

FedNor Report to Northerners

FALL 2003

An Update on the Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario

In May 2003, I released two key documents — the *Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario* and the *Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario Youth*. Divided into four themes, the reports list more than 75 action items to help improve access to capital; access to a competitive and innovative business environment; access to infrastructure, including telecommunications; and access to quality of life through health, education, and life-long learning for all Northerners.

Both action plans were the result of discussions during regional consultations and the Northern Ontario Citizen Engagement Forum and Youth Symposium hosted by FedNor in November 2002 in Sault Ste. Marie.

I am pleased to present this update on what has been achieved to date in Northern Ontario. A more comprehensive report card can be found at fednor.ic.gc.ca or by calling 1 877 333-6673.

The Honourable Andy Mitchell

Secretary of State
(Rural Development) (FedNor)

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FedNor Opens International Business Centre in Sault Ste. Marie

Business owners and entrepreneurs interested in expanding their reach in the global marketplace now have a new resource in Northern Ontario. The FedNor International Business Centre (IBC) was officially opened for business on Wednesday, September 17, 2003 in Sault Ste. Marie by local MP Carmen Provenzano.

The FedNor IBC will serve as a focal point for the development and implementation of programs and services that support the expansion of the trade sector in Northern Ontario. The centre will also play a facilitating role in support of community-based trade organizations.

The creation of the FedNor International Business Centre is a key element of a comprehensive FedNor Trade Strategy for Northern Ontario. Other initiatives include the establishment of a Team Northern Ontario Trade Network, and FedNor's continued financial support of international trade missions.

The Trade Network is made up of five regional community-based trade organizations providing "on the ground" trade advisory services to small- and medium-sized enterprises across Northern Ontario. This includes advice, pathfinding and guidance



We're open for business! FedNor Director General, Louise C. Paquette, Sault Ste. Marie MP, Carmen Provenzano, Managing Director, Algoma Tubes Inc., Jorge Mitre, and Mayor of Sault Ste. Marie, John Rowsell make it official.

for existing and prospective exporters, and coordinating training and skills development in their respective areas. The new Sault Ste. Marie trade centre joins those already established in North Bay, Sudbury, Timmins and Thunder Bay.

In addition to a highly successful *Team Northern Ontario* trade mission to Detroit, Michigan in June 2003, the Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of

State (Rural Development) (FedNor), led an inaugural mission to Atlanta, Georgia in April/May 2002.

The FedNor Trade Strategy for Northern Ontario is addressing the action items identified in the *Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario*, which was developed in response to feedback received during the 2002 Northern Ontario Citizen Engagement Forum.

Team Northern Ontario 2003



FedNor's support of *Team Northern Ontario* trade missions is a key element of the FedNor Trade Strategy for Northern Ontario.

The *Team Northern Ontario* 2003 trade mission to Detroit, Michigan was a great success with delegates participating in more than 80 pre-arranged meetings with their American counterparts.

The mission brought 18 representatives from 16 Northern Ontario organizations to the Detroit area from June 7 to 11, 2003.



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Canada

Innovative Northerners *at Work*

Innovation — it's about turning ideas and knowledge into new products, new services, and new ways of doing things. By working with community partners, and investing in a variety of innovative projects, FedNor is strengthening the Government of Canada's innovation agenda in Northern Ontario.

Here are just a few examples:

- **Tumour Biology Research Group at the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre** is conducting research into molecular mechanisms involved in the growth, progression and spread of tumours in cancer patients. The Group is observing how tumour cells resist chemotherapy drugs and radiation, and is attempting to identify specific molecules that can predict patient prognosis and/or response to treatment.
- **Algoma University College and Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology** are working with FedNor to develop state-of-the-art research laboratories, as well as innovative monitoring and approaches to sustainable resource management.
- **Northwestern Ontario Technology Centre** is implementing a marketing and promotional strategy to further support technology-driven businesses and the growth of an innovative culture in Northwestern Ontario.
- **Sudbury Regional Office of the Canadian Hearing Society** is providing advanced Internet services to ensure that new and relevant technologies, such as high-speed broadband video and mobile wireless communications, are made available to hearing-impaired individuals.
- **Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre** is completing a feasibility study of the potential economic, research and educational opportunities in the region and will compare those opportunities to an inventory of existing water-related activities.
- **Northern Centre for Advanced Technology** is continuing its level of activity in prototype and technology transfer, and helping Northern entrepreneurs through its residency program and business services.

Discover Abitibi

Not only a model framework for industry and community partnerships, Discover Abitibi may well unearth new mineral wealth and mining opportunities in the Timmins and Kirkland Lake regions. A two-year, \$12.9-million geoscience initiative, Discover Abitibi is designed to improve the geological databank through the use of the latest exploration technology. This initiative will build upon the strengths that exist in Northern Ontario and assist in designing world-class technologies to stimulate mineral exploration and discovery.



By applying state-of-the-art geological survey techniques across the Abitibi greenstone belt of Northeastern Ontario, Discover Abitibi will make geological information available in a more usable format. This will benefit all levels of the exploration community, ranging from local prospectors to senior exploration and mining companies.

"FedNor has been a driving force behind this initiative since the very beginning," says Dan Gignac, Chair, Discover Abitibi Management Committee. "Their assistance enabled us to garner a great deal of additional support for this project from individuals and private-sector companies of all sizes. Discover Abitibi is an investment in the future of our region. It is designed to generate additional exploration in the area and in turn should increase investment in the region. Everyone will benefit from these investments."

FedNor is proud to partner with other levels of government, as well as many private-sector investors, to bring the Discover Abitibi initiative to reality. Currently, 19 separate projects are being completed as part of this impressive venture.

During the regional consultations and the Citizen Engagement Forum, participants stressed the importance of creating an environment for wealth and job creation. Discover Abitibi was part of a \$13.3-million FedNor investment in several innovation projects announced by Secretary of State Mitchell in February 2003.

Northern Ontario communities need to be strong to be able to move forward with a successful innovation agenda. FedNor is committed to being part of the process.



Biotechnology Cluster a Northern Reality

People around the world have reason to celebrate what is being accomplished in Northern Ontario. An innovative biotechnology company is working on two exciting projects that could one day benefit the entire global population.



Jennifer Maki, Senior Research Specialist with Genesis Genomics, tests DNA chain reaction through electrophoresis.

Founded in 1996, and with deep roots in Sudbury's extensive medical community, the Northern Centre for Biotechnology and Clinical Research — formerly known as Neureka Research Inc. — has developed a cost-effective cholesterol marker kit (now in clinical trials) to measure risk assessment for cardiovascular disease. The Centre has also created a new diagnostic test to detect torovirus — an organism that, until now, could only be detected with the help of an electron microscope.

"Hospitals and laboratories everywhere will be able to use our kits," says Centre President and CEO, Dr. Magdy Basta. "FedNor's ongoing support provides us with a chance to help improve cholesterol testing worldwide."

Located in the Willet Green Miller Centre at Laurentian University, the not-for-profit research centre currently manages 55 clinical trial sites conducting tests for 25 international pharmaceutical companies and research institutes. And future growth seems inevitable with the \$20-billion biotechnology industry expected to more than double in size (\$50 billion) by 2005.

In fact, the North is one step closer to housing a regional biotechnology cluster with the recent agreement between the Northern Centre for Biotechnology and Clinical Research and Genesis Genomics, a privately owned biotechnology company in Thunder Bay. Currently, Genesis Genomics is doing research on the use of mitochondrial DNA to detect cancer.

With a total investment of more than \$1.6 million, FedNor is working with these two health research leaders to establish the foundations of an exciting new industry for the North — one that will not only make Northern Ontario a stronger competitor in the global marketplace, but will also provide better jobs and an improved quality of life.

Support for regional biotechnology clusters addresses one of the recommendations outlined in the access to a competitive and innovative business environment section of the *Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario*.

Northerners Brainstorm Capital Ideas

When business leaders from across Northern Ontario were asked last fall to discuss specific challenges facing their communities, one issue came up time and again — access to capital. FedNor has a number of initiatives underway to address this barrier to business growth and job creation in Northern Ontario.

Business owners and entrepreneurs have access to funding from a network of 57 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) based in Northern Ontario and rural southern Ontario. In the last five years, these CFDCs have invested more than \$90 million through loans and business counselling services to help small- and medium-sized enterprises create and maintain over 12,700 jobs.

Funded by Industry Canada/FedNor, CFDCs implement long-term community development initiatives, employ local staff and are governed by volunteer directors representative of their community.

Last May, the Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of State (Rural Development) (FedNor), announced a FedNor investment of more than \$6.5 million to CFDCs located throughout Northern Ontario. Of this total, \$4.8 million will be used to support ongoing operations of 13 organizations, while \$1.7 million will be used for investment activities in support of small- and medium-sized businesses.

Dan Borowec, President of the Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations says, "Northern Ontario CFDCs have helped communities take charge of

their economic future, thanks to FedNor's financial support and the dedicated efforts of volunteers and staff."

Another access to capital initiative from the *Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario* is a new venture capital pilot that will provide advisory services to SMEs to get them venture capital-ready. A further match-making component will assist businesses in identifying and securing much needed venture capital sources. Additionally, financial assistance in reducing transaction costs on venture capital deals will ensure a more level playing field for Northern Ontario businesses.

In September, seven CFDCs in Northwestern Ontario followed the lead of their counterparts in the Northeast by forming a shared investment pool. This partnership will provide CFDCs with greater loan capacity. The success of the Northeast Investment Pool has resulted in over \$7 million in projects ranging from those in the resource sector to manufacturing and tourism. Similarly, the Northwest Investment Pool will be an excellent opportunity for entrepreneurs in rural regions to explore small business start up or expansion, and to help generate revenue and create jobs for Northern Ontario.

By working in partnership with CFDCs, commercial lenders, and business leaders, FedNor will continue to help Northern Ontario communities compete more effectively in attracting needed investment capital and employment opportunities.

New Pilot Project

Partners Youth Interns with Private Sector

Finding that first work experience after graduation can often be the incentive young people need to stay and begin their careers in Northern Ontario. Since its inception in December 1997, FedNor's Youth Internship Program (YIP) has been helping young graduates bridge the gap between education and employment. To date, FedNor has invested approximately \$14.7 million to help support more than 550 interns across Northern Ontario.

During the Northern Ontario Citizen Engagement Forum in 2002, a new private-sector pilot project was announced to build on the success of the YIP program. Designed to provide Northern Ontario post-secondary graduates with valuable work experience in small- and medium-sized businesses operating within two of FedNor's strategic sectors — innovation and connectedness — the pilot project has already begun partnerships with 24 firms.

The youth interns will be working on a variety of innovative projects across Northern Ontario, from assisting in the development of environmentally friendly bio-pesticides to the development and testing of high-speed wireless networks.

Helping Northern youth find jobs in their home communities is one of several recommendations within the Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario Youth released this past May. The report is a direct result of input received from young Northerners at a series of regional consultations and a one-day Youth Symposium held as part of the Citizen Engagement Forum in Sault Ste. Marie in November 2002.

FedNor's new private-sector Youth Internship Program — providing youth with additional opportunities to stay and succeed in Northern Ontario.



Darren Larose

Lucidia Studios/Faith Online, Sault Ste. Marie

Lucidia Studios is an Internet marketing and consulting firm that specializes in online application development and e-marketing solutions. As a programmer, Darren will assist in the development of software applications using the latest Web-based programming languages. He will be responsible for formulating the architectural framework of a system currently under development and will work with a development team in coding architectures and learning new technologies.

Greg Roy

Rudnicki Industrial Inc., Thunder Bay

Rudnicki Industrial Inc. is a custom machine shop specializing in repaired and replacement parts for the pulp and paper industry. Greg will develop a unique Web-accessible database that will provide customers, especially designers, with real-time inventory information about Rudnicki's parts, materials and machines.

Brian Soucie

TribSys Inc., Sudbury

TribSys Inc. provides process improvement services to the metal forming industry including the "big three" automotive manufacturers — General Motors, Ford Motor Company and DaimlerChrysler, as well as many of North America's largest lubricant manufacturers. Brian will serve as the communications coordinator at TribSys Inc., taking the lead in the marketing and promotion of the company's leading-edge products and services. He will also assist the innovative firm in bringing several new products to market.

Making Healthy Connections

In Northern Ontario, where distances are vast and the majority of residents live in rural communities, state-of-the-art connection and coordination of health services are crucial.

That's why a new integrated regional health network based in Parry Sound has been welcomed so enthusiastically by First Nations communities, nursing stations, medical clinics, hospitals and other health facilities located in Northeastern Ontario.

With FedNor's support, the West Parry Sound Health Centre has introduced an innovative network that allows

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for a seamless flow of data from one member of the health care team to another, resulting in faster, more efficient and effective delivery of health services to citizens wherever they live.

To physicians and other health care professionals in the region, it will mean improved diagnosis and new educational opportunities. To residents, it will mean

access to comprehensive, culturally sensitive care closer to home.

Using the latest information and communications technology and advanced software applications, the new system can also be upgraded easily — without having to physically manipulate every computer in the chain. As a result, troubleshooting will also be a simpler process.

"Information is the life-blood of decision-making, especially in rural and remote communities," says West Parry Sound Health Centre CEO, Mr. Norman MacIver. "FedNor's investment will enable our Centre to become a leader in the innovative delivery of health care services."

This FedNor-funded project addresses one of the recommendations found in the *Government of Canada Action Plan for Northern Ontario* which looked at a number of initiatives to improve access to quality of life through health, education, and life-long learning.