Council on the committee as well as representation from a service club (Lions), the South Bruce Peninsula Chamber/BIA, the Propeller Club and the community at large.

Whether or not there is universal support for Wiarthon Willie and the notion of an albino groundhog defining the identity of the Town, it is clear that this phenomenon will not "go away". Every February 2<sup>nd</sup> the media will come, people will want to get a 'birthday card', tens of thousand of people will continue to log onto the website. During the summer, thousands will visit Willie in his home and many more will come for prognostication morning and the festival. The time is ripe to take advantage of this, milk it for all its worth! Willie has an international reputation. We can and need to build on that reputation to make Wiarthon a destination of choice in winter and summer. This notion of having an icon and developing a lure around that icon is supported by a lot of research and practice in the US. There are a multitude of instances where this type of marketing has worked, and worked very effectively. This style of marketing could also work for Sauble Beach

Given some of the challenges the Town has had in the promotion of Wiarthon Willie, we may want to consider developing an partnership with the South Bruce Chamber of Commerce/BIA, the Wiarthon Willie Festival Committee and the Lion's Club to work out an arrangement to manage the Festival and Wiarthon Willie that will meet the needs of the Town (protection of trademark) and the concerns of the residents while at the same time develop the Wiarthon Willie concept to its full potential for the benefit of the Town and its residents. In order for this to work, the Town will need to provide resources to assist with core funding for the Festival operations.

It is important to separate the phenomenon known as Wiarthon Willie from the Festival. Willie is a year round resource, while the Festival is an annual event that takes place at the most weather dependant time of the year. We need to work out a strategy that will allow us to capitalize on Willie the other eleven months of the year. More importantly, to fully realize the Wiarthon Willie potential, the Town, through its leadership, has to embrace the Wiarthon Willie concept, totally, with great conviction and without hesitation. Wiarthon Willie is a great marketing tool and we need to build on the wonder of Wiarthon Willie to draw people to the community.

### **Quarries**

There are a number of active quarries operating within the Town boundaries. Some are family owned and operated firms while others are publicly owned corporations listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. The product from these quarries is first rate and has been the subject of many newspaper articles. The stone is used to enhance landscaping features and for decorative and building construction. The natural limestone is ideal for patios, walkways, steps, driveways, fireplaces hearths and mantels. Limestone is a versatile stone used by homeowners, contractors, architects and stone yards. Limestone from the Adair Quarry in Hope Bay was used in the building of the Canadian Embassy in Washington USA as well as many other structures including the "Willie Emerging" statue in Bluewater Park. Many of the quarries have been in operation in the area for more than 50 years and as such are active in the community. Quarry owners support minor sports, Wiarthon Willie activities, fundraising

for the MRI campaign and work with the local school board in using the quarries as an outdoor classroom. This activity is viewed as a mixed blessing by the residents. Most of the quarries are situated north of Wiarton and trucks carrying the stone have to travel through the main street of Wiarton to carry their product to southern markets. As well, residents are concerned about the dust created with the mining and cutting of the stone, while still others express concerns that once a quarry is no longer useful it becomes a blight on the geography of the land given that all operations employ open pit mining techniques. In terms of employment, when positioned against the County and the Province, the mining industry in South Bruce Peninsula employs a higher percentage of the total labour force and the quarry sector was identified in the competitive analysis as an 'evolving' industry. The quarries in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula have a wide variety of stone. This stone leaves the municipality largely in a raw, unfinished state. Some finishing is done, but we could do much better in terms of revenue generation, cottage industry development, jobs and skills development if more product left the Municipality in a value added state. Various interest groups have invited quarry owners to take part in these discussions but to date the quarry owners have not expressed an interest in being involved. Generally quarry owners believe this job could be more cost effective if carried out by individual tradesmen/small shop owners. In consideration of the above, we should develop a focused campaign that will interest the private sector/entrepreneur, encourage training programs and investment in this type of value added enterprise. The EDO can work with other partners to develop a strategy that would identify potential business interests, set up a series of individual meetings with those interests and discuss the issues, the possibilities and the business potential.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

- contacts with potential developers and real estate companies
- partnerships developed with Bruce County Tourism
- partnerships developed with both Chambers of Commerce/BIA's
- grants applications completed
- short to long term (1-5 years) plan in place for downtown and waterfront development
- community profile current and on web site
- Management of the Wiarton Willie Festival Committee devolved to an appropriate structure
- plan for the purchase of employment lands
- value added business investment
- Town is able to meet an investment ready test

### **Business Retention and Expansion**

#### **Goals**

- welcoming business environment
- new business development
- business expansion
- excellent customer service reputation
- ongoing business training/professional development
- easy access to the range of financing options

Studies indicate that business retention and expansion is the most effective of all economic development programs. Existing businesses will generate 40% - 90% of

new jobs in the community. Developing business and creating jobs are critical to the health and vitality of any community. Research tells us that economic growth is mostly generated by existing companies. It is less costly to retain an existing job than to attract a new businesses or jobs. Building relationships with the business community through a structured and systematic approach can lead to quick economic development wins as well as more effective economic development planning strategies. Taking care of existing businesses reduces economic leakage and increases local direct employment. (the quarry sector is a prime example). There is the perception, generally felt by the business community, that businesses are barely surviving. Therefore, any initiatives related to assisting the business sector would be not only helpful but would go a long way to instill confidence in the business community.

In 2001, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) along with many other partners completed the development of the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program for Ontario. The program is designed to assist rural communities within Ontario by identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses within their businesses. The process provides information with which to build stronger business communities by addressing the reported opportunities and the identified issues. BR+E is a community-based, volunteer driven economic development tool designed to encourage the growth and stability of local businesses.

Early in 2004, a BR+E project was initiated by Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation for the Bruce CFDC catchment area, which includes Bruce County, the City of Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs and Meaford. A typical BR+E program involves the development, completion and analysis of an in-depth survey designed for the businesses in the community. Due to the large geographic area in the Bruce CFDC study, the businesses had the option of completing the questionnaire on-line. Out of 2,200 businesses who expressed an interest in participating, the response rate was 249, which is just over 10%. While disappointing, by market standards, 4-6% is considered successful. Sectors not represented in the responses include Agriculture, Manufacturing, Natural Resources/Forestry and Mining industries. Respondents are assured of confidentiality and as such it is not possible to focus on businesses in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. Respondents raised issues specific to their business (Red Flag Issues) and these issues will be addressed on an individual basis by Bruce CFDC. As a result of this process, a number of common Red Flag issues emerged:

- Lack of profitability
- Loss or change of customer base
- Health and environmental regulations
- Inadequate facilities (poor condition)
- Distance to markets and inputs
- Expansion limitations
- Seasonality

The Bruce CFDC BR+E Report makes eight (8) recommendations which reflect common themes and major issues identified through the survey responses.

1. Business & Telecommunications: To promote and extend the use of telecommunications in business, facilitate a working partnership between telephone company (companies) and business support organizations to address telecommunications business application needs. This may include:
  - Development of introductory business telecommunication packages,
  - Profile local success stories and telecommunications benefits,
  - Offering e-commerce workshops,

- E-business help-line or other initiatives to promote and accelerate use of telecommunications tools to maximize business and market opportunities,
  - Integrate business telecommunications resource, contacts and local successes on business organization and ISP websites.
2. Business Management Skills & Business Planning: Work with financial institutions, Chambers/BIA's and other business and economic development partners to:
    - Work toward providing a series of business planning & management workshops of particular interest to existing businesses and businesses looking to expand.
  3. Accessibility to natural gas: Assist municipalities without access to natural gas to research issues and requirements necessary to negotiate access to natural gas with providers. Assistance may be provided by those having successfully negotiated natural gas lines to their communities in the past several years (Walkerton, Saugeen Shores and Goderich).
  4. Financing: Develop a reference sheet of financial institutions, municipal contacts and government programs active in helping small businesses expand. Provide this reference sheet to lenders as well as business and economic development agencies that can promote and cross-market these local resources.
  5. New Markets/Customers: To address the concerns expressed related to marketing, finding new markets and new customers, work with Chambers of Commerce/BIA's and businesses to:
    - Explore creative local cross-marketing and distribution efforts between and among businesses
    - Develop and make available distributor contracts in southern Ontario by product type, including related process and costs.
  6. Customer Service: Promote and foster positive customer service culture by working with the School Board to incorporate customer service into school programming, starting with business courses.
  7. Super Host: Work with business and economic development partners to sponsor Super Host training.
  8. Email Notification of Support: To explore with government offices and delivery agents for government programs, the potential to implement a direct local business e-mail notification process of funding or training programs (e.g. summer student program, apprenticeship updates). With the approval of businesses, the new Bruce CFDC e-mail listing of over 2,000 could be provided for this purpose.

Business retention and expansion should be a key economic development initiative for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. Business retention and expansion also builds on other initiatives such as small business development and labour market development. The activity speaks to the importance of relationship building and allows the EDO to be proactive with businesses in the community. Many of the recommendations of this report can and should be implemented locally in partnership with the Chambers of Commerce/BIA's and the Small Business Enterprise Centre. Some of the recommendations may not be relevant to our specific area and some recommendations can be implemented by the Bruce CFDC. The BR+E survey offered respondents an opportunity to comment on their local community and Bruce CFDC will forward the specific comments to municipal officials and the Chambers of Commerce and/or BIA's for action at the local level.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

- Business planning and management workshops delivered
- Number of visits made to businesses by the EDO
- Super Host training delivered
- EDO, Small Business Enterprise Centers and Chambers of Commerce/BIA's develop partnership to deal effectively with business issues and concerns
- Identify new businesses and develop a 'welcome' program
- Increase in the number of business in the area
- Increase in the number of jobs in the area

### **New Business Start-ups and Small Business Development**

#### **Goals:**

##### Overall:

- to assist with the successful development of small business ventures
- to increase entrepreneurship activity in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula
- to offer business support conveniently located to Peninsula residents

##### Office Specific:

- increase the number of inquiries/consultations undertaken within the municipality
- liaise with both Chambers of Commerce/BIA by partnering on workshops and holding on-going communication to specifically target the needs of existing businesses
- liaise with the TSBP Economic Development Officer to create a higher profile for the Small Business Enterprise Centre by partnering on marketing efforts and the general operation of the office so that there are no service gaps

Entrepreneurial activity is one of the keys to successful growth for the region. The development of small enterprises creates jobs for the area. Successful ventures create additional, greater income levels for the population and a stronger local economy. The remoteness of the area from important industrial infrastructure makes the creation of small local businesses a priority for economic development action. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula wants to both encourage entrepreneurial activity and help in the support and counselling that fragile start-ups require and existing businesses need to expand and grow.

The TSBP's job is to work with agencies that help businesses access government programs, assist with financial considerations and find agencies that can provide them with the tools they need to be successful. The Saugeen Shores Business Enterprise Centre, which operates under a program model through the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, undertakes this kind of activity. Partners already established with the Business Enterprise Centre are the Town of Saugeen Shores and the County of Bruce.

Centre staff provide a range of services to assist entrepreneurs at all stages of business development. The Saugeen Shores Business Enterprise Centre provides these services throughout Bruce County, including the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation and the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation. Centre staff work closely with other Business Enterprise offices located in Owen Sound and Seaforth.

In 2004, the Saugeen Shores Business Enterprise Centre entered into a partnership with the Town of South Bruce Peninsula to operate a satellite office in Wiarton. This was a new idea and very much experimental. The initial location was the Ross Whicher Centre which already houses the library, Bruce County Planning and Tourism. Initially, 2 days a week were set aside for consultations, limited activity reduced the days to 1 every other week. In an effort to increase activity, the office was later moved to the Town Administration building. It is hoped that the new location on street level and a more direct connection with Town services will be more effective.

The first year of operation in the satellite office was only moderately successful. Approximately 40 business consultations were undertaken.

In order to make this partnership more successful the Town of South Bruce Peninsula should establish an operating Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Small Business Enterprise Centre that address; specific days and hours of operation; targets for consultations; business registrations and start-ups; seminars held; and a regular (quarterly) reporting mechanism that will allow TSBP to measure outputs and the effectiveness of those outputs. In order to address the gap in service, (i.e. days when Centre staff are not in the TSBP) the MoU should outline a process for referring potential clients and define the relationship between Centre staff and staff in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. The MoU should outline the reporting and liaison relationship with the TSBP. This is an essential community/business activity and a service that is not and cannot be provided by the EDO. The expertise provided by this activity is very business specific as opposed to the larger concept of economic development.

The TSBP ought to encourage the Small Business Enterprise Centre to work more closely with the Chambers of Commerce/BIA in the municipality. The Chambers/BIA would be able to identify business needs and are an excellent focal point for business start-ups and business development. The relationship is reciprocal and both organizations, as well as the Town could benefit from working together. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula could encourage and facilitate this relationship. With the cooperation of the Chambers of Commerce/BIA the Small Business Enterprise Centre could plan and hold business seminars that would be relevant and useful to the businesses in the Town as well as budding entrepreneurs. The Small Business Enterprise Centre needs to advertise and promote their services more effectively. One avenue for this is weekly or bi-weekly articles in the Echo and the Sauble Bulletin, another is organizing an Open House morning once or twice a year for local businesses.

#### **Key Performance Indicators**

- the number of new business start-ups
- the number of jobs created
- semi-annual meeting with the Chambers
- number of seminars held and attendees
- evaluation of Memorandum of Understanding (effectiveness, days/hours of operation, relationship between staff, reporting mechanism, client referrals)
- marketing plan developed and implemented

## **Labour Market Development and Training**

### **Goals**

- Work with School boards and the Grey Bruce Huron Perth Georgian Triangle (GBHPGT) Training Board to implement appropriate initiatives recommended by the report *Bruce Grey Skills Inventory: Present and Future*

Early in 2005 the Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth Georgian Triangle (BGHPGT) Training Board in partnership with The University of Guelph produced the report *Bruce Grey Skills Inventory: Present and Future*. This is a comprehensive report with input from employees, employers and high schools. See the report for methodology, detailed findings and conclusions. The report made eleven (11) recommendations. Many of these recommendations suggest working with school boards, local employers, learning networks in areas such as management training; communicating the range of job opportunities in the area; identifying occupations in demand; supporting partnerships that allow for labour market experience via co-operative placements, career fairs, mentoring, job shadowing and industry tours; raising computer skill levels for high school students and current labour force participants; investing in adult education; recruiting efforts should accentuate the intangible qualities of living in the Bruce-Grey region; more co-ordination of research and programs; forming partnerships and targeting those industries/companies that are engaged in education and training upgrading activities.

Given the shortage of labour in the skilled trades, the fact that those trades are 'driving' the economy in the Town and the potential for opportunities in the quarry sector, the EDO should work with the Bluewater District School Board, the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board and the GBHPGT Training Board to initiate activity/public education programs that would promote interest in those trades/businesses within the Municipality.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

- network in place that will effectively identify and communicate range of job opportunities in the area and jobs in demand
- management training programs established in various industries and occupations
- co-op placements in the area increased
- career fairs, mentoring programs and industry tours implemented

### **Business Practices**

#### **Goal**

- Town staff to serve as Champions of the community
- to reduce the red-tape required by potential investors
- be a role model for business to buy locally

It is not enough to have an "open for business" policy/attitude, one also needs to have a process and policy that facilitates work with developers/investors to help and assist them through the complicated maze of multi-levels of by-laws and official plans.

In working with a potential investor to the area, it has become increasingly apparent that our by-laws could be more user friendly. The role of the Economic Development

Officer has to be one of facilitation to guide the developer through the planning process. TSBP should consider a review of the by-laws in order to make them more user friendly for investors and business people in the area. It is possible to have the by-laws accessible through a computer program. As the by-laws are being amalgamated into one set of zoning by-laws, that is the time to review the by-laws using plain language. As well, they could be organized in such a manner as to make them easier to access by subject. As it stands now, the by-laws are known to a few staff members and interpreted by them. If the by-laws were organized in such a way as to make them easily accessible and written in plain language, they would be accessible to all staff and the public alike. We can develop better linkages between the Land Use Planning staff and the EDO. Through this co-operation, we would be able to identify trends and work together to streamline the processes. This is a significant initiative, however, it is finite in nature and would pay off over time for both the Town and the potential investors. The project could be undertaken through an HRSDC job creation project.

As the Town reviews the Official Plan, we should ensure that the Official Plan encourages and allows industrial and commercial growth and identifies appropriate locations for different types of growth. See section on Industrial development.

The Corporation may want to consider a policy with respect to small purchases, (under \$3,000) that is outside the tender process and the Request for Proposal process. If the Town were to develop a statement of principle to 'buy locally, within the context of getting the best value for the dollar' we would not only demonstrate our commitment to the businesses in the community but we would also set an example for other residents in the community.

As well the Town should consider developing consistent messaging that staff and council can use when speaking about Town issues in the public realm. Potential investors first impression is key to their investment decisions. When they are in the public realm, staff represent the Town, whether or not they support the issues, the message should be positive and consistent. We may want to consider developing a protocol for messaging and provide training to staff to ensure they understand their responsibilities to the corporation.

#### **Key Performance Indicators**

- by-laws consolidated into one set for the whole Town
- by-laws accessible and easy to interpret
- "buy local" policy in place
- Communication protocol developed and staff trained

### **Marketing and Communications**

#### **Goals**

- to develop a multi-year marketing plan for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula

Traditional marketing techniques usually involve the development of promotional publications, videos, DVDs, trade show exhibits, direct mail campaigns, and more recently, website development. All of these options are costly, and usually take up a significant portion of the economic development budget. However, research indicates that marketing is most effective when the EDO works directly with the business

community. Effective marketing programs involve developing a relationship with the business community. This works very well for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, given that we are a relatively small, rural community. The notion of developing relationships fits very well with the follow-on recommendations from the BR+E report and the focus of developing partnerships to assist with economic development initiatives and activities.

Having noted the above, it does not preclude the need for a comprehensive marketing plan to promote the Town. A marketing strategy that includes the whole Town is one of those overarching activities that serves an enabling function. Some of the strategies we would include in the Marketing Plan are:

- a multi-media/multi-year strategy for marketing the community within the area and marketing outside the Grey/Bruce area. We may want to consider a funding application thorough International Trade Canada, the Community Investment Support Program (CISP) to help subsidize this initiative. This is the same program that helped fund our Community Profile with 50% dollars.
- Linking with the County to ensure that there is no duplication and to ensure common branding themes and utilization of their distribution network where appropriate.
- A publication that serves as a corporate identity piece. This should be a publication that showcases the Town and may have a shelf-life of more than one year. The document can be used to hand out at trade shows, brochure swaps be included in local marketing initiatives, distributed at conferences and other corporate events as well as be available at the tourist outlets and local festivals and events in the area. This piece along with the Community Profile could be distributed at a variety of venues.
- Given that the internet is a major focus for site selection, the Town should consider developing a specific section on the website that focuses on economic development initiatives and is linked to the Chambers of Commerce/BIA web sites, the Grey Bruce Real Estate Board with MLS, etc. As well as having the full Community Profile available on the website, this section can highlight specific features in the Community Profile. The site could highlight features that are not easily accessible from other sources, such as availability of employment lands and buildings for industrial or commercial purposes, and local taxation. We may want to look at some of the best practices in website development to design an economic development section that suits the needs of potential investors and developers, within the parameters of our own development philosophy and budget limitations.
- Continue to keep our community profile current on the [www.2ontario.com](http://www.2ontario.com) website and continue to use the website to list investment properties
- Other partners produce publications for mass distribution and we could be more aggressive in what material we might want to include in those publications and insist on knowing what their distribution networks are in order to determine the efficacy of the publication. As well, it will be important that our Tourist Information Centres monitor and record, when possible, what it was

that drew visitors to the area. This is the only method, other than direct surveys, that we are able to use to find out what drew people to the area and as such will assist us in evaluation all of our marketing strategies.

- Willie is a famous icon and the branding of “Wiarnton Willie Country” can and should be more consistent and more widely adopted. The Wiarnton Willie Mascot is a wonderful means of promoting the Town and we could be more assertive in determining where and how often the Mascot appears. One of the challenges is finding an appropriate person(s) to wear the costume. It is important that the person wearing the costume have the right training and attitude in order to present the best image of the Town. It may be the time to reconsider our approach to the Mascot. As well, we should consider the ‘look’ of the Mascot and the Mascot’s Escort. There is a plan to approach the Service Clubs and Chambers/BIA to consider a contribution that would help subsidize the design and purchase of a new Mascot suit. This plan will be put into motion in the Fall of 2005. Now may be the time to consider a higher profile for the Mascot Escort. Instead of simply having a person to walk with, guide and protect the Mascot, we should consider the Escort as an essential compliment to the Mascot and have the Escort dressed in the traditional white tuxedo.
- Another branding icon that we will want to extol is *Sunny the Sauble Seagull, The Dune Dude with Attitude*. The Sauble Beach Chamber have developed a new image for Sunny and launched the image in June 2005. The Sunny image and the prediction of 92 continuous days of summer is consistent with Willie predicting the timing of spring and could be parleyed into positioning South Bruce Peninsula as **the** prognosticating capital. The plan to have Service Clubs contribute to the design and purchase of a new Mascot suit for Willie will be extended to include Sunny as well.
- Since one of the Town goals is the preservation of the environment, we may want to consider a plan to market the Town with a ‘green strategy’. This would build on the dark skies initiative. We already are designated a natural retreat, we could expand this to include an environmental focus with standards that would ultimately give the Town an international status similar to the Blue Flag program or ISO type status.
- Also, the Town may want to consider a radio campaign, through the local stations, that would span a year and include many of the significant events that take place in the Town. This will allow the Town to be specific and focused in our advertising while getting our events in the public arena. It would also and to assist and enable those organizations who stage events in order to attract tourists to our area. We can build on a “business friendly, can do” attitude and extol the great quality of life. Currently we have a radio commercial running on CFOS and the Beach 98. This is a single commercial that will run at least 300 times on each station over the course of a year. With an annual campaign, we could theme the ads to focus on events, places of interest, businesses, shopping experiences, bike trails, walking tours, etc. A campaign of this nature would give continuous exposure to the Town by focusing on specific themes.

#### **Key Performance Indicators**

- Funding application prepared
- Multi-year marketing plan developed and implementation began

- Investment properties listed on the [www.2ontario.com](http://www.2ontario.com) website
- Promotional publication completed
- Planned and aggressive approach to Willie 'sightings'
- Year round radio campaign developed

## **The Power of Partnerships**

Partnerships are the key to any successful economic development strategy. However, partnerships are even more important given that we are a small rural community with limited resources. Working in a partnership environment gives real meaning to the expression that "the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts." Partnerships offer additional expertise, experience, ingenuity, creativity, as well, partners are often in the forefront of the community and can be a vehicle for understanding the concerns of the residents and for garnering public support for initiatives.

This community offers rich and varied partnership opportunities and this economic development plan suggests and supports many partnerships that are helpful and productive for the municipality. Partnerships allow us to avoid duplication, maximize resources by leveraging projects, marketing activity and develop mutual relationships that support economic development initiatives. A rich partnership network allows the municipality to focus on what we can do while our partners focus on other activity. This allows us to be involved in many areas and as such, accomplish more for our municipality than we would otherwise.

Also, it is worthy to note that many of the partners/initiatives have overlapping goals. The Small Business Enterprise Centre, the Business Retention and Expansion study and the Labour Market Training and Development Initiative all point to the need for more business training and seminars. It is much more effective to co-operate and have one organization deliver these seminars rather than all three. Some of the more important partners for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula include:

Bruce County Planning and Economic Development Department  
 Bruce Peninsula Tourism Association  
 Chambers of Commerce/BIA  
 Service Clubs  
 Wiarton Willie Festival Committee  
 Wiarton-Keppel Joint Airport Services Board  
 Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation  
 Bruce Peninsula Community Development Committee, sub-committee Small Business/Industry/Agriculture/Tourism (SBIAT)  
 Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth and Georgian Triangle (BGHPGT) Training Board  
 Saugeen Shores Small Business Enterprise Centre  
 Grey Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership  
 Bruce Grey Festival Network  
 Regional Tourism Marketing Partners (RTMP)  
 Federal and Provincial Government Departments/Ministries  
 Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO)

## **Bruce County Planning and Economic Development Department**

Working with the County will assist and complement many of the economic development activities and initiatives within the Town. Often the County drives initiatives that we can benefit from, such as their tourism initiatives, the agricultural

project, the housing study and the new signage initiative. The Town can utilize the County's branding concept of "natural retreat" to build on the marketing strategy and when and where appropriate, the Town can utilize the County's distribution network. The County is a natural ally and partner for many initiatives. Their Planning and Tourism office has skilled staff and resources devoted to planning and tourism initiatives and we can, and should, use that network to build and develop our own tourism products and refine our planning and by-law processes. We should develop better linkages between the Land Use Planning staff and the EDO. Through this co-operation we would be able to identify trends and work together to streamline the processes.

### **Bruce Peninsula Tourism Association**

The Bruce Peninsula Tourism Association (BPTA) is made up of a wide representation of tourist operators, municipalities and Chambers of Commerce/BIA in the Peninsula. Their main focus is to network and work together on the myriad of issues related to tourism on the Peninsula and to produce an annual tourism publication (guidebook) that is distributed across tourist offices in Ontario and at U.S. entry points into Canada. This group has grown and matured over the years and is in a constant state of change and reinvention. The discussion around amalgamating the four Chambers of Commerce (see below) includes absorbing BPTA into that amalgamation. This would be a very positive step, but only if the amalgamated organization was appropriately funded and staffed.

The guidebook is a document that the Town has advertised in for many years and should continue to support. As well, local tourist operators advertise in the guidebook. There is a wide variety of opinion on how useful this guidebook is for tourists. The one thing that the BPTA needs to do is provide statistics on how many and where the guidebook is distributed. This is important data and will be useful in assessing the efficacy of the publication and in being able to sell advertising. Since the BPTA is a network of tourist operators and product developers, it is an important network to link with and be informed on tourism initiatives and issues on the Peninsula.

### **Chambers of Commerce/BIA**

The Chambers of Commerce/BIA are a natural ally and partner to the EDO. A healthy relationship with the Chambers/BIA also serves as a consultation tool as the Chambers/BIA have a good pulse on the business community needs and wants. A healthy viable Chamber/BIA can go a long way towards fostering a healthy business climate. Many Chambers take on very active business and tourist product development activity. Closer to home, the Sauble Beach Chamber has taken on the responsibility for operating the Sauble Beach Tourist Information Office in 2005. Despite some initial start-up challenges, this is a good first step in an active partnership with the Town and the devolution of activity (i.e. operating the Tourist Information Office) that is more in line with other municipalities. The Sauble Beach Chamber, in addition to member to member services, stages annual festivals such as Sandfest and Winterfest in co-operation with the Town. As well they work co-operatively with the Friends of Sauble Beach to support the Blue flag program and monitor and care for the ecology of the beach and preservation of the dunes. The Sauble Chamber has initiated a streetscape plan, they host Business Achievement Awards at the annual Spring Dinner meeting and they are currently looking for sponsorship/partnerships to assist with a portable performance facility.

The South Bruce Peninsula Chamber/BIA has taken an active role with respect to downtown of Wiarton. The Chamber/BIA has been instrumental in the development of the Parkette and the installation of the Town clock. More recently the Chamber/BIA has been working actively with the Town in a streetscaping initiative that will eventually see the installation of new light standards that conform to the dark skies proclamation and which will enhance the aesthetics of Wiarton's "mainstreet". These are excellent examples of partnership initiatives that can work for the interest of the Town, the residents and the business community. It is also a good example of an 'enabling' economic development initiative that illustrates the importance of including the Public Works Department into the equation. More recently the Chamber/BIA has expressed an interest in co-operating more actively in the Wiarton Willie Festival and, beginning in the Fall of 2005, have invited the EDO to attend Chamber/BIA meetings.

For the past year, the four Chambers (Sauble Beach, South Bruce Peninsula, Central and Tobermory) have been discussing the merits of amalgamating. These discussions will continue in the north. At present the Tobermory Chamber and the Central Chamber are close to an agreement on amalgamation. Discussions of this nature are encouraging as amalgamation would make the Chamber a strong entity with an improved position in the promotion of the Peninsula with a more co-ordinated approach.

The South Bruce Peninsula Chamber is synonymous with the Wiarton BIA. All members of the BIA are automatically members of the Chamber. Currently the South Bruce Peninsula Chamber is not able to operate a full Chamber program for its members. Like many organizations the members experience 'burn-out' and as one member stated, businesses in Wiarton is in a "survival mode". It is difficult to motivate members to more general activity when they believe they need to focus their attention and efforts towards maintaining and growing their own business.

Many of the other initiatives such as Business Retention and Expansion, Small Business Development and Labour Market Training are areas in which a healthy Chamber can contribute. An active/positive working relationship between the EDO and the Chamber(s)/BIA is a very constructive step towards better and more business development and promotion of the area. Partnership development that strengthens the Chambers/BIA is good for business development and retention.

### **Service Clubs**

The many service clubs in the area serve a very helpful and productive role in the community. The Town has an excellent working relationship with the service clubs. Many of them play a major role in sponsoring big events and projects that assist with recreation/tourist development facilities and activities. The Town should continue to nurture this relationship as these initiatives are significant to the culture, vibrancy and community development of the Town.

### **Wiarion Willie Festival Committee**

While it is extremely important for the Town to continue to support the Wiarion Willie Festival Committee, now is the time to consider a new relationship, with the Chamber, the Lions Club and or the Committee itself.

### **Wiarion-Keppel Joint Airport Service Board**

The Wiarion-Keppel District Airport has an active economic development plan and is seeking an investor interested in developing recreational facilities such as a resort,

golf course, airpark and light industrial enterprises for the extensive airport lands. A market survey has been conducted to determine interest in the airpark. A major interest is the development of a tourist air charter business which has the ability to enhance our growing tourism market. Water, sewer, hydro and natural gas services border the airport for access. It is important the Town's EDO liaise with the Airport Services Board and stay on top of the Airport's economic development initiatives.

### **Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation**

The Bruce CFDC is a significant organization that serves the Bruce/Grey community. The Bruce CFD can provide loans for small start-up ventures, they undertake large initiatives that benefit the whole community, such as BR+E study, Grey-Bruce Your Way, Bruceinvest.com, business directories, etc. The Bruce CFDC has undertaken strategic planning exercises for specific communities, they assist with grant applications, and co-ordinate community activity such as the Bruce Peninsula Community Development Committee. The Bruce CFDC is an important partner in economic development as they play a leadership role in advancing economic development issues and initiatives in the area.

There is an opportunity for the Town to further develop and assist new business start-ups by actively participating on the Board of the Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation. Small business start-up is a large portion of Bruce CFDC mandate and currently we have little or no direct involvement in their operation. If the municipality had a member on their Board of Directors we could provide an annual review of their plans and objectives.

### **Bruce Peninsula Community Development Committee, sub-committee Small Business/Industry/Agriculture/Tourism (SBIAT)**

SBIAT was formed as a result of a Strategic Planning exercise initiated by Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation (Bruce CFDC) in 2002. The committee evolved from several smaller committees and their mandate was to take action on issues set out in the Strategic Plan. This committee has had challenges in identifying initiatives and has found that the relationship with Bruce CFDC to be cumbersome. Currently the SBIAT Committee is discussing future direction and action. A number of action items are on the table, one of which is to put their efforts and support into the larger economic development initiative the *Grey Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership*. This group has support from all 19 municipalities, it has an action plan, it has project funding from OMAFRA and Bruce and Grey counties and it has momentum. There is clear direction of what they will be doing in the next year and the partnership is very focused. Another suggestion is to engage the two municipalities (Town of South Bruce Peninsula and Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula) in a visioning exercise that would look to the future five to ten years from now. The Committee believes that the Peninsula is a unique geographic entity and the development challenges should be different from those adopted in more southern communities.

### **Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth and Georgian Triangle (BGHPGT) Training Board**

The BGHPGT Training Board's role is to forge partnerships and alliances for labour force training and development. Their mandate is to make jobs and skills training assessable, effective and responsive to local needs. This organization provides valuable research on training and development issues for the area and is an important player in the economic development environment, as witnessed by the Skills Inventory

Study and the current labour market information they produce. See the section on Labour Market Development and Training.

### **Saugeen Shores Small Business Enterprise Centre**

The Business Enterprise Centre is a partner with a direct relationship to the growth and health of businesses in the Town and the Town is an active funding partner in this Enterprise Centre. See the section on New Business Start-ups and Small Business Development.

### **Grey Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership**

This initiative began when various economic development entities met in March 2004, to discuss the issues. The idea for a regional economic development initiative was fostered out of those discussions. Since that time a small working group made up of representatives of municipalities, Community Futures Development Corporations, economic development committees, Chambers of Commerce and other special interest groups worked to develop a regional strategy for Grey and Bruce. Over the course of the past year the initiative established: a data base of economic development research by municipalities and regional organizations; developed an action plan for the next 12 months; solicited support and representations from 19 municipalities, initiated 3 economic development seminars; improved communications between and among partners by issuing media releases and making presentations at all 19 municipalities. As well, the group developed and received funding from OMAFRA, Bruce County and Grey County for a regional initiative – the Regional Food Sector Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to develop a business case for specific food processing and food related suppliers in Grey and Bruce counties. These business plans will be available to all the partners to use as appropriate, but as importantly, staff in OMAFRA recognized a need for this type of information in their dealings with developers in the industry.

This is an important partnership in which the municipality should stay involved. Currently the EDO is represented on the Working Group and the Advisory Committee. It is advisable that the Town of South Bruce Peninsula continue to be represented on these two committees. Representation at this level ensures that the Town of South Bruce Peninsula is an active player. We get a profile in media releases, hold meetings in the Town and have influence in the agenda and the policy direction of the initiative. A major gain is the current Food Sector Project that has been approved. This initiative is one of the recommendations that came out of the *Building Bruce* project and the food processing industry has been identified as an 'evolving' industry in the Municipality, which means it is a leading industry in our area. This is an excellent example of working together to avoid duplication and to leverage resources.

### **Bruce Grey Festival Network**

The Bruce Grey Festival Network is a loose network of organizations that work together to share resources, expertise and professional development with respect to staging the various festivals in the area. Currently they have partnered with the Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce to apply for a grant from the Trillium Foundation to assist each organization with part-time staff. The status of this application is still under consideration. The Bruce Grey Festival Network is an excellent link for festival organizers in the area and there should be more representation on the Network from festival organizers in the municipality. The Network also serves as a support organization for festival organizers in the area and is very useful as a networking and resource tool.

### **Regional Tourism Marketing Partners (RTMP)**

This is a group of tourism operators and the Tourist Co-ordinators of Grey and Bruce County and Owen Sound, who come together to share experiences and professional development. It is an excellent network to stay connected with as it allows one to stay on top of tourism issues, programs and current policy development.

### **Federal and Provincial Government Departments/Ministries**

Both federal departments and provincial ministries offer a wide range of programs, services, and resources. They often have useful web sites and working with staff from government departments, ministries and agencies is a valuable resource as it provides insight into funding programs and is a valuable source for information and services (facilitation). All of this is available without additional cost.

### **Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO)**

This is a professional association of economic developers and is an excellent network source for professional development, best practices in the field, latest policy development and new programs. EDCO produces a monthly newsletter and an annual conference that is very valuable for the economic development professional.

### **Conclusion**

As you can see from the above, economic development includes a wide variety of activity working on a number of different fronts. As stated in the section "Overview of Economic Development", the Municipality's role is that of an enabler, assisting the community to develop the capacity to grow. Key areas not mentioned in the document include the need for quality health care and physician services. The Doctor Search Committee is an important capacity building initiative. As well it is necessary to have a strong social service and recreation programs. Universal, high speed internet access is also an important element of economic development and the Municipality should champion efforts in this area. These types of services are absolutely essential to attract and maintain a healthy business/industrial/residential sector and are essential components of an economic development plan. However, no matter how progressive we are, or how much promotion we engage in, unless and until we are able to provide water and sewage to the major centres of the Town, our economic growth will always be stilted.

Much of what has been outlined in this plan is not new to the community and in some aspects we are very proactive. However, we can always do more and we must not allow ourselves to become complacent or stagnant. The key is to develop an implementation strategy that is specific to our Municipality and one that will work for this community and to continually review its progress and make change where appropriate. The intent of this document is to speak to economic development for the whole municipality of the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. We need to ensure that we address all areas of the Town. In a municipality the size, of and with the resources of, South Bruce Peninsula, we cannot do everything and as such we need to determine what is key; what will give us the "biggest bang for the buck"; what may be left to a partnership to implement; what is best implemented over a one to five year strategy; what is best left to other sectors/administrations to implement.

### **Areas of Focus**

We have work to do before we can hang out the "Open for Business" shingle, but a well developed and a well supported Economic Development Plan will give us the

necessary kick start and prepare us as an investment ready community. Many activities listed in the areas of focus support the Town's Goals and Core Values\*: such as support and growth for a four season tourist economy; an infrastructure priority plan, preservation of the environment; communicate and link with citizens, and to foster economic growth:

- Continue the emphasis for water and sewage to Sauble Beach via Hepworth
- Focus on supporting existing business in the area through the Chambers/BIA, Small Business Enterprise Centre, Bruce CFDC\*
- Focus on those businesses that are seen as 'Evolving'. i.e. Agricultural & Related Service Industries and Mining, Quarrying\*
- Continue to support the Grey Bruce Regional Economic Development Partnership\*
- Develop a 1-5 year plan for downtown and waterfront development and an industrial development strategy\* that will see the purchase of employment lands
- Redefine the Town's role regarding Warton Willie
- Focus tourism initiatives on promotional activity
- Work with School Board and local employers to implement appropriate recommendations of the GBHPGT Training Board Report and address the possible shortage of labour in the Municipality\*
- Continue to work with Partners in order to ensure that the Town's interests are protected and that the Town is profiled
- Develop a communications plan for the Town that includes improvements to the web site to make it more business friendly\*

Economic Development is not a finite activity in itself, results do not come fast nor easily. The statistics are always changing, businesses come and go, the labour market fluctuates, aging trends impact on products and delivery, availability and cost of consumer product fluctuates. Disasters, tragedies, disease and pestilence impact on the market place and, in an economy that relies on tourism, the weather is a determining factor. Economic development is a continuous process that requires constant attention in an environment of continuous change.

## **Next Steps**

What is outlined above is the overall strategic direction of an economic development plan for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. The next step is to decide on the priorities for the next year and develop a work plan. The work plan will determine the goals we want to achieve; the length of time we need to achieve the goals (i.e. 1, 2, 5 year goals) and the budget required to achieve the goals. Inherent in the work plan will be the key performance indicators of those goals we want to achieve. Developing key performance indicators is a way of measuring the success of our plan. There is an expression: "*what gets measured, gets done*", and developing key performance indicators at the front end will go a long way in ensuring that we accomplish our goals. More importantly, for the economic development plan to have validity and a life of its own, the priorities need to be approved and accepted by the Council. An economic development plan **cannot** be the EDO's economic plan, it must have the buy-in from Council and staff to live beyond any one individual. In order to make this work, we need to work together.

The economic development work plan can become a key component of a performance contract with the EDO. It will set out the priorities, goals, timetable, and performance measures. The EDO performance contract should be monitored and evaluated on a semi-annual basis to ensure we are on track. There are bound to be glitches along the way, there will be timetables that we have no control over and there may be new developments that we want to pursue. A semi-annual evaluation will allow us to re-evaluate the work plan and take appropriate action. This process ensures buy-in from the stakeholders and Council.

The core research has been done, the community consultation is a continuous process, the priorities are Council's to determine, but it is clear, now is the time to take action, together.

## Resources

- "Municipalities-Are you ready Willing and Able?" Presentation by Mathew Fischer & Assoc. Inc. June 2005
- [www.ebelquarries.com](http://www.ebelquarries.com)
- Labour Market Bulletin, HRSDC, Owen Sound HRCC Management Area
- [www.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca)
- BUILDING BRUCE: Bruce Agricultural Community Capacity Development Project, December 2004: County of Bruce
- Bruce County Housing Study, March 2005: County of Bruce
- Tourism Oriented Signage Strategy: County of Bruce
- Bruce Grey Skills Inventory: Present and Future (BGHPGT Training Board and the University of Guelph)
- Business Retention and Expansion: Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation
- Town of South Bruce Peninsula Community Profile: urbanMetrics inc.
- Assessment of Competitive Positioning: urbanMetrics inc.
- Core Demand Generators: Marketing Review Committee, Bruce Peninsula Tourism Association