

Facing the Future

The Socio-economic impact of the global recession
on Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County



A report for the Perth County Social
Research & Planning Council



PERTH COUNTY
Social Research &
Planning Council

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Note: The names appearing in three of the four personal profiles in this report have been changed to protect the privacy of the people featured.



Imagine being told the factory where you've worked for over 20 years is closing – for good – and you're soon going to be jobless. To make matters worse, your husband is also out of a job because he works there too.

Gone are the \$75,000 annual family income and all the benefits you both took for granted for all those years. Just think – kids to support, a mortgage and no post-secondary education, in fact no high school diploma. What do you do? Where do you turn? How do you begin to start over?

What would you do if you lost your job at 58? Too young to retire, but too old to be considered a catch by another employer.

And try and imagine going from a \$24-an-hour job, to Employment Insurance benefits of \$472 a week, which eventually run out just like your savings. Still without a job, you're forced to apply for social assistance, which means you've now got an even bigger challenge – how to live on just \$572 a month.

These are the kinds of situations an increasing number of Perth County residents are facing as the impact of the global recession is absorbed locally.

Historically, Perth County has enjoyed enviably low unemployment rates compared to provincial and national levels. While the rest of Canada saw rates hovering around 8%, Stratford and Perth County were roughly 5% – which economists technically consider full employment.

Then the global recession came along.

“Stratford is no longer immune to the global economic forces. We've seen unemployment rates jump in the 1980s and early '90s, but what we're seeing now is a permanent loss of jobs.”

Randy Mattice, Economic Development Officer, City of Stratford

The Perth County Social Research & Planning Council commissioned this report to help identify the impact of the recession on the people of Perth County, the social services they rely on and the organizations they turn to for help finding work. The report will also identify emerging new opportunities and the resources required to support them as the future unfolds.

“In a small town like St. Marys any loss of jobs is felt. There's a trickle-down effect on all our other businesses and services. People are hurting here. It's not just about economics, it's about people. We're talking families here.”

Rob Brindley, CAO, Town of St. Marys



The Effects

The economic picture – disappearing jobs:

The number of people in Stratford and Perth County receiving Employment Insurance benefits reached an all-time high of 2,360 this March – almost two-and-a-half times as many recipients as there were in March 1997 – which is the earliest year EI statistics were tracked.

Statistics Canada

Stratford

Stratford has a population of roughly 32,000 and a labour force of close to 18,000, one-quarter of which works in manufacturing and construction, the rest in arts and culture, retail, commercial, health, education, and the service sectors.

Although people often cite the \$200 million in economic spin-offs generated by the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Stratford's manufacturing sector generates \$450-million in payroll alone. And for every \$1 paid out in wages, it's estimated there's a \$7 economic spin-off. That translates into an economic infusion to the area of more than \$3 billion.

But in the roughly one-year period from 2008 to mid-way through 2009 Stratford lost about 1,200 manufacturing jobs.

When Crane, a plumbing product manufacturer, shut its doors for good 250 jobs vanished overnight. Another 230 disappeared with the closure of Dura Automotive and another 500 when automotive parts manufacturer, Johnson Controls, closed down. The latest blow came in August when brake and accelerator pedal assembly maker KSR International closed its plant, taking with it more than 200 jobs.

Five Stratford-based plants have closed shop in the last few years and while five new Japanese automotive-related plants have also opened, Stratford's unemployment rate is still peaking at 8%.

And the sad reality is that many of these manufacturing jobs are never coming back, leaving 1,200 people – and almost as many families – facing an uncertain future.

“Gone are the days of the \$32-an-hour line worker. These people, if they're lucky enough to find new manufacturing jobs, are looking at something closer to \$17 an hour.”

Randy Mattice, Economic Development Officer, City of Stratford



What now? – Janice & Tom’s Story

When Janice and Tom graduated from high school they both took jobs at the Campbell’s Soup Co. in Listowel. The money was just too good for the 18-year-olds to pass up, but they told themselves they were only going to stay a year, then head off to college.

It never happened.

Janice and Tom stayed on at Campbell’s, eventually got married, had five kids and enjoyed their combined family income of about \$75,000 a year, plus benefits, until last year when they got the bad news.

Tom received his lay-off notice in April 2008 and Janice got hers two months later. Campbell’s eventually closed its doors for good in May 2009, taking with it 530 jobs.

Both now unemployed, Janice and Tom are worried sick about what’s going to happen, especially without any post-secondary education. They’ve been living on EI benefits and severance pay while considering their options, which includes the possibility of applying for a government-sponsored re-training program – but the future is still anything but clear and it’s taking its toll on everyone in the family.

“It’s very stressful and with stress comes a lot of arguing,” says Janice. “The home life takes a real dive. The kids can’t understand why they can’t do this or that anymore and why we can’t get them what they want for their birthdays. Christmas was really different last year.”

Janice and Tom aren’t alone. The whole town has been affected either directly or indirectly.

“There are a lot of people worrying about their houses and mortgage payments, wondering how they’re going to support their families,” says Janice. “People are hurting; some are drinking heavily, marriages are in trouble and there have been suicide attempts.”

“Everything and everyone has been affected. It’s one big awful snowball effect.”



Perth County

The situation is strikingly similar in Perth County. Between July 2008 and March 2009, Perth County saw a 75% increase in its unemployment rate. It went from 4.8% (the lowest rate in Ontario and a 30-year low) to 8%.

The county, and Listowel in particular, was hit hard when Campbell's shut its doors in May 2009 and 530 jobs disappeared. When Cooper-Standard Automotive in Mitchell had a major downsizing, another 151 people were suddenly out of work.

Although nine out of 10 businesses in the county are small firms with 10 or less employees, more than half the labour force of roughly 21,000 works in agriculture, manufacturing or agri-food, which is a cross between the two.

Those companies managing to weather the recession also have their challenges as they attempt to update operations to better compete in the marketplace - changes which have major implications for workers whose skills can, and will, become quickly outdated.

“We’re still going to have manufacturing and agri-food but the way those businesses operate and their use of technology are definitely changing. In many industries everything from paperwork to the manufacturing itself used to be done by hand. Now it’s all computerized, which requires retraining – that includes on-the-job training, as well as training for displaced workers so they can become employable again.”

Bernia Wheaton, Economic Development Co-ordinator, County of Perth



St. Marys

'The Stone Town' has been particularly hard hit by the global recession.

St. Marys lost 600 manufacturing jobs between January 2008 and June 2009. Dana, which manufactured truck frames, was the town's single largest employer so when it shut down in January and 450 jobs essentially evaporated, the impact was devastating. Dana alone accounted for 10% of the town's workforce capacity of 4,500.

But residents don't need to know percentages to understand the effect. In a small town of just 6,500 people everybody knows somebody who's out of work and struggling. In some families both spouses are now jobless.

And all these people are worrying and wondering, "What does the future hold? What do I do?"

"This kind of unemployment has a huge effect on the town and the quality of life people enjoy. People are also less apt to be involved in the community when they're out of work. They can't afford to be."

Rob Brindley, CAO, Town of St. Marys

The people picture - social services swamped:

People need jobs to make money and they need money to live. Without it, day-to-day life becomes far more difficult, challenges are amplified, relationships strained.

Those working in social services see it every day – and they're seeing a lot more of it lately.

Ontario Works (OW), which provides financial assistance when all other avenues have run out, has experienced a 32% increase in its local caseload between November 2008 and May 2009. The local OW caseload in May was 697 (a case can be an individual or a family), and it includes 444 children under the age of 18, who in all likelihood will be living in poverty among families dealing with multiple challenges and unpromising futures.

Since the recession hit, Ontario Works has also been seeing an increase in older workers and more first-time applicants – people who actually have savings and investments – which they quickly learn must be used up before they're eligible for OW benefits.

"We're seeing a lot more new faces and they're frightened. These people don't know if they're going to be able to keep their houses. Some clients are reduced to tears."

Heather Lovie, Municipal Service Manager, Stratford Ontario Works



The growing caseload makes it increasingly difficult for the 15 full-time OW staff to do their jobs properly, which means customer service suffers. The call-backs to clients and referrals to job finding services and other resources all take longer, which means getting people back to work also takes longer.

To make matters worse, Ontario Works is bracing for another big wave of applicants this fall as employment insurance benefits run out.

The Huron-Perth Centre for Children and Youth has also seen a dramatic increase in referrals in the past year. As of June 1, 2009 there were 264 children on the waiting list, 166 of them from Stratford, most of whom will wait 12 to 14 months for treatment. (Total includes Stratford, Listowel and Clinton offices.) Economic pressure was a key factor in many of the referrals.

Centre staff have been so overwhelmed with referrals they actually considered closing intake altogether, but opted instead to provide referrals to other services, reading materials and general advice to help people cope as best they can.

The Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society (CAS) has also seen numbers rise since the recession began.

While the number of families referred and assessed by the CAS has not changed significantly over the past 18 months, the number of families requiring ongoing intervention has reached an all-time high. In 2007/08 there were a total of 197 families requiring ongoing supervision. That number had climbed to a record-breaking 225 by June 2009 ~ only half-way through the year. And the expectation is the worst is yet to come this fall and early winter when employment insurance benefits run out for many people and escalate family issues.

Requests for credit counselling at Family Services Perth-Huron are also up more than 30% so far for the first half of this year, and waiting times have doubled from two to four or more weeks. An increasing number of seniors are also seeking assistance and requests for general counselling services are also up by about 30%. Clients report suffering from marital and emotional stress, depression and other symptoms with a direct tie to the recession.

“When we do credit counselling we look at the whole picture – spending habits, addiction issues, job loss, even unforeseen illness. Debt is a human issue, not just a financial one. If you don’t tie the two together, you’re going to lose every time. It’s just too bad there isn’t a greater investment in preventative programs that promote financial fitness – especially in times like these.”

Sue Melkert, Executive Director, Family Services Perth-Huron

(Refer to Appendix A for information on budgeting and credit counselling programs.)



Health at risk

Employment – and the income derived from it – affect diet, housing, self-esteem, social interaction, chronic illnesses and even recreation, all of which have an impact on health.

Research even shows there's a direct relation to income and how people rate their own health. For example, those who earn less than \$20,000 a year are on average almost three times as likely to rate their health as poor compared to people earning more than \$80,000 a year. Those with annual incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000 a year are more than twice as likely to give themselves a poor health rating. In contrast, people who are active and employed are more likely to rate their health as good.

Research also shows that eating a nutritious diet helps fight chronic illnesses, including certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. In Perth County, the average price of a nutritious food basket is about \$136 per week for a family of four. The rising cost of food only adds to financial stress, especially for those earning less than \$20,000 a year and needless to say, when children and families can't afford to eat well, their health is at risk.

Similarly, poor housing conditions can lead to health problems. In 2005, roughly one-quarter of all Perth County households could not afford a typical two-bedroom rental home.

Not surprisingly, low-income groups and the unemployed tend to have more stressful lives. They're also less likely to have health care benefits, such as drug and dental plans, which makes staying healthy even more challenging. Recreation opportunities, which can help cope with stress, are also much more limited.

Those who are unemployed also miss out on the non-financial benefits working people enjoy, including social inclusion, improved self-esteem and opportunities for self development.

“Among the most important determinants of health are social factors such as income, education and housing. As such, employment has a profound impact on our health and well-being.”

Dr. Miriam Klassen, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Perth District Health Unit

Canadian Mental Health Huron Perth Branch reports increases in the number of Perth County residents seeking help. One-third of those screened at intake indicate the reason for requesting support is directly related to economic stress.

Other evidence the recession is hitting Perth County residents hard is the growing number of people using local food banks. House of Blessing is helping to feed 65 new families – above and beyond the number of new families they helped in 2008 – and that was only half-way through the year. In June 2009, the demand for food hit an all-time high with 463 people accessing the House of Blessing's food bank.



The Salvation Army estimates they're also seeing a 20% to 25% increase in the number of people using their food bank.

“There are an awful lot of people hurting out there.”

Florence Kehl, Founder, House of Blessing



Shrinking donations, growing needs

The role of the United Way of Perth County is to raise and distribute funds to support programs and services in the best interest of the community at large. Much of the United Way's support comes from the manufacturing sector through pledges and donations from workers at local plants. The recession has delivered a double whack to the United Way: fewer workers and businesses giving, yet a growing list of requests for support.

Even before the recession hit, a lot of people in Perth County were barely getting by. Social service agencies are now stretched to the limit as they work to support a growing number of individuals and families dealing with hardships only deepened by the recession.

The needs are many and varied, from financial counselling and re-training opportunities to subsidies for children to participate in recreation programs. There is also a need to expand capacity to deal with rising levels of stress and domestic violence.

Some organizations are making cuts to staffing levels, while others may soon be forced to close their doors for good. Community service providers are being pushed to work more collaboratively than ever before in an effort to do more with less. The impact of the global recession is far-reaching. Clearly no one in Perth County has been left untouched.

“We're seeing first-hand the shifting reality in our community. Businesses are hard-pressed to make donations, while local agencies have rising caseloads to manage – usually with stagnant funding levels. It's a vicious cycle.”

Ellen Balmain, Executive Director, United Way of Perth County



When challenge and opportunity intersect

Re-training for the future

“The importance of a good basic education and, increasingly, post- secondary education and training cannot be emphasized enough. There has been a dramatic increase in both the education level and the skills required for all occupations ... The notion of lifelong learning as an integral part of one’s life is gaining momentum.”

Ontario Job Futures, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

The global recession has radically changed labour conditions in Perth County and while no one can predict the future with 100% accuracy, the prevailing opinion is that most of the manufacturing jobs lost during the past 18 months are gone for good. And those that will return are expected to look a lot different when they do: there will be fewer of them, they’ll likely be lower paying and some upgrading of skills will definitely be required.

One thing seems clear: a high school diploma may no longer be enough to get a job in the ‘new economy’, not in Perth County or anywhere else in the country.

So what to do?

The unemployed in Perth County have several options: they can retrain, retire or start their own businesses, depending on their age and aspirations. Opportunities do exist and there’s evidence people are taking advantage of them – and in record numbers – with growing support from local organizations.

For example, the volume of clients accessing the Self-Employment Benefit Program, where participants get help developing a business plan while collecting EI benefits, has doubled in the past year. Average monthly applications of about 35 jumped to 70 by June 2009, according to Jaret Henhoeffter, General Manager of Perth Community Futures Development Corporation, which offers free business consulting.

And the number of people starting a Return to Work Action Plan through Partners in Employment has almost tripled, jumping from 69 in January 2008 to 204 in January 2009. The non-profit organization helps people in Perth and Huron counties find and keep jobs by offering them a wide range of supports, including access to government funded programs.

Particularly hard hit by the recession have been the 50- to 60-year-olds, who are too young to retire and not necessarily financially prepared for it either. Their age, combined with the realization that some kind of retraining is in the cards, can make the future seem daunting.



Back to the future – Barb’s story

Barb worked in automotive-related manufacturing for over 25 years. She never dreamed at age 54 she’d be out of a job and forced to start a new career.

Now four weeks into a year-long program at triOS College in Kitchener, Barb is studying to become a paralegal, thanks to the government-sponsored program Second Career, which she accessed through Partners in Employment. The program pays for her tuition and some transportation costs, while her employment insurance benefits help with living expenses.

“I’m not going to lie – I’m struggling,” admits the Perth County woman. “It’s very difficult and there’s a lot to remember in such a short period of time. I’m not dumb, but this is intense learning.”

Barb has a triple challenge these days: she’s training for a whole new occupation, she’s learning how to use a computer for the first time, and she’s trying to live on a lot less money while she’s at it.

There are five hours of classroom time each day, followed by another eight hours on the computer doing homework and taking quizzes. Barb says there’s no time for anything else and her house looks like a tornado ripped through it.

There’s also the fact that most of the other students are in their 20s, which makes Barb wonder if her age is going to be an impediment to employment once she’s finished the course. “These kids have 30 or more years to devote to work; I have much fewer to offer and that does concern me.”

Still, Barb believes the days of plentiful, high-paying manufacturing jobs are gone, which is why she’s committed to retraining for the more employment-friendly service sector.

“I try and keep my chin up and tell myself I’m not the only one going through this,” she says. “I don’t want to whine about it, but this is a huge challenge. I’m either very brave or crazy – and sometimes I’m not sure which one it is.”

“Learning plays such an important role in the social and economic resilience of the country that I think we really need to pay attention to this.”

*Paul Cappon, President and Chief Executive, Canadian Council on Learning,
Maclean’s magazine, June 24, 2009 edition*



Post-secondary students, aged 20 to 24, also found it more difficult to find work this spring and summer. According to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate for this group was roughly 18% in May, compared with 15% the same time last year.

High school students looking for summer jobs also took a hit. With more people competing for fewer openings and being less choosy because of it, summer jobs were harder to get this year. Jobs that used to be dominated by students are now fair game for all kinds of unemployed workers.

The ‘New Economy’

While manufacturing jobs have taken the brunt of the recession, the good news is there is opportunity on the horizon – and cause for hope. The following list of emerging industry sectors is based on Human Resources and Skills Development Canada reports and on local experience. The emerging sectors promise strong employment prospects, including:

- aerospace
- biotechnology
- call/data centres (for example technical support)
- environment (‘green collar’ jobs)
- gaming
- multimedia/digital media
- telehealth
- tele-learning

“There’s tremendous opportunity and growth in solar, wind, geo-thermal and in home energy retro-fits, but there aren’t enough trained companies out there to do the work. The challenge will be training people fast enough to meet the demand.”

*Jaret Henhoeffler, General Manager,
Perth Community Futures Development Corporation*



There's also a chronic shortage of workers in all the skilled trades – which spells opportunity for unemployed Perth County factory workers willing to be retrained.

The County of Perth Business Retention & Expansion Project reported in July 2008 that 83% of local businesses surveyed ranked the availability of labour as “very important” in ensuring their business remained competitive. At the same time, 38% of businesses indicated they were unable to recruit sufficiently qualified employees.

On a national level, Statistics Canada predicts the country will need 10 million skilled trade workers in the next decade alone.

The federal government's \$62-billion stimulus package, announced earlier this year, includes significant spending on infrastructure and is expected to further boost the need for skilled workers – and the need for training programs.

“There are 3,000 construction projects funded by the government that are now in the design and engineering stages. These companies don't know where they're going to find enough qualified people to do the work.”

*Jaret Henhoeffler, General Manager,
Perth Community Futures Development Corporation*

Local training programs, like those delivered by the Stratford-based Technical Training Group, are helping to address the skilled trades shortage in Perth County. Government-supported, locally delivered and geared to the needs of the local business community, these are the kinds of solutions Perth County officials and business leaders are counting on to prepare its workforce for the future. Other opportunities, like the Ontario government's Second Career program, are providing long-term training and financial support to local unemployed or underemployed people, preparing them for today's job market in sectors where jobs are more plentiful.

“There are some fabulous government training programs out there right now. People may be surprised to learn that for those who qualify it's possible to go back to school *and* get an income and some living expenses. ”

Deb Hotchkiss, Manager, Partners in Employment

For some people, self-employment is proving to be a way out of joblessness. The Perth Community Futures Development Corporation has seen a lot of these entrepreneurs over the past year. Many of them are aging Baby Boomers who, after being laid off, weren't quite ready to retire for one reason or another. Launching their own businesses is a way to supplement retirement savings, help children through university, earn travel money, or ease them over to the time when they qualify for various pensions.



“Our welding program is full and expanding. What we need now is government-sponsored, locally delivered retraining opportunities in the other trades.”

Mark Roth, Welding Coordinator, Technical Training Group

Going green – Chris’s Story

Chris Hall is going underground to brighten his employment future.

The 40-year-old decided to take the entrepreneurial route and seize the growing opportunities in the field of green energy, beginning with geo thermal power.

After doing extensive research – which included visits to international green energy leaders Germany and Austria – and developing a solid business plan, Chris and his two partners launched the Stratford-based Discovery Geo Energy in April.

The company provides sales, service and installation of geo thermal systems to the residential market, and also plans to eventually add solar photovoltaic (which generates electricity), solar thermal power (generates heat), and wind turbine energy services. Geo thermal systems collect heat from the ground, radiated from the sun, and transfer it to a heat pump, which replaces a conventional furnace. In summer, it works in reverse: the pump collects heat from the house and transfers it back into the ground.

With a university education in history and business, Chris has had a surprisingly varied career path so far. He’s served in the army, worked as sales manager at several car dealerships and was recently the general manager of an engineering firm. Eager to start his own business, Chris first did a year’s worth of research, which included seeking advice and support from the Stratford-Perth Centre for Business.

He and his partners are now poised to take advantage of the growing demand for green energy solutions.

“The price of oil, electricity and gas just keep getting higher and higher. The consumer knows this and is eager for green alternatives,” says Chris. “This is good for the environment, good for the consumer – and we believe good for business as well.”



Vision and Collaboration: Unlocking the future

Vision plus collaboration equals progress and promise. Nowhere is this more evident than in the new Stratford Institute, now heading into its inaugural year. A satellite campus of the University of Waterloo, the research and education institute will study, create, and commercialize the next wave of digital media – considered to be one of the fastest-growing industries in the new economy, with an estimated value of more than \$2.2 trillion over the next five years.

The \$20-million facility is a collaboration among the University of Waterloo, Open Text (Canada’s largest software developer), the City of Stratford and the Province of Ontario.

Expectations are that the Stratford Institute may well become a launching pad to a new economic driver for the area, enticing high-tech companies to set up shop in Perth County and bring the new era of jobs with them.

“Drawing on the creative talents of Stratford and combining the region’s art, music and theatre programs with abundant technical and business expertise allows researchers and students to mix technology, the arts and business at a critical time in their career development. These highly skilled graduates will be well equipped to lead a new wave in Canadian innovation and tech startups on the global stage.”

Tom Jenkins, Executive Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer, Open Text

Never too late to upgrade – David’s Story

David is preparing to catch the digital media wave.

After being laid off from a Stratford factory, he applied to the Ontario Government’s Second Career program through Partners in Employment and was accepted. Second Career is now covering the costs of his retraining, as well as some of his transportation and living expenses.

David is enrolled in a 26-week course in digital media at Conestoga College and feeling a lot more optimistic about his future job prospects because of it.

“You’ve got to change with the times or you get left behind,” he says. “I think there’s going to be a lot more employment options with this training.”

What’s interesting about David’s situation is the fact he’s 62 years old.



A graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design, he's had 42 years of experience in graphic design, almost all of it contract work, so he has no company pension plan. That's one of the reasons he plans to work indefinitely – that and the fact he enjoys working when he's doing what he was trained for.

Three years ago, however, David found it impossible to find a job in graphic design so accepted a position with a local factory, mainly doing odd labour jobs. He was clearly under-employed but at least it paid the bills. Then, like so many other people in Perth County, he got downsized.

“Without this program I wouldn't be able to go back to school. I couldn't afford to. I'd be out looking for anything I could find like so many others are doing right now,” he says.

“This new training builds on my existing designs skills, but brings me up to date on advances in technology, which is where I need to go to stay current – and employable.”



Vision and collaboration are also at work with The Rural Economic Development Project. Here, provincial and municipal governments are joining forces with local businesses in a three-year, \$2.3-million community revitalization project to promote economic growth, attract investment and support local businesses. Project partners include the Province of Ontario, The County of Perth, Municipality of West Perth, Municipality of North Perth, Township of Perth South, Township of Perth East, Perth Community Futures Development Corporation, Perth County Visitors Association and the North Perth Chamber of Commerce.



Clearly, the new economy will require collaborative efforts from all sectors: public, private and the community.

Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County have already pledged to put aside their own political interests and work together to tackle economic problems and devise solutions that will benefit everyone.

This kind of visionary collaboration bodes well for the economic future of Perth County.

“You have to pool your resources when you can. We recognize that from an employee’s perspective the political red line is meaningless. If you live in Mitchell, but you work in Stratford, you don’t care that there are two separate political systems. You just care that you’ve got a job. This is long-term sustainability we’re talking about here.”

Bernia Wheaton, Economic Development Coordinator, County of Perth



Recommendations

- #1** That more locally-based training opportunities, especially in the skilled trades, continue to be supported and coordinated with emerging employment sectors.
- #2** That local zoning, licensing regulations and infrastructure are in place to attract and accommodate more businesses tied to the new economy.
- #3** That the City of Stratford, the Town of St. Marys and the County of Perth continue to work together and with private, public and community sectors to develop and deliver a proactive regional strategy for socio-economic development and new job creation and that this strategy particularly consider the following important community needs and gaps:
- More mental health support services to help families and individuals coping with stress
 - Additional resources for financial counselling
 - Additional resources to enable emergency dental care and medication purchases
 - Exploration and pilots of social businesses and new economy businesses (for example, green energy parts manufacturing or creative arts) that deliver skills training and business growth for individuals seeking employment.

“The age of easy is over, but the age of opportunity is just beginning.”

*Jaret Henhoeffler, General Manager,
Perth Community Futures Development Corporation*

Acknowledgements/sources

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Huron-Perth Children’s Aid Society Job Connect, Conestoga College
Partners in Employment Proaction Centre, Listowel Salvation Army
Stratford Perth Centre for Business Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Ontario Job Futures, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Maclean’s magazine, June 24, 2009 Perth County Rural Economic Development Project Summary
Service Canada - Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, June 5, 2009
The County of Perth Business Retention & Expansion Project



Appendix A

Finding a Path that is right for you: New Career, Education, Self-Employment, Volunteering

Please note the following regarding the resources identified in this Appendix:

- The PCSRPC does not necessarily endorse or propose a particular website.
- The information included in this Appendix may not be inclusive of all of the resources available.
- Check specific websites for changing qualifications.
- Check with your local library for updates and additional resources.

Step #1: Self Assessment

To start to guide your decision-making for your new path you should start by assessing your current abilities and determining what areas you should work on.

Job Bank: Explore Adult Learning Options www.jobsetc.gc.ca (Training/Learning)
Adult learning options, including tools for self-assessment to guide adults to an effective learning plan.

Job Bank: Career Navigator and Quizzes www.jobsetc.gc.ca (Career Exploration)
Tools for determining your abilities and interests and provides suggestions on occupations matching your profile. Also provides information on wages, number of jobs available and employment prospects to help you make an informed career decision.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
www.hrsdc.gc.ca (Essential Skills)

Literacy and essential skills toolkit to help address challenges, and provide training and learning supports.

Ontario Skills Passport <http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca>
Essential skills assessment tools and samples (resume, cover letter) for job hunting.

Your local library www.northperth.library.on.ca
www.pertheast.library.on.ca www.stmarys.library.on.ca
www.stratford.library.on.ca www.westperth.library.on.ca
Books (print & audio), DVDs/videos, electronic resources & professional staff assistance on careers and job searching. For instance, “Career Centre” on Stratford Public Library’s main floor.

CareerCruising www.careercruising.com
Available free of charge from Perth East Public Library and Stratford Public Library:
www.pertheast.library.on.ca www.stratford.library.on.ca
Assessment tools, detailed occupation profiles, and comprehensive post-secondary education information, for career exploration and planning.



Step #2: Determine Career/Interest Areas

Next you should assess your career and interest areas. Knowing what type of work engages you most can help you with any path you take next, whether it is in education, a new career, self-employment or volunteering.

Service Canada: Job Futures

www.jobfutures.ca

Career and education planning tool that provides useful information about 265 occupational groups and describes the work experiences of recent graduates from 155 programs of study.

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu (Job Seekers)

'How to' resource for anyone needing education or training.

Labour Market Information

www.labourmarketinformation.ca

Current labour market information to help make informed decisions of areas or need for employment choices.

Career Development eManual

www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca

Six "steps" to help you manage your career development process.

Your local library

www.pertheast.library.on.ca

www.stratford.library.on.ca

www.northperth.library.on.ca

www.stmarys.library.on.ca

www.westperth.library.on.ca

Books (print & audio), DVDs/videos, electronic resources & professional staff assistance on careers and job searching. For instance, "Career Centre" on Stratford Public Library's main floor.

TypeFocus Careers

<http://typefocus.com>

Discover your personality type and what careers fit your natural strengths.

Try exploring some career fields.....

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)

www.caf-fca.org

Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council (CARS)

www.cars-council.ca

Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council (CAMC)

www.camc.ca

Canadian Food Industry Council (CFIC)

www.cfic-ccia.ca

Canadian Plastics Sector Council (CPSC)

www.cpsc-ccsp.ca

Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC)

www.supplychaincanada.org

Canadian Trucking Human Resource Council (CTHRC)

www.cthrc.com

Construction Sector Council (CSC)

www.csc-ca.org

Electricity Sector Council (ESC)

www.brightfutures.ca

ECO Canada (ECO)

www.eco.ca

Information and Communication Technology Council (ICTC)

www.ictc-ctic.ca

Library Career Centre

www.lib.sk.ca/sla/careercentre

Mining Industry Human Resource Council (MIHR)

www.mihrc.ca

Petroleum Human Resource Council of Canada (PHRCC)

www.petrohrsc.ca

Police Sector Council

www.policecouncil.ca



Step #3: Starting on your new path

Education

If you have chosen to further your education, the following resources can help you to find financing for your education, a school and your program of choice.

CanLearn

www.canlearn.ca

Tools and financial tips to start lifetime learning.

SchoolFinder

www.schoolfinder.com

Comprehensive information on college and university tuition, facilities, programs, admission requirements, deadlines scholarships and financial aid for specified areas.

Second Career Ontario

www.secondcareerontario.com

This is an Ontario government program that pays tuition, if certain qualifications are met.

Employment Ontario

www.edu.gov.on.ca (Employment Ontario)

Provides a variety of links to resources for financing your education.

Conestoga College

www.conestogac.on.ca

Fanshawe College

www.fanshawec.ca

Westervelt College

www.westerveltcollege.com

Trios College

www.trios.com

Liaison College

www.liaisoncollege.com

Culinary Arts

Medix School

www.medixschool.ca

Health Care

Technical Training Group

www.technicaltraininggroup.org

Technical

New Career

If you have decided to start a new career, you can now explore the government opportunities for employment programs and/or start your job search with the below resources:

Service Canada: Employment Services For You

www.servicecanada.gc.ca (Employment)

Provides a wide scope of information to employers and those looking for jobs. The site also provides information on the government employment strategies.

Job Bank

www.jobbank.gc.ca (Job Search)

Allows you to search for jobs in your area with specific to the type of work that you are looking for.

www.jobbank.gc.ca (Employment and Job Services, Other Job Sites)

- Lists other internet job searching websites for Canadians.
- Lists specialty job searching websites.
- Lists government job searching websites.
- Lists placement agencies.

Partners in Employment

www.partnersinemployment.on.ca

Agency that assists people in Huron and Perth Counties to find and keep employment.



Self-Employment

If you have chosen to become self-employed, the below resources can help to get you started.

Stratford Perth Centre for Business www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca

Local information and support for starting your own business.

Service Canada www.servicecanada.gc.ca (Life Events)

Information and planning for starting your own business.

www.servicecanada.gc.ca (Employment, Active Employment Measures)

Provides information about the Self-Employment Program, which supports eligible insured participants to become self-employed.

CanadianCareers.com www.canadiancareers.com (Finding Work)

Links to resources for persons who are looking at becoming self-employed.

Canada Business www.canadabusiness.ca

Resources for entrepreneurs.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to gain experience, network and make a difference in your community. Find out more about volunteer opportunities by using the below resource:

Information Perth www.informationperth.ca

Database that offers potential volunteers an organizational snapshot of any/all community agencies and organizations throughout the County.

Volunteers In Perth www.volunteersinperth.com

Provides information on volunteer opportunities in Perth County.

Step #4: Building a strong financial future

Ensuring your financial stability is key to building a strong future for yourself and your family. Below are resources to help you solve any financial problems that you may be facing and to help you work towards financial wellness.

Family Services Perth-Huron www.debtontario.com

Provide professional, confidential counselling services as well as tools and information on managing your money.

Ontario Association of Credit Counselling www.oaccs.com

Tools for regaining financial control and achieving financial wellness.

InCharge Debt Solutions www.inchargecanada.ca

Resources to find solutions to debt problems and tools for money management.





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www.socialresearchandplanning.ca

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