

# **Toward Prosperity**

## **Inverness County Roundtable (Southwest Margaree)**

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000

### **Infrastructure, consistency & investment:**

- Invest in infrastructure - roads and bridges need immediate government attention as infrastructure that will lead to economic development.
- Invest in community development - volunteers cannot continue to be downloaded upon. ie. Margaree Hatchery is a sustainable resource that encourages tourism and generates revenues but cannot get any help for stocking and hatchery programs.
- Development is not always from away – the document looks at attracting investment outside the province but there is a frustration locally because it seems government is more eager to help people from away and ends up risking money as a result.
- Invest in creating cottage industries to work with our raw products – wood, fish, agricultural products – instead of sending that raw product away for manufacturing. ie. furniture manufacturing can be done here, should be able to have University College of Cape Breton programs locally to provide training.
- Support producers - Government has to be more producer driven in all sectors and listen to those producers.
- Protect our investments - taxpayers are paying for people to take medical degrees and leave.
- Increase government efficiency i.e. let the Transportation department compete with the private sector instead of trashing the department.
- Provincial education department should be educating students on how the world works around them to create more awareness and more ability on how to live.

### **Look beyond Metro:**

- Political will is explained by the number of votes – we literally do not count. The school in Hammonds Plains had a multimillion-dollar investment and another new school on the way but meanwhile in Whycomagh, the school has fallen into decay. The number of voters equals what government will do for you. Real relationship exists between economic development and electorate size.
- Support initiatives outside the city. Halifax appears able to access funds that community groups cannot. Efforts to see a golf course proposal in Inverness get slow response yet volunteers with the project see million dollar developments in the city.

### **Work in Partnership**

- Support as a whole what turns out to be the prime economy and have all three levels of government working to get things done. Not happening in Margaree i.e. river designated as a Heritage River yet volunteers cannot access funding anywhere to get signs made stating that fact. Counterproductive to tourism – the prime economy.
- Inverness County just finished a plan for its development. Use that and work with Community Economic Development groups to achieve economic development here.
- Inverness County has a newsletter sent to every household. It is a vehicle for CED and could

be utilized much more from your office.

**Recognize arts and culture:**

- No funding or recognition for the contribution of arts and culture yet it has a major offering in Inverness County. The tourist trade is carried on the shoulders of underpaid, part-time women who are expected to be professionals but are not paid to be professionals. No sense of professionalism is recognized for those involved in culture: appears to be considered a frill instead of a business that people could be making a living at with some support.

**Ease off on business bureaucracy:**

- Hard to start up businesses with there is a dual economy out there to compete with. Cottage industries are not paying taxes, licensing fees. Level playing field and the wages would improve.
- \$ Taxation - Small operators face many restrictions. It does not seem worthwhile to set up as a year round industry if you pay less tax when you operate as a seasonal business. If province took a hard look at the whole tax situation it may be a way to address the regional inequality of operating business in rural vs. urban areas.
- \$ Offer tax breaks to help create jobs and development. Small industries should get breaks too just like Michelin and Sobeys can.
- \$ Support for businesses such as bookkeeping or marketing, you will know if a business is performing well and will have a current tab on it.

**Differentiate between Cape Breton and CBRM**

- \$ Document lumps rural Cape Breton with Cape Breton Regional Municipality. How has rural Cape Breton found its stride? No sign of this in Inverness County. Do serious case study on the county. Silicon Island – not our stride. We've got study after study after study. It's all around.
- \$ Mainland perception that Cape Breton Regional Municipality is Cape Breton means people mistakenly think all the money that goes into Cape Breton Regional Municipality benefits the island as a whole.