

Economic Development Accomplishments 2007-2013



COMMUNITIES
with OPPORTUNITIES

HASTINGS COUNTY

January 30, 2014

Executive Summary

This report summarizes major accomplishments for the period August, 2007 to December, 2013. The intention is not to detail all of the tasks and day-to-day activities, but rather provide evidence of the progress being made with the County's economy, particularly in the area of creating new jobs and businesses.

Real economic growth can be measured as follows:

- The number of jobs across the 14 member municipalities has increased by 6.1% (682 jobs) between the 2006 and 2011 Census years;
- 340 more businesses were added to the County's economy between 2009 and 2012; and,
- More than 250 local entrepreneurs have received direct assistance from our office in the form of starting a new venture, expanding their operations or resolving an issue.

The *foundation of the County's economic development function* has been established and guided through several strategic initiatives, including:

- The Economic Development Action Plan;
- The Premier-ranked Tourism Master Plan;
- The 10-year Cultural Plan; and,
- The Investment Marketing Strategy and "Communities with Opportunities" brand which won the 2010 Ontario Lieutenant Governor's Marketing Award.

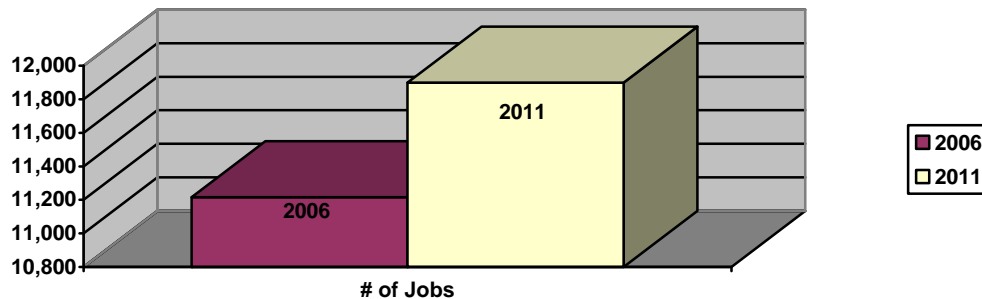
A great deal of work and implementation of the preceding strategies happens through *partnerships and networking* with many local and external organizations, including:

- Harvest Hastings;
- Municipal Economic Development Partners Group;
- Enterprise Facilitation Resource Board;
- Hastings Opportunities in Tourism (HOT) Working Group;
- Ontario East Economic Development Commission; and,
- Partnerships with neighbouring Counties to attract investment in artisan food and beverages (e.g. Food & Beverage (FAB) Region).

Benefits and Examples of Accomplishments

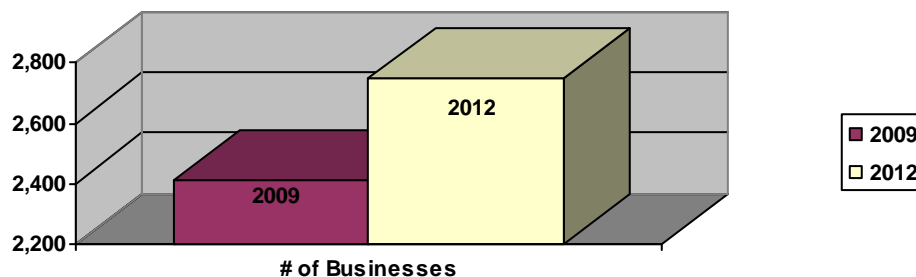
New jobs and businesses

- According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food & Rural Affairs and Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), between 2006 and 2011, the total number of jobs (employees & self employed) across our 14 member municipalities **increased by 6.1% (682 jobs)**. In contrast, the same source indicates the number of jobs in all of non metropolitan Ontario (rural) combined was a negative -1.5%.



Source: EMSI and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

- According to Canadian Business Patterns Data, in 2009 there were a total of 2,410 businesses operating across our 14 member municipalities. In 2012, this number jumped to 2,750 which is a difference of **340 more businesses (an increase of 14%)**.



Source: Canadian Business Patterns, December, 2012

Leveraged funding

- We attracted more than \$1.5 million of provincial, federal and other partner funding into the local economies of Hastings County to undertake various initiatives, such as:
 - Premier-ranked Tourist Destinations Framework;
 - Investment Marketing Strategy and Brand;
 - Cultural Plan; and,
 - Enterprise Facilitation.

A clear first point of contact for entrepreneurs

- We provide a central office for entrepreneurs or investors, regardless of where in the 14 member municipalities they wish to locate;
- We help direct people to funding opportunities, other resources and help guide them through the process of getting answers that they need;
- With external funding (and 100% funding in 2010), we instituted the position of a permanent part-time Enterprise Facilitation Coordinator who provides confidential business coaching to support the opening or expansion of a business. Funding at a rate of 25% has been provided by the province annually to support the costs of the Coordinator since 2011; and,
- More than 250 businesses and new entrepreneurs have received hands-on assistance from the Enterprise Facilitation Coordinator leading to more than 100 startups or expansions and more than 100 new jobs being created.

Supporting tourism product development

- We completed the Premier-ranked tourism study and formed the Hastings Opportunities in Tourism (HOT) Working Group to help implement it;
- Established the position of a permanent part-time Tourism Development Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the County Council approved plan;
- With volunteer help and collaboration with other organizations in the community, we have been actively working on improving underperforming and underdeveloped assets such as recreational geology, businesses offering wellness services, outdoor recreation opportunities, agri-tourism and arts and culture;

- We led the commencement and implementation of a seasonal resident survey and visitor survey to better understand how to leverage the interests of visitors and cottagers; and,
- Created the HOTie Tourism Awards and organized an annual Tourism Dinner as an initiative to raise the profile of tourism businesses and industry across the County.

Concentrating on the needs of communities across the County

- We developed an investment marketing strategy and brand that promotes all 14 member municipalities with a recognizable logo and tagline – “Communities with Opportunities”. Our strategy and brand won the 2011 Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Marketing Excellence in Ontario – the highest economic development award in the province. The strategy is used to guide investment marketing efforts such as social media, and better understand who our target markets are and how to reach out to them – e.g. Lone Eagles and Value-added agriculture opportunities (craft brewing);
- Formed the Municipal Economic Development Partners Group with representation from all 14 member municipalities to share resources, ideas and collaborate on initiatives; and,
- We have actively lobbied senior levels of government to help support and seek the approval and implementation of both the proposed Biomass Project in Bancroft and the Pumped Storage Project in Marmora & Lake.

Partnering with other Municipalities

- We have established strong working partnerships with neighbouring Counties’ economic development officials;
- We are a founding member of Ontario’s Artisan Food & Beverage (FAB) Investment Marketing Initiative which developed an award winning
- handbook on how to start an artisan cheese-making business, and also a start-up handbook for craft brewing; and,
- We continue to be an active member of the Ontario East Economic Development Commission to conduct investment marketing to metropolitan areas around North America and globally.

Provide leadership on “grass roots” initiatives

- We are a founding member of Harvest Hastings – an initiative to promote local produce and forestry/wood products;
- With 100% funding we developed the Arts Route to promote artisans and galleries across the County – to help showcase creative talents; and,
- We led the development of a County-wide 10-year Cultural Plan (with City partners).

Concluding remarks

These accomplishments would not have been made possible without the support of County Council. As well, our member municipalities, their councils and staff, have been supportive through their involvement, such as contributing their time, conducting improvements to municipal infrastructure and beautification of commercial districts.

Special thanks also to the endless hours, commitment and contribution made by many of our local organizations and volunteers. This includes the members of the County’s Economic Development Advisory Committee, and members of the Municipal Economic Development Partners Group. Those who have contributed to the Hastings Opportunities in Tourism (HOT) Working Group are also acknowledged, and most especially, a special thank you to the Community Futures Development Corporation of North & Central Hastings and South Algonquin for providing important financial assistance and allowing economic development staff to use their office and meeting space as a “satellite” office.