



Lunenburg Queens  
Regional Development Agency

# CLEAR DIRECTIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE LUNENBURG QUEENS  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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## Executive Director's Message

There are many factors that can affect a business's bottom line, some more predictable while others are unforeseen. In the case of workplace health, there are dozens of safety and health factors that can be addressed by the business owner which have a direct impact on employee productivity, turnover, sick time, and so on.

Linda Thompson, Primary Mental Health Care Coordinator with Mental Health Services of the South Shore, dropped in to speak with us about the link between workplace health and the bottom line. During our discussion she spoke of the work being done to help business owners initiate employee programs that are designed to attract, retain and develop good workers.

Good employee health is a business asset that cannot be overlooked. Linda Thompson has prepared the following article to explain this further.

-- Neil Emenau, Executive Director

## What is the Bottom Line on Workplace Health?

### Tax Dollars Going to Increased Healthcare Costs

It is estimated that chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or arthritis, cost Nova Scotia taxpayers more than \$3 billion each year. Health care costs are rising at a faster rate than general government revenue. Health care spending accounts for 43.3 % of the provincial budget, compared with a national average of 39%. If current trends are not changed, by 2026, 83% of total revenues will go to spending on sickness.

We have an aging population; with age there will be an even greater strain on the health care system, which translates into higher tax rates. Our youth (the workers of tomorrow) already have a high incidence of obesity, inactivity and poor diet, all factors that contribute to chronic disease.

Psychological health is interrelated with physical health. Those with mental health issues are at greater risk of chronic disease, especially heart disease. It is estimated that mental illness costs the Nova Scotia economy approximately \$338 million a year.

### Workers Compensation Costs

Accidents in the workplace are often directly related to health status. Employees who are not mentally alert or physically fit are more at risk of accident and injury. They are less resilient and often require a longer rehabilitation period before returning to work.

### Lost Productivity

NS experiences the second highest rate of days lost per worker due to illness and disability (9.1 days versus the Canadian average of 7.5 days). Based on workdays lost, the loss in productivity in NS due to illness and disability is \$1.138 million.

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Lunenburg Waterfront  
Association Inc.  
902-634-3282

The Lunenburg Waterfront Association is recruiting members to help secure and revitalize the Town of Lunenburg's working waterfront. The Association formed last summer after the Province of Nova Scotia purchased 22 waterfront properties and eight wharves from Clearwater Fine Foods. Please visit [www.lunenburgwaterfront.ca](http://www.lunenburgwaterfront.ca) to download a membership application.

## How Does the Health Status of Your Employees Affect the Bottom Line?

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### Direct Costs

1. Sick time
2. Insurance costs: prescription drugs and other treatment usage, long-term disability, increased premiums
3. WCB costs
4. Increased taxes to pay for health care

### Indirect Costs

1. Replacement labour and overtime
2. Absenteeism and presenteeism
3. High staff turnover
4. Loss of skilled worker; retraining costs
5. Equipment damage

### Costs to Competitive Business

1. Lowered creativity and innovation
2. Lowered productivity and morale
3. Decreased quality
4. Lowered ability to attract business

### Health: A Business Asset

Successful employers view health as a business asset, a crucial way to address employee retention and productivity and create a future that benefits the whole community. The good news is that the incidence and economic impact of chronic disease can be lowered significantly by changing many of the lifestyle factors that contribute to ill health. A number of businesses in Nova Scotia have already begun workplace health initiatives which have lowered business costs and improved productivity.

For more information please contact Linda Thompson @ 634-8801 ext. 3209.

**“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”**

### Small Business Week 2006

Planning is well underway for Small Business Week 2006, to be held from October 15 – 21 across our two counties. This year's theme is “A World Without Boundaries” – today's businesses have a world of opportunities open to them presented by the enormous potential of new and expanding economies across the globe.

The week-long event pays tribute to small business, the basis of our local economy, by providing professional development workshops and presentations, and by creating opportunities to share success stories and talk to experts. The 2006 event is shaping up to be the largest in years, with plans for expert panels, workplace health specialists, marketing experts, a business exposition, a women's luncheon, export-related discussions, networking sessions and more! Watch for upcoming advertisements in the local papers!

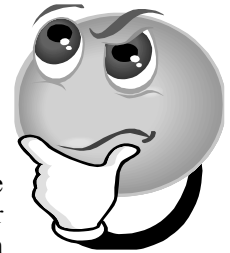
### Lunenburg County Business Excellence Awards

Set this date aside in your calendars! The 2006 awards gala is set for October 30, 2006 at The Oak Island Resort. Hosted by the local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, the Business Excellence Awards celebrate Lunenburg County business success stories under these six categories:

1. Small Business
2. Large Business
3. Entrepreneurial Achievement
4. Grassroots
5. Innovation
6. Export Achievement

Lighthouse Publishing has once again signed on as the event's major sponsor. Award criteria and nomination forms will be published in the Bridgewater Bulletin and the Progress Enterprise in the coming weeks.

### Succession Planning – As a Human Resource Tool



In our talks with local business, we have found that only a small number have some sort of succession plan in place. It's easy to put off planning when everything seems to be going so well, right? Wrong!

Succession planning is not only planning for the day that you retire or sell your business – it also refers to the ongoing development of potential successors that could provide a smooth transition and minimum disruption if you lose a key member of your staff. By having some sort of plan in place, either formal or informal, a disruption (such as one created by a sudden illness, retirement or departure) will be marginal.

One small but significant method of preparing for a middle or high management departure can be solved by the proper delegation of projects or jobs. It can assist the manager in getting jobs completed more efficiently and also provide awareness of which staff can handle more responsibility. It further provides staff familiarization with some of the manager's responsibilities, enabling a few to be partially prepared, if required, to fill in for different aspects of the manager's job, thereby providing continuity instead of disruption.

The bonus aspect of this proper delegation will be that it can provide a continuous flow of talented people to meet the organization's management needs, build trust and loyalty amongst staff, and possibly provide an influx of new views and ideas.

**The What, Why, Who, When & How of BRE**

**What is BRE?**

BRE is the acronym for Business Retention and Expansion. BRE is a grassroots approach to economic development that has been very successful in other communities. It offers the LQRDA an efficient means to determine business opportunities and challenges.

During a scheduled visit, the selected business is interviewed, and the data collected is analysed by a team of economic, community and workforce development organizations serving businesses in Lunenburg Queens. The team is called the Local Action Team (LAT), and their job is to determine any necessary follow-up actions to assist the business. BRE is a means of linking the business community and the front line deliverers of business and economic development programs and services and it is a framework for team building and collaborative problem-solving.

**Why do BRE?**

BRE programs work to strengthen relationships between economic development partners and the business community. The idea is to help existing businesses thrive, expand, and carry on, which is an important element of economic development. Existing businesses are the basis of our economy – they create 40-60% of new jobs, and they have invested time, money and effort into our communities. They also help us attract new businesses by establishing a better business climate. The program gives economic developers solid feedback on the business climate, information on potential growth opportunities, and the barriers that might hinder growth.

**Who is doing the BRE Pilot Project?**

The Nova Scotia Association of Regional Development Authorities (NSARDA) has initiated this BRE program. In addition to LQRDA, the program includes five other RDAs – Southwest Shore Development Authority, Hants RDA, Kings CED, Pictou RDA and Colchester County RDA.

The Steering Committee for the initiative comprises core representation from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP), NSARDA, Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), and the Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development (OED).

**When will the BRE Program run?**

The BRE program has actually already begun! In Lunenburg Queens, the business visits have been ongoing since early July 2006.

**How is the BRE Program being run?**

The BRE Account Executive, in conjunction with the Local Action Team (LAT), is responsible for carrying out the business visitation program. The Account Executive plays a significant role in connecting businesses and service providers to support business growth and help resolve issues and barriers to growth.

**Lunenburg Opera House: the task ahead...**

There are many projects across the region deserving of community support, guidance and participation, and this newest project is most definitely one of them. The Lunenburg Opera House is being renovated by the not-for-profit society known as the Lunenburg Arts Council.

As reported in the news, the building was purchased by Farley Blackman when he became concerned that the building might be purchased and used for something other than a cultural centre. It is easy to understand this level of passion when you learn that Mr. Blackman’s entire family is part of the cultural scene – his wife, Courtney Blackman, works in the fashion industry, his mother was a professional ballerina, his father a Hollywood art director, and his brother a professional writer.

With the community’s help, Mr. Blackman hopes to restore the building to some of its original grandeur, and bring more community theatre and musicals to the Town of Lunenburg. Denise Green, Executive Director, is on site and encourages community members to stop by and see how their contributions are helping the restoration progress.

# NEWS FROM THE LQRDA!

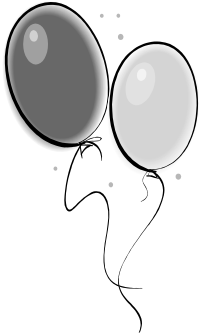
## Queens County Fairgrounds Project Nearing Completion

The Queens County Fair takes place from September 19 – 21. Not only will the 126-year-old agricultural fair be celebrating a birthday, it will also be celebrating a significant facelift! With the aim of enhancing tourism and year-round visitation to the North Queens area, the Queens County Fair Association with the North Queens Board of Trade looked beyond the typical grounds and facilities maintenance and set out to bring major grounds improvements to the Fair.

The project, which is nearing completion, will be finalized for the September 19 opening ceremony. Included in the improvements are: construction of an illuminated equestrian building for evening use; construction of bleachers with capacity for 400 spectators; renovation of the administrative building; landscaping; installation of a security chain link fence; removal of the old two-storey Co-op building; various painting and repairs; and design and implementation of a marketing strategy, which will include the creation of a website and promotional materials. The website, currently under development, is set to launch toward the end of August. Get set to check it out at [www.queenscountyfair.ca](http://www.queenscountyfair.ca)!



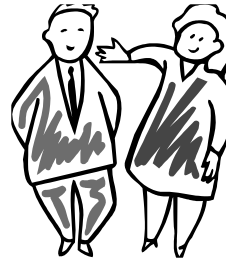
## Community Celebrates Grand Opening!



Congratulations to the New Ross Country Market on their opening! Saturday mornings from June to October, residents from New Ross and surrounding area, visitors, and cottage vacationers will be able to support each other and the local economy by shopping for a variety of products at the Country Market, located at the Ross Farm Museum.

The dedication of those involved in this project represents the epitome of Community Economic Development at its finest.

## New Faces @ The LQRDA!



Stephanie Beaton has been hired under the NS Association of Community Business Development Corporations Youth Internship Program. This program is targeted to 18-34 year old individuals who have graduated from a college or university within the past 3 years and are currently unemployed,

under-employed or employed in an area unrelated to their field of study. This program gives young people the opportunity to use their skills and acquire new ones in supporting Canada's economic growth through community economic development. Stephanie, a recent graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University, has been hired for an eight-month term to work on specific projects identified through our strategic plan as well as assist other development officers/agencies.

Drew Craswell, General Office Clerk, has completed his first year of a Business Administration Degree at Acadia University and will be returning to full-time studies in September. Over the summer months, Drew will be creating an "in-house" virtual library from all of the reports and studies presently housed in our main office in Bridgewater as well as performing general office tasks which will give him a chance to gain insight into the workings of an economic development organization.



## Happy Birthday LQRDA!

The LQRDA has celebrated its 10th anniversary! During the 2006 LQRDA Annual General Meeting in June, awards were presented for 10 years of dedicated service to Allan Webber, Chairman; John Jones, Citizen Representative; and Tina Connors, Community Economic Development Officer.

There were numerous award worthy moments during the past 10 years and we thank our communities for your help and support and look forward to serving another 10 successful years!

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