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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **NEWS RELEASE: BR+E COMPLETION OF SURVEY PROCESS**

Since early January 2006 the Economic Development Authority, Economic Partners Sudbury East/West Nipissing, the West Nipissing Chamber of Commerce and the Province of Ontario have been diligently working in partnership to give community businesses the opportunity to voice their opinions about our local economy.

The West Nipissing Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project officially began during the month of January as over 20 trained volunteers met with 62 businesses who agreed to participate to identify their needs and concerns. They were asked their opinions about government, and what ways the local business climate could be improved.

“The visits that we have done with local businesses have four purposes,” said Monique Hébert, BR+E Project & Economic Development Coordinator. “First we wanted to show our local businesses that we really appreciate the contributions they are making to our local community. Second, we wanted to see if they had any concerns, and, if so, if there are ways we could help. Third, we’re offering to help our local businesses take better advantage of business resources. Finally, we wanted the businesses to help us set priorities on future directions of local economic efforts.”

The information obtained from the surveys will be analyzed during the next few months and follow-up assistance will be provided to several local businesses. Recommendations based on the survey results will then be developed for use in local economic development strategies. Results of the survey and the recommendations will be shared with the community during a Public Meeting that will be coordinated this fall.

They say "Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world." “The Business retention and Expansion program is a tool, that hopefully will help us provide tangible solutions.” stated John Candie, General Manager of Economic Partners Sudbury East/West Nipissing CFDC. "This is where our vision, our actions our ability to lead through these challenges will make our community stronger, competitive, sustainable and the BR+E process is a way where we can really start tracking and benchmarking the results."

“West Nipissing is extremely fortunate for having great people, people that care and work together, to make West Nipissing what it is. The BUSINESS RETENTION PROGRAM required a high level of involvement. The need of volunteers to be on the task force team, volunteers to conduct business interviews and importantly, businesses that volunteered their time and information. The next step is the analysis and dissemination of the feedback obtained.” said Joanne Savage, Mayor of West Nipissing.

“The economy of our municipality depends on the existing businesses. The BR+E is a pro-active way of determining needs, issues or assistance required. Many business organizations and agencies believe in this approach. Thank you to Economic Partners

Sudbury East West Nipissing CFDC, the Chambers of Commerce and the West Nipissing Economic Development Authority for establishing a partnership for this initiative.

Thank you to the volunteers for their time and commitment. Your participation is indispensable.”

The West Nipissing Chamber of Commerce is also enthusiastic about this project. “This program sees the business community coming together in a proactive way to enhance the local economy as a whole while also addressing specific concerns of existing businesses. Of course, the real test comes once the report is in; the BR+E is a tool, but how we use it, the actions we take as a results, will determine how successful it is in promoting our growth. The West Nipissing Chamber of Commerce, like all the BR+E partners, is committed to ensuring this program leads to effective strategies and concrete action to help our local businesses thrive,” says Chamber president Suzanne Gammon.

The results of BR+E Ontario pilot project have been impressive: development of a more business-friendly attitude, new local investment, more jobs, fewer barriers to development and easier access to financing, to name a few.

**For further information:**

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