

Promoting Community Economic Development

Filling the hunger and job gap

Making ends meet is no easy feat for Rene Fisher of Welland, Ontario. "When I get near the end of the month, we're down to Kraft Dinner—I call

BY MURRAY MACADAM

it Crap Dinner—hot dogs, stuff that's not expensive." Keeping enough food on the table for herself, her husband and four children on a low income is difficult.

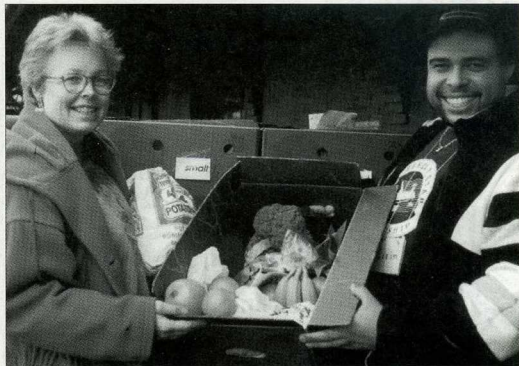
But what's helping her—and a growing number of low-income people in the Niagara region, Cambridge and Toronto—is a unique self-help program called the Good Food Box. Since its formation last year, this bulk purchase program has grown far beyond the hopes of its organizers.

Once a month, cardboard boxes brimming with fresh fruits and vegetables are dropped off for consumers from Fort Erie to Hamilton. As much as possible, the produce features locally grown food or other Canadian produce. Each customer pays \$16 for their box, which would cost \$20 or more at the supermarket. The boxes are delivered to 25 housing co-ops, community centres

and other sites where people come and pick up their box. People such as Rene Fisher earn money as promoters of the Food Box in their neighbourhoods.

That basic feature—fresh fruits and vegetables—sparked the program's sponsor, Niagara Peninsula Homes (NPH) to launch the program last July. The Good Food Box program was pioneered by FoodShare Metro Toronto, which promotes community-based solutions to hunger.

The Niagara group's aim fitted in with efforts by the provincial government's CED Secretariat to promote the local economy and strengthen local connections within the food industry. A jobsOntario Community Action grant helped NPH to develop the food box program. The Good Food Box got



Murray Macadam photo

Coordinator Mary Lou Morgan and Errin Stone display the bounty in the Good Food Box. This community-based initiative is growing rapidly in Toronto and Niagara.

underway last July, delivering 205 boxes. Christmas gift sales pushed December's figure over 700. The program is well on its way to attaining a break-even sales figure of 2,000 boxes per month. It's now subsidized by Niagara Penin-

sula Homes.

Who buys the Good Food Box?

"Anybody and everybody", replies coordinator Ian Fripp. The program was conceived to

See Good Food Box, page 2

Hope comes alive

Making the dramatic shift from welfare to well-being is coming within view for hundreds of people in Ontario, with help from CED organizations and the jobLink Ontario Innovations Fund. The first round of Innovations Fund grants were announced recently for projects to help people on social assistance find work or learn job-related skills:

London: computer skills training for visually impaired people through the Audio Tactile Network; job training for people with disabilities through London Goodwill;

Stratford: life skills and self-employment business training for rural women through Women and Rural Development;

Cambridge: self-employment, business start-ups and job training for 219 people through the Community Opportunities Development Association (CODA), under a new program run by former social assistance recipients;

See JobLink, page 2

I N S I D E

Special Feature

CED and Environment

Good Food Box much more than Food

From page 1

mainly benefit low-income people and Fripp estimates that 70% of current customers fit into that category. They benefit from fresh, low-cost food — and by having it delivered, since most of them don't have cars. Many live in the 14 housing co-ops managed by Niagara Peninsula Homes.

Having fresh fruit and vegetables means a lot to low-income people, says Rene Fisher. "I buy a bag of oranges and they're gone in no time", she says. In the Ontario Housing complex where she lives, most people are on social assistance and running out of food towards the end of each

month when the Good Food Boxes are delivered. "This stuff is fresh, it's economical and it's good for you."

But the Good Food Box program is about much more than just food. A major aim is to support local farmers. "I am buying the box because I know that the money I pay will help local farmers, and as a result many other jobs will be created around farming", said one customer. In season, 90% of the box is made up of local produce.

Local job creation is another benefit. Part-time jobs are provided to truck drivers, helpers and packers, amounting to the equivalent of three full-time jobs. Attaining the 2,000-box goal would double that figure. "We are employing people who would be out of work other-

wise" says Fripp, noting that one Food Box truckdriver had been unemployed for years.

Beyond these direct jobs is the ripple effect of job creation in the community. "It's putting more money back into the local economy", says Fripp.

Tucked in among the potatoes, onions, apples and other contents of each box is a newsletter with updates on the Good Food Box, recipes, and information Ontario produce. As a result, demand for locally-grown food is increasing.

Another ingredient of success is the program's community base. Box contents change in response to consumer response. Sales have grown due to the efforts of a 30-person network of paid promoters and sales representatives, along with volunteers.



Many hands make light work. Staff pack Good Food Box cartons at a Catharines housing co-op, for distribution throughout Niagara the same day, ensuring freshness.

Happily married: CED & the environment

People are looking at the world around them in a different light these days. There is a coming together of efforts to develop a community-based economy that meets genuine human needs, and that treats more lightly on the earth than the old economy has.

That progression is another step forward for the CED movement, into sustainable community economic development. This movement blends traditional CED values of self-reliance, community control and meeting community needs, with a desire to ensure that economic development protects the environment and reduces pollution.

In this issue, we look at some ways in which environmental and CED goals complement each other in Ontario. One is in the area of food, and specifically through the Good Food Box venture. Another is through efforts to tap the surge in recycling as a market for new community businesses creating jobs for the disadvantaged. The third example highlights an innovative way in which government is encouraging sustainable economic development activity through the Green Communities movement. We also take a look at what one community — Peterborough — is doing to advance sustainable community economic development.

We hope that these stories inspire you to include the environment in your CED work. You can't lose.

JobLink in action

From page 1

Ottawa: self-employment training for 24 people through the Community Enterprise Centre; training and jobs for deaf and hearing impaired people through the Capital Region Centre for the Hearing Impaired; jobs for autistic adults in paper recycling through Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes. Through West End Community Ventures, 10 women on welfare will develop "economic literacy" materials based on their experiences of poverty.

Kingston: creation of a worker co-op business for people with development disabilities through the Kingston District Association for Community Living. The business involves processing and disposal of documents

Toronto: Job training and support programs for people on social assistance through the 761 Community Action Centre. A Street Community Enterprise Centre providing information, a Community Initiative with help for new groups, an Action Learning Initiative to provide resource material, and three CED businesses are included.

Twenty-five people will learn about the food industry and related life skills through a training program offered through FoodShare Metro Toronto.

The JobLink Ontario Innovations Fund is funded by the provincial and federal governments, with a \$10-million budget for 1994-95.

“Instead of talking about CED, this does it!”

The Good Food Box program profiled in this issue has benefited from an innovative project called the Niagara Food Project which draws people together from throughout Niagara's food industry.

This is an attempt to build on Niagara's traditional strength in food by enabling people from various players in the food chain — farmers, food processors, chefs, bakers, and consumers — to forge links with each other on specific projects.

A wide array of groups and individuals are involved, including Niagara Peninsula Homes, Vision Niagara, Niagara College, the Niagara Region Development Corporation and the Community Development Council. More than 400 consumers, farmers, chefs, food processing factories and others helped develop an “economic map” of the food sector through a survey.

Seed funding for Food Project initiatives came from the Ontario Government's CED Secretariat. Robin Murray, director of the Secretariat, spoke with *Community Economics* about the project. Murray is an internationally known figure in CED circles.

CE: What's the most significant aspect of the Niagara Food Project?

Robin Murray: To create a stronger food economy, in the face of an increasingly globalized market, in a different way from a traditional view where you work to create your market through tariffs. The project is saying there's a possibility of creating local networks which can sustain themselves against global competition.

After almost a year, we understand better why the local food economy is fragmented. Consumers have become molded into the system. They buy mass-produced products; a lot have lost their art of cooking. Some Niagara hotels can't feature local wines. Some restaurants feature food from elsewhere, even in season. The Niagara Food Project is about recreating a system that responds to each other locally.

Through work at the local level, we can reconnect. Some examples: groups of farmers and chefs are meeting to dis-

uss how connections can be made on what (fresh food) is available, using a databank.

Chefs have met to discuss how they can develop a distinctive cuisine linked to local fresh food supplies.

At least 20 bakers have attended meetings of the Niagara Bakery Business Network. From that, much sharing is taking place, on such things as equipment.

Over 200 people came to a trade show where suppliers demonstrated their goods. Most local bakers don't use preservatives in their products, like the big food companies. One idea is to develop a trademark which shows there are no preservatives in this product.

Niagara College has been a great source of connections and support. A few people living on social assistance told us through our survey that they'd like to be chefs. Four days later, Pat Hogan, head of their chef course, said they could join a course starting up. As a result of that networking, two people

on social assistance joined this training program and will be trained bakers within a year.

The most ambitious project is the Good Food Box. In the first five months of operation, 56% of the produce came from Ontario, mainly Niagara. They're tapping into communities in a way that ordinary firms don't. They're trying to build a direct relationship between the producers and consumers. This is quite a different way of thinking about our economy.

CE: Getting networks going can be difficult. What have been some ingredients for success in Niagara?

Robin Murray: Practical projects are a way of bringing people together. This (project) creates a real community discussion, because it's so concrete. Instead of talking about CED,

this does it. It brings in people who would never come to a CED event.


CE: Can the Niagara Project be replicated elsewhere?

Robin Murray: I don't think anything can be replicated. Every economy must adapt to its own situation.

Many food networks are developing in Ontario. In Windsor, for example, we brought together a coalition of people which crosses political boundaries. It's coordinated by the Canadian Auto Workers. In that coalition there are consumers, processors, institutions and some big farmers. At a December trade show, 120 people came to discuss the local food system. Eleven project proposals are expected to result from it, including one for a Good Food Box.

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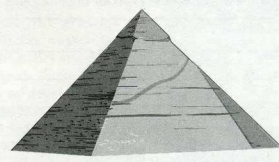
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Welcome Our Times!

Community Economics is sporting a new look this issue. Along with a new format by Brian Grebow of BG Communications, we have a new printer: Our Times Publishing, a

unionized worker-owned co-operative. This issue has been printed on unbleached recycled paper. We hope you like our new look, and our support for a community business.

Time is not on our side

Time — that elusive commodity which seems in such short supply these days, is squeezed even more when it comes to community economic development.

As people working with CED groups and setting up businesses know only too well, it takes a lot of time to get these initiatives and projects off the ground. Time to form solid organizations to undertake CED. Time to get staff, boards and other groups involved and working well together. Time to develop strategic planning. Time to plan and develop businesses. Time to access capital. Time to allow businesses to become profitable.

Yet that need to take a longer-term view is sadly lacking when it comes to provincial government support for CED projects and groups. Funding criteria for programs such as jobsOntario simply do not acknowledge how long it takes CED groups accomplish their goals. They often forget the “development” part of CED.

Two of Canada’s leading experts on CED, Mike Lewis and Stewart Perry, pinpoint the problem in their book *Reinventing The Local Economy* (see page 14). They note that Ontario’s CED program “seems to assume that after one year of funding, com-

munity groups will be self-sufficient. Even a cursory look at (real-life examples of CED) reveals that the notion of creating organizations that will be self-supporting in one year is totally unrealistic...As one Ontario civil servant suggested, the whole system becomes a numbers game, everything geared to creating counts for the counters.”

Similarly, Guy Brethour of Human Resource Development Canada has pointed out that federal research has shown that “CED is not a short-term fix, it is a long-term investment. CED initiatives are long term in nature in terms of both the empowerment process and the cycle of development.”

The focus on quick results and on numbers — how many jobs created for how many dollars — is unfortunate and short-sighted for many reasons. Not only does it lead to “creaming” in self-employment and skills training programs where the more disadvantaged unemployed lose out, but it is a complete distortion of what CED is all about.

Development is a long-term business. We need politicians to support programs that will bear fruit well after they have left office. We are growing trees in the CED movement, not annuals.

If you're involved with CED, don't do it alone...

...Connect with other people and organizations doing community economic development in Ontario

“I have learned over the last couple of years that when I connect with others doing the same work, it is easier. I've also confirmed that a strong provincial group is needed to articulate our collective needs for resources and funding.”
Sandra Mark, West End Community Ventures, Ottawa

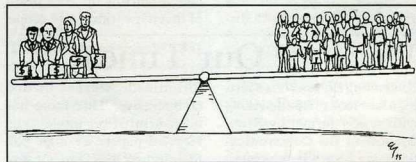
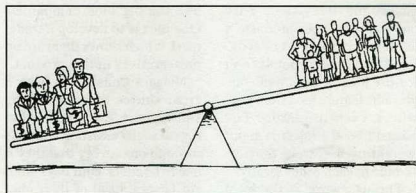
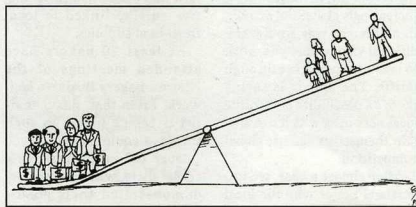
Count me into the Ontario CED Alliance!

Membership fees are \$35 for individuals, \$45 for new CED organizations, \$60 for associates, \$120 for organizations

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My membership fee of \$ _____ is enclosed.

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The power of the little guys

Alliance hits 50 — but we need you

We're growing!

About 50 organizations and individuals have joined the Ontario CED Alliance. The range is wide, covering multi-func-

BY LYNNE MARCELL

tional CED groups such as CODA and West End Community Ventures, Community Futures, Business Development Centres, social planning councils, new community business groups such as COIN in Peterborough, a Metro Toronto credit union, native groups, immigrant and low-income groups. Support organizations such as the Canadian Co-operative Association, Ontario Social Development Council and

Levi-Strauss have also joined.

Yet we still face considerable challenges. The process of starting the Alliance, the provincial network for Ontario's CED movement, has proven to be the same as starting any new local CED group.

It demands community consensus, a clear vision, committed leaders, an entrepreneurial philosophy, a good strategic plan, money and an appropriate structure. It also requires equal doses of business and social values, hard work, patience, and long-term commitment.

We also face additional problems of community-building and communication between people who live far from each

other, use various methods to accomplish their goals, and can't even agree on a definition of community economic development.

Launched in 1992, the Alliance has undergone many refinements during its development.

An interim board spent a year planning and having input into new government CED policy. Modest funding was obtained in 1994 from jobs-Ontario Community Action to start the network, and for sister projects including the Community Economics newsletter and CEDric, an electronic network.

Every time I get discouraged about our lack of progress, I

remember the other CED groups with similar problems and it motivates me to keep going. By experiencing the same challenges, we are more able to communicate to government and others which is needed to support CED in Ontario. We need the Alliance for self-help and collective action. Nobody can do this alone.

At its November board meeting, Alliance board members set five-year goals concentrating on information and policy. Specific goals are to:

- ensure that CED organizations have access to effective information to do their work;
- influence policy and pro-

See *Alliance*, page 13

Moving CED to mainstream Canada

Why has community economic development remained on the fringe of the mainstream system? Why has it received limited recognition as an effective re-

BY GUY BRETHOUR

sponse to creating jobs?

We at National Welfare Grants feel the answers to these questions can be found in part, in the lack of documentation and research regarding CED and limited awareness about its potential. We're doing something about it.

National Welfare Grants (NWG) is a research program within the Department of Human Resources Development. It develops knowledge and resources about Canada's social development.

Research about CED is needed to help policy-makers, program developers and organizers. Knowledge acquired would enable them to determine, for example, the conditions under which CED is most likely to succeed or when its

implementation is preferable to a more traditional approach.

Here's a summary of some CED-related research we've carried out in recent years:

- Four major projects focusing on how CED initiatives can meet social and economic objectives in Atlantic Canada, eastern Ontario, Quebec and urban Canada. The fourth project looked at this topic from a woman's perspective.
- A research paper called *A Synthesis of Knowledge on Community Economic Development*, which summarizes knowledge on CED's capacity to improve the social and economic health of communities.
- A book entitled, *Community Economic Development: Perspectives on Research and Policy*, which provides a comprehensive overview of CED in Canada.
- A summary of proceedings from a 1994 conference called "Building on Strengths: Community Economic Development in the Atlantic Provinces", in Wolfville, N.S.

The conference was funded by NWG and done with the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council and the New Economy Development Group. It raised awareness about CED by promoting best practice models in the Atlantic provinces.

• A report called *The Role of the Private Sector in Community Economic Development*, done in collaboration with the Conference Board of Canada.

CED offers an exciting alternative to more traditional ways of creating jobs and eradicating poverty.

However, the practice of CED still far outstrips research, and policy and program development. There is a critical need to develop a sound knowledge base and to market that knowledge to targeted audiences. We believe that NWG has a key role to play. During the next two or three years, we will concentrate on the following areas:

- Promotion of CED among

See *Research*, page 14

COMMUNITY ECONOMICS

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As the northern Ontario town of **Elliot Lake** continues its economic meltdown after Ontario Hydro's decision to close the uranium mines, a group of CED activists is tackling alternative economic opportunities.

Members of the Elliot Lake Cooperative Development Group are assembling community partners and making links with other provincial CED groups to reclaim the shattered economy.

In January the group was granted \$12,000 by Elliot Lake's economic development office, most of it for training. Group members are coming together with a new business development group in Elliot Lake and the North Shore to look at training, mentoring and a centre for local entrepreneurs.

The development group is sharing experiences with Sudbury's GEODE group in February, and members will attend GEODE'S CED forum and workshops in Sudbury on March 9-10 (see below).

Activist Sharon Gow says they plan to hold a similar community conference in Elliot Lake this year, focusing on the special problems and opportunities of the five communities affected by the mine closings. Eco-tourism, micro-enterprises, farm support, land use planning and peer lending are just a few of the options on the table.

"We want to get people expanding their vision and looking at a variety of CED approaches," says Gow. Elliot Lake's 12,000 people are almost evenly split among sen-

iors, young people, and people of working age, many of them on social assistance.

Traditional approaches like appeals for rescue to distant governments or large corporations are simply not working in Elliot Lake.

In **Sudbury**, the community organization GEODE (Grass-

The event has strong support from the Ontario CED Alliance. A similar event last year drew 110 participants.

GEODE aims to develop a network of organizations and activists across northern Ontario.

In **Toronto**, 20 small businesses have been launched

Organizing picks up

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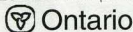
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Lightbox maker Terence Ram got into business with support from Toronto's DEED program. Staffperson Charles Purdy looks on.

roots Economic Opportunity and Evaluation) is stepping up its CED outreach to communities in northern Ontario.

The organization received a small grant to stimulate community economic development in the north and to build a CED network. Coordinator Ram Jagessar is holding workshops in many communities starting with Elliot Lake, Blind River and Gore Bay.

GEODE expects interest from throughout the north for its CED forum and workshops on March 9-10. Brewster Kneen, well-known agriculture author and activist, is the featured speaker.

Panel discussions and workshops include CED in the North, Innovative Farming, Funding Small Business, Barter Systems, Community Loan Funds, Peer Lending, and Reclaiming the Local Economy.

through a unique church-sponsored venture which enables volunteers with business expertise to work face-to-face with low-income people eager to get a new start in life.

The Downtown Economic Enterprise Development (DEED) program bridges the gap between budding entrepreneurs who lack start-up cash and advice, and church people willing to help them get started in business. DEED represents various organizations and local churches. A \$100,000 United Church grant launched DEED into action.

DEED makes loans to people to start their own small businesses. When a loan is made, decisions on the amount, interest rate, and repayment terms are made by the borrower and DEED. This builds respect and responsibility.

in Northern Ontario

But money is only part of the picture. When a person applies for funding and presents a business proposal, a "mentor" or advisor is assigned to the applicant.

"Without the support of the DEED consortium, I could not have even begun this enterprise", says Terence Ram, who began a business making lightboxes for graphic artists.

"This is an investment in human resources, in giving people experience so they can build their economic future", says DEED staffperson Charles Purdy.

Meanwhile, mentorship is taking a new twist in **Goderich**, Ontario. Senior citizens are acting as mentors for fledgling entrepreneurs, and in the process overcoming a major obstacle to starting new businesses.

Gary Davidson told a workshop at the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition annual conference in November that a changing economy in rural Ontario has resulted in a dramatic loss of traditional jobs.

"Small communities have a lot of people who want to start their own businesses", Davidson said. "They can do quite well if they are mentored through the process." Seniors who ran their own businesses were approached through community centres to volunteer, and many have responded.

Community Loan Funds are getting underway across the province. In London and Middlesex the fund will guarantee loans to 35 entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs who have been rejected by traditional funding sources can apply to the com-

munity loan fund to put up the collateral for a small business loan up to a maximum of \$15,000 for individuals and \$45,000 for co-operatives.

"It really is needed" says George Stewart, manger of the London Community Small Business Centre and a board member of the London Middlesex Community Loan Fund. His centre trains people to write business plans and run a small business, but because many people have no significant assets to pledge as collateral, they can't get financing. Under the loan fund, they will obtain financing and also benefit from small business centre and mentoring support.

Thunder Bay is ready to launch an innovative program for delivering small business loans for women, using the

peer lending system popularized by Toronto's Calmeadow Foundation.

The Women's Community Loan Fund offers small business loans for women from \$500 to \$3000. No cash equity or collateral is required, and the fund provides free business training and planning.

The fund is a project of the Northern Women's Centre. Funding and technical assistance comes from a local economic agency, Thunder Bay Ventures.

Rosalind Lockyer, loan fund coordinator, explains that the program will overcome some of the barriers to credit and self-employment faced by women, such as lack of a credit history and lower wages. The loan circles will also give needed support in planning and basic business skills.

Funding cut hits worker co-ops

Down — but not out. That sums up the situation facing Ontario's worker co-op movement following the loss of jobsOntario funding in January. Since losing the grant, the Ontario Worker Co-op Federation has had to lay off eight staff in Kitchener-Waterloo, Sudbury, Ottawa and Toronto. The staff were assisting in the development of new worker co-op businesses.

Supported by a jobsOntario Community Enterprise grant, organizers had been working with a broad range of people, including social assistance recipients, to help them launch new businesses. Under the program's criteria, there were certain expectations around job creation for the new businesses started. That's where the crux of the problem lay. New business owners, still in the fragile start-up phase, felt that they

had to pour their earnings back into their businesses in order to make sure their costs were covered, before paying themselves wages. Some continued to live on social assistance in the meantime. "There's a whole different level of costs that affect how soon you can take out wages" says Kathy Kennedy, one of the laid-off federation organizers.

Kennedy underlines the urgency of the capital squeeze facing new co-op business owners. People had their business plans ready, but lacked start-up financing. Some applied for jobsOntario Community Action funds, but that program involves an extremely slow decision-making process.

From the government's perspective, the worker co-op program failed to reach the agreed-upon targets for job creation. Others feel that the funding cut was linked to a

government extremely nervous about anything that could fuel opposition party criticisms of the jobsOntario program.

"The government's taking a short-term approach to something that's long-term", says Mary Lou Morgan, president of the Worker Co-op Federation Board. Morgan, long experienced with business development, is well aware of the difficulties involved in starting co-operative businesses. For her, this episode raises some critical questions, especially around how success is judged.

Despite this setback, the worker co-op movement has made some important advances in recent years, including firming up its own internal development, succeeding in getting legislative changes to support worker co-op development, and working with labour to establish the Labour Sponsored Investment Funds, as

noted in the article on page 13.

Worker co-op supporters are hopeful that other funding may be found, through the co-op movement or through other government programs. Kennedy describes some of the groups she worked with as "amazing" in terms of their commitment to their business goals. "If they had the tolerance level most people have, they would have given up long ago."

CLASSIFIED

CED ACTIVISTS invited to Summer Program, Institute in Management & Community Development, Concordia University, Montreal, June 19-22. Sessions on community loan funds, business planning, running organizations, etc. Phone (514) 848-3956, fax (514) 848-4598.

Greening Ontario through community action

Environmental protection is giving local business development a big boost in communities across Ontario, thanks to a remarkably effective provincially funded

BY MURRAY MACADAM

program.

The Green Communities Initiative is bringing the environmental movement into thousands of homes, businesses, and schools across the province, with hands-on projects. In some communities, such as Ottawa and Peterborough, local activities include a strong CED element as well. (See articles on pages 9 and 12.)

The initiative promotes the greening of Ontario by encouraging communities to increase energy and water efficiency, reduce waste and prevent pollution.

Across the province, thousands of homeowners have already learned what they can do to reduce their heating bills and achieve a greener lifestyle, thanks to the Home Green Up program, the heart of the GCI. Visits by assessors show homeowners what they can do to cut energy and water waste. Home-

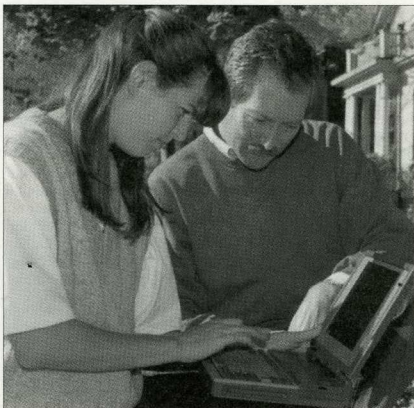
10% of that spending will go to the government.

The GCI "is designed to be green CED", says Keith Collins of the provincial GCI office, who helped design the program. The spending that results from Home Green Up Visits provides an economic boost by creating new business for local suppliers of building materials, hardware stores and other merchants. Home improvements also create jobs for local tradespeople. Other benefits include:

- lower energy and water bills for householders;
- increased sales for Ontario companies that supply green products and services;
- reduced costs for water and sewage treatment.

While some government funding is involved, the program is grassroots-based; it only happens in a community when a group of people agree to work together.

Within each community the initiative is directed by a steering committee representing groups such as municipal water and waste departments, environmental groups, Ontario Hydro, the Chamber of Com-



Guelph 2000 staff Mark Brodrick and Julie Stewart work on their laptop computer in carrying out energy, waste and water assessments of local homes. Guelph's home green-up program has reached nearly 2,000 residents, in a city of 85,000.

merce, a whole gamut of activities are underway, depending on local goals. In Elora, every school has taken part in a "Greening Your School" program involving students and staff in conservation activities. Cycling, public transit and alternate fuelled vehicles are being encouraged in Sarnia.

What happens when the funding runs out?

The goal is that the demand for green industry products, and the skills learned in the process, will mean that businesses will have enough momentum to sustain themselves. Ottawa's Green Community Initiative has built its program with a view to long-range viability.

Collins points to the popular Beavermead ecology park, sponsored by Peterborough's GCI, as an example of how local initiatives may be able to live on after government funding dries up. This park provides environmental learn-

ing through demonstration gardens, workshops and a nursery. "At first you think that money has just been dropped in there", he notes. "But what happens is that people get trained in landscaping, tree planting and other skills. The public gets involved and enthusiastic. Once that happens, work for landscapers, landscape architects, nurseries and other suppliers takes off. You've helped establish the market and the suppliers of the service."

Whatever its future, Green Communities Initiatives are blossoming across Ontario now. The Initiative has expanded greatly since its beginnings four years ago in Atikokan, Cornwall and Sarnia. Another 15 local projects have sprung up since then, including ten which got underway last fall. By the end of 1995 several dozen Ontario communities will be going green.

Home Green-ups benefit thousands of homeowners.

owners have to pay for the installation of insulation, new furnaces, water-efficient toilets, new windows and improvements themselves. To help them do so, a leading financial institution is offering 10-year loans at the prime rate.

The program has been conceived to not only benefit the environment, but to boost Ontario's economy. It's expected that over three years the Home Green-Up program will lead to over \$300-million in green home renovation spending across the province. Less than

merce, and others. Participating communities set their own goals and methods for achieving them.

"Our aim is to go in (to local communities) and jumpstart a widely-representative community organization", says Keith Collins. The provincial Green Communities office in Toronto, with its small staff, reflects this program's non-bureaucratic, community-based approach. The GCI is sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

Beyond the Home Green-up

West End Community Ventures goes green

One of the biggest challenges for community business organizations is to find a business development niche. West End Community Ventures is carving out a niche in the environmental field, thanks to support from the public and the provincial gov-

BY SANDRA MARK

ernment's Green Community Initiative.

Early in our business development process, West End Community Ventures identified environmental protection as an area to pursue. Ventures is a community development organization based in a low-income section of Ottawa.

Green Works of Ottawa was our first environment-friendly business. Using scrap fabric, Green Works' four employees make cloth shopping bags, lunch bags and other products.

Ventures' business development committee carried out feasibility work for a home assessment/energy retrofit project with jobsOntario Community Enterprise funding in 1993. That study pointed out the potential of the Green Communities Initiative as a

strategy for developing a community business idea.

Today that idea is becoming a reality. Community partners were invited to join us and Ottawa's Green Community Initiative was born, called Envirosense.

As in other Green Communities, a key feature of Envirosense involves home energy audits by trained assessors who will identify ways in which homeowners can reduce their energy and water use, and reduce waste by such means as composting. But there's a distinctive CED tinge to our green work. Women who had been on social assistance are being trained to be the assessors.

Our longer-term goal is that as homes and businesses are brought into the Green Community project, they will become customers for other environmental goods and services, sold through a business called Green Works Environmental Enterprises.

This unique approach of viewing the Green Communities Initiative as a community business that can become sustainable has captured the imagination of Ottawa's busi-



Zabra Amin of Green Works of Ottawa, an environment-conscious business begun by West End Community Ventures.

ness community. The Ottawa-Carleton Economic Development Corporation has formed a partnership with West End Community Ventures under the Green Communities Initia-

tive to develop more green community businesses.

Sandra Mark is executive director of West End Community Ventures.

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Edmonton sets pace for recycling

Across Canada, community groups are discovering the "fit" between environmental protection and job creation for the disadvantaged. In cities such as Edmonton, Halifax and Hamilton, the blue box is much more than a recycling program: it's a ticket to a brighter future for people who've been on the sidelines of society. But as the following article shows community-based recycling ventures face many hurdles.

The Edmonton Recycling Society (ERS) has emerged as a unique success story mixing hard-nosed business skills with a social mission. It has trained over 500 people and provided over 70 full-time jobs while providing complete recycling services to half of the City of Edmonton. The ERS does not receive any government grants, and has even returned more than \$800,000 to the City from operating sur-

plus to hire employees who are physically or mentally disadvantaged or have poor work records won political support. The ERS was awarded a contract to handle half of the City's household pick-ups of recyclable materials.

The Society employs 70 people, a quarter of whom are hard-to-employ people who had been on social assistance. These jobs have made an "amazing" difference on the

tion some commitment such as saying their profits from recycling will go to housing for the poor. That's the kiss of death. The municipality can't mix social programs with garbage."

Everyone involved with recycling around Edmonton

residences in the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth. Its 80 employees include 20 youth who been unemployed and out of school for a long time.

Each one stays with Third Sector for six months on a training program financed by

"We're motivated by a humanitarian cause, but driven by a profit motive."

— Edmonton Recycling Society

know that the Edmonton Recycling Society was formed to provide jobs for disadvantaged people. "It's our *raison d'être*", says Guenter. "But when we talk to the city, we set that agenda on the back burner. We compete on their terms."

The Society has gone far afield to find customers for its materials, shipping material to Europe, Japan, and elsewhere. "As a matter of survival, we had to flog the markets", says Guenter. A recycling industry consultant was quoted in *The Financial Post* as saying "The ERS is a model for recyclers across Canada in terms of its aggressive marketing of recycled materials."

At the same time, it has been a catalyst for the local economy. More than a dozen industries in the Edmonton area are making products using recycled commodities as raw materials, providing more than 100 jobs. The Society designed and built much of its processing equipment, using the skills of its employees and those of unemployed craftspeople.

In Hamilton, disadvantaged youth get a new chance on life thanks to a large-scale recycling business run by Hamilton-Wentworth Third Sector Employment Enterprises. It picks up and sorts recyclable waste such as glass, newspapers and tins from 160,000

the federal government under the Canadian Jobs Strategy. Their work week combines lifeskills training and academic upgrading with work on collection routes or in the warehouse as sorters.

An active job search program helps the trainees land permanent jobs. About 65% of them find jobs, usually entry-level service industry jobs.

Besides the jobs created, this business has a major environmental benefit through the huge volume of waste materials diverted from landfill sites.

Third Sector was awarded the Program Operator of the Year award from the Recycling Council of Ontario in 1992.

But Third Sector can't afford to rest on its laurels. "This is a very bottom-line order business", says executive director Ron Barker. Reconciling social service goals with business demands is a tough balancing act. "It's difficult to get across to the social service industry that you must be bottom-line conscious, and vice versa", says Barker.

The Region takes into account the social benefits provided through the training program when awarding its recycling contract. Nonetheless, Third Sector still needs to re-win the contract every four or five years in competition with recycling giants such as Laidlaw.



Edmonton Recycling Society staff at work. More than 500 people have learning life skills and found work since the ERS was formed seven years ago.

pluses between 1989 and 1994.

A charitable organization, the Society was formed by two Christian groups, the Mennonite Central Committee and Citizens for Public Justice, to bid on Edmonton's blue box recycling contract in 1988. At first City Council was reluctant, because the ERS required some start-up capital and because its bid was higher than the competition's. The Mennonite Central Committee provided loan guarantees.

In the end, the Society's non-profit status and commitment

lives of people who had never had a steady job in their lives, says director Cornelius Guenter. "I would never have believed some of these people could stand on their own two feet", he says.

The Society's success, says Guenter, rests on the fact that it provides what the customer wants: low-cost, effective recycling services. "The problem many non-profit groups encounter is that they come to the table (to win a recycling contract bid) with more than one agenda. They invariably men-

Old stoves gain new life in Sudbury

The idea came to me while at a conference on sustainable communities in Picton, Ontario, in 1994: why do we dump our used stoves, and other appliances in landfill

BY RAM JAGESSAR

sites? Can't they be re-used?

Today, the answer is clear. A new community business in Sudbury, the Electronic Recycling Depot, is now diverting electrical and electronic equipment from local landfill sites.

After returning home from Picton, I suggested the idea of recycling appliances to members of the Sudbury Exchange Trading System (SETS). It's a green dollar barter system operated by Grassroots Economic Opportunity Development and Evaluation (GEODE), a Sudbury CED group. Three members of SETS with experience in equipment repair took it from there and set up the Electronic Recycling Depot last July.

The recycling depot recycles "anything that works with batteries or can be plugged in", according to Valerie Felice, manager of the depot's retail outlet near downtown Sudbury. The list includes radios, televisions, computers, stereos, refrigerators, washers, drier, irons, toasters, phones, and on one occasion, a satellite antenna.

Equipment which can be saved is repaired, then sent to the retail outlet for sale to the public.

The trio who started the Electronic Recycling Depot initially invested "sweat equity", their own tools, vehicles and money. Later they were able to get an investor, and then a loan from the Interim Loan Fund operated by GEODE. The first worker was a native student on a placement, who was followed by several social assistance recipients seeking work experience and training.

Future prospects are prom-



Appliance shop foreman Al Gaudette works at recycling a stove at Sudbury's Electronic Recycling Depot, a business which benefits the environment and provides local jobs.

ising if the depot can get and repair enough appliances and equipment to cover salaries and overhead. For now the social assistance recipients do not have to be paid a salary out of income from sales, but soon the ERD will face the salary hurdle.

The Sudbury district has

over 60,000 homes, each of which contains an average of two or three pieces that could be donated. Even if the ERD collects only 10 percent, that means 6,000 homes and possibly 18,000 electric and electronic appliances for recycling.

Ram Jagessar is coordinator of GEODE.

Making connections

Community-Based Recycling: A report called *The Edmonton Recycling Society — An Experiment in Employment and Sustainable Development* is available from Edmonton Recycling Society, 11631 80th St., Edmonton, AB. T5B 2N3, tel. (403) 471-0071.

First Ontario Fund: More information about this Labour Sponsored Investment Fund is available by calling 1-800-401-6705.

Field To Table: To learn more contact Field To Table at FoodShare Metro Toronto, 238 Queen St. West, Toronto, Ont. M5V 1Z7, tel. (416) 392-1658, fax (416) 392-6650.

Green Communities Initiative: The provincial GCI office is at the Ministry of Environment and Energy, 56 Wellesley St. W., 14th Floor, Toronto, Ont. M7A 2B7, tel. (416) 327-1477, fax (416) 327-1514. E-mail: walker2@epo.gov.on.ca

JobLink Ontario Innovations Fund: Information and application forms are available from Ministry of Community and Social Services offices.

National Welfare Grants: For more information on National Welfare Grants' CED research initiative, phone (613) 957-0607 or fax (613) 954-1821.

Sustainable CED: A series of

factsheets on sustainable CED are available from the Community Economics Caucus, Toronto Environmental Alliance, 401 Richmond St. W., Suite 104, Toronto, Ont. M5V 3A8.

tel. (416) 348-0660.

West End Community Ventures: 804 Grenon Ave., Ottawa, Ont., tel. (613) 596-6262, fax (613) 596-6266.

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Peterborough points the way to sustainable CED

Sometimes change starts by people taking the first step. In Peterborough, individuals and agencies are taking the first steps towards developing sustainable community

BY HEVIN EDWARDS

economic development.

CED is taking the next logical step, in terms of integrated community planning, to becoming sustainable community economic development (SCED), recognizing that the environment is also a critical element in the health of any community.

In Peterborough work is underway to develop a SCED Action Plan that will integrate not only social and economic goals, but environmental objectives as well. The process was kicked off last December with an information sharing conference on SCED, sponsored by the Greater Peterborough Community Futures Committee, the Peterborough Social Planning Council and community partners.

The event enabled a cross-section of the community to learn more and to begin work. As a result, a Citizens Round Table on SCED was established and plans are underway to draft a SCED Action Plan for the community.

Meanwhile, people are working to make sustainable community economic development a reality through such initiatives as:

- the Peterborough Community Enterprise Project;
- the Peterborough LETS Exchange (a barter system);
- the Low Income House Warming Project;
- the Peterborough Community Food Security Institute.

The Community Opportunity and Innovation Network

(COIN) and 14 other private and public partners are sponsoring the Peterborough Community Enterprise Development Project.

It will, in part, focus on the creation of green community enterprises designed to enhance the local environment by reducing waste or substituting for current energy-intensive imports. One is a building materials re-use centre that could profitably divert building and demolition waste from landfill sites.

COIN and its community partners are also sponsoring the Peterborough LETS Exchange. Like other LETS systems, it generates economic opportunity for those left out of the mainstream economy while promoting local buying.

Another innovative SCED effort is the Peterborough Green Up's Low Income House Warming Project. It helps low-income individuals to weatherproof their homes or apartments.

The people taking part save on their energy bills and have more disposable income. The community is realizing a conservation dividend and jobs are being created in the local construction industry, which has been hard hit by the recession. Peterborough Green-Up has reached nearly 2,000 people with the message of energy conservation.

Another important initiative is the Kawartha World Issue Centre and Peterborough Social Planning Council proposal to establish the Peterborough Community Food Security Institute. It would promote greater food self-sufficiency and sustainability. This would involve identifying ways to replace the importing of food and improved use of local food



Peterborough Green-Up assessor David Hobson discusses ways to cut energy, water and waste with Anne, Joey and Joel Sloggett.

resources by identifying local large-scale or small-scale food processing opportunities.

As these examples show, a wide range of people and organizations are working together in Peterborough for sustainable community economic development. It's com-

mon to find businesspeople, social agency staff, tradespeople and others collaborating for the good of the community.

Kevin Edwards is general manager of the Community Opportunity and Innovation Network in Peterborough.



Linking Self Employment and Community Economics

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New funds boost local jobs

Amidst discussions on the economy, I hear little about hope for the powers-that-are-not. But members of communities with a long tradition of bringing hope to

BY RUSS CHRISTIANSON

difficult situations — co-operatives and unions — are piping up. They're pointing to the separation of capital from social values as the chief cause of our continuing malaise.

The result is that money is sucked out of our communities and local economic development falters.

But co-operatives and unions have been working to re-make a society in which

people's needs are met, and in which wealth remains in our communities.

An important building block for this new economic order has just been put into place: investment funds which combine social goals with economic returns. Two funds are being launched in Ontario. The First Ontario Labour Sponsored Investment Fund is sponsored by the Ontario Worker Co-op Federation, the United Steelworkers of America and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. The fund will invest in co-operatives and companies with progressive employment practises designed

to save and create jobs.

The Ontario Worker Co-op Federation is also sponsoring the Co-opportunity Fund, which will invest in worker co-op businesses.

These funds offer good returns. First Ontario investors will receive a 20 percent federal tax credit, plus a 20 percent provincial tax credit, and investment is RSP-eligible. People and organizations who

invest in the Co-opportunity Fund can expect a return equal to that of a long-term GIC. Co-opportunity Fund investments are also RSP-eligible. The provincial government guarantees 100 percent of the principal, making them perfect vehicles for promoting social goals while protecting capital.

Russ Christianson is a business developer at the Ontario Worker Co-op Federation.

Alliance on the move

From page 5

grams affecting the practise of CED;

- become a self-sufficient organization.

Memberships taken out in February and March, 1995, will extend into the next fiscal year, so there is no financial incentive to waiting before joining. "We don't have the money to keep sending reminders to people", says board treasurer Julian Papier. "We urge everyone involved in CED in Ontario to join the Alliance."

See the ad on page 4.

CED Index

The Alliance is compiling a listing and profile of all Ontario CED organizations. Dubbed CEDindex, it will contain information on activities, businesses, nature of community and funding.

This database will connect like-minded groups or new groups seeking information. Funding has been provided by the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition.

Barb Matthews is staffing the project and preparing a

questionnaire to be sent to groups. "We want to include everyone who is undertaking community-based economic projects", she says.

If you'd like to be included in the database and do not hear from us, contact Barb by fax at (416) 408-4843 or E-mail at oceda@web.apc.org.

The Alliance has been a sponsor of CEDric, our electronic network, since it started.

We sell publications on CED, answer information requests, consult with government and coordinate many projects. Like other CED organizations, we write funding proposals, and worry about having enough money to do the things we know will make a difference.

We try to keep focussed on our long-term strategy. Unlike governments who are desperate for short-term fixes and are still learning about CED, we know that CED is a long-term investment. The trick is balancing long-term thinking with short-term reality.

Lynne Markell is Coordinator of the Ontario CED Alliance.

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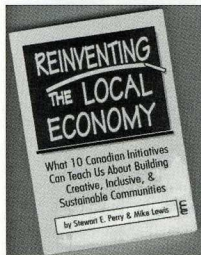
CED's track record inspires hope

REINVENTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY: What 10 Canadian Initiatives Can Teach Us About Building Creative, Inclusive, and Sustainable Communities.

By Stewart Perry and Mike Lewis

Published by the Centre for Community Enterprise, 1994, 238 pages, \$25.

This is a book about hope — the hope for an economic future for Canadians, when they have the tools and opportunity to work together to fashion



that future for themselves, instead of being at the mercy of the global economy.

Stewart Perry and Mike Lewis are two of Canada's experts in community economic development. In *Reinventing The Local Economy*, they put a face on this movement by systematically looking at 10 real-life examples of CED, from one end of Canada to another.

Perry and Lewis say that their aim is to demonstrate "the creative capacity of citizens for reinventing their local economies." The examples

Available through the Ontario
CED Alliance's Publications Service.

Research boosts CED's strength

From page 5

governments and non-government organizations as a viable alternative for marginalized communities. The identification of best practice models and the sharing of lessons learned are key to the effective promotion of CED.

NWG and the Conference

portrayed provide a convincing response to the basic question: does CED work?

The examples are tremendously varied not only in location and type of business or project, but in who the players are: labour, community organizations, financial institutions, community organizations, psychiatric survivors. They include a Cape Breton home-building company financed by union deductions; HRDA Enterprises in Halifax, through which over 1400 former welfare recipients have found work; Saskatchewan's Community Bonds programs; and the Community Loan Association of Montreal.

Each chapter is an honest portrayal of what community economic development involves. Besides covering accomplishments, setbacks and challenges are discussed as well.

Another major highlight is the final chapters, Drawing on the earlier chapters, Perry and Lewis outline ways in which CED could be strengthened and should be part of broader public issues, such as social security reform.

Board of Canada are collaborating in a second piece of work aimed at promoting CED in the private sector. Results are expected in 1995.

- Building on the model used for the Atlantic conference, we may commission other regional conferences to discuss

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE: Five tales of community economic development in Toronto, by the Toronto CED Network.

By Kathryn Church

What's the impact of CED on health, broadly defined?

Some answers to that question can be seen in *Voices of Experience: five tales of community economic development in Toronto*. The tales, comprising a book and a video, are part of a study sponsored by the Fred Victor Mission and funded by Health Canada.

The tales grew out of interviews, focus groups and videotaping with workers and organizers from five businesses: Fresh Start Cleaning and Maintenance; From the Root Landscaping; Hands of Latin America; Mosaic Desktop Publishing; and Toronto Community Ventures. The overall aim is to explore the meanings of "health" in the context of community businesses.

People indicated that creat-

ing a community business is a difficult way to make a living, a no-frills endeavour with little room for error. Earnings are low and unpredictable.

Voices of Experience demonstrates the incredible diversity of community economic development. None of the businesses profiled is an unqualified success. All must contend with critical issues.

They do this with strategies ranging from futile to brilliantly adaptive. In each case, the bittersweet learning is valuable, and is profiled in *Voices of Experience*.

Kathryn Church is a researcher with the CED health research project. The *Voices of Experience* book and video are available for \$10 each.

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CED case studies, emphasize successful models, identify research and policy implications, and strengthen regional networking.

- Evaluative research, comparing CED to more traditional approaches to job creation. One approach could be a national database of CED initiatives.

- Enhancement of the practice of CED, by developing up-to-date tools and information. An example of this involved a handbook addressed to women interested in becoming involved in CED.

Guy Brethour is national consultant for the National Welfare Grants Program.



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