

Eastern Manitoba

Stronger Economies Together

Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

Regional Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan

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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

*See **Appendix A: 2016 Eastern Manitoba Economic Profile** for a detailed regional overview.



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.

Economic Development, Growth and Health

The following definitions will be used for the purpose of this regional planning initiative:

Economic Development Efforts that seek to improve the *economic* well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base.

Economic Growth An increase in the capacity of an *economy* to produce goods and services measured over time. Conventionally measured as the percent rate of increase in real gross domestic product (GDP).

Economic Health The economic health of an area can usually be measured by looking at economic growth and development.

Roles and Responsibilities

Economic development in Manitoba happens at all levels – local, regional and provincial. These levels of strategies all fit together and much of our success lies in how well we communicate and work together. The following chart outlines key roles and responsibilities and is meant to display how the levels work together.

Local Community Level	Regional Level	Provincial Level
Determine and address needs, challenges and opportunities unique to the local area.	Determine and address needs, challenges and opportunities of whole region or common among many communities in region.	Determine and address needs, challenges and opportunities of the whole province or common among many regions/communities.
Support and contribute to relative regional and provincial activities.	Support and contribute to relative local and provincial activities.	Support and contribute to relative regional and local activities.
Promote the community/area.	Promote the region.	Promote the province.
Implement local projects, programs and services.	Implement regional projects, programs and services.	Implement provincial projects, programs and services.
Establish strong local communication systems and networks.	Establish strong regional communication systems and networks.	Establish strong provincial communication systems and networks.
Communicate and liaise with neighboring communities, regional and provincial agencies.	Communicate and liaise with regional communities, regional and provincial agencies.	Communicate and liaise with communities, regional and provincial agencies.

Regional Planning Principles and Beliefs

The following principles will help guide our success as we strive for collaborative solutions:

- ✓ Think and act as a collective region
- ✓ Believe that a success in the region benefits all communities
- ✓ Share in the responsibility, roles, required resources, successes and challenges
- ✓ Build on strengths, assets and successes
- ✓ Identify and minimize weaknesses and potential risks
- ✓ Be proactive and strategic
- ✓ Be realistic and achievable
- ✓ Remain focused on and committed to our mission, goals and strategies
- ✓ Stay positive and together
- ✓ Communicate effectively

The following beliefs identified in the **Rural Economic Development Strategy for Manitoba** are shared within the regional plan:

- ✓ Rural Manitoba is a critical contributor to Manitoba's and Canada's economy.
- ✓ Success requires collaborative planning and action of business, government, education, community organizations and citizens.
- ✓ Rural Manitoba is and can be home to more world class companies.
- ✓ Rural Manitoba offers an attractive and unique quality of life.
- ✓ Business drives prosperity in rural Manitoba.
- ✓ Cultural diversity is essential to a sustainable rural economy.

Vision for Rural Manitoba

The following 10-year future vision for rural Manitoba has been adopted 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.

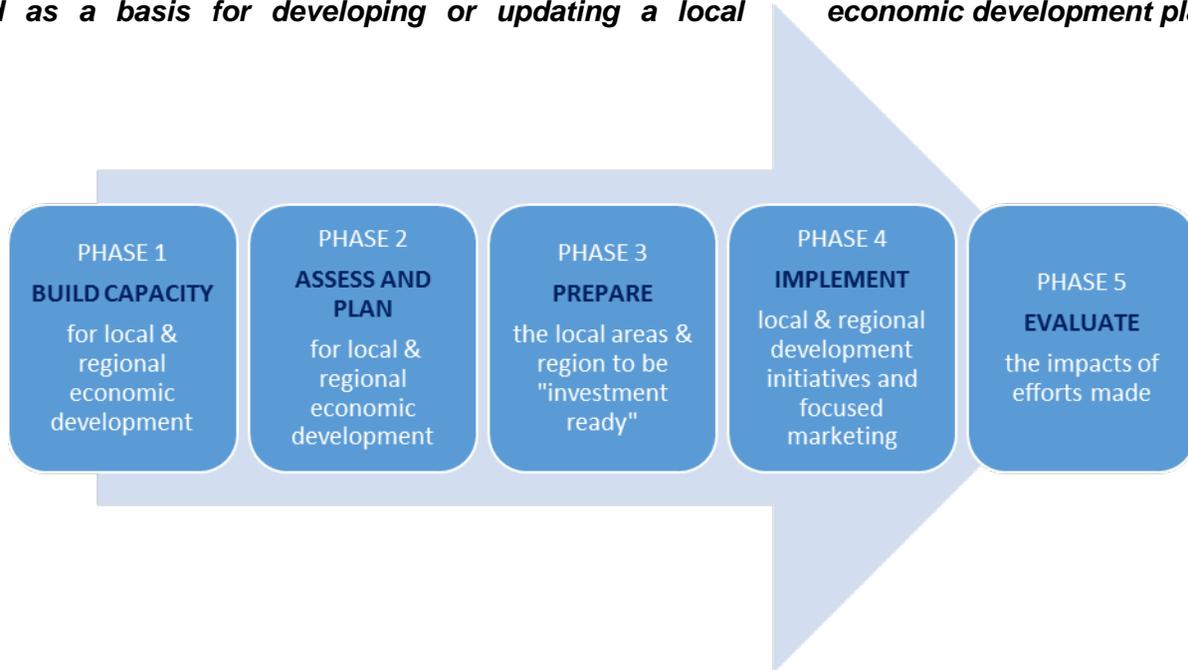
Regional Economic Benefits

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

A Phased Regional Plan

To make these important goals and benefits manageable and achievable, the regional plan will be based on a 5-phase approach. Regional and local actions will be determined for each phase that are based on the goals and strategies desired. Regional actions for the first year of work have been identified in this document and will be updated annually along with a progress report. ***Each community within the region will be asked to complete an assessment to identify current strengths and areas they would like to focus on. This can be used as a basis for developing or updating a local economic development plan.***



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.

Regional Actions for Each Phase - First Actions

For each Phase, first year, continual, and some second year actions have been identified with the various strategies in mind. As the Regional Development Corporation, Community Futures Winnipeg River (CFWR), will oversee all regional actions and will coordinate involvement of other agencies.

Local actions that coincide with the regional actions have been identified. Each community can contribute to this regional plan by conducting these actions. Any businesses, organizations, or local governments wanting to assist CFWR with any specific regional actions are asked to express interest to the CFWR office. Local groups are also encouraged to identify additional local actions they will take for each strategy.

Actions have been identified to provide examples of the types of work that will be undertaken as a region. **Actions will be selected and altered over time.** CFWR will prepare and make available more specific Quarterly Action Plans and Progress Reports that will be posted on our website at www.cfwr.mb.ca. **Ideas for future actions can be forwarded to CFWR by anyone, at any time.**

Phase 1: Build capacity for local/regional economic development.

Regional Actions	Local Actions Required	Timeline
Develop presentation on benefits and factors involved with economic development for local governments.	Invite CFWR to council meeting to conduct presentation.	Year 1
Develop public information articles to understand economic development, influences on the economy and personal efforts that help boost the economy.	Promote and discuss information in your business and community.	Year 1
Gain access to quality economic/demographic data for economic development planning within the region.	Utilize data when setting local economic development plans. <i>Note: Use REAP and other information available.</i>	Year 1
Gather information and widely promote entrepreneurship and business development services.	Local promotion efforts. <i>Note: CFWR to provide information.</i> Refer local people to appropriate service provider or to CFWR.	Continual

Encourage and help facilitate Jr. Achievement and other business programs in schools to encourage entrepreneurship as a career option for youth.	Identify local facilitators to Jr. Achievement. Schools host JA/business programs as possible.	Continual
Host 3-day Business Start Program annually in the region.	Promote and encourage participation.	Annually
Develop and implement a “ Shop Local ” Awareness Raising Campaign to increase spending in the region.	Local promotion efforts. <i>Note: CFWR to provide information.</i>	Year 1/ Continual
Develop Business Information Package with ideas to support other local businesses, to increase revenue, marketing, expansion, hiring locally, reaching new markets, internet sales, etc.	Distribute to businesses in local area. Businesses implement new strategies.	Year 1/ Continual
Publish news article to inform the public about the economic benefits and impacts of tourism.	Promote and discuss information in your business and community.	Year 1
Encourage and assist communities in developing or strengthening Community Development Corporations (CDC’s), Chambers of Commerce, or other economic development groups.	Form or join a neighboring CDC, Chamber or economic development group so there is strong leadership and collaboration. <i>Note: This can be informal or formal.</i>	Year 1/ Continual
Encourage and assist communities in hiring and/or training an Economic Development Officer (EDO). <i>Note: Partnering with neighbor community is an option.</i>	Fund and support qualified economic development staff to support local plans.	Year 1/ Continual
Identify and address economic development training needs in the region (councils, EDO’s, CDC’s, CAO’s, front line municipal staff, etc.).	Identify local training needs and communicate to CFWR. <i>Note: One training need is understanding and working with investors (foreign & Canadian) and site selectors.</i>	Year 1/ Continual
Conduct project planning and grant writing seminars to improve ability to leverage dollars and implement capital projects.	Register and participate in training. Ask CFWR to review grants prior to submission to help strengthen applications.	Year 1/ Continual
Actively promote the importance of education/skill development; support programs; and available training opportunities the region.	Promote available training programs and supports. <i>Note: WRLC, J.U.S.T. Training, Adult Education Centers and other training providers to promote.</i> Encourage and support professional development in your organization or business.	Year 1/ Continual
Identify labor force training needs within the region (labor market trends and projections, large employer needs, industries of competitive advantage, studies, etc.)	Businesses/organizations to discuss training needs with Winnipeg River Learning Centre (regional training provider) and J.U.S.T. Training (regional training service co-coordinator).	Year 1/ Continual
Coordinate training to occur in the region where possible.	Work with WRLC, Adult Education Centers and other training providers in the region to facilitate training needs for your local agency.	Year 1/ Continual
Brand and market CFWR as the regional center to provide resources, support and referrals related to business, economic and community development.	Assist with promotion of CFWR.	Year 1/ Continual
Establish a Business Mentorship Program to pair new entrepreneurs with experienced business owners in their sector.	Promote in local areas. Refer new business owners to CFWR.	Year 1/ Continual
Develop How to Capture Tourism Dollars Information Package and provide to businesses.	Discuss with staff in your business. Businesses determine and implement new strategies to capture tourism dollars.	Year 2/ Continual

Phase 2: Assess and plan for local and regional economic development.

Regional Actions	Local Actions Required	Timeline
Create and distribute a Community Investment Readiness Assessment to local governments to identify current strengths and areas to focus for local economic development.	Complete Assessment and provide a copy to CFWR.	Year 1
Develop an online survey that can be used by local communities to get public and business input regarding economic development. <i>Note: Could be part of the Community Investment Readiness Assessment.</i>	Access survey and any assistance required from CFWR.	Year 1
Create and distribute Local Economic Development Plan Template and Guide to local governments. <i>Note: This will include a Community Profile Template.</i> <i>Note: Communities will identify economic development and business attraction opportunities for their local area and all will be compiled for the region.</i>	Develop or update local economic development plan and provide a copy to CFWR. <i>Note: Consider ideas from Regional Planning Forum Meeting Notes.</i> Ask CFWR to facilitate local planning if required (no cost). Develop and market a Community Profile.	Year 1/ Continual
Promote and encourage communities to utilize MAFRD's First Impressions Community Exchange Program to assess what visitors see/feel when they first come to a community.	Make inquiry to MAFRD about the program and participate as required.	Year 1/ Continual
Develop a Socio-economic Plan to address future loss of business and jobs at AECL.	Neighboring communities to participate on Whiteshell Laboratories Community Regeneration Partnership.	Year 1/ Continual
Identify where gaps in goods and services exist and where competitive advantages/opportunities exist in the region.	Identify same for local area through local planning process and relate to CFWR.	Continual
Bring agencies/businesses together to discuss new business opportunities and collaborations. <i>Note: CFWR will coordinate and facilitate focus group meetings.</i>	Businesses to inform CFWR of opportunities they want to explore within their sector and across other sectors. Participate in meetings.	Year 1/ Continual
Eastern Tourism Association to develop a Regional Tourism Strategy with focus on day trips and tourism business development.	Participate in strategy development. Promote tourism opportunities.	Year 1/ Continual
Develop a Business Visitation Program Guide to gather key information from businesses and to discuss needs and opportunities.	Implement business visits/interviews.	Year 1/ Continual
Eastern Tourism Association to work with local areas to develop a Community Inventory of Tourism Assets to package for regional marketing.	Participate in asset identification and use in local promotions.	Year 1/ Continual
Design and provide a Mystery Shopper Program that businesses or Chambers of Commerce could implement to assess customer satisfaction.	Businesses choose to participate and receive feedback.	Year 1/ Continual
Determine the external businesses we want to attract to the region and where the best location opportunities exist. Develop an attraction plan to carry out.	Participate in meetings.	Year 2/ Continual

Phase 3: Prepare the local areas and region as a whole to be "investment ready".

Regional Actions	Local Actions Required	Timeline
Implement regional and local economic development initiatives identified through research and planning.	<p>Conduct local planning.</p> <p>Participate in regional planning by identifying how your organization, business or local government can contribute to regional goals and strategies.</p> <p>Ensure human and financial resources are in place to carry out plans.</p> <p>Report progress to CFWR to compile for regional communications.</p>	Year 1/ Continual
Reestablish the Regional Lobby Committee to advocate for common needs. <i>Note: Funding and training for economic development have been identified as needs.</i>	<p>Participate in committee.</p> <p>Forward issues and opportunities from local area to committee.</p>	Year 1/ Continual
Continue to address health challenges in the region through the collaborative efforts of the Eastern Region Community Health Committee.	<p>Participate in committee.</p> <p>Forward issues and opportunities from local area to committee.</p>	Continual
Continue to address regional economic development challenges and opportunities through the Regional Municipal Forum.	<p>Councils participate in meetings.</p> <p>Forward issues and opportunities from local area to committee.</p>	Continual
Identify key external agencies and establish synergies that can help move economic development and this plan forward for Eastern Manitoba (i.e. Capital Region, other CF's, government departments, funding programs, etc.)	<p>Provide ideas to CFWR.</p>	Continual
Continue to work towards establishing a Vocational Training Centre in the region.	<p>Assist with advocacy as required.</p>	Continual

Phase 4: Implement local/regional development initiatives and focused marketing.

Regional Actions	Local Actions Required	Timeline
Identify businesses that draw visitors to the region and partner with them to market Eastern Manitoba.	Businesses identified to distribute promotional materials and act as spokespeople for the region.	Year 1/ Continual
Promote big events and encourage communities to plan new ones. <i>Note: In 2017 Canada will mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Let's join Canadians and celebrate by hosting events throughout the region!</i>	Identify event opportunities and coordinate. Provide event information to CFWR for marketing purposes.	Year 1/ Continual
Develop a Regional Marketing Strategy that outlines each target market, key messages, branding, promotional methods, timelines, contributions, etc. <i>Note: Components of Regional Tourism Strategy will be part of this.</i>	Participate in strategy development. Contribute financially to the project.	Year 2/ Continual
Develop a Regional Welcome Wagon type program with key information and souvenirs from Eastern MB.	Provide information and souvenirs for packages. Identify and provide a local distribution site to give packages to new residents. Promote program locally.	Year 2/ Continual
Develop an Invest in Eastern Manitoba Website to showcase all community profiles and web links.	Complete Community Profile Template and provide copy to CFWR. Provide other local information required to populate Invest in Eastern Manitoba Website .	Year 2/ Continual
Create a " Come Back Home " marketing campaign to encourage previous residents that moved away to visit and consider moving back to the region.	Use promotional materials in local marketing.	Year 2/ Continual
Have a Regional Booth at Centralia to promote the communities to potential investors.	Provide local information as needed.	Year 2/Continual

Phase 5: Evaluate the impacts of efforts made.

Regional Actions	Local Actions Required	Timeline (Year 1 or Continual)
Gather baseline data required to monitor and measure the regional economic benefits we seek.	Provide information as required.	Year 1
Annually attain the same information gathered for the baseline data to track progress and impacts felt from efforts made.	Provide information as required.	End of Each Year
Provide quarterly progress reports on actions worked on each quarter.	Provide information as required.	End of Each Quarter

Evidence Basis for Plan - Appendixes

Appendix A: 2016 Eastern Manitoba Economic Profile

Appendix B: North Eastman REAP (Regional Economic Assessment Process)

Appendix C: Notes from Regional Economic Forum

CONTACT



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