

TOWARD PROSPERITY
Lunenburg County Roundtable (Chester)

June 14, 2000

Notes:

Labour Market:

- C Canada in general has an anti-business climate. We must make an effort to change this.
- C Nova Scotia Community Colleges should offer more courses on entrepreneur development. These should also be a part of the high school curriculum.
- C We must develop better management skills. Mentors are an important part and should be developed.
- C We are doing a good job at educating our young people but they go elsewhere in Canada to find employment. We must stop this brain drain. It increases costs for Nova Scotia and there is no gain. We must change the mind-set that young people have to leave Nova Scotia by creating jobs here.
- C There must be a better correlation between education and the private sector. We must teach the kids what they need to know to fill emerging jobs.

Community Economic Development:

- C There is confusion in the general public about community development in general. Not sure about the relationship between the Department of Economic Development and the Regional Development Authorities (RDAs). More work is needed here to promote this relationship.
- C We are doing too many strategic plans lately. Are working on this government strategy now and the RDA is starting another strategy in September. There should be a way that one strategy can be used.
- C Government announcements on these programs must be made clearer. Many times the announcements are broad and when groups apply, the RDA must tell them that they do not qualify or that funding amounts have been cut back.
- C Many community groups are looking for money. Where will we go to help them when the Community Economic Development (CED) division cuts back all the funding? We question if it is the role of the taxpayer to provide grants to these groups. Many people are around to talk about CED, but there is no money available to fund strong projects.
- C The challenge is to partner with other agencies. There is no program money at present. The general public wants deficit reduction and debt reduction.
- C There is not the same awareness of CED that there is for health and education. There are not many people here tonight. If a school was closing or a hospital was facing cutbacks, there would be 100 people here. In several years things will be disappearing. We must create more awareness in the community about CED.
- C The RDAs are doing more of the work that CED used to do in the past. The CED division will focus more on export development, infrastructure development, marketing Nova Scotia, creating a brand name - more on what industry wants.

- C A critical success factor listed is to build our community partnerships. How can this be done with no money? Why do we have all the bodies talking CED and no money to invest in projects that could create economic benefits?
- C We need to improve communication and planning with RDAs as well as a renewed relationship with the federal government. Currently they have the money and we must take advantage of this.
- C If the CED division is walking away from smaller community projects, there is a concern that these will be downloaded to the municipalities. The problem is whether there will be any money to allow them to carry out these projects.
- C Very concerned about budget cuts as they relate to community economic development. How do you do community economic development without any money?

Business Climate:

- C Nova Scotia's small size is a competitive advantage in the global economy.
- C There is a concern that the Nova Scotia we have known is going to be lost in the next 10 years. Foreign money is coming in and purchasing all our land. The economy is changing. Foreign ownership will dictate what is going to happen in the future.
- C The RDA is closer to the community for decision-making purposes. The RDA must build on successes in the communities. Some good success stories are non-profit sector projects.
- C Economics is a social science - how to create wealth for oneself. One critical success factor is to have the ear of provincial cabinet ministers.

- C Various industry sectors have concerns that must be dealt with and senior cabinet people must listen to them.
- C Businesses must learn to do things for themselves. They must be more independent and initiate projects without government involvement. This would help them to mature by themselves.
- C Government is poor at running business. We must harness the resources of business.
- C We should work with the federal government to have pre-custom clearances at Halifax Airport. Smaller airports e.g. Yarmouth could be used to ship cargo by air.
- C A huge opportunity for economic growth in this area is to expand on the tourist business.
- C The cultural sector is underdeveloped, we should communicate more and better with the media.

- C Small business is the backbone of the Nova Scotia economy. Many people work several jobs just to survive. We must create ways to add as much value as possible to local products. Products still leave the province in a raw state.
- C Some products made in Nova Scotia are not supported by the province. We need a "buy Nova Scotia policy".
- C There was an attempt to do "one stop shopping" for business but it is not working. The provincial government will make a commitment while the federal government will not. We must change this. It can be done now with government restructuring. We should also have municipal people at the table for input on local bylaws.

- C In order to be competitive, government must give a quicker turnaround. Everyone involved in investment must be at the table at the same time - other provinces are already doing this.
- C Nova Scotia has a vibrant economy and a good tourism market. The Information Technology sector is growing and natural gas is being developed. Europeans are investing.
- C We must promote exports and establish new markets. We need to look at the service sector to create sustainable jobs.
- C Transportation links are poor in Nova Scotia. We need a regional transportation policy. Local air flights are too expensive.
- C The tourism industry is very important but many of the student jobs were cut this year from the Provincial Employment Program. How can we extend the tourism season when there is less money for visitor information centre staff?
- C We can be innovative in Nova Scotia, but in some things we cannot make a difference. There must be a level playing field.
- C Federal policy is difficult to change e.g. we need our subsidized freight rates to be competitive.