



## **Discovery Workshop Report Trenval (Quinte Region)**

*February 18, 2009*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report is part of The Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project, a three-year endeavour to connect academic knowledge with economic development needs in Eastern Ontario. The report is a summary of information collected at a 3-hour workshop in Belleville, ON. Eleven community leaders and business people from the Quinte region gave feedback on their community's economic development needs and research questions. This information, along with similar information gathered in 14 other communities in Eastern Ontario, will guide the research pursued over the course of the KIS project.

The workshop was hosted by Gerrit De Bruyn, Director, and David Valcamp, Chairman, Trenval Business Development Corporation. Dr. Yolande Chan, Director, The Monieson Centre, introduced the KIS project and George Jackson, Associate Facilitator, Queen's Executive Decision Centre, facilitated the workshop. Special thanks belong to Carolyn Kuipers Law and Jeff Dixon for their coordination of the workshop. The KIS project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit [www.easternontarioknowledge.ca](http://www.easternontarioknowledge.ca).



## QUESTION 1

*What are the pressing issues, challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making the Quinte region a vital community (economic, social, health)?*

Top Issues:

1. **Attitude towards economic development.** We need to look at economic development as an investment, rather than an expenditure.
2. **Youth retention.**
3. **Partnership development.** Economic development requires cooperation at all levels: Federal, Provincial and Municipal.
4. **Physician attraction.** Attracting doctors and other health care service providers given limitations of rural communities to provide incentive programs. County programs help, but still tend to focus on urban areas.
5. **Workforce development.** We need to develop effective training and retraining initiatives.
6. **Lack of business planning.**
7. **Small business support.** Most business funding opportunities are geared towards medium to large businesses rather than small businesses.
8. **Labour education.** We need better education and skills development that utilizes trades and apprenticeships.
9. **Demographic planning.** We need to plan for the demographic shifts that are coming, particularly the retiring baby boom generation.
10. **Inter-community Cooperation.** Neighbouring rural municipalities need to partner more on economic development and end “hockey war” mentalities.

## QUESTION 2

*If you had access to our researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?*

1. **Branding.** What are best practices of municipalities working together to market and brand themselves?
2. **Demographic Shifts.** What are going to be the distinct needs of the baby boomer population as they age and how can business capitalize on this shift?
3. **Business relocation decision factors.** What does a business consider the most important factors when relocating or staying in a community?
4. **Trades education.** What can the education system do to encourage students to consider the skilled trades?
5. **Economic development investment.** How do you show return on investment on dollars invested in economic development?
6. **Value-added business partnerships.** What are exemplary models of businesses partnering and packaging their services?
7. **Small business investment.** How do we convince government associations and funding programs to recognize the value of investing in small businesses, not just medium-large?

Other Questions:

- What types of employment and lifestyle are today's youth looking for?
- What are effective methods/initiatives to encourage rural and urban communities to partner on a regional transportation system?
- How can we differentiate our downtown?
- How do you market a community along transit corridors? People traveling through don't get an accurate impression of what the community has to offer. Money is invested in the communities, but we need unique highway advertising/attractions.
- Could there be an "Economic Development 101" course setup for rural municipal councils?
- Why is eastern Ontario one of the top ten places to invest in in Canada?
- How do we help communities decide what is best for their future regarding resource allocation?
- Is there a best practice for rural transit?
- Is the creative economy a possible solution to rural economic diversification?
- What new partnerships would be beneficial within Eastern Ontario?
- How best can we stay in touch with rural youth who migrate away to keep them on the community radar?
- How would you market eastern Ontario?
- What can a community do to encourage youth to stay or come back to their community?
- What methods show the value of small businesses compared with large industries? What are they investing back in the community? What does the community get a better ROI from?
- What amenities/services would attract/retain youth?
- How do rural communities compete with urban communities to successfully attract new doctors, health care providers?
- How do we improve the education system so there is a focus on skills attainment, not advancing through the system?

## QUESTION 3

*What local resources (organizations, reports, past work etc.) might contribute to addressing the issues identified above? What in-kind support can you contribute (office space, personnel, etc.) for research?*

1. **Branding.** What are best practices of municipalities working together to market and brand themselves?
  - Speak to Comfort Country in Madoc, Marmora, Stirling and Tweed - see Andrew
  - Quinte Economic Development Commission (QEDC) - Chris King
  - Ontario East - Chris King
  - City of Quinte West implemented a new branding and marketing plan in 2008
  - Comfort Country branding - Stirling, Tweed, Marmora, Madoc
  
2. **Demographic Shifts.** What are going to be the distinct needs of the baby boomer population as they age and how can business capitalize on this shift?
  - Demographic stats study for Quinte West - see Craig Desjardins
  
3. **Business relocation decision factors.** What does a business consider the most important factors when relocating or staying in a community?
  - Business retention and attraction studies are a great resource, see Dave Valcamp/Karen Poste
  - City of Belleville - Business Retention Studies - see above
  - See Hastings County - See Andrew
  - Qunite West - Linda L.
  
4. **Trades education.** What can the education system do to encourage students to consider the skilled trades?
  - New partnerships with local high schools - see Craig Desjardins
  - Chuck O'Malley at Loyalist College works with manufacturers & offers skilled training to their workers. He would know where the shortages are.
  - The East Central Ontario Training Board has done research on the skilled trades areas and they have a number of publications from this work. Contact: 613-969-0720 - Anne
  
5. **Economic development investment.** How do you show return on investment on dollars invested in economic development?
  - Use the system Oakville uses. They survey businesses that come to the community on how helpful the local economic development office/officer was in terms of deciding to locate in Oakville. The business gives a percentage. That percentage is then multiplied against the taxes the business pays creating an "economic development influence factor". The challenge with this is new economic development officers or departments need time to get up and running before being able to use this measure.
  
6. **Value-added business partnerships.** What are exemplary models of businesses partnering and packaging their services?
  - Destination Ottawa - Tourism packages

- Quinte West will be offering a Collaborative Marketing workshop in the spring for businesses in Quinte West - an idea resulting from our Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project in 2008
7. **Small business investment.** How do we convince government associations and funding programs to recognize the value of investing in small businesses, not just medium-large?
    - CFDC eastern Ontario Network has had experience with advocating with politicians
    - Talk to executive directors of CFDCs
  8. What types of employment and lifestyle are today's youth looking for?
    - Master's Thesis -Youth Retention - Andrew Redden
    - CFDC-funded youth interns should be asked what they want
    - Brighton has a youth committee- Northumberland - See Craig
    - Creative opportunities (Richard Florida)
  9. What are effective methods/initiatives to encourage rural and urban communities to partner on a regional transportation system?
    - Town of Deseronto - transportation to and from the City of Belleville
    - Dana Valentyne
  10. How can we differentiate our downtown?
    - City of Quinte West conducted BR & E Study on downtown businesses in April 2008. See Linda L.
    - Belleville conducted BR+E study and target marketing study. -Karen Poste
    - Award winning Master Plan created for Downtown Belleville-Jim O'Brien, Chair Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA)
    - Use internationally proven four-point approach to main street revitalization
    - City of Quinte West Community Improvement Plan success stories.
    - Stirling-Rawdon, see Kevin Heath
  11. How do you market a community along transit corridors? People traveling through don't get an accurate impression of what the community has to offer. Money is invested in the communities, but we need unique highway advertising/attractions.
  12. Could there be an "Economic Development 101" course setup for rural municipal councils?
    - Recommend Economic Development and municipal council folks attend the Small Business Centre special Economic Development day planned with Dr. Ernesto Sirolli, of the Sirolli Institute in California planned for March 5/09 at the Ramada Inn - contact Dale Lehtila, Manager, Small Business Centre 613-961-0590 - This is an opportunity not to be missed on how to work with small business and entrepreneurs in developing rural economies.
    - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) Economic Development regional staff help development a program and visit each council at the start of their new session after an election.

13. Why is eastern Ontario one of the top ten places to invest in in Canada?
  - Quality of life (as per Richard Florida's argument on natural environment and natural amenities you can't find in the big city)
  - Reasons are available, talk to Karen Poste/Chris King
14. How do we help communities decide what is best for their future regarding resource allocation?
15. Is there a best practice for rural transit?
  - Master's student has completed study on hospital patient transport See Craig Desjardins
16. Is the creative economy a possible solution to rural economic diversification?
  - Dan Taylor - Prince Edward County EDO
  - Prince Edward /Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation (PELACFDC) leading quantitative study of creative economy in eastern Ontario - See Craig et al
17. What new partnerships would be beneficial within Eastern Ontario?
  - QEDC - Chris King
  - Look at best practices throughout Eastern Ontario.
18. How best can we stay in touch with rural youth who migrate away to keep them on the community radar?
  - A community in Australia had a volunteer help the local high school keep track of graduates who left for university and the Mayor would send regular updates and "Hi, it's your hometown contacting you". A fellow (forget name) from this community spoke at a special TORC conference last fall in Brockville. Harold Flaming of TORC would know.
  - Loyalist College
19. How would you market eastern Ontario?
  - Ontario Eastern Economic Development Commission
  - The further development of the Bay of Quinte Tourist Council to market the entire region
  - Quinte Economic Development Commission
20. What can a community do to encourage youth to stay or come back to their community?
  - Belleville Want You Campaign - Karen Poste, City of Belleville
21. What methods show the value of small businesses compared with large industries? What are they investing back in the community? What does the community get a better ROI from?
  - Buy locally owned group - contact Frank Hendry (Kwik Kopy Printing - Belleville)
22. What amenities/services would attract/retain youth?
23. How do rural communities compete with urban communities to successfully attract new doctors, health care providers?
  - Study on knowledge worker attraction completed by PELA CFDC [www.pelaird.ca](http://www.pelaird.ca)

24. How do we improve the education system so there is a focus on skills attainment, not advancing through the system?

- Maureen Piercy - President Loyalist College

## QUESTION 4

*If this project is to be successful, what are the things that you would see in place in the next two years? What must happen in order to ensure that the KIS project makes a positive impact on your community?*

1. Greater job creation.
  - KIS can provide resources on job creation and skills training.
2. A toolkit of exemplary practices for rural businesses and municipalities to follow.
3. Greater ability to attract and retain businesses in our communities.
  - KIS can highlight strategies in this area.
4. The identification of tools or ideas to assist in meeting the identified challenges.
5. The identification of new partnership opportunities, such as, economic development, tourism and youth.
  - *New* (not the ones that already exist): focus on the NEW!
6. Greater regional collaboration on projects (i.e. arts trails, cheese routes) that extend beyond municipal boundaries.
7. Have information on the importance of small to medium sized businesses on a community and the ROI to be expected.
  - By the owner and the community at large.
  - For the partners and for the business owners and partners.

## Appendix A – Rough Ideas for Question 1

*What are the pressing issues, challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making the Quinte Region a vital community (economic, social, health)?*

### Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 6) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 37

Total number of voters (N): 8 teams at the computers

Votes	Rank	Issue	Comments
4	1	Economic development	Need to look at economic development as an investment, not an expenditure
3	2	Youth retention	-
3	3	Government partnership	Cooperation at all levels of government – Federal, Provincial or Municipal
3	4	Doctors	Attracting doctors and other health care service providers given limitations of rural communities to provide incentive
3	5	Workforce development	Training and retraining
3	6	Business planning	Lack of business planning
3	7	Entrepreneurship	Business funding opportunities are geared towards medium to large businesses, not small
2	8	Education	Skills development (trades, apprenticeships)
2	9	Demographics	Planning for the demographic shifts that are coming: baby boom generation
2	10	Municipal partnerships	Neighbouring rural municipalities need to partner more on economic development - end the hockey war
2	11	Transportation	Lack of transportation between communities and public transit
2	12	Income disparity	Income level disparities between rural and urban communities especially with increase in minimum wage
2	13	Diversification	Changing economic base
2	14	Education	Improvements to education system beginning with elementary education. Students are being moved through the system regardless of whether they have grasped all skills
2	15	Communication	High speed internet
1	16	Downtown	Revitalizing downtowns
1	17	Communication	Lack of access to provincial support / information
1	18	Business partnerships	Rural businesses could work together more and package opportunities/offers (e.g. Bed and Breakfasts, golf courses, theatre, restaurants)
1	19	Small businesses	Too much emphasis placed on attracting large industrial based businesses. Small business attraction and retention needs to be the priority for rural

1	20	Attitude	Way to overcome attitude to eastern Ontario
1	21	Resource allocation	Community resource allocation - Re-access priorities
1	22	Unions	Minimize/eliminate need for unions. Workers and employers work together
1	23	Economic development knowledge	There is a general lack of knowledge overall it seems about what economic development really is and should be
0	24	Downtown	Lack of investment in downtown properties - absentee property owners or lack of interest
0	25	Welfare	Greater percentage of lower income families - welfare/ODSP
0	26	Improving tourism	-
0	27	Creating employment	-
0	28	Best use of vacant farmland	-
0	29	Lack of marketing plans	-
0	30	Conduct feasibility studies	-
0	31	Transportation	Distance to training an issue for many rural businesses
0	32	Communication	Communications with stakeholders of programs
0	33	Industry	Attracting industry and retaining industries
0	34	Politics	Eliminate partisan politics
0	35	Funding	Government funding for business development centres e.g. Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs), small business centre needs to be increased so they can be more effective
0	36	Funding	Support for business/manufacturers to fill out funding applications
0	37	Funding	Funding resources

## Appendix B – Rough Ideas for Question 2

*Question 2: If you had access to our researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?<sup>1</sup>*

**Note: prior to voting, the group brainstormed questions. Below is the result of selecting top questions**

### Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 6) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 40

Total number of voters (N): 9

Votes	Rank	Question
5	<b>1</b>	What are best practices of municipalities working together to market and brand themselves?
5	<b>2</b>	What are going to be the distinct needs of the baby boomer population as they age and how can business capitalize on this shift?
4	<b>3</b>	What does a business consider the most important factors when relocating or staying in a community?
4	<b>4</b>	What can the education system do to encouraging students to consider the skilled trades?
4	<b>5</b>	How do you show ROI on dollars invested in economic development?
3	<b>6</b>	What are exemplary models of businesses partnering and packaging their services?
3	<b>7</b>	How do we convince government associations and funding programs to recognize the value of investing in small businesses, not just medium-large?
2	<b>8</b>	What types of employment and lifestyle are today's youth looking for?
2	<b>9</b>	Methods/initiatives to encourage rural and urban communities to partner on a regional transportation system.
2	<b>10</b>	How would you differentiate our downtown?
2	<b>11</b>	How do you market a community along transit corridors people traveling through don't get an accurate impression of what the community has to offer? Money is invested in the communities, but need unique highway advertising/attractions.
2	<b>12</b>	Could there be an "Economic Development 101" course setup for rural municipal councils?
2	<b>13</b>	Why is eastern Ontario one of the top ten places to invest in Canada?
1	<b>14</b>	How do we help communities decide what is best for their future regarding resource allocation
1	<b>15</b>	Is there a best practice for rural transit?
1	<b>16</b>	Is the creative economy a possible solution to rural economic diversification?
1	<b>17</b>	What new partnerships would be beneficial within Eastern Ontario?
1	<b>18</b>	How best can we stay in touch with rural youth who migrate away to keep them on the community radar?

<sup>1</sup> Items in **bold** represent questions chosen as best ideas to be referred to the entire group for prioritizing.

1	19	How would you market eastern Ontario?
1	20	What can a community do to encourage youth to stay or come back to their community?
1	21	Methods to show the value of small businesses compared with large industries. What are they investing back in the community? What does the community get a better ROI from?
1	22	What amenities/services would attract/retain youth?
1	23	How do rural communities compete with urban communities to successfully attract new doctors, health care providers?
1	24	How do we improve the education system so there is a focus on skills attainment, not advancing through the system?
0	25	Why do people live/move to eastern Ontario?
0	26	How is rural eastern Ontario different/the same as other rural communities in the world?
0	27	How do we convince businesses to partner on advertising/marketing efforts?
0	28	What attracts people and businesses to a specific location?
0	29	What businesses (small or large) would thrive in eastern Ontario?
0	30	Are there financing solutions/models that can provide communities with capital to grow the economy?
0	31	What can small communities do to entice development / industry / business?
0	32	How do we have rural transit systems that don't bankrupt communities?
0	33	Is there a difference between youth retention and youth attraction?
0	34	How would you create tourism partnerships in eastern Ontario?
0	35	What common practices are in place to retain youth in employment?
0	36	How could we encourage small businesses to do business plans?
0	37	How would you fund a business start up?
0	38	Have any post-secondary institutions provided distance training to rural businesses or offered training off site in a rural setting?
0	39	How do businesses and communities prepare for baby boomers?
0	40	What programs are in place to train current business owners?

## Appendix C – Session Overview

The **purpose** of the workshop was to engage community leaders and academics to collaborate in order to:

- Identify Eastern Ontario knowledge needs and resources
- Prioritize research needs and opportunities
- Share experience and knowledge
- Build lasting relationships and communication channels
- Serve Eastern Ontario

Discovery workshop groups **explore four topics**:

1. Burning issues. What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making Quinte Region a vital community (economic, social, health)
2. Research wish list. If you had access to researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?
3. Local capacity. What are the local resources (organizations, capabilities, past work etc.) that might contribute to addressing the issues identified above?
4. Defining success. If this project is to be successful, what are the things that you would see in place in the next two years? what must happen in order to ensure that the KIS project makes a positive impact on Quinte Region?

## Appendix D – Methodology

### Information Gathering and Community Consultation process

The community consultation process included an information gathering component composed of a series of interactive workshops using facilitators from the Queen's Executive Decision Centre. The purpose of this component was to get input from a broad cross section of community stakeholders.

The consultation was conducted using a group decision support system also known as an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen's School of Business. The Queen's EMS, called "the Decision Centre", combines expert facilitation with a state-of-the-art group decision support system to enable groups to rapidly accelerate idea generation and consensus building. This facility consists of a network of laptops accessing software designed to support idea generation, idea consolidation, idea evaluation and planning. The tool supports, but does not replace, verbal interaction; typically 25% of interaction takes place on the computers. Feedback from groups who have used the Executive Decision Centre process includes: meeting times can be cut in half; participation goes way up; better idea generation and alternative evaluation; a more structured process; and automatic documentation of deliberations.

Over 500 organizations around North America use the Centre for meetings such as: strategic planning, visioning, annual planning, focus groups, team building, budgeting, program review, project planning, risk assessment, job profiling, 360 degree feedback, alternative evaluation, new product development and a variety of other meeting types.

In the consultations, participants were asked, for example, "What are your region's burning issues with respect to economic development". Participants typed in ideas on the laptops all of which appeared on a public screen at the front of the room. These ideas were then discussed and categorized into common themes. The group was then asked "if we could only address five of these in the next year, which ones are most critical?" Individuals selected his/her top 5 and the overall results were then displayed to the group and further discussed.