

STRATEGIC PLAN

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regional District of Central Okanagan**

2007

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Regional District of Central Okanagan

VISION

“A prosperous region, where smart growth complements its natural resources and amenities embracing new global economic and social change.”

MISSION

“Working in partnership to facilitate a healthy, dynamic and sustainable community economy by supporting existing businesses and encouraging appropriate new business investment.”

VALUES

The EDC takes an objective and informed approach to research and evaluation while recognizing the relationship between economy, society, culture and environment. The Commission strives to work in the public interest and with all levels of government regardless of political affiliation.

The Board of Directors and the Staff of the EDC are committed to the following values:

- Integrity
- Fairness
- Co-Operation
- Leadership by Example
- Dignity
- Professionalism

2007 EDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive:

Ross Langford, Chair	Petraroia Langford Rush LLP
Steve Burns	Burns Innovation Group
Bob Monaghan	Kelowna Flightcraft Group of Companies
Scot Speiser	Business Development Bank
Mark Stober	Al Stober Construction Ltd
David Webb	best HR Solutions Inc.

Directors:

James Baker	Mayor, District of Lake Country
Andre Blanleil	City of Kelowna
JC (Broc) Braconnier	Community Futures Development Corporation
Laurel Douglas	Women's Enterprise Centre
Gilles Dufort	Harvest Golf Club
Jayne Fosbery	Westbank First Nations
Diana Groffen	OSTEC
Sharon Hallberg	District of Peachland
Jim Hamilton	Okanagan College
Tommi Hanley	Shop the Valley
Darlene Hartford	Peachland Chamber of Commerce
Brad Imrich	Vadim Software
Robert Louie	Westbank First Nations
Mark John McInnes	Multi-Power Products Ltd
Len Novakowski	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Doug Oworm	UBC-Okanagan
Barrie Pachenski	RBC Royal Bank
Bill Redmond	Retired (<i>Founder, Past President & CEO, HRI Supply</i>)
Roger Sellick	Kelowna International Airport
Ben Stewart	Quail's Gate Estate Winery
Michael Trenn	Westbank Chamber of Commerce
Renee Wasylyk	Troika Development Inc.
Peter Withers	Lake Country Chamber of Commerce

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2007 Strategic Plan differs from the operating plans of the past four years. While the Commission's activities still fall within three primary focus areas – ***Business Enhancement, Business Attraction and Business Facilitation*** – the actual business issues on which the Commission will focus will drive the plan for 2007. The latter reflect the areas where the needs of the Central Okanagan business community are greatest, and to a certain degree critical: issues related to ***labour, infrastructure and valley-wide initiatives***.

	Business Enhancement (70%)	Business Attraction (10%)	Business Facilitation (20%)
Labour	70%	20%	20%
Infrastructure	15%	10%	60%
Valley-Wide	15%	70%	20%
	100%	100%	100%

Through the strategic planning process, the industry leaders and regional representatives who comprise the EDC Board recognized how the Commission's emphasis on Business Enhancement over the last four years has provided in-depth information directly from business owners about the most common challenges facing Central Okanagan businesses. One-on-one site visits conducted through the EDC's Business Visitation Program number over 1,000 interviews since 2002, and clearly identify where Central Okanagan businesses need the most assistance.

In the last year especially, the challenge of attracting and retaining workers has become the paramount barrier to growth and development for Central Okanagan businesses. This is an acute problem and therefore an area of focus for the Commission in 2007.

Given the rapid population growth of the Central Okanagan that is projected to continue to increase, the need for improved infrastructure – from broadband connectivity to improved transportation routes – is another major factor in the growth of the regional economy. This and other challenges common to communities throughout the Okanagan Valley are the basis for a third area of focus – valley-wide initiatives.

It is important to note that considerable staff time is also devoted to the following core activities that take place on an ongoing and/or daily basis:

CORE ACTIVITIES

- **Respond to public inquiries daily by phone, fax, e-mail and walk-in traffic** (*over 11,000 inquiries in 2006*);
- **Clearing house for information** (*approximately 288 site visits with established Central Okanagan businesses in 2006, plus hundreds of one-on-one consulting/advisement meetings*);
- **Data Updates** (*Economic Profile, Community Profiles; Business Confidence Survey*);
- **Valley-wide initiatives** (*Okanagan Partnerships, Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society (OVEDES)*);
- **Work with companies seeking to locate in the Central Okanagan;**
- **Work with groups of companies within specific industry sectors to ensure new markets developed** (*i.e., assist with market diversification strategy development; participation in trade shows; industry-specific website developed, and other initiatives*);
- **Newsletter development** (*excellent response to electronic newsletter and distribution system - distributed weekly to up to 2,000 businesses, proving an effective way to increase attendance at events and awareness of programs and initiatives*);
- **Website Updating** (*regular updating of links and downloads on site – 1.5 million hits annually*);
- **Ongoing communication with various agencies and organizations** (*Okanagan Science and Technology Council, Chambers, Community Futures, Women's Enterprise Centre, etc.*).

MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

The importance of key performance measures to monitor the work of the EDC is reflected in the identification of specific activities, budget implications and timelines for the implementation of projects. During the audit periods of June and December 2007, the outcomes will be reviewed to measure the value of these activities.

BACKGROUND

Business Enhancement, Business Attraction and Business Facilitation

BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT

Research in the field of economic development shows that the majority of wealth in a community is generated by the existing business base and that a strong and viable business retention focus is fundamental to a successful economic development strategy. The EDC has made business enhancement activities the mainstay of its programs and services for the past four years through industry-specific studies, business confidence surveys, and over 1,000 in-person site visits with Central Okanagan businesses. As the EDC has assisted more local companies in dealing with these issues through its Business Enhancement Program, awareness of our services and the demand for them has increased.

In addition to assisting businesses individually, the Commission's Business Enhancement Program, and its Business Visitation Program in particular, have provided a vehicle for identifying the major challenges to doing business in and from the Okanagan. Three areas of focus that impact significantly on our economy set the tone of the 2007 Strategic Plan. These relate to labour (employee attraction and retention); infrastructure - from broadband connectivity to improved transportation routes, and ensuring a valley-wide approach to issues that affect the economy of the entire Okanagan Valley.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

The continued success of a region is, in part, dependent on its ability to attract new businesses to the region. The EDC has influenced the decisions of several major companies to locate in the Central Okanagan including companies in the manufacturing, high technology, financial, retail and contact center industries. Thousands of new jobs have been created in the region as a result.

We know from our Business Enhancement work that as the community matures, there is need for capital to facilitate continued growth and expansion of the many small businesses that make up the Central Okanagan. This was key to the EDC's decision in 2005 to shift our Business Attraction activities to attracting *investment dollars into the valley* rather than *attracting new businesses*. In addition, there are now a number of established niche markets and products that can be marketed specifically. Business attraction initiatives have, therefore, been increasingly targeted towards specific markets including those identified through the Okanagan Partnership as having the greatest potential for growth such as aviation, technical research and a wide range of manufacturing.

As well the Commission has spent considerable effort and time toward the development of a film studio for the Okanagan Valley. A study completed as part of the 2006 Strategic Plan, has identified the potential and laid out a path toward success of such an operation. Resources in conjunction with the Okanagan Film Commission will be part of the 2007 plan.

A major valley branding initiative was launched in 2005, and a consistent regional branding message is being used in all of the EDC's marketing activities, from its own promotional collateral to initiatives aimed at attracting workers and investment to specific industries. Attending trade shows outside the Valley have proven to be an effective way to attract both business investment, and potential employees to the region and will continue to be a major part of the business attraction activities in 2007.

For many entrepreneurs looking to locate a business in the Central Okanagan, the range and volume of statistic/demographic information available through the EDC office is a unique and vital resource.

Maintaining systems and processes that ensure the EDC can respond to inquiries for information will continue to be a priority in order to support the effectiveness of all business attraction activities.

BUSINESS FACILITATION

Effective business facilitation is also key to regional economic development. This requires developing an information infrastructure that includes tools to ensure good communication with decision-makers at all levels of government and other community organizations. The EDC must ensure that a business perspective is incorporated into the decision-making process by these entities, and be aware of the financial resources available for business retention and growth. Effective business facilitation also requires the EDC to work with groups outside its specific region on growth management strategies with regional benefits.

Activities in this area are ongoing and proactive: continuing to promote a valley-wide approach to economic development; making sources of information and assistance known and accessible to the business community; improving communication between regional planning entities and initiating and supporting programs that ensure the long-term economic viability of the region such as the opportunities associated with UBC Okanagan and the Okanagan Partnership. The Business Confidence Survey initiated in 2005 that is delivered every two months has proved to be a valuable measure of how companies feel about their future and the general economy and will continue to be implemented as a tool for regional planning.

2007 OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY AND TACTICS

BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT

Objectives

1. Continue site visits and follow-up assistance to Central Okanagan businesses in all industry sectors with the goal of visiting 200 businesses by December 31, 2007. Continue visits to the largest employers in the Region with Central Okanagan municipal representatives as well as EDC directors attending selected visits.
2. Expand on the Visitation Response Program (informational programs created to address the common challenges identified through the Visitation Program) to include a wide range of topics related to recruitment and retention.
3. Attend an increased number of emigrate events which will focus on skilled human capital recruitment.
4. Work with a group of sustainable energy companies to increase awareness of the capabilities of this sector and enable it to realize new marketing opportunities.
5. Create an immigration attraction and settlement committee to look at how the immigration program/process can be more effective and provide services to those who have recently arrived.
6. Continue to implement the Agricultural Field Service Program initiated in 2006 with more programs aimed at helping farm-related businesses diversify and develop strategic, sustainable businesses.
7. Continue to develop the opportunities associated with the Okanagan Cultural Corridor through the services of the Cultural Tourism Support Officer established in 2006.

Business Enhancement: Strategy and Tactics

1. CONTINUE SITE VISITS

Using the services of the EDC's contracted Business Enhancement Specialist, visits will be ongoing to Central Okanagan businesses in all industries. The goal will be to interview 200 businesses by the end of the year and provide individual follow-up as required. A systematic approach to include municipal representatives and EDC directors on visits will be employed.

The findings of the Visitation Program will continue to be used to develop programs and initiatives in the Strategic Plan. The breakdown of businesses visited will be 25 businesses in Peachland, 25 businesses in Lake Country, 25 businesses in Westbank and 125 in Kelowna.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify businesses to visit (coordinated between consultant and Executive Director) | Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultant to organize meetings with businesses | Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultant to advise EDC directors of appropriate visits for them to attend, and invite specific municipal representatives to attend visits in their areas, as appropriate | Ongoing |

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| ▪ Follow up to meetings (consultant) | Ongoing |
| ▪ Consultant to provide detail visit breakdown | Monthly |
| ▪ Consultant to provide overview of visits, results, trends, etc. | June/Dec |

Partnership and Financial Implications

Continue to work with the Chambers of Commerce, OSTEC and the business community in general to identify companies to visit. The program budget is \$60,000.

2. EXPAND THE VISITATION RESPONSE PROGRAM

In 2004, the EDC introduced the Business in the Park series of educational programs – short, inexpensive programs held for groups of up to 20 businesses in Lake Country, Kelowna, Westbank and Peachland. To date, Business in the Park programs on hiring, marketing, internet research techniques, capitalization, procurement opportunities related to the 2010 Olympics, and the Provincial Nominee Program have been well received for the efficient, convenient delivery of pertinent information. With the widespread need for information on attracting and retaining employees identified among Central Okanagan employers, the Visitation Response Program will be expanded in 2007 to provide a greater number of programs on mainly labour-related topics. Wherever possible, partners will be sought for these programs to maximize the publicity and offset the increased time and resources required of the EDC to hold these events.

Other information and networking programs will be held in conjunction with appropriate partners to meet the needs expressed by the business community.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| ▪ Set dates and identify presenters and partners to deliver programs on topics suggested at the 2007 Strategic Planning session. | February |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|

Partnership and Financial Implications

The EDC will partner with the appropriate organizations for various programs including the Chamber of Commerce(s), OSTEC and Community Futures. Additional partners may be identified as other program series are developed. Budget for all identified series and sponsorships is estimated to be \$2,000.

3. EMIGRATE TRADE SHOW PARTICIPATION (RECRUITMENT)

While recruitment will be an underlying theme at all trade events that the EDC attends, the Commission will attend up to six shows aimed exclusively at recruitment in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany and France in 2007. Some of these are repeat shows for the EDC based on the number of workers moving to the region as a result of the leads generated through our involvement at these shows. Two additional recruitment events will be attended in France and Germany which have been sanctioned by the government of those countries as a means of providing external work opportunities for their citizens. The shows have also been identified by the Province of British Columbia as primary opportunities and the Commission will partner with the province whenever possible. It will also partner with private industry to ensure local employment opportunities are promoted.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| ▪ Secure all possible partners for events | February |
| ▪ Attendance at shows in the United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and France | March |
| ▪ Follow up on attendance | April |
| ▪ Incorporate new initiative regarding Settlement Community | April |
| ▪ Review potential fall Emigrate shows for attendance | Ongoing |

- Creation of standardized emigrate website
 - 2nd round of emigration shows
- May/June
September

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The Province of British Columbia will be in attendance at all shows and we will partner with them on other identified shows where appropriate. Partnerships will also include other BC communities including Kamloops and Prince George. The EDC will also identify private partners including those businesses specializing in HR recruitment and emigration. Total budget is set at \$20,000, with partnerships covering most of the costs.

4. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

The EDC's business enhancement efforts in working with specific and/or emerging industry sectors such as agriculture, high technology and metal fabrication have provided a means of identifying common needs and pooling resources and energies to build awareness and capacity of these sectors, and helping them realize new market opportunities. In 2005 and 2006, for example, the Commission worked with a group of metal fabricators to implement strategic marketing initiatives and develop a website – www.okanagansteel.com – to increase awareness of the valley's capabilities in this sector.

The alternative energy sector in the Central Okanagan includes several innovative companies that are gaining a foothold on the marketplace and meeting regularly to share information and ways of further developing the sector. The EDC will take a supportive role in furthering this activity.

Actions for Implementation

- Meet with industry representatives to discuss needs, solutions and how the EDC can work with the sector to help achieve objectives
- *Additional actions items and timelines to be determined*

May

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Budget estimated at \$2,000.

5. SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE

Attendance at the Emigrate shows has been very positive and has attracted a number of interested individuals to the area. There has been a large amount of time invested in one-on-one consultation with each individual and additional time spent with the business community to identify opportunities that may provide a match or fit for both the business and the individual. With attendance at the shows increasing for this year and the subsequent increase in individuals traveling to the region to investigate opportunities, we will need to ensure we maintain a level of service to ensure that these individuals are looked after and opportunities are not lost. We will form a Settlement Committee to investigate what can be done to ensure a smooth experience for the landed immigrant and make the transition as easy as possible. The Committee will be made up of various representatives from immigrant agencies/societies as well as individuals who have already relocated to the area. These individuals can share their successes and pitfalls of their experience.

As well, we would like to hire a consultant to work one-on-one with individuals traveling to the region and to work with local businesses to research the opportunities that exist. The consultant would develop an Immigrant Settlement Program and would be responsible for matching up the individuals with the opportunities and would be integral to the success of the new immigrant. The consultant would also provide a six month review of new immigrants to evaluate the success and identify means to improve the program.

Actions for Implementation

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| ▪ Identify potential agencies, organizations, individuals for committee | February |
| ▪ Form committee and schedule meeting dates | March |
| ▪ Hire consultant for Immigrant Settlement Program | April |
| ▪ Meeting with consultant for review and success of program | Ongoing |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partnerships will include various agencies and organizations related to immigration, as well, potential partnerships with business will be investigated. The committee itself will have little or no budget implication; however the Immigrant Settlement Program budget will be \$20,000 with matching funds requested from the federal government.

6. AGRICULTURE FIELD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Okanagan Agrifutures Program, initiated in May 2006, is aimed at bringing guidance and assistance to the agricultural sector in order to develop more strategically oriented, sustainable businesses. Through the services of an Agricultural Support Officer and the program's Advisory Committee, accomplishments have included creation of an industry-specific website with links to various agriculture-related organizations that provide information and resources, and mentoring activities have begun with several businesses. As media coverage of the program has increased, so has awareness and the number of businesses taking advantage of it.

The program will continue to focus on three target areas: understanding the ongoing challenges facing the agriculture industry; addressing municipal regulatory challenges to agribusiness and farmers, and assisting farm operators directly to pursue new opportunities.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ▪ Conduct mentoring interviews | Ongoing |
| ▪ Plan for education sessions | Ongoing |
| ▪ Assist with conducting education programs | Ongoing |
| ▪ Organize information library | Ongoing |
| ▪ Organize information website | Ongoing |
| ▪ Update status to Executive Director and Board | Ongoing |

Specific Objectives

- Establishment of agri-tourism consortium
- Completion of agricultural human resources study
- Implement an action plan for agricultural human resources
- Addressing regulatory obstacles to agricultural operations
- Facilitate development of an Agricultural Plan for the District of Lake Country
- Enhancement of RDCO farmers' markets (Peachland, Kelowna, Lake Country).

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The program is a partnership between the EDC and RDCO planning department. Budget from the EDC is \$25,000 with total budget for the program set at \$110,000. A commitment of \$6,875 was also made to the program for completion of an agricultural human resources study by the BC Agricultural Council. Additional funding is expected from the BC Agricultural Council and partnering agencies for development and implementation of an agricultural human resources action plan for the Okanagan.

7. OKANAGAN CULTURAL CORRIDOR PROJECT/ CULTURE & ARTS SUPPORT OFFICER

A primary objective of this project is to assist individuals and organizations to reach new opportunities in their cultural tourism and arts, cultural and heritage activities. The consultant will work with a minimum of twenty individuals/organizations on an ongoing basis to help them build capacity.

The program is also aimed at developing one new consortium model per year. The consortium for 2007 - "Be A Cultural Tourist in Your Own Home Town" – is designed to make residents aware of the region's cultural offerings and encourage them to take their visitors.

Other objectives are to create a stronger cultural tourism and arts, cultural and heritage presence for the Central Okanagan; create a user-friendly resource system which enables arts, cultural and heritage operators to obtain comprehensive information about available resources; to contribute to new and ongoing cultural initiatives with major stakeholders and to facilitate joint marketing and development opportunities with local and regional partners.

The Consultant will host a minimum of two seminars per year and participate in the organization of a major cultural awareness campaign. A 15-page insert to the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA)'s Wine and Culture Guide will be created to be distributed locally and at international trade shows (80,000 copies).

Actions for Implementation

Assist organizations and individuals

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| ▪ Identify 1-2 new organizations per month that require assistance | Ongoing |
| ▪ Organize meetings and follow-up meetings with businesses | Ongoing |
| ▪ Provide detailed visit breakdown to EDC Executive Director | Monthly |
| ▪ Provide overview of visits, results, trends | June/December |

Encourage new consortium models

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ▪ Procure sponsorships and recruit participating organizations | Jan/Feb |
| ▪ Develop printed material (TOTA) sponsoring | March |
| ▪ Promotion and media campaign | April |
| ▪ Event, evaluation, follow-up with organizations/sponsors | May |

Create or maintain user-friendly resource system

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Enhance Cultural Corridor website to include resource section for cultural providers | Feb/ongoing |
| ▪ Evaluation of website/resource material | November |

Facilitate joint marketing opportunities

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| ▪ Cultural Stakeholders meeting | Monthly |
| ▪ Formation of a cultural awareness team | January |
| ▪ Determine goals and timelines of campaign | Feb.-March |
| ▪ Development of cultural insert for TOTA Guide | Feb.-May |
| ▪ Cultural awareness campaign | June-Dec. |
| ▪ Recruit speakers/facilitators for conference | Aug/Sept. |
| ▪ Promotion of conference | October |
| ▪ Conference for cultural providers and evaluation | November |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The program will be administered through the EDC similar to how the Okanagan Film Commission is set up; however, the Cultural Support Officer will report directly to the EDC and an advisory committee. Budget committed from EDC is \$25,000 with a total budget of \$125,000.

Partners for the Cultural Campaign include Arts Council of the Central Okanagan, City of Kelowna, Central Okanagan Foundation, UBC Okanagan, Rotary Centre for the Arts, with financing generated through sponsorships. The insert in the TOTA Guide is funded through advertising sales.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Objectives

1. Continue to employ a valley-wide investment attraction strategy in conjunction with the Okanagan Partnership, and to focus on attracting investment dollars to the Okanagan versus attracting actual new businesses. Continue to promote the use of a consistent regional branding message by various business and tourism-related organizations involved with marketing the valley, and incorporate this message into EDC's own strategic marketing collateral.
2. Build on the opportunities identified to grow the Central Okanagan aviation sector through a strategic marketing and awareness campaign. Work with the local aviation sector to develop capability and expansion of markets.
3. Create a Technology Attraction Task Force to establish an anchor technology company in the Central Okanagan.
4. Attend several trade shows, two in conjunction with Linx BC related to the advanced manufacturing industry and two dedicated to marketing the Okanagan Valley and encouraging investment in the Central Okanagan businesses. Incorporate a skilled human capital/recruitment component to our presence at these events.
5. Based on the recent study on the viability of establishing a film studio for film and television production in the Central Okanagan, develop and implement a strategic plan for attracting investment capital for this facility.
6. Ensure EDC's databases, demographics and other information are kept current and the systems and processes to disseminate information are efficient.

Business Attraction: Strategy and Tactics

1. VALLEY-WIDE INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGY

For the last two years, emphasis has shifted to attracting investment in existing businesses and specific industry sectors in the Central Okanagan rather than attracting new businesses overall as means to economic development. The formation of the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society in 2006 provided a foundation from which to apply a regional approach to addressing the challenges facing businesses throughout the Valley. Both the investment attraction and valley-wide initiative support the outcomes of the Okanagan Partnership and the need to focus on development of industry sectors that hold the greatest growth potential.

The Okanagan Strategic Advantage "brand" was launched in 2006 and is being incorporated into various marketing and promotional materials that highlight the capabilities of specific industry sectors in the Okanagan Valley. This branding theme will continue to be incorporated into a wide range of marketing and promotional materials dedicated to marketing industry sectors, and attracting skilled workers and new investment into the Region.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ▪ Meet with Society members to outline specific roles/initiatives | Ongoing |
| ▪ Further development of Okanagan Strategic Advantage logo-brand | Ongoing |
| ▪ Design and development of specific promotional materials | As needed |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Funding for the materials will be administered through the valley-wide society with funds already committed in previous budget year.

2. AVIATION INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

In partnership with the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society (OVEDS), the Commission has been working specifically with the existing aviation firms in the region. The aviation industry has been targeted for its potential for development as an industry cluster based on its competitive advantage, high-paying jobs and the presence of major companies already in the region. The initiative has a distinct goal of increasing investment in the Okanagan aviation industry by 25% by 2011 and adding 300 new jobs to the industry by 2011.

A database of existing aviation companies, their capabilities and future needs has been created. Work will continue to expand the industry's market base, secure new contracts and opportunities, and promote the sector's capabilities outside the region.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| ▪ Application and approval for continued federal funding | January/February |
| ▪ Completion of Aviation specific website and promotional material | TBA |
| ▪ Completion of database of local companies | TBA |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

This initiative is a partnership between the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society (OVEDS) and each project may have additional private partners involved. Budget for the total OVEDS initiative is \$18,000 – the vast majority of this amount will be spent on valley-wide aviation attraction.

3. TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE

Through a working partnership with the Okanagan Science & Technology Council, a Task Force will be created to identify appropriate methods for establishing an anchor technology company in the Okanagan. The objective for 2007 will be to create a tangible strategy with proposed outcomes, to be implemented in 2008.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Task Force meets to begin strategy development | May/Ongoing |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The Task Force will consist of representatives of the EDC and OSTEC. There is no financial implication for the EDC.

4. TRADE SHOW FOCUS/MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY

The EDC has had considerable success raising the profile of the valley as a place to invest by attending trade shows outside the Okanagan, as well as creating sales and exposure for the companies that attend with us. The current focus on manufacturing and technology will see the EDC attend several shows geared specifically to these sectors. We will be attending the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) in January in Vegas, and in partnership with LinxBC, additional shows will be identified to promote our region as well as the advantages British Columbia offers.

Actions for Implementation

- Research, identify and secure participation at shows Ongoing
- Advertise and secure partners for each show Ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Attendance at the shows involves a number of partners including private industry; associations and agencies. Revenue will be received from the companies attending the tradeshow and it is expected that net expenses to the EDC will be approximately \$10,000 based on attendance at the shows identified.

5. FILM STUDIO FEASIBILITY STUDY

With the significant growth in the BC film and television industry over the last 16 years, the film industry has become a relatively stable component of the BC economy and industry leaders have encouraged film production to occur outside of the Greater Vancouver area. The EDC has partnered with the Okanagan Film Commission to assess the viability of the dedicated film studio located in the Okanagan. The results of this study, released in January 2007, recommend our region would be highly successful in the pursuit of a film studio. The next step is to promote the recommendations of the study out to key industry leaders.

Actions for Implementation

- Release findings of film studio study January
- Review key events to attend to promote study findings February
- Attend Regional Film Commission Association Event, Vancouver and Red Carpet Screening of FIDO and FIDO Party, Kelowna February
- Target sales calls to production companies in Vancouver and Toronto March
- Target sales calls to Los Angeles in conjunction with Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) trade event April
- Attend National Association of Broadcasters 2007 Conference in Las Vegas April
- Develop a database of key industry leaders/investors April
- Develop a regional tour of industry to key investors May/June
- Attend a minimum of two key industry events Spring/Fall
- Promote the findings of study in partnership with industry representatives Ongoing

Partners and Financial Implications

All activities related to this initiative will be in partnership with the Okanagan Film Commission. Budget implication is set at \$10,000 with matching federal funds applied for.

6. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The EDC produces a wide range of demographic information on the region. Our Economic Profile and individual Community Profiles are used both by the general public, and internally as a means of sourcing information for business attraction, business retention, presentations media, etc. These documents are also downloaded from our website an average 300 times per month. As the Okanagan grows and awareness of the Commission’s programs and services increases, it is imperative that the information in these documents remains current and readily accessible to staff and the public.

Actions for Implementation

- Update the Economic Profile utilizing most recent available data June
- Update each separate Community Profile September

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Budget committed for full updates is \$6,000.

BUSINESS FACILITATION

Objectives

1. Provide focused efforts to support the enhancement of regional infrastructure.
2. Complete an Economic Assessment of traffic congestion on Central Okanagan businesses.
3. Hold an employer/employee forum focused on youth employment goals and employer needs.
4. Continue to take a lead role in supporting and educating the community on initiatives that promote long-term economic benefits (i.e. the opportunities associated with UBC Okanagan/Okanagan College; 2010 Olympic procurement opportunities; affordable housing, etc) .
5. Continue to educate other organizations serving the business community on the work of the EDC and its findings through the visitation program. The EDC will continue to invite reciprocal presentations (familiarization tours) and identify new partnership opportunities to deliver programs and services that meet the information needs of business community.
6. Continue to assist in the development, expansion and enhancement of the Kelowna International Airport as a regional economic engine.
7. Build upon the existing International Student Program.
8. Continue to be an active participant in the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society which is aimed at identifying issues which impact regions throughout the Valley, and working cooperatively to address them.
9. Participate in the development of a Westbank Community Vision session.
10. Continue to conduct a Business Confidence Survey every two months and use the Business Confidence Index as a tool in measuring economic activity and identifying areas where economic assistance is needed.

Business Facilitation: Strategy and Tactics

1. INFRASTRUCTURE

As the Okanagan Valley - the Central Okanagan in particular - continues to experience rapid population growth and business start-up and expansion, the importance of efficient transportation and communication systems is essential. The Economic Development Commission has played a key role in the development of broadband connectivity in the Region, and receives direct feedback on a wide range of other infrastructure requirements from the business community through its Visitation Program.

In 2007 the Commission will therefore provide specific focus on infrastructure-related issues and potential solutions. Areas of key concern are efficient highway routes to transport goods in and out of the valley; air connections to key markets, and affordable housing.

Actions for Implementation

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| ▪ Through the Business Visitation program identify business concerns | Ongoing |
| ▪ Meet regularly with key business and political leaders | Ongoing |
| ▪ Use of available resources to ensure current issues are known | Ongoing |
| ▪ Involvement in various committees related to issues | Ongoing |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partnerships will be with various agencies and organizations related to business and infrastructure. Budget implication will be nil other than time involved.

2. COMPLETION OF AN ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON CENTRAL OKANAGAN BUSINESSES

Through a series of enhancement visits, the Commission has learned that businesses are being adversely affected by the inability to move goods and services. The purpose of an Economic Assessment related to traffic congestion in the Central Okanagan is to create a tool that demonstrates the degree of impact including financial impact on businesses, and to provide our municipalities and partner organizations with an effective lobbying tool to take to various levels of government in order to facilitate solutions. Solutions considered and being implemented in other city centres and jurisdictions will be looked at as part of this initiative.

Actions for Implementation

- Develop terms of reference March
- Meet with Partner groups April
- Hire Consultant April
- Report completed June
- Release and consultation June – Aug

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partners are Municipalities, Regional Districts, Chambers of Commerce and other business-related organizations throughout the Central Okanagan. Cost of study is estimated to be \$20,000.

3. YOUTH/EMPLOYER EMPLOYMENT FORUM

In conjunction with the Visitation Response Program, we will hold a half-day information forum that brings together youth and employers to communicate and understand what both groups are looking for in the employer/employee relationship.

Actions for Implementation

- Set date for event and identify presenters March
- Marketing and hold event November

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The EDC will coordinate the event in conjunction with such potential partners as Services Canada and the Human Resources Management Association (HRMA). Financial implications reflect staff time to organize and promote, and possibly rental cost for an appropriate venue.

4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The EDC has a role to play within the community to help educate and inform the public regarding the short term and long term economic impacts and benefits of specific initiatives and developments within the region. The EDC is not a lobby-type organization but is well positioned within the community to provide non-biased information regarding various impacts as related to our economy. Examples of this would include the impact of UBC-Okanagan; results of the Okanagan Partnership Study, 2010 Olympics procurement opportunities and the International Students Program, and the 10 by 10 Challenge.

Actions for Implementation

- Continue to be aware of coming developments, initiatives, projects, etc. Ongoing

- Utilize weekly radio show and other media as education platform Ongoing
- Utilize weekly e-newsletter to disseminate information Ongoing
- Work with the 2010 Olympics Committee to ensure procurement opportunities are realized by local businesses Ongoing
- BC Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities' 10 x 10 Community Challenge. Ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partners vary from project to project. No financial commitment is expected other than staff resource.

5. FAMILIARIZATION TOURS

The EDC continues to initiate information exchanges between the Commission and other business organizations throughout the Central Okanagan. The purpose is to ensure all levels of staff understand what the different organizations do and the kind of information they provide, and avoiding the duplication of information.

Actions for Implementation

- Identify key organizations to share information with May
- Establish schedule for presentations Ongoing
- Continued involvement WEC Business Partners Ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partnerships in this initiative will be the various business organizations that the EDC works with including Community Futures, DKA, Chambers and WECBC. There will be no financial implications other than staff resources.

6. KELOWNA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Commission will continue to play an important role in the development of Kelowna International Airport by working through the advisory committee to communicate to government agencies and municipalities opportunities for economic growth in the future.

Actions for Implementation

- Participate in Airport Advisory Committee meetings Ongoing
- Ensure Kelowna promotional video running at airport Ongoing

7. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

The EDC will continue its International Student Program initiated in 2004 in partnership with Okanagan College. The program will include tours and receptions for international students to showcase the region's opportunities as described in the Business Enhancement and Business Attraction areas of the Strategic Plan.

Actions for Implementation

- Meet with OC and other partners to develop tour February
- Hold tour with students March
- Evaluate tour and develop steps for future events April

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Okanagan College. Financial implication is approximately \$2,000.

8. OKANAGAN VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

The OVEDS was created in 2005 as a way for the individual economic development officers within the valley to share information and develop initiatives that would work better on a regional basis. The activities for this initiative cross over between business attraction and business enhancement and the actions, partners and financial implications are repeated under each section of the strategic plan.

Actions for Implementation

- Meet with Society members to outline specific roles/initiatives Ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partners include all Valley economic development offices and budget is outlined under the appropriate section for each initiative.

9. WESTBANK COMMUNITY VISION

The Westbank Chamber of Commerce has expressed interest in developing a session to look at the history of what made Westbank what it is today and what it is going to be in future years. The EDC will help facilitate a “town hall” type of meeting with the public and Westbank representatives to discuss the past, present and future of the Westside. The information gained from this type of session will be helpful to Westbank as it looks to develop a future plan and deals with the outcome of the upcoming referendum.

Actions for Implementation

- Meet with representatives to develop session Jan/Feb
- Develop invitation list, fix date and secure facilitator Feb
- Hold event March
- Formalize feedback into report March
- Report finalized and presented to representatives April
- Develop next steps April

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partnership will be with the Westbank Chamber of Commerce. Financial implications to the EDC budget will be approximately \$5,000.

10. BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

Designed as an additional tool to monitor how local businesses perceive the environment they are operating in and address appropriate issues, a Business Confidence Index was created in 2005 as a joint project of the EDC, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and Kettle Valley Research. This bi-monthly web-based survey will continue to be released every two months and regular reports distributed to the EDC and the Chamber members as well as to local media.

Actions for Implementation

- Chamber and EDC provide firm with email addresses and contacts Ongoing
- Online survey instrument developed March
- Data collected and analyzed Ongoing
- Final report to EDC and Chamber for analysis and distribution. Ongoing process repeated in February, April, June, August, Oct & Dec

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partnership will be with the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce. There is no financial impact to the EDC budget.