

NEWS RELEASE
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WEST NIPISSING EMBARKS ON MAJOR PROJECT TO HELP BUSINESSES.

The West Nipissing Economic Development Authority, West Nipissing Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Partners Sudbury East / West Nipissing are in the initial planning stage of a major economic development project, according to Royal Poulin, chair of the Economic Development Authority. The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project is designed to stimulate economic development and growth by assisting existing businesses in West Nipissing.

“Helping our existing businesses is the primary objective of the project. Other communities have had very good results with BR+E projects” said Joanne Savage, Mayor of the Municipality of West Nipissing. “Before considering this project we talked to community leaders in several other areas that have used this approach to business retention and expansion. They were very positive about the results,” said Debbie Robitaille, chair of the BR+E Leadership Team.

For example, in Huntsville one of the key findings was the lack of competent staff and the need for people who are comfortable working with cash day-to-day, and having an understanding of unique applications for billing and accounting. In this case, the goal was to establish a mechanism to deliver the skills required by local businesses by a specific date.

“It is great!” stated the Huntsville Economic development officer. “The results are outstanding and we have gained the community support by accomplishing this project.” “It’s a tool to test the waters of your business community, and I strongly recommend this project to other communities.”

Before a community can assist existing businesses it must identify the businesses’ needs, concerns, and problems. Through the BR+E project, local volunteers will visit businesses and gather information. The local leaders running this program will then try to solve the problems or better meet the needs identified by the businesses.

“A key aspect of this project is confidentiality,” according to Monique Hébert, a BR+E Ontario Consultant. “We do not publish information on individual businesses. The project is very careful about this confidentiality issue.”

The information gathered from the visits will be compiled and analyzed, leading to recommendations for future economic development initiatives for the Municipality of West Nipissing. “One of the reasons for the popularity of the BR+E project is that it not only provides a long range plan for the community but also yields some short-range tangible results,” said Monique Hébert.

For further information:

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