



STRATEGIC PLAN

Submitted by:

LONG RANGE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

AUGUST 31, 2011



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DEAR READER:

The Long Range Regional Economic Development Board is the lead economic development association for Zone 9. We are committed to working with business associations, municipalities, local service districts, government agencies and businesses toward business recruitment, retention and expansion, as well as start ups for Zone 9.

As we work to fulfil our mandate we also have to keep in mind our funders requirements and community needs. This is often challenging and not a perfect system, but we manage to make it work through collaboration and comprise.

Our strategic direction for 2011-2014 is a result of ideas gathered from communities, business associations, many sector meetings, as well as one on one and public consultations. Numerous ideas were discussed and initiatives were chosen according to the need in the sector and the initiative criteria that we are guided by.

At the Long Range we know there are a variety of opportunities in our region for a more diversified economy; however, with the opportunities comes challenges. Our aim is to work with partners as well as new and existing entrepreneurs to overcome challenges to drive economic development.

We look forward to your comments and suggestions on our strategic direction for the next 3 years and look forward to working with community organizations, business agencies, stakeholders and our partners to make Zone 9 economically stronger.

Yours truly


Anne Hart, Chairperson
Long Range RED Board
encl.

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Economic Zone 9 services approximately 21,830 people (2006 census), 54 communities, over roughly 14,000 square kilometers that stretch from Gallants in the north, to Highlands in the south; the south coast communities from Burgeo to François, and the entire Port au Port Peninsula. The main service center for the region is Stephenville. The area has a diverse culture, influenced by the Mi'kmaq, French and American presence, as well as an abundance of natural resources. Utilizing the experiences of the people and the expertise in the resource sector is important as economic development moves forward.

The Long Range Regional Economic Development Board (LRREDB) is directed by a nine member board of directors with a primary focus on Agriculture / Agrifoods, Business Development and Tourism and Coastal Management. Although our Board and Staff resources are dedicated to those particular sectors, we continue to consult with industry players in the forestry, oil and gas and mining sectors. We find that the part we play in the development of the major resource sectors relates to the time schedule and drive of the major players. Nonetheless, we continue to keep abreast of industry developments so we can be prepared when the time is right to facilitate economic development.

The LRREDB is a community based organization and as such, is responsible to be informed about community and business activity and create economic development based on the needs of the community; with input from the community. This is a time consuming process but needed if we are to stay informed about community happenings. It is also vital to serving the community. Consultations on current issues come from individual get-togethers, community forums, organizational meetings, government departments input, municipality plans, funder requirements and document reviews. In the past year, the LRREDB reviewed all Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) and regional association documents within the zone for common goals and objectives. Aside from identifying common objectives the review provides insight into the direction of community sectors.

In Zone 9 Agriculture has been identified as an industry with tremendous potential. The LRREDB has committed to lead agriculture growth and work with stakeholders and government departments to develop opportunities and minimize obstacles that prevent or hinder development.

Tourism is a vital and increasingly important part of the regional and local economy. Successful initiatives attract more visitors and higher spending customers. The LRREDB is committed to developing tourism related products focusing on quality, sustainability and industry involvement to gain maximum economic benefit.

The Bay St. George and Port au Port area is believed to have a great deal of potential for mineral wealth, such as base metals, peat, sand/gravel, and industrial minerals. Two major exploratory drill sites have revealed large reserves of halite and potash. Exploration is optimistic within the Zone, and the future is believed to be bright.

As of April 2010, there were seven companies with oil and gas exploration rights over the Long Range region. These areas combine for four onshore exploration permits, totalling 111,494

hectares, one production lease, (Garden Hill South property, 15,875 hectares) as well as five offshore exploration licenses covering 595,335 hectares.

The exploration and development of our natural resources is a positive economic generator to the area. In developing these rich resources we have to be equally aware of, and address, the potential impacts and cumulative effects that various industries and other activities may have on one another, on resources, the environment and coastal communities. The goal is to facilitate development by providing knowledge and information regarding all resources and infrastructure in the area to all major players and to identify opportunity to diversify the region.

As we go forward over the next 3 years, we will work with our partners, supporters, business and industry to promote new types of business/products/services with an emphasis on identifying gaps in consumer needs. This Strategic Plan is fluid document that will be revisited yearly.

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2.0 Acronyms

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
AGM	Annual General Meeting
BIA	Business Improvement Association
BR & E	Business Retention and Expansion
BSGCOC	Bay St. George Chamber of Commerce
BSG/PAP MCSC	Bay St. George / Port au Port Marine and Coastal Steering Committee
CBDC	Community Business Development Corporation
CEN	Community Education Network
CNA	College of the North Atlantic
DFA	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
DTCR	Department of Tourism Culture and Recreation
EDC Stephenville	Economic Development Committee Stephenville
GMIST	Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism
HNL	Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador
HRLE	Human Resources, Labour and Employment
IBP	Integrated Business Plan
INTRD	Innovation Trade and Rural Development
LRREDB	Long Range Regional Economic Development Board
MMZC	Marine and Mountain Zone Corporation
MNL	Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
MUN	Memorial University of Newfoundland
NLFL	Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour
NLREDA	Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association
REDB	Regional Economic Development Board
RS	Rural Secretariat
SC	Service Canada
SWGC	Sir Wilfred Grenfell College
TSW	Tourism Southwest
WDMO	Western Destination Marketing Organization

3.0 BOARD STRUCTURE

Name	Position	Geographical Area	Sector Representation
Anne Hart	Chair	Aboriginal Representative	Business Development
Cynthia Downey	Vice Chair	Stephenville Crossing, Mattis Point, Gallants & Black Duck Siding	Education
Susan Fowlow	Secretary / Treasurer	Stephenville, Cold Brook, Noel's Pond & Gull Pond	Education Policy Procedure Committee
George Lee	Director	St. George's, St. Theresa's, Flat Bay & Barachois Brook	Tourism Member at Large- Executive
Randy Lieb	Director	Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River & François	
Catherine Fenwick	Director	French Culture Representative	
Nathan Dennis	Director	Port au Port Peninsula	Agriculture
Cator Best	Director	Port au Port East, Point au Mal, Fox Island River & Kippens	Policy Procedure Committee
Lloyd Harnum	Director	Bay St. George South, Fischells to Highlands	Coastal Management Policy Procedure Committee

4.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS:

Consultation is an ongoing process indeed to the point that the general public has made it clear that they would prefer our time being spent working on projects. We meet with people in all sub regions annually and in 2011 partnered with the Long Range Business Development Centre who used the opportunity to present their business plan, while we focused on direction for our strategic plan besides meetings where the general public was invited over the year. We met with local harbour authorities to discuss fisheries issues; we met with every farmer in our zone, as well as several people interested in becoming part of the industry. Mineral exploration is having a significant impact on our area and we consulted with the major players in this sector. We also consulted with those involved in the oil and gas sector in our zone. We also discussed the current economic climate in our zone and projections for the next 3 years with local bankers, real estate agents and investment councillors. We had discussions with various government agencies to gauge their response to some of the feedback we were getting from the public, our objective being to develop a plan that is reflective of the public as well as having the potential of support by the various government agencies who at the end of the day determine whether an initiative succeeds or fails.

5.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES - The Bay St. George/Port au Port Peninsula area has a diverse coastal and marine landscape that continues to shape the social, cultural and economic structure of the area. An area that first settled around coastal fisheries and agriculture continues to evolve with emerging interests in mining, oil and gas exploration, aquaculture and tourism. These industries provide an economic base for the area and are dependent on available coastal and marine resources.

This coastal area is also known for its fertile landscape, rich mineral beds, and marine sub-basins that provide potential for oil and gas deposits. As of April 2010, there were seven companies with exploration rights over the Long Range region, with exploration activity occurring in Shoal Point, Garden Hill and Bay St. George South. These areas combine for four onshore exploration permits, totalling 111,494 hectares, one production lease, (Garden Hill South property, 15,875 hectares) as well as five offshore exploration licenses covering 595,335 hectares. One of the long standing companies in our region is Vulcan Minerals Inc., which has drilled over 10 exploratory wells, both shallow and deep, over there 95,619 hectares of leased land in Bay St. George South, reporting seven positive oil and gas shows. Other companies include Canadian Imperial Venture Corp., which is working on 103,040 hectares, as well as Corridor Resources, which are working on 51,780 hectares. Both of these companies currently work offshore of the Port au Port Peninsula.

5.1 MARINE AND COASTAL

It is important to acknowledge the significance of all coastal and marine resources and the social, cultural and economic benefits they provide to the area. It is equally important to identify and address the potential impacts and cumulative effects various industries and other activities (increased shipping, storm surges, untreated wastewater, and aquatic invasive species) may have on one another, on resources, the environment and coastal communities. In recent years, we have become more aware of how climate change can impact our coastal infrastructure and communities.

Consultation:

The BSG / PAP MCSC is made up of representatives from DFO, DFA, LRREDB, CEN, youth, towns and industry players from tourism, fisheries, and mining. Over the past couple of years there have been more than 40 consultations with industry players and local residents. These consultations provide the basis for discussion on initiatives around the table at the BSG / PAP MCSC meetings. The BSG/ PAP MCSC sees the relationship between the protection and development resources. The collaboration between DFO, DFA, and industry toward marine and coastal economic development is a conscientious and well intentioned venture to protect future development and provide accurate up to date local confirmation to companies developing our resources around marine and coastal areas.

Goal 1: To Promote Economic Development around the use of coastal and marine areas.

i. Objective:

Identify business opportunity around coastal infrastructure.

Action:

- Gather data to provide new and up-to-date statistics on coastal infrastructure
- Analyze the data and provide recommendations
- Host a symposium, for municipalities, REDBs, and Development Associations on how to apply recommendations in communities

Timeline:

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

ii. Objective:

Identify business prospects.

Lead: LRREDB

Support: DFO, DFA, industry, MNL, BSG/PAP MSCS, EDC Stephenville

iii Objective:

Foster an integrated planning process by involving stakeholder groups and organizations in the coastal management process.

Action:

- Ensure industry stakeholders have a clear understanding of DFO and DFA mandates for coastal management
- Ensure industry players, municipalities and groups sit around the table

Timeline:

Year 1, 2, 3

Year 1, 2, 3

Lead: LRREDB

Support: BSG/PAP MCSC, DFO, DFA, EDC Stephenville, Triple Nine Resources, Emera NL,

5.2 AGRICULTURE

Zone 9 has a very diverse agriculture industry; there are approximately 20 agriculture sites in the Bay St. George/Port au Port region, giving it the largest sized farming area in Western Newfoundland. Many of these farms harvest traditional root crops, such as potatoes and carrots among other things. Recently, there have been new developments in the area, such as two cranberry fields, located in Cold Brook and Stephenville Crossing. These farms have plans already underway to expand their acreage, and are currently testing out the viability of the marketplace.

The dairy industry is significant in western Newfoundland. In 2009 the dairy industry employed 480 people in this area, with that number expected to rise to 560 in 2015. There are two dairy farms located in Zone 9, which includes New World Dairy Ltd. and White Cliff Farms. New World Dairy operates out of St. David's and boasts that it is the third largest dairy producer in Canada, having more than 1,200 head of cattle. White Cliff Farms operates out of Robinsons

The demographics of the region show that there will be opportunities for new farmers in the near future, as 77% of farmers are over the age of 45, with the average age being 55. Currently, local farmers are in the process of growing the industry further, with 21.7 million invested in farming equipment and infrastructure.

Consultation:

A committee made up of farmers, resource people from INTRD, MMZC, LRREDB and Department of Agriculture came together to create a plan to grow agriculture in Zones 9 & 10. The committee used the Agri Point study produced April 2009 as the basis for their strategy. In addition to committee discussions, many one on one consultations took place which gives the LRREDB a good grasp on the challenges and potential for agriculture in the region.

Goal 1: Expand the agriculture industry

i. Objective:

To work with farmers to identify opportunities that expands the industry.

Actions:

Carry out a pilot project to determine the best method to increase the cost of lamb effectively.

Timelines:

Year 1, 2, 3

Lead: Zones 9 & 10 (joint project)

Support: Department of Agriculture, ACOA, INTRD, Industry

ii. Objective:

To assist farmers to work cooperatively for cost sharing and avail of opportunities to expanding markets and cost sharing expenses.

Year 1, 2, 3

Lead: LLREDB

Support: Department of Agriculture, INTRD, MMZC

5.3 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

There are over 550 businesses that serve approximately 21,000 people in the Zone, with the highest business representation being held by the following sectors: retail; education; health care and social assistance; accommodations; and construction. Stephenville and the surrounding area have access to transportation infrastructure by air, sea and road.

These linkages include:

- Stephenville Airport;
- The Port of Stephenville (Port Harmon Authority Ltd.);
- The Trans Canada Highway (via Whites Road and Stephenville Crossing); and
- Marine Atlantic connection to North Sydney, Nova Scotia via Port aux Basques.

Collectively, this enables relatively easy connection to Stephenville and surrounding areas to the benefit of local industry.

Consultation

The WE Cormack Business Centre is a unique centre that provides business services from one central location. CBDC, INTRD, BSGCOC, EDC Stephenville, ACOA and the LRREDB work from the WE Cormack Centre this allows everyone the opportunity to communicate frequently. The central location provides a good site for hosting scheduled meetings, but more importantly the close proximity allows for easy consultation on a frequent basis.

In 2004 the LRREDB undertook the BR&E interviewing process and interviewed 101 businesses throughout the zone. Seven years later many of the issues that were identified then, still exist in the area and communications with other parts of the province indicates the same issues exist provincially as well. Challenges with business recruitment, retention and expansion often come from a small employment pool with many unskilled or under skilled workers, the ability to offer a higher wage, low customer service skills and under trained managers. In the next 3 years the LRREDB is committed to developing and maintaining a collaborative process with business associations and businesses to address some of these issues.

Goal 1: Advance Business Development

i. Objective:

Build strategic alliances and partnerships to advance business development.

Actions:

- Improve communication between the business development agencies and the business community Year 1, 2, 3
- Assess the obstacles to businesses development like transportation costs, and shared services Year 2, 3
- Organize Small Business Week activities throughout the region Year 1, 2, 3
- Carry out research to identify or reaffirm the needs of the business sector Year3

Timelines:

Lead: LRREDB

Support: ACOA, INTRD, CBDC, NLREDA, MNL, HRLE, SC, RS, NLFL, Department of Immigration, BIA, EDC Stephenville

ii. Objective:

To expand new business ventures

Actions:

- Assist or organize the Selling to the Public Sector: oil, gas/mining Year 2
- Develop a database of coastal infrastructure to facilitate a smoother process for obtaining permits for mining, oil & gas Year 1
- Identify structures that can be re-purposed Year 1
- Assist municipalities better identify economic opportunities Year 1, 2, 3

Timelines:

Lead: LRREDB

Support: BIA, BSGCOC, EDC Stephenville, INTRD, ACOA, DFO, DFA, industry BSG/PAP MCSC

5.4 TOURISM

Tourism has been steadily growing in Newfoundland and Labrador. The provincial statistics indicate the industry contributed \$226M toward the gross domestic product; exceeding both agriculture and forestry. The province set the direction for tourism in 2009 with the release of "An Uncommon Potential: A vision for Newfoundland and Labrador tourism". Five DMOs assist the province by providing marketing activity and strategic direction for the various regions. Southwest Newfoundland is guided by *Tourism Southwest*, a volunteer committee made up of industry players and resource people from the LRREDB, MMZC (economic zones 9 and 10 respectively), INTRD, WDMO and the DTCR.

The LRREDB plays a major role in tourism development in Zone 9. In addition to assisting individuals and groups in developing products for the region; the LRREDB is committed to building capacity in the tourism industry so that industry players become more knowledgeable, productive and competitive. Through consultations and partnerships the various tourism groups work together to build a stronger tourism industry.

Zone 9 is made up of four Tourism sub-regions that include: "The French Ancestor's Route," "Stephenville and Surrounding Area," "Three Rivers Scenic Drive," and "The Caribou Trail". A sample of things to do is available to visitors as one can see by the activities listed below.

French Ancestor's Route	Stephenville & Area	Three Rivers Scenic Drive	The Caribou Trail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le Boutte du Cap Park • Tour du Port au Port • French Bread Oven • Acadian Monument • Wave-cut Terraces • Bilingual Folk Festival • Our Lady of Mercy Church & Museum • International Peace Monument • Gravels Walking Trail • Port au Port Agricultural Fall Fair • Alpaca Farm • Lourdes Grotto • Cercle de Mémoires Musée • Kittiwake Colonies • Faults & Folds of West Bay Beach • Long Point – Artic Terns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petrified Forest • Blanche Brook • Walk A Ways Trail • Jewel of Newfoundland's Wetlands • Stephenville Theatre • Festival • The Cabox – Highest point on the island • Dinner Theatres • The Sharing Circle – Aboriginal Culture • Mi'Kmaq Museum • Powwow • Erin Mtn Trail • Black Bank Beach • US Air Force Pavilion • Discover St. George's Experiential package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backcountry ATV • Salmon Fishing • Sea Stacks • Robinson's Head Ramble • Robinson's Farmer's Market • Twig Furniture making • Christmas in July • Annual Pig Roast • Scenic Drive • Fishing Villages • Dairy Farm • Birdwatching • Art on the Rock – experiential pkg • A scenic loop drive • Skits and scoffs • Tourism Packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burgeo Museum • Rock Island Festival • Sand and Sea Festival • Step Back in Time – Communities unchanged • Kayak the Coast • Sand Dune Eco-System • Northwest Head Lighthouse • Ramea Heritage Centre • Windmills of Ramea • King George IV Ecological Reserve • Hike the Friar • Sand Banks Provincial Park

Consultation

The Long Range is quite involved in tourism and subsequently is in tune with the needs of the industry players in the area. The Long Range serves as a resource on Tourism Southwest since its inception and contributes in a wide variety of ways; such as administrative, financial, and staff time to develop and complete projects. In addition, the Long Range contributes to the planning, implementation and follow-through of Tourism Southwest's AGM. This annual gathering of tourism operators is fundamental to being aware of the industry needs from a southwest regional perspective. Over the past couple of years, the Long Range has strived to connect more with the provincial tourism associations and utilize their skills, connections and expertise. The Board is in contact, on a regular basis, with the western representative from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation; the Western Destination Marketing Organization; and Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. As a result of consultation and feedback from the industry the LLRED will engage in the following activities that will make the industry stronger.

Goal 1: To Increase Marketing Efforts

i. Objective:

Increase marketing efforts to showcase the products and/or services that will draw visitors to the region.

Actions:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Inform industry players of marketing opportunities through WDMO | Timeline:
Year 1, 2, 3 |
| • Add to the web presence through YouTube videos | Year 1, 2, 3 |
| • Increase signage | Year 2 |
| • Inform municipalities of regional activities | Year 1, 2, 3 |
| • Keep colleges abreast of the tourism product activities in the area | Year 1, 2, 3 |

Lead: LRREDB

Support: WDMO, HNL, DTCR, TSW, INTRD, ACOA, CNA

Goal 2: To Build Capacity and Collaboration

i. Objective:

Work with sub-regional tourism associations and other stakeholders to enhance the abilities of industry players which will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results.

Actions:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| • Ensure long-term viability of festivals especially the Feather and Folk Festival | Timeline:
Year 1, 2, 3 |
|--|----------------------------------|

- Assist with or be informed of sub-regional tourism plans Year 1, 2, 3
- Increase communication among tourism operators Year 1, 2, 3
- Encourage and provide opportunity for capacity building sessions Year 1, 2, 3
- Promote HNL, WDMO and TSW Year 1, 2, 3

Lead: LRREDB
Support: WDMO, HNL, DTCR, TSW, INTRD

Goal 3: To Increase Communication

i. Objective:

Heighten understanding of tourism products, training opportunities, trends and best practices taking place in tourism and to identify common interests and potential for mutual benefit among operators.

Actions:

- Create and/or maintain dialogue with sub-regional associations
- Share information with operators from HNL, WMO, DTCR, TSW

Timeline:

Year 1, 2, 3
 Year 1, 2, 3

Lead: LRREDB
Support: WDMO, HNL, DTCR, TSW, INTRD, GMIST

Goal 4: To Develop Tourism Products

i. Objective:

Increase the diversity and appeal of Zone 9 as a destination and improve the overall experience of the region.

Actions:

- Encourage packaging between operators
- Develop nature based tourism products
 - Geology
 - Birding
- Increase experiential tourism activities
- Build involvement in the Feather and Folk Festival
- Develop a product around the American presence

Timeline:

Year 1, 2, 3
 Year 2, 3
 Year 1,2
 Year 1, 2
 Year 1, 2, 3
 Year 2, 3

Lead: LRREDB
Support: WDMO, HNL, DTCR, TSW, INTRD, ACOA, CNA, MUN, SWGC, GMIST

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Long Range Regional Economic Development Board has developed this Strategic Plan as a living document. The Committees and Staff will inform the Board at monthly meetings as to the status of the initiative/activity. The evaluation / monitoring process is the responsibility of the Executive Committee who works with staff to keep the Board apprised of activities and make recommendations on changes that are necessary. The IBP and SEP is discussed on a regular basis with representatives of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, who provide support on an ongoing basis. When evaluating our plan we follow the following guidelines:

- Goals – are they being met? If not, why?
- Objective – is the objective still within reach?
- Time Frames – are time frames still relevant?
- Has the environment changed enough to warrant changing priorities?
- What affect will changing priorities have on integrity of the plan?
- Are all partners still engaged / supportive?
- Is the funding necessary and is successful completion still achievable?
- Are there emerging opportunities that provide more long term economic benefit to Zone 9?
- Does the initiative still reflect what the people asked us to do during our consultation process?