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2008 YORK REGION BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated February 12, 2008, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The 2008 York Region Business Directory be made available in electronic form to the public, local municipalities, various agencies and as marketing material in trade shows and corporate events.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the 2008 York Region Business Directory is:

- To provide businesses and area residents with up-to-date business address and contact information to promote existing local businesses and to assist in business recruitment.
- To inform Council of the various products available that result from the annual York Region Employment Survey.
- To provide insight and information on both business and employment, allowing for a better understanding of York Region's economy.

3. BACKGROUND

The 2008 York Region Business Directory is based on information collected from the 2007 York Region Employment Survey, a door-to-door survey conducted between May and August, 2007. The Business Directory contains approximately 26,500 business listings and is a valuable resource guide for business-to-business contact, a convenient research tool for the general public and a showcase for the diverse nature of York Region's economy. Detailed employment data from the annual employment survey provides a large part of the background data for the forthcoming York Region Employment & Industry Report.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The 2008 York Region Business Directory is an annual electronic publication that provides basic business information for both York Region residents and businesses. The Directory is available electronically on CD-ROM or online through the York Region website. The online directory enables the public to search using a combination of search

criteria, including company name, product/service, city or town, postal code, industry classification and number of employees. Each business record contains the following information: business name, address, municipality, postal code, phone number, number of employees and location map. Each business is sorted according to the main industry sector, as defined by the North American Industrial Classification system.

The 2008 York Region Business Directory is derived from the York Region Employment Database. This database contains information on approximately 26,500 of the Region's estimated 29,000 local businesses. The remaining 2,500 represent businesses that surveyors have either been unable to contact or are home and farm based businesses. In 2007, all 26,500 businesses were surveyed in our annual York Region Employment Survey. The Directory contains approximately 26,500 individual business entries.

2007 Employment Trends Appear Positive

The following business and employment trends were observed in 2007:

- There were an estimated 29,000 businesses in the Region.
- There were an estimated 475,000 jobs in York Region.
- In terms of employment by industry, the 3 largest industry sectors in York Region were manufacturing, business services and personal services.
- Recent employment growth in a number of industry sectors has contributed to the diversification of an already broad-based economy. This diversification helps to insulate our economy from sectoral shifts in the business cycle.
- Approximately 80% of York Region employment is full time.

The forthcoming 2007 Employment and Industry Report will provide a more detailed summary of the business and employment trends in 2007.

Directory is a Useful Business-to-Business Guide

The York Region Business Directory is a useful business-to-business resource guide, providing points of contact to businesses across the Region. The Directory also serves as a Regional marketing tool, promoting York Region and its many diverse business sectors. In addition to promoting local businesses, the database also provides the Region with a contact management system to assist our Economic Development Department with the distribution of materials to a targeted audience. An analysis of employment information obtained from the Directory also provides a better understanding of the Regional economy.

Business Directory Available Online or on CD-ROM

The York Region Business Directory is available in two formats:

- Internet (go to www.york.ca then follow the links for Business and Business Directory).

- Electronically (on CD-ROM) .

The York Region Business Directory is currently being marketed through a variety of means, including:

- Online via the corporate website.
- In print advertisements on the back cover of a number of planning documents (e.g. Economic and Development Review Reports, Employment & Industry Reports).
- In person at various trade shows and corporate events attended by Economic Development.

Partnership for the Online Business Directory

The Region has entered into a partnership with Breken Group of Companies Inc. to improve the data collection efforts of the York Region Employment Database through online surveying of local businesses. This partnership has enhanced the York Region Online Business Directory by allowing local businesses the option of independently updating their business information online (via the web site), while making online business searches easier for the general public.

Businesses can also choose to upgrade their listing to include logos, electronic coupons and small web sites.

Since the initial launch of the York Region Online Business Directory in January of 2005, the response in terms of public use has been positive. As evidenced in the adjacent graphic, the York Region Online Business Directory searches averaged over 2,500 inquiries per month in 2007.



All Nine Local Municipalities Participate in Data Collection

York Region continues to work collectively with all 9 area municipalities to expand the scope of the York Region Employment Survey. As a result of this partnership, the 2007 version of the York Region Employment Survey was able to contact every business in York Region (excluding home and farm based businesses). Local municipalities were supportive in providing financial resources that allowed for the hiring of additional student surveyors and provided information and feedback on the employment characteristics within their area. The partnership has also aided local planning and economic development staff in a number of local initiatives.

Update Planned for 2008

Future updates of this Directory are planned on an annual basis as a by-product of the annual York Region Employment Survey. The 2008 York Region Employment Survey update is scheduled to commence in May. There have been a number of recent improvements to the annual survey, including point of contact data entry (through the use of Tablet PC's), electronic mapping to aid in navigation and coding and a redesign of the data entry form. These improvements have resulted in a system that is more accurate and efficient in terms of survey coverage.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The York Region Business Directory 2008 supports the Vision 2026 goal of 'creating a vibrant economy' through the strengthening of the following action area:

- **Attracting and Supporting Businesses.** By providing local businesses with a source of free advertising via the York Region Business Directory, business-to-business contact is enhanced. Further, the provision of these Directories to local business development centres and the accompanying Regional economic overview within the Directory helps to build more global awareness of York Region's strengths as a destination to live, work and play.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Database products including electronic and printed business directories offer an additional revenue source for the Region that can be used to maintain the employment database, based on a cost-recovery basis. Based on a pricing analysis of similar products in other jurisdictions, the pricing for the York Region Business Directory 2007 is \$175 for the CD-ROM version. Copies of the Directory are available free of charge to non-profit organizations, local libraries and area municipalities. During the 2007 calendar year, there were approximately 50 copies of the directory sold, accounting for over \$6,000 in total sales.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Information contained 2008 York Region Business Directory presents business contact information at the local municipal level sorted by business sector. The information gathered for the York Region Business Directory is an essential component of the forthcoming Employment and Industry Report 2006. This report will provide a summary of York Region's economy at the regional and area municipal level, which can be used as a basis for decision making, strategic planning and attracting new business. Moreover,

all area municipalities have contributed to the directory through their guidance and financial contributions associated with the Employment Database Working Group.

7. CONCLUSION

The 2008 York Region Business Directory is one of several products derived from the York Region Employment Survey. This Directory acts as an important resource to assist in business marketing efforts, to source local trades and suppliers, and to analyze the Regional economy. It is also useful in targeted job searches and assisting citizens in locating specific products/services located within York Region. The significant increase in the number of updates available in the 2008 Directory is a direct result of the co-operative effort with local municipalities in undertaking the York Region Employment Survey. The 2008 York Region Business Directory is available in both online and electronically on CD-ROM.

For more information on this report, please contact Anthony Ierullo, Planner at Ext. 1537, or John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning, Ext. 1525.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is included with this report.)