

Toward Prosperity

Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council Consultation

June 27th , 2000

Discussion

Housing Construction Issues:

- There will be a skill shortage in the building industry in the near future. We are frustrated by governments continued concentration on tourism and IT. Housing construction is a huge player, but it does not get recognition.
- Construction creates meaningful jobs. It is viable and it is not going anywhere. People are always going to need a place to live. We must encourage the industry for our youth.
- Education is important. Young people seem lost on trades training. We must pay solid attention to education.
- If there is a construction boom in Nova Scotia, we would not be ready for it. Shortage of skilled labour.
- Industry is not taken seriously in Nova Scotia. The housing industry in Nova Scotia is worth \$893 million.
- Can't lump housing and commercial construction together.

Underground Economy:

- Underground economy is a big problem in Nova Scotia. It costs Nova Scotia about \$110 million a year. There is a disincentive for workers to be honest. Government must stop going after reputable people and start concentrating on homeowners who ask for people to work on their house in the underground economy. 70% of underground housing economy is initiated by homeowner. Treat the consumer the same as the contractor.
- One way to help battle the underground economy is information. Inform people about liability, workers compensation and the Department of Labour.
- Encourage a licensing mechanism where it can be easily tracked who is building where.

Partnership:

- All departments must buy in to this process. Ex: Arizona - Government there welcome new companies with open arms. They guarantee meetings with management in government. The business environment in Nova Scotia is totally opposite.
- Department of Transportation and Public Works is not tuned in to economic development. They have archaic policies. We cannot implement old economy ideas in new economy.

Strategy:

- A long term strategy is extremely important. But it needs a recognition that things will change.
- Demographics show that Nova Scotians are getting older. We need investment into education.

Priority Issues:

- Need to follow up this current process. People are hesitant until they know there will be

follow up.

- There should be summit at provincial level with relevant sectors and departments to discuss issues.
- Leadership must come from the top.