

Toward Prosperity Yarmouth County Roundtable

June 10, 2000

Q. What are the Key Assets in Yarmouth? Obstacles?

- < Fisheries
- < Forestry
- < Interest in staying in community (People 30+) (Younger crowd feels the need to move away)
- < Good place to raise children
- < Good geographic location (as long as we have transportation)
- < Tourism
- < Cultural diversity
- < Cheap property
- < NSCC / College de L'Acadie
- < Workforce - open to challenge, trainable, broad based
- < Natural Gateway (Harbour, international highway - Obstacle: need to dredge harbour)
- < Kind people
- < Geographic Beauty (Cape Forchu, Tusket Islands, Coastline)
- < Population (size of community)
- < Lifestyle - services centralized in town (community) - easy to get to them
- < Airport - MUST maintain, presently underutilized
- < Climate, temperate
- < Low crime rate
- < Bilingual School system
- < Personal Development Opportunities
- < Municipal Tax rates and cost of living - lower
- < Golf courses (Yarmouth, Pubnico, Shelburne, Clare, Digby) -18 hole and they all open earlier than any place in NS
- < Cost of Recreational Activities (lower than other parts of NS) Obstacle: can be costly for low income families
- < Eco-Tourism Opportunities
- < Improvement of water street
- < Diversity in Workforce
- < RDA effort to regionalize
- < Obstacle: improve highways, more passing lanes, fix roads..
- < Obstacle: improve parking access for tourists and ferry or proximity to waterfront, need more signage (parking)
- < Obstacle: low literacy rate
- < Obstacle: Fishery - bad image - need new development - lack of respect by financial institution

- < Obstacle: need to improve cleanliness in Yarmouth downtown area (Tourists - first impressions)
- < Obstacle: need to improve media on area - people have perception that Yarmouth is in the "Boonies"
- < Obstacle: new hospital complex - need staff
- < Obstacle: IT knowledge based - highly skilled workforce leaves area - IT fast links weak
- < Obstacle: Black Community - Employer - education (no opportunities, once trained they move away) - need awareness campaign
- < Obstacle: fishery - seasonal employment
- < Obstacle: Infrastructure - for knowledge industry - CRTC decision impacting on location of 911 centre

Q. What should government do to improve economic growth?

- < Craft industry - treated as business people
- < Highway Improvement Plan
- < Fisheries - ie. Aquaculture (CFA's have easier time finding money than do resident companies) - development on merit not on who is making submission
- < Change the nature of gov't assistance - more accountability - risk issues need to be considered - performance based
- < Federal / Provincial gov'ts compete with employers ie: EI comparable to wages employers offer
- < Occupancy taxes - significant and unwarranted increases
- < Agree that Economic growth is a provincial priority - equitable distribution of funds
- < Difficult to access statistical data (population, growth, projections, etc)
- < Gov't tends to talk to big players who more than likely migrate to urban areas.
- < Tourist - potential for growth, ie: added French Doer's & Dreamer's Guide (good)
- < Gov't should assess company size and try and match company needs for different communities

Q. What should Yarmouth do to improve Economic growth?

- < Negotiate with Universities - offer undergrad programs
- < Education opportunities
- < Proper foundation - focus on small businesses who need more support
- < Institutions do not have to be physically located in close proximity
- < Support fishery - planning, money, resources
- < Increase tourism activities to keep visitors longer

Q. How can we improve the Vision? The Principles?

- < Include Education - access to life-long learning opportunities
- < Include Social development, it is as important as Economic Development
- < Literacy Issues
- < Decentralize gov't services - don't put all Industries in Halifax - fair consideration in all

areas

Q. Other opportunities for partners?

- < Better ways of communicating with one another
- < Talk to our own people
- < Partnerships - need to talk to WVDA - smart communities opportunities for Yarmouth Co. - Need to "Piggy-back"
- < Lack of numerical data on community, ie: RDA - self-evaluation process due by Sept 1 includes:
 - Economic Dependency ratios
 - Assessments
 - Employment figures - participation rates
- < Tourism - least investment - equal focus - short season
- < Change marketing strategy
- < To get people to stay here we need a critical mass of attractions - support growth of attractions
- < Streamline - avoid duplication

Q. What Innovative things should government support in Yarmouth?

- < Any projects tied to seniors
- < Need Marine Resource centre - \$100,000,000 + value of fish landings in Yar Co. alone in 1998
- < Support Strengths in our community, i.e. fisheries (more support through DFO strategy), tourism, air cargo service
- < National Parks (seaside, shoreside)
- < International Students Program (250 expected this year) - continue to support
- < Opportunities in Oil & Gas - proven that we can have both - need to overcome negative perception and clashes with fisheries
- < Tourist - Sunday shopping & longer restaurant hours (would help improve tourist image and increase economic activity) - need to provide what tourists want
- < Yarmouth Casino Concept - specified times & target groups; i.e. only tourists or conventions

Q. How can we improve the Business Climate

- < faster connection to the Internet

Q. How do we prepare workers for the jobs to come?

- < Employability Skills
- < Young people do not have the skills to develop entrepreneurship & courses

Q. How can we increase exports? How can we replace imports?

- < Craft development
- < Shelburne - Example: Sandspit project with Cox Warehouse
- < Communicate with RDA to find solutions
- < Technology innovation centre - value-added products
- < Airport - exporting by air from Halifax - little secondary processing
- < Tariffs on product leaving unprocessed?
- < Student (export our learning techniques)
- < 98% of food being imported - new developments might help

Q. How to increase investment in NS? By Nova Scotians? By outsiders?

- < Community Bond Fund - Municipal Bonds
- < Make attractive investment products within the province
- < Cut "red-tape" reduce on streamline regulatory process
- < More use of Credit Unions - money stays locally - business financing

Q. How can we build or renew keys in NS infrastructure?

- < Airport MUST Stay
- < 3 phase wiring (power infrastructure - would help attract business)
- < Gasification
- < Roads, sewer, water
- < Ferries / commercial traffic
- < Volunteer Sector - recognition of volunteers (tax credit system)
- < Hospitals
- < Financial support for business - banks need to support local businesses - gov't needs to advocate on behalf of businesses

General Comments

- < Tourism Aspect: Welcoming - need signage
- < Unique Place
- < Bilingualism an asset
- < Professionalism (service to clients)
- < Accessibility - disabled, hearing impaired TTY line needed in public place
- < Celebrate our achievements (positive attitudes)