

Eastern Manitoba

Stronger Economies Together

Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

Regional Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan Executive Summary

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Pinawa Channel Photo, Courtesy of Nancy Bremner

Contact...



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Regional Planning Initiative Overview

Community Futures Winnipeg River (CFWR) is leading the development of a **Regional Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan** for Eastern Manitoba. CFWR was motivated to start this process because of the losses in industry and jobs seen in the region, particularly in larger businesses. A proactive, collaborative regional approach is being taken to address socio-economic challenges and opportunities and to shape the economic future of Eastern Manitoba.

This **Regional Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan** will serve as the roadmap for the future economic development efforts of Eastern Manitoba. The strategies and actions will be regional in nature and geared towards achieving the regional economic development mission and goals. Strategies and actions will be based on the North Eastman REAP (Regional Economic Assessment Process), the 2016 Eastern Manitoba Economic Profile, input from the Regional Economic Development Forum (held Nov 16, 2015 in Beausejour), and rural provincial strategies.

Local and regional stakeholders from various sectors embrace a spirit of regionalism to support this initiative. Implementing the action items described within this document will strengthen the ability of Eastern Manitoba to secure its economic future and position it as a competitive region. This plan is the result of an extensive and inclusive research and planning with active participation from business, social, and local government leaders.

Description of Region

For the purpose of Regional Economic Development Planning, the Eastern Manitoba Region will be defined as the area north east of Winnipeg, north of Highway 1, west of the Ontario border, and east of Highway 59 and Lake Winnipeg.

Located in this geographic area are:

- 3 Towns
- 1 Local Government District
- 8 Rural Municipalities
- 4 First Nations
- 3 Northern Affairs Communities
- 7 Provincial Parks

We are seeing changes in our rural communities that require a collaborative and proactive approach in addressing. These changes include...

- Loss of key industries and employers
 - > Tembec (Pine Falls paper mill closed in 2010)
 - > SanGold Mine (Bissett mine closed spring 2015, repurchased and expected to open late 2016)
 - > AECL (Nuclear Research Plant near Pinawa set to complete decommissioning in 2024. Partnership has been established to focus on business development opportunities for the site.)
 - > TANCO (Mine outside of Lac du Bonnet laid off 40% of unionized workforce in 2013)



- ⦿ Employment in primary agriculture has declined, shifting from small family farms to larger corporate owned structures.
- ⦿ Population trends expect that by 2051, 2/3 of Canadians will live in cities as opposed to the 50% that currently live in cities.
- ⦿ Our population is aging and many of our youth are leaving the region so our work force is shrinking.
- ⦿ The sectors driving the MB rural economy have shifted from primary agriculture to wholesale and retail, manufacturing, healthcare and natural resource development.
- ⦿ Milner Ridge Correctional Centre has gained approximately 225 part and full time jobs since 2008.

Vision for Rural Manitoba

The following 10-year future vision for rural Manitoba has been adopted from the **Rural Economic Development Strategy for Manitoba** for this regional planning initiative:



Regional Mission

This regional planning initiative has been undertaken to achieve the following mission:

To work together to create a positive and progressive economic future for Eastern Manitoba that is more diverse, sought after and competitive within Manitoba, Canada and the world.

Manitoba Rural Economic Goals

By 2025, the province hopes to achieve the following outcomes. The goals set in for Eastern Manitoba are aligned and will contribute towards achieving the broader provincial goals.

- ✓ To increase the population across rural Manitoba by 150,000
- ✓ To grow existing businesses in rural Manitoba by 20%
- ✓ To increase the number of businesses by 3,000 in rural Manitoba

Regional Economic Goals

Based on research and input from the region the following economic goals were determined for Eastern Manitoba to work collectively to achieve over the next five years:

- Goal 1:** Strengthen and diversify the economic base and workforce of the region.
- Goal 2:** Enhance physical infrastructure and services within the region to support business development and high quality living.
- Goal 3:** Strengthen human resource capacity required for economic development.
- Goal 4:** Increase visitation and population within the region.

Regional Economic Benefits

The following benefits are what we hope to see in Eastern Manitoba as the result of working towards these goals. A baseline measurement will be taken for each benefit and concurrently measured once a year for five years as a way to measure progress and impact of our collective actions.

- ✓ Increased number of new businesses – small, medium and large
- ✓ Increased number of existing business expansions
- ✓ Increased economic growth and spending within the region
- ✓ Increased innovation
- ✓ Increased number of jobs
- ✓ Increased number of people and skilled workers residing in the region
- ✓ Increased tax base
- ✓ Increased number of people visiting the region
- ✓ Increased number of visits to the region (people keep coming back)
- ✓ Greater quality of life satisfaction from residents, businesses and visitors
- ✓ Greater skills, knowledge, leadership, coordination, cooperation and efforts made towards enhancing local and regional economic development

Regional Economic Development Strategies

The following strategies describe the directions, philosophies, and focus areas where concentrated actions will be taken at a regional level and at a local level within communities in the region. Collective efforts towards these strategies will result in the economic benefits we seek for Eastern Manitoba.

Goal 1: Strengthen and diversify the economic base and workforce of the region.

Strategies:

- ✓ **STRATEGIC BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:** Identify and communicate product and service needs in the region and create innovative business opportunities/partnerships.
- ✓ **HOME GROWN BUSINESSES:** Encourage and support entrepreneurs within the region to start new businesses.

- ✓ **BUILD ON BUSINESS SUCCESS:** Expand existing businesses to match needs and opportunities for goods and services.
- ✓ **SHOP LOCAL TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL ECONOMY:** Educate and encourage the public and business owners on the benefits to shop within the region.
- ✓ **RETAIN BUSINESSES:** Prevent businesses closures and downsizing where possible through support, succession planning and innovative strategies.
- ✓ **HIRE LOCAL:** Train and hire people residing in the region for available jobs prior to external hiring where possible.
- ✓ **TARGETED INVESTOR MARKETING:** Improve how we promote local and regional assets, opportunities and advantages to potential investors (external businesses).
- ✓ **STRATEGIC BUSINESS ATTRACTION:** Proactively attract new businesses that address job losses, fill needs, increase competitive advantage and diversify the economy.

Goal 2: Enhance physical infrastructure and services within the region to support business development and high quality living.

Strategies:

- ✓ **ASSESS INVESTMENT READINESS:** Determine readiness and capacity for economic development and business development in each local area.
- ✓ **ASSESS COMMUNITY APPEAL:** Inventory existing-infrastructure and services in each local area and assess what is and is not desirable to residents and businesses.
- ✓ **PLAN:** Set local plans to address improvements required to ensure investment readiness and community appeal.
- ✓ **PROMOTE THE GOOD:** Focus local and regional marketing on assets, services and resources that make Eastern Manitoba a desirable place to live and set up business.
- ✓ **REGIONAL APPROACH:** Address infrastructure and service needs as a region using a collaborative approach and a united voice.
- ✓ **BETTER CELL & INTERNET SERVICE:** Advocate and work towards improved cell and internet service in areas that do not meet residential and business needs.

Goal 3: Strengthen human resource capacity required for economic development.

Strategies:

- ✓ **MAKE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHER PRIORITY:** Increase investments and efforts made to work towards economic development in Eastern Manitoba.
- ✓ **STRONGER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP:** Enhance interest and ability of local governments and development agencies to lead local economic development.

- ✓ **LOCAL COORDINATED PLANNING:** Ensure each local area has an economic development plan that coincides with this **Regional Economic Development Strategy** and the **Rural Economic Development Strategy for Manitoba** along with the human and financial capacity to carry out the plans. *Note: Know and work within your limitations and to your strengths.*
- ✓ **COMMIT TO LEARNING:** Develop a system to continually identify and address economic development training needs in the communities and region.
- ✓ **A UNITED REGION:** Establish and maintain a strong regional network and strategic partnerships to continually communicate and collaborate on economic development and to forward regional plan.

Goal 4: Increase visitation and population within the region.

Strategies:

- ✓ **STRONGER FOCUS ON TOURISM:** Work with Eastman Tourism Association to build and market memorable tourism opportunities that draw visitors to Eastern Manitoba. *Note: Visitors are potential new residents.*
- ✓ **HOST LARGE EVENTS:** Implement existing and new events in the region and promote widely in region, province and beyond.
- ✓ **COORDINATED REGIONAL MARKETING:** Collectively and widely promote Eastern Manitoba to attract new/ex residents and visitors and to retain residents/visitors within the region with a focus on workforce, business owners (home and store based), and retirees.
- ✓ **WELCOME NEWCOMERS:** Cultivate an environment that is extremely welcoming to visitors and potential new residents/businesses.