

October 2004

The

# NIAGARA LABOUR MARKET REVIEW

A publication of the Niagara Training & Adjustment Board  
...Niagara's Workforce Development Board

## Mandate

To identify issues pertaining to local labour force development and to forge community partnerships to address the employment/training issues.

## Mission

To facilitate community solutions related to the development and maintenance of a strong workforce in Niagara.

## Vision

That Niagara residents achieve and sustain meaningful employment.

## NTAB Board of Directors 2004-2005

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1 vacancy

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Trudy Parsons, Executive Director  
Tracey Meszaros, Project Coordinator  
Jeannie DuBois, Admin. Assistant

## Co-Chairs' Message

This past year has been a year filled with change, challenge and opportunity for Niagara and NTAB! The Board has undergone a significant change in membership with eight (8) new representatives accepting a directorship position. These committed individuals bring with them a sincere interest in Niagara's labour force development, extensive knowledge in key sectors of our region and a desire to fulfill NTAB's vision ..... "that Niagara residents achieve and sustain meaningful employment".

On behalf of the Board of Directors for The Niagara Training & Adjustment Board, we are pleased to present this 6th Annual Report to our community partners and stakeholders. Following the positive response to the "Niagara Labour Market Review – 2003", we have once again included our Annual Report as part of this information resource publication.

The Board has been very active over the past twelve months and this is reflected in the increased number of community partnerships and outreach activities undertaken by staff and directors. A particular focus has been on workforce development and career awareness across key sectors. For example, several health sector activities were undertaken to promote career opportunities and influence retention and recruitment strategies.

Two key roles for NTAB are information dissemination and partnership facilitation. As one of 21 local boards across the province funded by Human Resources & Skills Development Canada and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, NTAB's primary focus is the development of Niagara's labour force, not to be segregated from labour market development as they are two sides of the same coin. Through such publications as the Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report, NTAB provides stakeholders with qualitative and quantitative data relating to issues impacting this region's labour force development and sustainability. As important, is the facilitation of partnerships, collaboration and cooperation between business, education, government, labour and other key stakeholders towards the identification, implementation and management of actions that result in measurable outcomes. Strategic planning and process development are key drivers for NTAB.

We wish to acknowledge the continued support and financial contributions of our Sponsors, Human Resources & Skills Development Canada and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities without which our endeavours in the community would not be possible.

As co-chairs we extend a special thank you to our fellow board members for their continued commitment and contribution to the Niagara Training & Adjustment Board.

Bill Irwin  
Labour Co-Chair

Bridget Krajnak  
Business Co-Chair

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The Niagara Training & Adjustment Board is funded by:



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## ...Niagara's Workforce Development Board

### Greetings from NTAB's Executive Director



Well 2003-04 has certainly been a busy one for the Board and its staff. Increased partnerships, committee involvement, career resource development and the research and authoring of the Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report has kept both board members and staff focused!

Niagara continues to face challenges resulting from its aging workforce along with the shift of jobs from manufacturing to the service sector. In 2003 alone, Niagara lost 9200 manufacturing jobs and since 1987 that decrease has seen close to 50,000 jobs disappear! An increase in participation of women in the workforce is certainly a positive trend, however the point must be made that females are still earning 67.3% of income earned by males as of 2001. This speaks to the fact that women's employment continues to be concentrated in lower paying occupational clusters. Research for the Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) report also confirmed that although Niagara's labour force is better educated than it was 20 years ago, it still consistently (from 1991 to 2001) exhibits a lower level of university educated labour force, relative to that of Ontario.

The TOP report which is a culmination of Statistics Canada census data, secondary data review, locally conducted labour market survey and issue prioritization, community consultations and interviews, will provide key stakeholders with valuable information on issues of priority for labour force development. As importantly, the document will include community actions that have been identified as contributing solutions. It defines the trends, answers the "so what" and most importantly, creates a new plan of action that builds on what is already being implemented in our Region.

Once again, I want to thank all those individuals and organizations who continue to support the work being carried out by the Niagara Training & Adjustment Board. Your attendance at community consultations, time spent completing surveys and questionnaires, willingness to volunteer on event committees and financial support towards such resources as the catalogue series and brochures, is a true demonstration that partnerships are strong and at work in Niagara! It has been a privilege working with each of you and I look forward to continued and expanding partnerships in 2004-05.

Trudy Parsons, C.I.M., P.Mgr.  
Executive Director  
NTAB

### Niagara Hosts Celebration of "Decade of Success" for Ontario's Local Boards

Local Boards of Ontario gathered at the Niagara Falls Hilton as part of the 10th Anniversary celebration of the inception of the local board initiative supported by a partnership between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

The 2004 Local Board Provincial Conference provided an opportunity for local board co-chairs, directors and staff to gather together from May 13-15th for three days of networking, learning and sharing. A total of 77 delegates registered for the conference, representing all 21 training boards, as well as municipal, provincial and federal governments.

The Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism and Recreation, the Regional Chair Peter Partington and Niagara Falls Mayor Ted Salsi welcomed delegates to the Niagara Region. Mr. Gary Pillitteri, MP for Niagara Falls brought greetings on behalf of Joe Volpe, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Kathleen Wynne, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Training, College and Universities, spoke to the audience on the Adult Education Review. Her address stressed the importance of a strong adult education system that encourages life long learning, and ensures that Ontario has a skilled workforce to support a strong economy.

Based on feedback received, the conference was deemed to be a success! Niagara provided exceptional scenery, great weather, warm temperatures and a first class conference facility.

## Congratulations

to the winners of the 2004 Training Excellence Recognition Awards

#### Manufacturing/Motive Power

Gillespie Pontiac Buick Cadillac GMC Ltd.  
Graham Sensor Technologies Inc.  
Trivieri Service Centre

#### Construction

C.B. Smith Electric Ltd.  
Kraun Electric Inc.  
Merit Contractors Niagara  
Timbro Design - Build Contractors  
Turkstra Lumber Co. Ltd.

#### Service

Brain Injury Community Re-Entry Niagara Inc.  
District School Board of Niagara - Plant Operations  
Niagara Regional Police Service Training Unit  
Niagara Support Services

#### Other

Niagara College Centre for Professional Development  
Niagara Health System



The Niagara Training and Adjustment Board in partnership with Work in Niagara congratulates the companies for their commitment to workplace training and development of their employees.





## Electronic Knowledge Sharing – Niagara Health Training Network

Ongoing Health Sector Human Resource Planning reports identify labour force shortages and changing skill demands for health care professionals and support workers across Canada.

Niagara is not immune to this problem. In fact, the face of hospital-based health care is changing in Niagara as a result of provincially mandated restructuring. Growth in cancer care, mental health and ambulatory care will see the need for specialized skills in a number of health care specialties that do not currently exist locally. Because of the aging population in Niagara there will also be increasing need for the development of specialized skills in diabetes management, dialysis, and heart and stroke care both in the hospital and community. Nursing home and community based care will also require increased staffing and skill needs to meet the needs of our aging population.

Our aging healthcare workforce will see increasing numbers of healthcare workers retiring in the next 10 years and the number of young people entering the health professions is not sufficient to replace those retiring.

All of these trends require regional human resource planning and coordinated accessible training beyond individual institutions. Funding for healthcare will continue to be stretched and all opportunities to share resources and avoid duplication must be exploited.

In a search for solutions to address recruitment, retention and training needs, health sector administrators attending a regional forum proposed the idea of establishing a health training network. The Niagara Training and Adjustment Board received funding through HRSDC and MTCU to conduct a feasibility study on the implementation of a web based training network for the health sector in Niagara.

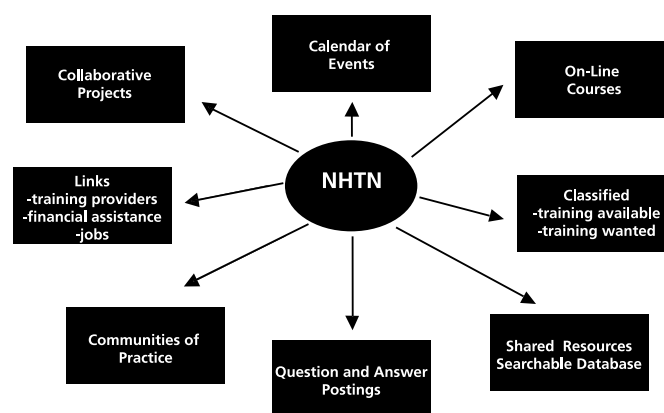
In order to test the feasibility of this solution a survey was designed and delivered to 121 health care providers (including acute care, long term care, community care, public, not for profit and private organizations), multicultural centers, employment agencies and education institutions.

Responses were returned by 63 (52%) of those surveyed. All sectors of the health care field were represented. The key findings of the survey confirm that training remains a critical issue for recruitment and retention of staff and most importantly to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the quality of care. The cost of training, the cost of employee replacement and the scheduling of training were all rated as significant obstacles to training. Most significantly, the survey revealed that there is strong support for sharing and collaborating as a means of increasing training opportunities and reducing training costs. 83.7% of the respondents indicated that they would include employees from other health care organizations in their training. 81.4% indicated that they are willing to share training resources and program materials with other health care organizations. 72% are interested in partnering with training providers to design training and 69.8% are prepared to exchange/share in-house training staff.

Research on best practice models of web based training networks was integrated into the following model, which includes 8 possible features.

1. **Calendar of Events** – The survey results show the strongest support for this feature in which health care providers and training providers would submit training events. This would enable more access to training and the potential for more cost sharing.
2. **On-Line Courses** – Another opportunity afforded by a web based training network is offering relevant courses on-line to all participants. This option is rated very important by 53% of respondents to the survey but with cautions expressed in the comments and by the focus group members. The ability to find relevant courses available in an e-learning format and the cost and time required to design such courses in-house are significant factors. This option is more costly to implement and is better left to a later phase in the maturity of the network when user demand and ability to pay are better determined.

### Health Training Network



3. **Classified** – A total of 83% of respondent organizations rated as somewhat or very important the ability to post on the network the training topics they were looking for and training programs they had developed or are offering that others could attend. This feature, along with the training calendar, provides the easiest opportunity for health care providers to share in the provision of training

4. **Shared Resources** – 64% of the survey respondents rated the ability to share training materials, PowerPoint presentations, workshop outlines, fact sheets, policies and procedures, best practices etc., on a searchable database as very important. This feature has the greatest potential to pool the combined wisdom of health care providers in the region, build capacity in all healthcare workers and reduce the time and money spent 're-inventing the wheel'.

5. **Question and Answer Posting** – 94% of the respondents rated this feature as somewhat or very important and it has the potential to quickly engage participants in the network. This feature will introduce participants to their counterparts in other organizations and facilitate a spirit of joint problem solving for better patient care. It can be an opportunity for more experienced staff to provide job coaching to newer staff, which increases job satisfaction for both parties.

6. **Communities of Practice/Moderated Discussions** – This feature is a more in depth version of Questions and Answers and is generally used by specific professional groups or multidisciplinary groups working on a specific issue. 42% of the respondents rated this feature as very important and 20 participants already participate in some form of on-line collaboration or sharing. This feature can also help facilitate learning and problem solving across sectors (i.e. acute care, long term care, community care.)

7. **Links** – There is strong support for the network to provide related links regarding employment, financial assistance, training and resources for students and internationally trained workers.

8. **Collaborative Projects** – As the network matures, there may emerge region-wide projects that can be facilitated through the technology available. For example, participants may want to conduct a region wide needs assessment or work on a region wide training program.

The feasibility study also explored technical options for designing and developing a web based health-training network.

The results of the survey point to an interest and openness on the part of healthcare organizations in the Region to share resources to increase accessibility and reduce the costs of training. A health-training network can serve as a clearinghouse and database of training needs and solutions bringing together health care organizations and training providers. It can also link healthcare organizations to share in-house training resources and materials. The model can also be designed as a 'knowledge network' bringing together individual health care practitioners to share their learning, research and practice questions and 'best practices'. Providing opportunities for exchange across organizations can contribute to creating a 'learning culture' in healthcare across Niagara - a strong recruitment and retention tool as well as contributor to quality patient care for our residents.

Executive Summary and complete report for the Niagara Health Training Network is available in print through NTAB or electronically at [www.ntab.org](http://www.ntab.org).

Submitted by

Karen Zanutto  
Knowledgebrokers Inc.



### NTAB releases Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report 2004 for Niagara Region

Not unlike much of Ontario, North America and indeed other industrial countries, Niagara's labour market has experienced dramatic changes over the past several decades. Aging population, increasing market competitiveness for goods and services through globalization, higher demand for a highly skilled labour force due to technological changes, population diversity, increased participation of women in the labour market, and a decline in the percentage of employment that has seen employees spend the majority of their working years with a single employer - these are just some of the significant challenges and opportunities for the changing face of the workforce and the labour market.

Local Boards in Ontario have been working within their geographic areas to carry out an empirical research initiative that focuses on the issues, trends and opportunities impacting the local workforce and labour market. The resulting Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) Report 2004 for the Niagara Region is prepared by the Niagara Training & Adjustment Board, Niagara's workforce development board. TOP is a NTAB driven, community-based report that evolved from a highly interactive process of research, community consultations, on-line surveys and interviews. TOP will be updated on a semi-annual basis to capture the progress of initiatives undertaken by Niagara stakeholders to address the identified and emerging issues.

The results of this research will be cross-tabulated with that conducted in other areas of the province to identify any similarities in local labour force and labour market issues. This is an important step in the process as it serves to draw attention to the vastness (or lack thereof) of key social and economic indicators that tend to influence future policy and political decisions and directions.

The TOP report is being presented to the Niagara Region at the Annual General Meeting for Niagara Training & Adjustment Board on October 19, 2004. The report will be available electronically in both official languages at [www.ntab.org](http://www.ntab.org) (follow the link to NTAB Publications) or in hard copy by contacting NTAB at 905.641.0801.

#### Summary of Research Findings

- FACT:** Continued transfer of jobs to the services sector.
- FACT:** Increased age of the labour force.
- FACT:** Increased participation of women in the workforce.
- FACT:** Niagara educational attainment less than Ontario.

#### Prioritized Issues

1. There is a need to create a process to maximize the utilization of available skills within such labour force groups as youth, women, persons with disabilities, foreign trained professionals, resulting in the increase of an available skilled-labour pool.
2. The largest employer in Niagara in 2001 was "Manufacturing" even though it had already experienced a decline to 17% of Niagara's labour force in 2001 from 22% in 1991. Manufacturing continues to extend its downward trend in job losses into 2004 with an additional 9200 jobs being lost over the past year. This raises concerns about the region's ability to deal with major changes such as plant closures.
3. The impact of downsizing and plant closures is resulting in an increase in the need for transitional supports and programs developed specifically for the older worker.
4. Employer recognition of their role in the transfer of experiential skills and knowledge between experienced workers and new entrants to the occupation will result in an increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the workplace and create a best practices model for recruitment.
5. Over the past decade, Health Care and Social Services (including Nursing and Residential Care Facilities) has emerged as one of the top three services sectors (9% of all employment in Niagara). However, professional occupations in health experienced a 9.4% increased share of workers in the 45 years and older cohort, threatening a continued shortage of skilled professionals in all aspects of health care.
6. Industries in the goods-producing sector and the more dynamic segments of the services sector have experienced the greatest technological change and reaped the greatest increase in their productivity. Productivity improvements can explain, in part, the declining demand for labour within the goods-producing sector, ex. manufacturing. As a result of the increase in technological change across occupational clusters, there is an increasing demand for higher skills by employers.
7. There is a need to address the specific training and labour market needs of women including promoting education and training in non-traditional employment which could work to address differences in income between males and females as well as address skills shortages in specific areas in the labour market.
8. Dynamic industries tend to locate in areas that have an available labour force that meets their educational and skill level requirements. Niagara falls below the provincial level resulting in a potential barrier to attracting new and emerging industries.
9. Jobs opportunities in various services sector clusters (eg. Accommodations and Food Services) are not being considered as viable employment due to perception of low-pay, seasonal, low-skill jobs opportunities. This is resulting in a shortage of applicants across these clusters.
10. Services sector training programs are under-utilized. This is resulting in a disparity between the levels of skills required by employers and the actual skill levels of the labour pool.

## Niagara's Skilled Trades

### A Review of Regional Progress Two Years After the Release of Skilled for Life

Developed by Niagara College for the Niagara Training & Adjustment Board - September 2004

In 2002, the Niagara Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB) published a report entitled *Skilled for Life*, which summarized the Niagara region's apprenticeship usage patterns over a ten-year period (1990 to 2000) and projected regional demand for apprentices. It provided evidence of a potential demand for 10,000 new apprentices within Niagara to the year 2010, and included a specific breakdown of the trades in greatest demand. Its recommendations for further action were clustered around three basic themes, namely the need to develop regional consciousness of skilled trades' opportunities, to develop work placements that would facilitate experiential learning opportunities and promote employer sponsorships, and to enhance retention and training capacities.

In the two short years since the release of NTAB's *Skilled for Life* report, the accumulation of national and international events (e.g. the U.S. initiated war in Iraq, SARS, BSE, Power Blackout, Soaring Canadian Dollar) have affected the regional economy and contributed to setbacks in Niagara's tourism and manufacturing sectors. At the same time, Niagara's construction sector has been booming. The extensive investments in institutional, commercial and industrial infrastructure that began in 1998, and that have been led by the tourism sector, remain high. The local housing market has also remained very strong, with new housing starts up by 36% in March 2004 over March 2003.

So what are the implications for skilled workers, particularly for skilled tradespersons? With the aim of contributing to the development of a Niagara workforce that will help attract investment in Niagara and foster livable career opportunities for the residents of Niagara, NTAB has taken the lead to monitor the region's progress toward the development of skilled trades career opportunities within Niagara. This report card is a summary of NTAB's review. It is intended to provide members of the Apprenticeship Strategy Committee with a progress update, two years after the release of its *Skilled for Life* report, and direction to help focus future action.



## ...Niagara's Workforce Development Board

### Progress Report Card - Skilled for Life - 2004

Report: Skilled for Life		Released by: NTAB		Original Release Date: April 2002	
Rating Progress Toward Implementing Recommendations					
YYY Significant Progress Made YY Some Progress Made; additional work required Y Minimal to No Genuine Progress; significant work required					
Recommendation Theme	Rating	Findings	Comments		
Develop regional consciousness of skilled trades' opportunities	YYY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career seekers are increasingly considering skilled trades as a viable career option and apprenticeship a viable learning stream.</li> </ul>	<p>Various community organizations have contributed to the increased awareness and promotion of skilled trades careers, including both school boards, the Business Education Council, Niagara College and the Niagara Training and Adjustment Board. Some examples of regional initiatives include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trades and Technology Exploration (TTX)</li> <li>- Skilled Trades Awareness Campaign (STAC)</li> <li>- Careers you can build on</li> <li>- Construction and Motive Power Employer Networks</li> <li>- Regional, provincial and national Skills Canada competitions/events</li> <li>- Youth Apprenticeship Brochure; Adult Apprenticeship Brochure</li> </ul>		
Develop work placements that would facilitate experiential learning opportunities and promote employer sponsorships	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registrations have remained relatively constant</li> <li>Skilled trades registrations reflect the continued transfer of jobs to the services sector</li> </ul>	<p>Over the past four years the annual number of new apprentice registrations and the concentration of those registrations, have remained consistent within Niagara. Between 2001 and 2004 Niagara experienced an average of 566 new registrations annually, with four trades accounting for almost 60% of the new registrations (Automotive Service Technician, Hairstylist, Cook and Construction Electrician). This rate is consistent with the annual average experienced through the 1990s, but is considerably below the demand projections outlined in NTAB's Skilled for Life report.</p> <p>Recent apprentice registrations reflect the general and historic transfer of jobs from the industrial sector to the services sector. Over the past four years service sector trades have consistently accounted for approximately 40% of all new registrations, with the two largest service trades, Hairstylist and Cook, leading the way; there were no industrial trades among the top ten trades. Within Niagara, two recently developed service sector trades, namely Horse Groom and Horticultural Technician, have demonstrated consistent growth over the past four years. Other service sector trades with growth potential include the following trades: Information Technology Support Analysts, Network Cabling Specialists, Appliance and Electronic Service Technicians, Fruit Growers, Early Childhood Educators, and Child and Youth Workers.</p>		
Develop work placements that would facilitate experiential learning opportunities and promote employer sponsorships	YY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) registrations continue to grow</li> </ul>	<p>The number of OYAP registrations continues to grow as more Niagara youth sign apprentice contracts. During the 2001-2004 period, the 446 OYAP registrations accounted for more than 1/4 of all new registrations within Niagara. Almost half of the OYAP registrations fall within two trades (Automotive Service Technician and Hairstylist), and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> fall within four trades (Automotive Service Technician, Hairstylist, Cook, Construction Electrician).</p>		
Enhance retention and training capacities	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional training delivery capacity remains static</li> <li>Apprentice Candidates (labour supply) exceed Employer Sponsors (demand)</li> </ul>	<p>Over the past two years, in-school training was delivered to only eleven (11) different trades within Niagara. From a simple demand perspective, one may deduce that it's the lack of employer demand that has limited the use of most of the voluntary trades. There is some anecdotal evidence that suggests the lack of accessible in-school training negatively affects prospective apprentices' participation levels, particularly in voluntary trades (e.g. Early Childhood Educators, Network Cabling Specialists). And within Niagara, in-school training is available for only seven (7) voluntary trades. No new skilled trades training programs have been delivered in Niagara over the past two years. The only new, indirectly related, training initiatives that have been developed and delivered are Niagara College's Construction Craft Worker and Construction Techniques programs.</p> <p>The single greatest need is to increase the number of employers that sponsor (hire and train) apprentices. Training delivery institutes are typically the first consideration when speaking about the capacity to deliver training to apprentices, yet it is widely acknowledged that between 85% and 90% of apprentices' training is designed to occur at their worksite and on-the-job. It is the lack of participating employers that most hinders Niagara's capacity to deliver training and develop its workforce.</p> <p>Efforts to attract employers should focus particularly upon attracting small businesses. An incentive program that helps to offset their investments in training apprentices would attract many small business owners. For example, by linking services regional OYAP and Job Connect staff have been able to increase the number of employer sponsors. The Ontario government's recently announced Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit program is another example of a potentially attractive incentive program. The use of any kind of incentive initiative would need to be closely monitored and assessed. Unemployment is arguably a major reason for apprentice dropout rates, so it is crucial to avoid a situation in which too many apprentices are recruited relative to available work opportunities.</p> <p>Brick and Stone Mason Training Program is another example of trade specific programs being developed and delivered in the Region.</p>		



## Ontario DHCs Provincial Forum on Health Human Resources Capacity and Utilization

In the September 2003 issue, we shared some of the key findings of the Ontario District Health Councils' Provincial Health Care Labour Market Survey (July 2002) AND Ontario Hospital Association First Annual Health Care Provider Labour Market Survey (Feb. 2002) - Combined Findings Report (March 2003). In 2003, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care requested the 16 DHCs across the province to hold local forums to identify solutions agencies have implemented in response to the recruitment and retention challenges they are experiencing. The Niagara forum on Increasing Health Human Resource Utilization and Capacity was held in February 2003. The forum was co-sponsored by the Niagara DHC, NTAB, and Niagara College Centre for Community Leadership. Strategies identified and shared included such things as:

- introducing new models of service delivery and technology,
- expanding scope of practice/skill set,
- introducing efficiencies or changing staff utilization practices,
- training and educational strategies,
- recruitment strategies, including longer-term strategies such as early exposure to health careers,
- healthy workplace strategies,
- using volunteers; and
- others, such as low-cost motivational strategies.

A copy of the forum proceedings, including the strategies employed in Niagara (as well as a compendium of strategies in the Central South Region, including Niagara, Grand River and Hamilton) can be found on the Niagara DHC web site, [www.niagaradhc.on.ca](http://www.niagaradhc.on.ca)

In June 2003, a provincial forum was held to review the DHC findings and identify system-wide opportunities to support more effective use of the health workforce. A copy of the Executive Summary as well as the full report, From Practice to Policy: Report of the Health Human Resources Capacity and Utilization Project, October 2003 can also be found on the NDHC web site.

There were five main categories of HHR strategies identified in the province, including strategies to increase employee satisfaction; strategies to use health human resources differently; strategies to find and use other resources; strategies that involve collaboration between two agencies; and strategies that involve collaboration among several agencies.

Enablers for implementing strategies of all types tended to be similar, including such things as:

- willingness of professionals to change,
- senior management commitment,
- a champion, and
- positive management/staff relations.

Barriers for all types of strategies included:

- lack of funding,
- lack of flexibility in how funding and staff can be used,
- issues related to scope of practice, and
- provincial policies that promote competition among agencies.

The implications for policy and practice were also identified. The report indicates the most promising approach would appear to be a combination of the five key strategies: collaboration is important in developing system-wide solutions, but individual retention strategies by agencies are also a key factor. In particular, the report acknowledges that communities cannot resolve HHR challenges on their own, but need health policies, legislation and regulation that support and encourage innovative practices and remove barriers.

In the summer of 2004, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Honourable George Smitherman, announced a major restructuring of the health system in Ontario. While details are not yet known, a number of Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) will be formed across the province. The intent will be to create a true system of care, by breaking down silos which currently exist in the health sector and building teams of health care providers – a solution which is expected to meet the needs of communities, users of the health system and health care professionals. This approach offers an opportunity to use health human resources to their full potential and respond to local health care needs.

## WIN Enters Phase 3



**Work in Niagara** is a collaborative effort drawing the voices of Niagara's education, business and government communities together and working to align the supply of skilled workers with the demand. **Work in Niagara** has the critical task of linking Niagara's education and training programs with the needs of the labour market and to develop a commitment from the private sector to become active players in supporting these programs on an on-going basis.

STAC, a Skilled Trades Awareness Campaign, will be in full swing once again this year. STAC will highlight career potential in Niagara's Construction, Motive Power, Manufacturing and Tourism Sectors. An integral part of this campaign will be the 'Employability Skills for Potential Apprentices' Conference slated for early 2005, offered to interested unemployed and underemployed individuals. This conference will promote career opportunities in Skilled Trades occupations identified as having immediate or anticipated shortages within Niagara.

**Work in Niagara** would like to recognize and thank the members of the Construction and Motive Power Sector Networks for their continued dedication in the development of a collaborative action plan to address respective skilled labour shortages in Niagara.

**Work in Niagara** is a partnership between Niagara College and the Business Education Council of Niagara and is funded by Human Resources & Skills Development Canada and Regional Niagara Community Services.

For further information or to find how you can become involved with these **Work in Niagara** initiatives contact Kathy Murray at 905-684-7200 Ext. 226 or [kmurray@becon.org](mailto:kmurray@becon.org).

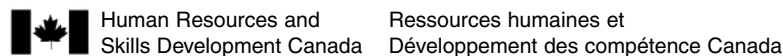
## "Mission Possible" Message Designed for Parents and Educators



**Parents and educators are being asked to take part in an evening symposium on March 30, 2005 designed to raise awareness and improve practices and attitudes towards all student career choices. To register or for more information log onto [www.ntab.org](http://www.ntab.org) or contact us at 905.641.0801**



## Labour Force Activity St. Catharines-Niagara Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) June 2003 – June 2004



### Labour Force Trends

The change in labour force activity between June 2003 and June 2004 saw a decline in all aspects of the labour market. Over -10,000 people lost employment with the majority leaving the labour force altogether (-7,400). The others (-2,800) who remained in the labour force became unemployed. Full-time and part-time employment were affected virtually the same with a decline of just over -5%. The participation rate was down from 64.3% in 2003 to 61.8% in 2004 while the unemployment rate rose from 6.5% to 8.2%. The unemployment rate is higher than both the provincial and national average of 6.9% and 7.2% respectively. Labour Force Activity continued to peak in September when there were 217,700 (slightly higher than the previous September) in the labour force and a 66.8% employment rate. Throughout the year, the 3-month moving average unadjusted unemployment rate was anywhere from a high of 9.1% in March 2004 to a low of 6.1% in September 2003.

St. Catharines-Niagara is not alone. Other areas such as Thunder Bay and London have had larger increases in the unemployment rate from the same time last year. In June 2004, St. Catharines-Niagara was ranked as 8th out of the 25 CMAs in Canada with an unemployment rate of 8.2%. Saguenay, Quebec had the highest with 10.9% while the lowest was found in Edmonton, Alberta with 4.3%.

Labour Force Trends St. Catharines-Niagara CMA				
Labour Force Characteristics	June 2004	June 2003	Absolute Change	% Change
Population 15yrs +	326,900	325,400	1,500	0.5
Labour force	201,900	209,300	-7,400	-3.5
Employed	185,500	195,600	-10,100	-5.
Full-time	147,400	155,300	-7,900	-5.
Part-time	38,100	40,300	-2,200	-5.
Unemployed	16,500	13,700	2,800	20.
Not in labour force	124,900	116,100	8,800	
Participation rate %	61.8	64.3	-2.5	
Unemployment rate %	8.2	6.5	1.7	
Employment rate %	56.7	60.1	-3.4	

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

### Employed Labour Force by Industry

Contrary to June 2002 to June 2003 where the largest employment increases were in Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing and Information, Culture and Recreation, June 2003 to June 2004 saw all three of these industries with major decreases.

Most of the decline in employment year-over-year came from losses in the Manufacturing sector (-8,500). While employment in Manufacturing has remained relatively flat over the past six months, it showed a steady decline through the second half of 2003. Manufacturing has lost over 50% of its workforce since August 1987 when there were 51,500 people employed in that industry. Declines were also seen in Transportation & Warehousing (-2,200), Accommodation and Food services (-2,100) and Information, Culture and Recreation (-1,700). While they all peaked in the fall of 2003 they all also began their descent at that time. Transportation & Warehousing continued its decline right into June 2004 while the other two started to rise in alignment with seasonal trends.

An increase was seen in Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing of +2,100. Employment has almost doubled in this sector since the beginning of 2003 when there were 6,100 people employed. There are now 11,700. Other significant increases were seen in the Professional Scientific and Technical services (+1,200) and the Public Administration (+1,200) sectors.

Employment by Industry St. Catharines-Niagara CMA				
Industry – (NAICS)	June 2004	June 2003	Absolute change	change %
All Industries	185,500	195,600	-10,100	-5.2
Goods-Producing Sector	42,100	48,200	-6,100	-12.7
Agriculture	3,300	3,200	100	3.1
Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Oil and Gas	...	...	...	...
Utilities	1,600	...	...	...
Construction	12,400	11,700	700	6.0
Manufacturing	24,200	32,700	-8,500	-26.0
Services-Producing Sector	143,400	147,300	-3,900	-2.6
Trade	27,500	27,700	-200	-0.7
Transportation and Warehousing	7,100	9,300	-2,200	-23.7
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	11,700	9,600	2,100	21.9
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8,100	6,900	1,200	17.4
Management, Administrative and Other Support	9,400	10,100	-700	-6.9
Educational Services	13,400	14,800	-1,400	-9.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	19,100	19,000	100	0.5
Information, Culture and Recreation	13,700	15,400	-1,700	-11.0
Accommodation and Food Services	19,600	21,700	-2,100	-9.7
Other Services	6,000	6,300	-300	-4.8
Public Administration	7,800	6,600	1,200	18.2

Note: "..." indicates that data are too small to be expressed and are not appropriate for release. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

Carol Dupuis  
Labour Market Information Analyst  
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
Niagara Area



## ...Niagara's Workforce Development Board

### More employees needed for growing tourism industry

As the Tourism Industry in the Niagara region continues to grow, many employers are being faced with the difficult task of finding the correct people for the job. The Niagara Tourism Human Resource Council's goal is to work with industry partners as a "matchmaker". The Council works closely with tourism employers and job seekers to address the needs of both parties involved, while creating a wareness of educational institutes and future industry and development.

These goals are achieved by hosting job fairs, information sessions and industry career days, and by working with industry partners to promote employment opportunities.

For more information about the Council, please visit our website at [www.tourismcareersniagara.com](http://www.tourismcareersniagara.com)



### NTAB extends a Special Thank You!

Board members and staff extended a special thank you to Sherry Dorling for her five years of service as the NTAB Administrative Assistant. We wish her all the best as she accepts new endeavours and opportunities.

## YOUR NIAGARA.CA

November 2004 will see the launch of a brand new community portal.

The site will offer you, a resident of Niagara, the convenience of accessing targeted municipal services on-line. For example...book your daughter's swimming lesson at the local pool...buy a pet license for your dog or pay for that parking ticket lurking in your wallet.. all from your home computer. You will have access to an aerial photography and interactive maps, allowing you to find restaurants, tourist attractions, sports and recreational facilities, biking and hiking trails, beaches, etc.

Other map based information pertaining to government facilities, current infrastructure improvement projects, properties and real estate genealogy and history, schools and other educational opportunities will also be available.

This amazing collaborative effort involves eleven local municipalities, Regional Niagara, District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara College, Brock University and numerous community partners.

[www.yourniagara.ca](http://www.yourniagara.ca)

*Your Community Connection!*



### Upcoming NTAB Sponsored Events

- October 19, 2004 .....Annual General Meeting
- October 19, 2004 .....Mission Possible – It's Cool to be Capable, Young Men's Conference
- October 27, 2004 .....Take a Break & Learn – Decision Making/Goal Setting
- October 28, 2004 .....Take a Break & Learn – Interview Skills/Resume Updating
- November 2, 2004 .....Take a Break & Learn – Communicating Effectively
- November 3, 2004 .....Take a Break & Learn – Assertiveness/Self-Esteem
- November 4, 2004 .....Niagara Falls Community Career Fair
- November 24, 2004 .....Mission Possible – It's Cool to be Capable, Young Women's Conference
- December 1, 2004 .....Community Forum
- Winter 2005 .....Employer Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship Strategy Development
- January 12, 2005 .....ETC ~ Exciting Tourism Careers Awareness Event
- February 11, 2005 .....Training Excellence Recognition Awards of Niagara
- March 3, 2005 .....3rd Annual Niagara Information Exchange
- March 30, 2005 .....Mission Possible – Growing Up is Hard to Do

For a complete listing of NTAB publications check out NTAB Publications or Career Related Resources Centre on our website at [www.ntab.org](http://www.ntab.org)



### POSSIBILITIES - A Niagara Job Awareness Conference: Effects on Unemployed and Underemployed Women

#### A Research Study

The Women's Reference Group of NTAB, held a job awareness conference for women in the Fall of 2003 in St. Catharines. Within this one-day conference a research study was conducted, which is reported on in this article.

The main problem addressed in the research study was a lack of information about labour-market issues and how that can be a barrier for women who are unemployed or underemployed. The need for this conference was demonstrated in the large response of applicants. There were 275 applicants for conference participation, 175 of which participated in the first conference held in the Fall of 2003, with 113 acting as research study participants, and another 100 of which were referred to a second conference held in the Spring of 2004. The individuals were funded to attend the conference by either Ontario Works or NTAB.

The findings of the research study concluded that participants improved their levels of awareness, to a statistically significant degree, on:

- the importance and accessibility of career assessments;
  - the jobs in demand in Niagara that pay at least a minimum living-wage;
  - the availability of educational/training opportunities in Niagara;
  - the qualifications required to get a job in demand in Niagara.
- the prevalence of women running a small business and how to get started in a small business;
  - the choices for earning a high-school diploma;
  - the choices for upgrading English literacy skills;
  - the availability of community-based services for help in finding training or a job;
  - the availability of funding for training;
  - the process of networking to make job connections;
  - augmenting action toward enquiring about an educational/training program within three months of the conference.

A recommendation by the researcher is that an annual Niagara Job Awareness Conference for Women be considered and that the time for individual presentations be extended. Another recommendation is that a series of half-day targeted workshops be offered in different communities built around feedback from the participants as they complete the conference. Participants could also be referred to mentoring providers for additional support. Further areas for research could include a longer-term follow-up period after the conference to determine effects, a study demonstrating where women have found success in transitioning to training or work, a study to determine the earnings improvement of women out of workplace training programs, and the tracking of entry of women and their earnings into the skilled trades.

A copy of this research study will be on file at Brock University with the Master of Education projects and theses after September 2004. The study includes an extensive literature review on marginalized women and job training and employment. It also has numerous findings broken out by socio-economic status and various age groups as well as the effects the conference had on caseworkers of whom participated. The study would be of interest to educators/trainers, service deliverers, government funding agencies and sample populations. The name of the project is: POSSIBILITIES - A Niagara Job Awareness Conference: Effects on Unemployed and Underemployed Women, August 2004, Author: Carolyn A. Maingot.

The author of the research study wishes to recognize with appreciation the contributions to the conference of Kim Penwarden of the Skills of Success Program, Bethlehem Projects; Susan Buckingham of the Adult Learning & Resources Centres, Niagara West; and Jessica Notwell of the Canadian Access for International Professions and Skilled Trades. In addition, appreciation is extended to Trudy Parsons and Tracey Meszaros of NTAB for their financial and logistical support; to Ontario Works for their financial support; and to Dr. Michael Kompf of Brock University for his academic guidance.

This initiative was funded in part by  
HRSDC and MTCU.



### GOODWILL INDUSTRIES NIAGARA - Putting Goods and People Back to Work The Niagara Trades Career Centre

The Niagara Trades Career Centre will be an innovative and collaborative project that will provide New Canadians, At Risk Youth, Workers over 40 and Persons with Disabilities with construction, building and business skills. Direct employment or bridging to formal apprenticeship training are goals. Skills training and employment support will be provided through partnerships with existing service providers from a central and accessible trades skill school. Participants will demonstrate their new skills by renovating houses that will provide affordable housing in the region.

Goodwill Niagara is pleased to announce that the Niagara Trades Career Centre is only a year away from becoming a reality. To resolve the dramatic shortages of trades people for Niagara that has been forecasted in local studies, new support or infrastructure must be defined and installed to support traditional efforts to graduate skilled trades people. We have now defined a "due diligence process" that will prepare a facility design, curriculum, business plan, marketing plan, sustainability plan, and bring together many community leaders to support our goals. The first meeting of the Advisory Council provided overwhelming support as builders, representatives from social service agencies, government and consumers confirmed and reinforced our plans and commitment to this vision.

Together, with input from many volunteers we have confirmed local market training needs and potential partnership opportunities.

We are pleased to announce that we have secured a 50,000 square foot facility, within a 10 minute walk from the central bus station in St. Catharines. Soon people with employment barriers will be learning new skills and deciding what trade will best suit their ability and future goals. They will have new opportunities to become independent and contributing members of their community while earning an improved living wage.

Under the direction of the Niagara Trades Career Centre Advisory Council, this November, we will establish a project team that will prepare the blueprint necessary to make the Niagara Trades Career Centre a reality.

Many people in the community have provided encouragement and support for the Niagara Trades Career Centre while others have also contributed funding to support this project's development. We are very grateful to the Trillium Foundation, The United Way of St. Catharines and Thorold, The St. Catharines Task Force and the Royal Canadian Legion for their support.

The next meeting of the Niagara Trades Career Centre Advisory Committee will take place this November at the Stokes Seed Building on Page Street. At that time we will review facility plans, introduce our project team and meet the many community supporters who have adopted the Niagara Trade Career Centre vision. We will also share with you our Phase III workplan that will ensure a standard of excellence and the future success and sustainability of the Niagara Trades Career Centre.

Various Ministries have always encouraged partnership among "not for profit" sector organizations. We look forward to their participation at this meeting as they view community partnership in action. Together we will provide a new example and model of how organizations can work together to expand our capacity and create the required new infrastructure a community needs to resolve local issues without creating new administration, duplication or additional tax burden.

If you would like to be a part of this event, please contact us at goodwill@iaw.on.ca to ensure your notice of meeting.

Saulis Zemaitis  
President and C.E.O  
Goodwill Industries Niagara



### The Truth about Disabilities and Work Place Accommodation

By: Donna L. Herrington, NTAB Persons with Disabilities Director

Over the past 10 years, there has been a growing recognition in society that individuals with disabilities have a right to meaningful and real employment. However, there also seems to be a great deal of apprehension and reluctance on the part of employers to embrace workers with disabilities into their labour force. I believe this reluctance is based in part on a lack of understanding of the abilities and skills of people with disabilities and perhaps a lack of interaction between the employer and people with disabilities in general.

When most people think of "disabilities" or "accessibility" they think of wheelchairs, ramps and elevators. From an employer's point of view this may conjure visions of extensive renovations and purchasing high cost equipment. Adding to this pressure is the employer's "duty to accommodate" outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The reality of disability and work place accommodation is in truth, quite different. In many cases, accommodation should not produce "undue hardship". The following illustrates this point, and hopefully will address concerns and perceptions about hiring people with disabilities:

**Myth: I haven't had to deal with workplace accommodation before, why should I now?**

**Reality:** Every time you negotiate to hire a new employee you are negotiating work place accommodation. This is true in both unionized environments (as seen through a collective agreement) and in non-unionized environments. General work place accommodations may include such things as: hours of work, length and schedule of breaks and lunch breaks, reimbursable business expenses and vacation times and schedules. In creating a positive work environment for both the employer and employee, one must negotiate the terms of employment. This includes making reasonable accommodations for both sides. Both employers and employees continually accommodate each other.

**Myth: Accommodation is just too expensive.**

**Reality:** Again, this perception is based on the idea that all accommodation is physical in nature. There are many individuals who have invisible disabilities but who still need accommodation, but who may not need any specialized equipment. Also, the vast majority of disability accommodations cost less than \$500. By law, an employer cannot circumvent this responsibility by simply claiming "undue hardship". In recent decisions (2000), the Supreme Court of Canada has clarified the parameters of "undue hardship" as follows:

- Accommodation measures must be taken unless it is impossible to do so without imposing undue hardship.
- The undue hardship threshold is high.<sup>1</sup>

Claims of undue hardship must be:

- Quantifiable;
- Shown to be related to the accommodation; and
- So substantial that they would alter the essential nature of the enterprise, or so significant that they would substantially affect its viability.

It is also important to remember that not all people who have a certain type of disability need the same accommodation.

**Myth: My insurance rates will go up.**

**Reality:** This perception is based on the idea that people with disabilities are sick and require constant medical attention. This stereotype is inaccurate and discriminatory. In fact, most people with disabilities are in excellent health and do not require any more medical treatment than their co-workers without disabilities. In general, employees with disabilities have lower absentee rates than workers without disabilities.

Further, if an employee does not qualify for a group insurance plan because of a disability the employer must compensate the employee an amount equal to the contribution that the employer would make on behalf of an employee who does not have a disability.<sup>2</sup>

**Myth: Accommodating an employee means they can't do the job they are hired for.**

**Reality:** In situations where the ability to accommodate is unclear it is important for the employer to determine whether the job duties can be modified to accommodate an employee with disabilities. Sometimes this can be achieved very easily by changing not the duty but how the duty is achieved (i.e. allowing an employee to work from home for part of the day, but still requiring duties to be completed while working at home).

Another option is to "re-bundle" or "trade off" duties between job descriptions. For example, if the job requires lifting, and the employee cannot lift, can another duty such as processing requisitions be reasonably exchanged or substituted? Can the lifting be reasonably reassigned to another employee?

**So how do I begin to accommodate?**

Accommodation strategies begin and are successfully implemented through communication. An employer cannot ask "Do you have a disability"? The appropriate question is "What, if any, accommodations would you require to perform this job"? This is an important question for all potential or new employees. But, this is not a "guessing game". The employee with a disability has an obligation to inform their employer of their needs and provide all needed information to facilitate the accommodation. The employee must also participate in discussions about solutions and work with the employer to manage the accommodation process.

Through communication and good faith, work place accommodation can be a "win-win" situation. By creating universally accessible environments and practices, employers and employees with disabilities can work together to achieve mutual benefit.

<sup>1</sup>Disability and the Duty to Accommodate in the Canadian Workplace, Michael Lynk

<sup>2</sup>Ontario Human Rights Code

### Meeting the Employment Needs of Niagara's Francophone Community

Club 2000 Niagara, sponsored a study of the employment needs of the Francophone community, and has created a consortium which includes Collège Boréal, les conseils scolaires de district catholique centre-sud et conseil public de district du centre-sud-ouest (2 French School Boards), l'ABC communautaire and Employment Help Center of Welland.

#### Goal:

The goal is to facilitate the implementation of a strategic plan and the plan of action for the project in order to meet the needs and improve the training services delivered in French in the francophone community of HRSD-Niagara

#### Objectives:

- Identify the strengths of the francophone community and its' capacity to address those needs.

- Prioritize the needs and services related to the employment sector.
- Determine the objectives and the means by which the common employment goals of all the partners can be met.
- Develop a local consortium of francophone services that would eliminate gaps in services.
- Encourage the decision-making between community partners for the development of human resources and strategic planning for the delivery of francophone programs and services delivered in the employment sector.
- Develop an approach to the development of employment by way of a community business and strategic plan.

The consortium has reviewed the findings of the study and has identified 9 fields that would provide the best job opportunities in the peninsula. These fields are not necessarily the fields with the highest manpower needs but are the ones where bilingualism would be an asset.

1. secretary, especially in a government office ;
2. booking clerk (tourism) ;
3. hotel management ;
4. personal care-giver ;
5. hair stylist and esthetician ;
6. cook and commercial prep cook ;
7. early childhood educator ;
8. speech-language pathologist ;
9. call centre agent ;

Club 2000 Niagara has also submitted a proposal for the creation of an Agri-tourism Business Development Incubator (Resource Center) for the Niagara Region. We hope that this project will soon be approved and accessible to everyone who wants to start or to grow an Agri-tourism business.

The Agri-tourism Centre would provide facilities and all the tools and human resources needed to start or grow an agri-tourism business. More news will be provided when available.



## ...Niagara's Workforce Development Board

### A Niagara Human Resources Strategy Framework

A Niagara Business Leadership Council was established as a direct response to the human resources challenges outlined in **Confronting the Jobs Challenge: A Niagara Human Resources Development Strategy**. The Council currently consists of volunteer business leaders from various industry, public-sector organizations, and geographic regions of Niagara. The volunteer Council has become the nucleus of a regional stewardship network of leaders committed to strengthening the viability, growth and prosperity of Niagara.

The Council has determined that the number one priority for our region over the short term is to develop a strategic framework to engage stakeholders in what many observers are saying will be a major regional crisis—a looming labour force supply-demand imbalance in Niagara's industries, occupations and communities. As a result, this issue has become the Council's primary focus of attention.

Senior executives realize the importance of having access to a pool of skilled workers and want to be assured that their needs and concerns are being heard by the institutional community, the professional bodies that represent their interests or by governments that invest in strategic human resource development. This is especially important to industry sectors of our regional economy that are changing the economic landscape of the region.

The Niagara Business Leadership Council has determined that the best way to address this complex

challenge is to create a framework that will guide inquiry, focus the discussion on key issues and elicit workable, Niagara-based solutions from regional stakeholders. Work has to continue to understand the complexities of Niagara's human resources challenges before options for the future can be recommended and implemented.

In the interim, however, the Niagara Business Leadership Council proposes that a strategy framework be developed to focus on the following elements with respect to Niagara's labour market: labour demand; labour supply; coordination of labour market programs and services; and the funding of skills training and workforce development in Niagara.

The analysis of 'labour demand' sets the context and identifies elements that must be addressed in order to understand Niagara's current and future demographic, labour force and economic characteristics, the region's industrial and occupational composition and the shifting trends in labour force attachment within these sectors. As well, attention will be directed to strategies that examine labour force growth potential and workforce retention/expansion in existing enterprises.

The identification of 'labour supply' issues and options requires a comprehensive examination of the dynamics of labour force supply in a changing Niagara economy. The framework gives direction for this type of analysis and strategy development

that includes, but is not limited to, the current human resource practices of employers, the integration of newcomers, seniors, women, youth, the disabled and aboriginal Canadians into the region's labour force, and the education and skills training programs of the region's education and training system.

A third element of the framework will focus the issue of the "coordination of employment and labour market services" within the Niagara region. Council has incorporated the coordination and delivery of labour market intelligence, programs and services, as one of the key elements.

The last component of the framework will direct attention to "the funding of skills training and workforce development in Niagara". This is a complex issue that involves understanding legislative mandates and the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The initial strategy framework will be completed in the Fall 2004.

For information on the Niagara Business Leadership Council, please contact:

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### Year in Review for Niagara Training and Adjustment Board

#### NTAB Deliverables

##### Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report (TOP)

Initially scheduled for release in 2003-04 fiscal year, the report has been delayed to allow for inclusion of specialty tabulated census data that was prepared for the local board areas. The TOP Report is an NTAB driven, community-based report that will result from a highly interactive process of research, community consultations, on-line survey and interviews. It is a living document that NTAB will be updating on a semi-annual basis. The updates will demonstrate the progress of planned and current initiatives and actions as they relate to the identified and emerging issues of labour market and labour force development. This report will be submitted to Human Resources & Skills Development Canada and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities by September 30, 2004 with a planned community release scheduled on October 19, 2004.

##### Inventory of Programs and Services (IPS)

IPS is a comprehensive database of employment programs and

services available in Niagara that can lead to employment. In addition to local programs, information on provincial and federal programs and services is available. In spring of 2004, Community Information Toronto (C.I.T.) was awarded the contract to host and provide technical and data maintenance of the IPS. Data collection and input now follows the National Guiding Principles & Minimum Standards for 211 in Canada.

##### Community Forum 2004 (Local Planning)

On January 28, 2004 NTAB welcomed community stakeholders at the CAW Hall in St. Catharines. Approximately 70 representatives from numerous sectors and agencies throughout the Niagara region took part in prioritization discussions on issues impacting Niagara's labour force development. This information is a key part of the data collection process for the "Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report".

##### Community Partnership

Niagara Training & Adjustment Board actively participated in thirteen (13) partnerships during the 2003-04 fiscal year. The impact of such collaboration and cooperation has been vali-

dated through participant feedback, community recognition and the growing number of requests NTAB is receiving! Such high level of activity has stemmed a growing desire to expand our partnership role while maintaining a focus that supports the Board's strategic plan. Additional information on these and other NTAB initiatives can be found throughout this report.

##### Outreach and Linkages

NTAB Directors continue to provide a strong link between the constituency groups they represent and NTAB. Through both oral and written communications, directors voice their concerns, suggestions and recommendations on issues and initiatives ongoing throughout the region. This information is a vital component to the strategic planning process carried out by the board and helps to identify future focus and activities. Staff continues to expand their visibility at the community level through participation in such activities as interagency meetings, ad hoc committees, local events and conferences and community outreach interviews and meetings.

### Focus On...

#### Apprenticeship

##### Niagara Apprenticeship Strategy Committee

The NTAB Apprenticeship Strategy Group continued to identify issues and initiatives related to apprenticeship in the Niagara Region. The group redefined its mandate, that being:

*To develop strategies to promote apprenticeable skilled trades training in the Niagara Region*

Through a collaborated effort of the youth-serving agencies represented on the committee an Apprenticeship Brochure for Youth was reprinted and is now available as a promotional resource for both apprentices and employers.

#### Catalogue of Skilled Trades - Update 2004

Originally developed in 2000-2001, this catalogue was created to provide an overview of skilled trades available in four sectors: Construction, Motive Power, Industrial and Service. This update reflects changes in job requirements, salaries and qualifications that have emerged since the original binder was produced. Revised in partnership with BEC, DSBN, and NCDSB, this product will be available in all community agencies, libraries and school career resource areas.

#### Youth

##### Mission Possible – It's Cool to be Capable

These two - full day student conferences targeting young men and women (individual conferences held for each gender) from grade 10, provided a current and accurate snapshot of today's labour market, with a specific emphasis on careers that are not gender-based, and may not be deemed "traditional" in the skilled trades, construction, manufacturing, health care and tourism sectors, entrepreneurship and technology-related industries. Local role models from each industry played a key role in the day's events. The day resulted in increased



## ...Niagara's Workforce Development Board

awareness among participants of the career opportunities available in non-traditional trades, the creation of a more realistic image of people who work in the skilled trades and non-traditional careers as well as increased awareness among educators of the services and supports available in the region to assist in career awareness among students. Over 300 high school students took part over the two days!

### Mission Possible – Exploring Pathways Educators Conference

As part of round table discussion groups, over 100 educators had the opportunity to speak with employer representatives from growing business sectors in Niagara to learn what they're looking for when hiring entry-level staff and what's happening in their industry/sector. Networking in the marketplace provided educators opportunity to connect with people and resources in the community that deal with all facets of career exploration.

### Mission Possible - Growing Up Is Hard To Do

Parents and educators had the opportunity in both the Fall and Winter to take part in a symposium designed to raise awareness and improve practices and attitudes towards all student career choices. Information pertaining to opportunities for college, university, apprenticeships and direct school to work was the focus of workshops and was shared with over 200 parents over the two dates. Due to the continued demand, this symposium was held in both the Fall and Winter with plans to make it an annual event.

### Celebration of Flight

Approximately 500 high school students from across the Niagara region gathered at Niagara District Airport to celebrate the 100th Anniversary and gained exposure to various careers in the local aerospace industry. Activities included static displays of aircraft and components, information booths, guest speakers and hands-on activities.

### Niagara Falls Community Career Fair

NTAB was pleased to be a partner in this full day event which saw approximately 2000 students take part in an opportunity to speak with employers and sector representatives about career options and education pathways. The day helped raise awareness of regional employment opportunities (present and future). Local community agency and educator exhibits offered additional support relating to program availability and requirements.

## Women

### Possibilities – Women's Labour Market Awareness Conference

Two one-day conferences for approximately 300 unemployed or underemployed women provided participants a chance to enhance their awareness of their marketable skills, the Niagara labour-market demands and the available educational and training options that match these demands. Deemed a great success, this conference has resulted in ongoing initiatives targeting women for 2004-05.

## Literacy

### Workplace Literacy is Everyone's Business

A breakfast presentation for employers and Human Resource Professionals was provided to raise awareness about a critical but sometimes overlooked issue - Literacy in the Workplace. Industry representatives spoke about their company's experiences with literacy problems. The morning provided increased awareness among participants of Literacy and provided networking opportunities between individuals and organizations sharing a common interest.

## Newcomers

### Employment Profile For Newcomers in Niagara - Phase 1

Under the lead of the Region of Niagara, this initiative focused on the design and implementation of a research methodology to facilitate the identification of key information and best practices pertaining to newcomers to Canada. NTAB played an active role in the completion of Phase I and serves as a member of the project steering committee. The final product will provide a profile of employment opportunities and barriers for newcomers in Niagara (including immigrants and refugees). A

detailed review of existing research on employment initiatives and a literature review are key elements of the work being carried out.

## Health

### Niagara's "Healthy" Labour Force

The challenges of staff shortages, increased overtime hours, demands of new skills and skills enhancement, and lack of time allotment for professional development, all lead to a cause for concern around service levels in the health sector. A significant impact on the available labour force for this sector is the difficulty experienced with recruitment and retention of human resources. NTAB sponsored a presentation on issues, challenges and solutions facing Niagara's health sector. This was led by representatives from the local and provincial levels and clearly articulated the urgency of a labour force development focus for this sector.

### Niagara Health Training Network

The purpose of this project was to examine the feasibility of implementing an internet-based training network for Niagara's health sector. The Niagara Health Training Network is a proposed model for accessible training for employees working in the Niagara health sector. An executive summary and a complete report are available electronically and in paper copy. See the related article in this newspaper.

### Catalogue of Health Sector Careers...In the Niagara Region

This career resource tool was designed to promote healthcare career and employment opportunities. Information provided guides the reader through such areas as employment description, education requirements, salaries, working conditions as well as a list of related associations which can be utilized as an additional information resource. This project was led by NTAB in partnership with Niagara Health System, BEC and local school boards. Copies were distributed to all schools, employment support agencies and local libraries.

## Employers

### Employer Training Recognition Award of Excellence

There is an increased awareness to the important role employee training has on retention and recruitment. In partnership with "Work in Niagara", NTAB presented thirteen local employers with an award recognizing their commitment and support to workplace and/or employee training. The awards were presented at the Annual Partnership Breakfast sponsored by the Business Education Council of Niagara held at the Niagara Falls Sheraton Hotel in February. A complete listing of the winning organizations is included in this newspaper. **Be sure to check out the "Call for Nominations" for the 2005 Employer Recognition Awards at [www.ntab.org](http://www.ntab.org)**

### Employer Appreciation Celebration

May 2004 saw NTAB, in partnership with Business Education Council, District School Board of Niagara and the Niagara Catholic District School Board, play host to approximately 200 employers from the Niagara Region to say thank you for their continued support and commitment to the students participating in co-op placements, OYAP programs, Take Our Kids to Work events, guest speakers, role models, and the list goes on..... Employers are a vital component to the equation for success!

## Ongoing Initiatives

### Niagara Business Information System:

NTAB continues to partner with key stakeholders on the development of an interactive, current, regional business database that identifies key information on all employers within the Niagara Region. This project will support "yourniagara.ca", which is to be launched in late Fall of 2004.

### Need Help Series:

NTAB continued its commitment to information dissemination through its ongoing partnership with Information Niagara for the printing of 5000 brochures targeted to support and assist families in Niagara. The "Need Help Series" includes: Need Help with Housing; Need Help with Financial Assistance; Need Help with Food, Clothing and Household Goods; Need Help with Counseling and Support Services; A "need more information piece" with a perforated

wallet sized card has also been distributed throughout Niagara. This year also saw the St. Catharines District Labour Council join as a partner.

### Niagara Information Exchange

In what is becoming an annual event for NTAB, the Niagara Information Exchange provided organizations the opportunity to be a part of a "trade show" of agencies for agencies. A total of 40 exhibits of local employment support agencies gathered at the CAW Hall in late February to network and share information about their services with fellow agency staff, case management and client referral groups.

### Health and Safety in the Workplace

Promoting increased awareness and cooperation in the delivery of the message to youth relating to health & safety. "Let's Talk Safety!"... *In the Classroom* website can be found at [speakers.becon.org](http://speakers.becon.org).

### Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Strategic Development for Ontario

There is growing interest in PLAR as a means of addressing the skills shortage that is emerging in the labour market in Ontario. Because of the large numbers of experienced workers who have never completed high school or post-secondary education, coupled with vast numbers of immigrants with experience from other countries, the need for a comprehensive PLAR system is becoming even more apparent. In November of 2004, a one-day meeting was held to rekindle interest in PLAR in the province and to explore ways in which new and existing PLAR resources and expertise could be utilized in local communities. The event was organized by a planning committee made up of representatives from the Niagara Training and Adjustment Board, the Workforce Development Board, the Canadian Manufacturer and Exporters (Ontario Division), Access to Professions and Trades Branch (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities), the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment and the Ontario PLA Network. Over 40 invitations were sent out to a wide range of stakeholders including labour groups, human resources management associations, Human Resources Development Canada, settlement organizations and education and training providers. NTAB will continue its involvement in this initiative into 2004-05.

### NTAB takes an Active Role in Community Committees

Recognizing the value of active participation and the importance of information sharing and data collection, NTAB strives to be represented on numerous committees around the Region. Such committees include:

- NTAB Educators and Trainers Reference Committee
- NTAB Apprenticeship Strategy Group
- NAPL – Niagara Aerospace Partnership for Learning
- School to Work Advisory Group
- Ontario Disabilities Support Program – Labour Market Partner Group
- Partners in Enterprise
- Apprenticesearch.com Advisory Committee
- Work in Niagara Community Agency Advisory Committee
- Employer Strategies for Newcomers to Niagara
- Agricultural Impact Study Task Force
- 40+ Advisory Committee
- School to Work Agency Support Group
- Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland Interagency Groups
- Niagara Skills Trades Centre Advisory Group
- Niagara Marine Training Group
- YourNiagara.ca

### Committees Of The Board

- Executive Committee: Meets monthly to oversee the business of the Board between regularly scheduled Board meetings.
- Planning Committee: Meets monthly to direct the strategic planning process for the Board.
- Human Resources Committee: Meets as required to address staff requirements and conduct and/or evaluate performance reviews.
- Finance Committee: Meets quarterly or as/required to oversee financial operations of the Board.

### General Board Meetings

The Board of Directors for Niagara Training & Adjustment Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month to carry out and review board business.