



Lake of the Woods Development Commission
Q3 Report to Council July – September 2011

Introduction

Q3 was dynamic in every area of the Lake of the Woods Development Commission, from Business Development and Attraction, through Tourism and Special Events and Education and Training.

Kenora saw its best summer in five years.

Highlights from the third quarter include:

- 323 people attended the Sep 2 Grand Opening for the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre
- \$800,000 Aug 4th contribution announcement from NOHFC for the Harbourfront Tent
- Grants for 9 Summer Students working for tourism and business development
- 75 municipal, aboriginal and business leaders at the Treaty 3 Area Economic Opportunities Conference
- Presentation to Keewatin Patricia District School Board for the Lakewood School Redevelopment project
- 1200 people attend Grand Opening of the iconic Harbourfront Tent
- Sep 21 Matiowski Farmer's Market honouring Buck Matiowski
- Tourism Kenora is top 3 Finalist in the Ontario Tourism Marketing Awards behind Ottawa & Toronto
- MS Kenora announced that the MS Kenora will be continuing operations in Kenora for the foreseeable future to work in partnership in the development and roll out of Kenora's Tourism Strategy and Economic Development Plan
- Site visits by 3 value added forestry companies interested in Kenora

The Lake of the Woods Development Commission was established by the City of Kenora in 2007 to work with the City of Kenora and other partners to implement the City's Economic Development Plan. The work of the Commission focuses on the three goals of the Plan: job creation, increased assessment & population growth. Quarterly reports are delivered to Council as per the MOU between the City and the Commission. This is the third quarter report (Q3) for Commission activity from July – September 2011.

This report acknowledges the work of the members of the Lake of the Woods Development Commission Board, the Chairs of the three standing committees and the volunteer members of those committees, and the staff at the Commission as well as the support from City Council.

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Business Development & Attraction

Business Development & Attraction activities focus on three main areas:

- Business Attraction which focuses on bringing new business to Kenora
- Business Development which focuses on the support and growth of local business
- Destination Kenora which focuses on developments to attract new residents to Kenora

Q3 activities:

Activity	Q3
Business Attraction: value added forestry, mining, commercial and land development opportunities, assisted living	13
Business Starts	12
Business Expansion	1
Jobs Created	61
Summer Company	4
Consultations with Northwest Business Centre	124
Business Workshop and Seminar Participants	1233

Q4 will see the completion of 80 in person surveys from the local retail sector. These surveys will provide local business data and identify barriers and challenges faced by the local retail sector. The Commission will work with these businesses to remove these barriers to growth in order to create new jobs and increase assessment in the community.

Q4 activities will continue focus on the redevelopment of the former mill site through the value added forestry sector

Business growth and development will not occur in the Kenora area without strong First Nation partnerships. The Lake of the Woods Development Commission hosted the Treaty 3 Area Economic Opportunities Conference on Sep 28-30 on behalf of the City of Kenora in partnership with Grand Council Treaty 3 and the Township of Sioux Narrows Nestor Falls. 75 municipal, aboriginal and business leaders from throughout the Treaty 3 area heard stories of existing partnerships and partnership opportunities in the forestry, mining, tourism and arts & culture sectors. The Conference report and video are being finalized and will be distributed to conference attendees and presented to municipalities and First Nation communities throughout the Treaty 3 area.

Conference highlights included presentations from:

- Miitigoog and Miisun and the Wincrief story from the forestry sector
- Hugh Munro Construction and Ochiichagwe Babigo Ining on their construction company
- Jim Madder, President of Confederation College on the development of the Badlands tourism region in Alberta
- Cheryl Becker, Mining Coordinator from Grand Council Treaty 3 on mining opportunities

An implementation plan will focus on next steps to continue the discussions initiated at the Conference. Conference delegates sent a strong message that the Conference must become an annual event in recognition that “We Are All Treaty People” and that growth and development in the Treaty 3 area cannot occur without working together.

Tourism & Special Events

The Tourism Strategy (2008) identifies four key areas to ensure that Kenora and Lake of the Woods become a world class tourism destination:

- Year Round Marketing
- New Product Development
- Community and Industry Awareness and Training
- Special Events

Q3 Highlights

- Special Events: Canada Day, Celebrate Summer, Winnipeg Symphony, Harbourfest KBI, and the Thursday Night Concert series. We have received considerable positive feedback on our operating model.
- Tourism Kenora moved into the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre on July 22, 2011. 323 people attended the September 2, 2011 Grand Opening BBQ and toured the building.
- 2011 Visitor numbers to date at Kenora's visitor information centres are up by nearly 6000 visitors compared to 2010 numbers. To date, 13,318 visitors compared to 7,388 over the same period for 2010. These visitor numbers have led to a discussion with Ontario about shared visitor services.
- 1250 people attended the Grand Opening of the Harbourfront Tent on September 16, 2011. 35% ticket sales were to out of town visitors, generating an economic impact of \$110,250. This figure does not include the impact of the 800 local attendees who visited local retailers, restaurants and bars.

- The Lake of the Woods Development Commission was nominated for a 2011 Ontario Tourism Award in the Category of Best Tourism Advertising (no budget limit) for the regional Escape to Ontario campaigns led by Tourism Kenora in summer 2010 and winter 2011. Kenora was one of three finalists together with the cities of Toronto and Ottawa, who won the award.
- From August 27- September 11, 2011, Tourism Kenora ran its most successful campaign to date: *Summer in Kenora, the Extended Version*, was designed to extend the summer season beyond the September long weekend to Thanksgiving. The campaign generated the following results:
 - ✓ 3,600 unique visitors to the StayinKenora.com website
 - ✓ Visitors at the Discovery Centre referencing the campaign
 - ✓ KHA reported a noticeable increase in both inquiries and bookings
 - ✓ One downtown retailer indicated that their sales were up 24% in September and that they were up 60% in October. We are looking into this further to see if this impact was felt across the downtown.
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Q4 Activities will include bringing back Roger Brooks for a community assessment, Winter Advertising Campaigns, applying for the Canadian Tourism Commissions Signature Experiences Program, Special Events including the Winter Carnival and the Development of the Discovery Centre's Interpretive Forest.

Education & Training

The Education and Training Committee has the mandate to retain local youth and attracting new learners to the community by increasing post-secondary education and training in Kenora.

The Education & Training Strategy identifies 4 key areas to bring that vision to Kenora:

- Developing a multi purpose education/training facility
- Attracting a University presence to Kenora
- Developing a research facility
- Creating a local education and training consortium

Q3 activities:

- Education & Training Committee Chair presentation to Keewatin Patricia School Board re Lakewood School as the Lake of the Woods Centre
- Aggressively working on the completion of the business plan to be delivered to the School Board in early January 2012

Q4 will see completion of the Lake of the Woods Centre Business Plan for the Lakewood School property

Conclusion:

This Q3 report provides a quick overview of the activities undertaken by the Lake of the Woods Development Commission from July – September 2011.

The Commission is pleased to report that it is on track and on target for the quarter. 2011 is the strongest year to date since the inception of the Commission in the areas of business attraction and development, tourism and special events and education & training.

A Q4 report will be delivered in January 2012.