

# **The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee**

## **Trends, Opportunities and Priorities**

### **Report Update**

**A PLANNING DOCUMENT**

**December 2005**

## **Table of Contents**

- 1. Background**
  
- 2. New issues for Sault Ste. Marie and the “District of Algoma”**
  
- 3. Initiatives in the community that address the key issues identified in the 2004 TOP report**
  
- 4. Updated TOP Planning Chart**
  
- 5. Appendices**
  - i. List of Community stakeholder groups who participated in the 2005/06 process**
  
  - ii. A description of the methodologies used to solicit community input**
  
  - iii. A description of the consultations**

## **1. Background**

In the fall of 2003, the necessity for a community strategy to address training and recruitment needs in the District of Algoma was identified as part of the Destiny Sault Ste Marie economic diversification strategy. Subsequently, a Workforce Investment Committee consisting of various employers, organizations and community stakeholders was struck to address this important area of workforce development.

As a result of these preliminary meetings, a regional Workforce Development Steering Committee was established, which included as founding members, representatives from; the East Algoma Futures Development Corporation, Superior East Community Futures Development Corporation, Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie, Destiny Sault Ste. Marie, and Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology. This committee has since expanded its membership to include other key stakeholders from the catchment area.

An agreement with the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and Service Canada was reached in June 2004 to support the research and issuance of an Algoma District Trends Opportunities and Priorities Report (TOP). This TOP Report clearly identified several issues in the District of Algoma that indicated an ongoing need for a coordinated effort to effectively identify training needs, to co-ordinate training availability, and for relevant timely labour force data.

MTCU entered into a second agreement in June 2005 with Sault College who, on behalf of the Algoma Workforce Development Steering Committee, agreed to develop two Labour Market Proposals for submission to Service Canada, update the 2004 Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (Top) report, prepare a report on the Enhancement of the Perception of Trades and to produce a report on Distance Delivery Capacity in North-Western Algoma..

A key requirement of the TOP Update Report is to revise and update the 2004 TOP Planning Chart that sets the priorities and issues to be dealt with in the coming year.

Of the nine issues identified in the 2004 TOP Report, three are outstanding and will require on going community action to address them throughout the coming year. In addition to these three remaining issues, two new labour market issues have been identified that will require further action in the coming year.

The current trends and issues remaining in our TOP Planning chart that will be considered for action during the upcoming year include:

- Negative perception of Apprenticeship;
- Poor communication of corporate training delivery;
- Need for distance education training in Superior East;
- Shortage of skilled construction workers; and,

- Shortage of skilled workers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

## **2. New issues for Sault Ste. Marie and the “District of Algoma”**

The 2004 TOP report identified nine issues that required action, since the publication of the report in 2004 six issues have been adequately dealt with or have been deemed to be beyond the scope of the committee and thus require no further action at this time.

The community consultation process of the TOP Update identified the following two issues as current and they are included as such in the following updated TOP Planning Chart.

- **Hospitality & Tourism**

Hospitality and tourism is an important component of the Sault Ste. Marie/Algoma economy and plays a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of the region. It is also one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the area and could potentially become the biggest job provider.

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, a division for the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, proposes to increase the role of Tourism Sault Ste. Marie as the tourism marketing organization for the city, through cooperative initiatives with the private sector and appropriate government agencies.<sup>i</sup>

Also, one of the key objectives emerging from a conference on Aboriginal tourism held in Sault Ste. Marie in April 2001, places a high importance on the need to “establish an effective ongoing process for the training and human resource development for the owners, managers and front-line staff of Aboriginal enterprises, emphasizing hospitality training, cross cultural training, business management and marketing.”<sup>ii</sup>

To help address some to the challenges of the hospitality and tourism industry, the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee plans to submit a Labour Market Partnership proposal to Service Canada that will address the following:

- Where is hospitality and tourism activity growing?
- Where will we find tomorrow’s workforce?
- What skills will they need?
- Are training programs in place to develop these skills?

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<sup>i</sup> Source: Partnership 21/2001-2005 Tourism Industry Plan

<sup>ii</sup> Northern Ontario Hospitality Tourism Institute 2004-05 Business Plan

- **Construction Industry**

Construction has boomed in Sault Ste. Marie this year. The city building department is reporting \$68.34 million worth of activity through the first 10 months of 2005, a \$29.47 million increase from a year ago. The year-to-date totals represent the 5<sup>th</sup> busiest year since records have been kept. *iii*

This increase in construction activity has created many challenges and workforce development issues for the Sault Ste Marie and area construction industry.

To address these challenges, the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee has agreed to submit a Labour Market Partnership proposal to Service Canada that will have as key deliverables:

- A full demographic analysis of the industry;
- A forecast of human resource requirements, by occupational group over the next 3-5 years;
- An assessment of the gaps between forecasted work force requirements and the current work force compliment, as well as of the effectiveness of current human practices and skill development activities in bridging these skill gaps; and,
- Recommendations to ensure that an area industry human resources plan, including both training and other human resource practices that address the critical issues identified.

### **3. Initiatives in the community that address the key issues identified in the 2004 TOP report**

The 2004 TOP process identified nine issues as current priorities in the District of Algoma; however, based on discussions only three of these issues are applicable today. *iv*

<b>Issue # 1</b>
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There exists an invisible barrier to employment for those prospective employees who have not achieved formal grade 12 qualifications from high school.
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#### **Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #1:**

- Adult Alternative School - Algoma District School Board

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*iii* Sault Star November 16, 2005

*iv* Issue numbering is for reference purposes only and not intended to indicate the priority or the importance of the issue.

- Holy Angels Learning Centre - Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board
- Prince of Wales Education Centre - Algoma District School Board
- Le Coin des Mots
- Literacy and Basic Skills and Ontario Basic Skills - Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology
- Soogoma Industries - Algoma District School Board
- The Canadian Hearing Society
- Niin Sakaan Literacy - Indian Friendship Centre
- Blind River Learning Centre - North Channel Literacy Council.
- Centre Alpha Rive-Nord - North Channel Literacy Council
- Enjikendaasang Learning Centre - Missisauga First Nation
- Elliot Lake Learning Centre - North Channel Literacy Council
- Elliot Lake Adult Education - Secondary School Credit Programming
- Algoma District School Board
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

**Next Steps: No further action required at this time.**

**Issue # 2**

There is an invisible barrier to completion of the apprenticeship programs due to reduced earning capacity that the apprentices endure during the training section of their apprenticeship program.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #2:**

There are currently no community initiatives underway that address this issue. There are Provincial initiatives that address this issue and this is not, on our opinion, a community issue.

**Next Steps: No further action required at this time**

**Issue # 3**

There continues to be some negative perception regarding apprenticeships as a viable skills development option.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #3:**

- Apprenticeship Works Event
- OYAP - Jump-Starts Careers
- Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Craft Worker - Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology
- ZAD-Consulting-Non Office Setting - Skilled Trades
- Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology - Pre-Apprenticeship Cook (Aboriginal) Program
- Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology Electrical - Mechanical (Trades Option)

**Next Steps: See Updated TOP Planning Chart**

**Issue # 4**

A more granular study of the level of current IT skills and requirements should be conducted across Algoma in order to indicate a clear current situational and needs analysis.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #4:**

- Analysis of Current IT. Environments – SubSpace Communications

**Next Steps: No further action required at this time**

**Issue # 5**

There has been difficulty in finding labour market and economic information that is current and easily accessible to the community.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #5:**

- Human Resources Skills Development Canada (Service Canada)
- Algoma District Information Network (ADIN)

**Next Steps: No further action required at this time.**

**Issue # 6**

The following occupations were identified as those most likely to suffer a shortage in the next three to five years (according to responses from surveyed employers) - Heavy Equipment Operator, Electricians, Millwrights, Registered Nurses/RPN's, Information Technology, Pharmacists/Pharmacy Technicians, Carpenters and Developmental Social Workers.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #6:**

- Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology – Electrical Mechanical (Trades Option)
- Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology - BScN Program
- Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology - Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Craft Worker

**Next Steps: No further action required at this time.**

**Issue # 7**

The percentage of the workforce in the East Algoma under the age of 30 is considerably lower than the district average.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #7:**

- East Algoma CFDC

**Next Steps: No further action required at this time.**

**Issue # 8**

The availability of corporate training that may be useful to other organizations is not communicated to other organizations in the district that could potentially benefit from it and thereby potentially make the delivery more efficient for a large number.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #8:**

- IWIN
- Community Quality Initiative

**Next Steps: See Updated TOP Planning Chart**

**Issue # 9**

Superior East region has a need for a conduit for a post secondary and adult education and/or training, with connectivity to the Internet to allow for distance education and training where appropriate.

**Initiatives underway in the District of Algoma currently addressing issue #9:**

- The Distance Delivery Capacity Study in North Western Algoma looks only at the distance education infrastructure and distance delivery agencies in Ontario.

**Next Steps: See Updated TOP Planning Chart**

#### 4. Updated TOP Planning Chart

The updated planning charts below reflect the trends and five current issues facing Sault Ste. Marie and the District of Algoma.

<b>Trend:</b>	<b>NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF APPRENTICESHIPS</b>
<b>Issue:</b>	Negative perception regarding Apprenticeships as a viable skills development option.
<b>Action taken to date:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held annual “Apprenticeship Works” event on November 22, 2005, to help increase Apprenticeship awareness among high school students.</li> <li>• OYAP will continue the “Jump Start Careers Program” which promotes Youth Apprenticeship Programs to parents of high school students.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	High, long-term
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work to change the perception of apprenticeship as a viable method of skills development.</li> <li>• Hold “Apprenticeship Works” event in November 2006.</li> </ul>
<b>Partners:</b>	Sault College School Boards Job Connect Trades Advisory groups MTCU OYAP Adult Education groups Literacy Councils
<b>Timelines:</b>	On-going
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	Increased apprenticeship awareness among high school students and their parents.

<b>Trend:</b>	<b>POOR COMMUNICATION OF CORPORATE TRAINING DELIVERY TO ORGANIZATIONS IN DISTRICT</b>
<b>Issue:</b>	The availability of corporate training that may be useful to many organisations is not communicated to other organizations in the district that that also require this training.
<b>Action taken to date:</b>	Preliminary discussion held with industry groups to examine network building and cost sharing of training
<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a database available to subscribers across the Internet that is designed to communicate training availability and identify training needs.</li> <li>• Consider the feasibility of an Industrial Training Network System that will bring</li> </ul>

together training providers, trainers, training programs and trainees in Sault Ste. Marie.	
<b>Partners:</b>	Community Quality Initiative Sault College Training providers Service Canada Area Workplaces Hamilton Training Board
<b>Timelines:</b>	January – December 2006
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	A database will be available to provide training information through an industrial training network. More effective and efficient training delivery methods.

<b>Trend:</b>	<b>NEED FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION TRAINING IN SUPERIOR EAST</b>
<b>Issue:</b> Superior East has a need for a conduit for post secondary and adult education and/or training, with connectivity to the Internet.	
<b>Action taken to date:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SubSpace Communications was engaged to study “Distance Delivery Capacity” in Northwestern Algoma. This information is applied to the Superior East region as well.</li> </ul>	
<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Action to be taken:</b> Establishment of distance learning centres.	
<b>Partners:</b>	Wawa EDC Sault College SubSpace Communications Superior East CFDC
<b>Timelines:</b>	January – December 2006
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	The establishment of distance learning centres that will make it easier for residents of Superior East to achieve academic success.

<b>Trend:</b>	<b>SHORTAGE OF SKILLED WORKERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY</b>
<b>Issue:</b> Due to increased building projects/activity throughout Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma district it has been forecast by industry professionals that the availability of a skilled and reliable workforce may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the sector.	
<b>Action taken to date:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of a LMP funding proposal to Service Canada to research the issues and develop a set of recommendations to addresses the issues.</li> </ul>	
<b>Priority:</b>	High

<b>Action to be taken:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a funding application and proposal to the Service Canada for funding to conduct research on the issues.</li> <li>• Implementation of the research findings and recommendations.</li> </ul>	
<b>Partners:</b>	Service Canada Sault Ste. Marie Labour Council Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association
<b>Timelines:</b>	January – April 2006
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	Identification of the reasons for worker shortages and their possible solutions.

<b>Trend:</b>	<b>SHORTAGE OF SKILLED WORKERS IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY</b>
<b>Issue:</b>	The hospitality/tourism industry does not have adequate numbers of workers to fill current job openings.
<b>Action taken to date:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of a LMP funding proposal to Service Canada to research the issues and develop a set of recommendations that addresses the issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a funding application and proposal to the Service Canada for funding to conduct research on the issues.</li> <li>• Implementation of the research findings and recommendations.</li> </ul>	
<b>Partners:</b>	Service Canada Sault Ste Marie EDC Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Sault Ste Marie Hotel Restaurant Association Sault Ste Marie Chamber of Commerce, Business Development Committee.
<b>Timelines:</b>	January – April 2006
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	Find reasons for worker shortages and possible solutions.

## **5. Appendices**

### **i. List of Community stakeholder groups who participated in the 2005/06 process**

Sault Ste Marie Innovation Centre  
Sault Ste Marie & District Labour Council  
United Steelworkers of America LU 2251  
Sault Ste Marie Construction Association  
Service Canada  
Algoma District School Board  
Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MTCU)  
IWIN  
Team Sault Ste Marie  
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)  
Canadian Steel Trade & Employment Congress (CSTEC)  
Sault Ste Marie Community Quality Initiative  
Superior East CFDC  
East Algoma CFDC  
Sault College Job Connect  
Sault Ste Marie Hotel Restaurant Association  
City of Sault Ste Marie Social Services  
Algoma Region Human Resources Professional Association  
ZAD Consulting  
Algoma University  
Sault Ste Marie Community Futures Development Corporation  
Destiny Sault Ste Marie  
Sault Ste Marie Chamber of Commerce, Business Development  
Committee  
Sault Ste. Marie Community Resilience Forum  
Tourism Sault Ste Marie  
Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie

### **ii. A description of the methodologies used to solicit community input**

The methodology used in the TOP Report update included interviews with Algoma Workforce Investment Committee members, business, labour and education representatives that clarified the key workforce development issues facing the region, and provided parameters within which the balance of the update would develop.

A comprehensive review of existing literature and data on workforce development was undertaken. This included both statistical and quantitative data, and material drawn from Internet searches.

### **iii. A description of the consultations**

Interviews and meeting were conducted with community stakeholders and included representatives from

- Relevant federal and provincial departments agencies;
- Employers;
- Industry Associations;
- Union Spokespersons;
- Educational institutions; and
- Other organizations.

These interviews and meetings focused on reviewing and updating the key issues identified in the 2004 TOP Report.