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YORK REGION SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE 2007 ANNUAL REPORT AND 2008 MARKETING PLAN

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated March 5, 2008, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The continuing operation of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre program be subject to confirmation of external funding sources and conditional on budget approval.
2. The Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary funding agreements, at a net Regional cost of \$36,000, with the Provincial Government and other sponsors, subject to review by Legal Services.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is:

- To provide Regional Council with the 2007 Annual Report of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre.
- To present the Marketing Plan for 2008.

3. BACKGROUND

The York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre-YRSBEC (hereafter called the Centre) provides assistance in the creation of new enterprises and the development of early growth stage businesses. The Centre in Newmarket serves entrepreneurs and small businesses in the Northern Six Municipalities and complements the services provided by the other three Small Business Enterprise Centres in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan which are operated independently by the respective municipalities.

In March 2002, Regional Council approved the establishment of the Centre at the Regional Administration Centre. Regional staff were authorized to submit an application to the Ontario Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (MSBE) for funding support to operate the Centre. A Letter of Agreement was signed between the Province and the Region in February 2003, and a Small Business Consultant was retained in June 2003 to start up and manage the operation of the Centre.

In July 2008 the organizational structure of the Centre was modified by changing the status of the Small Business Consultant and part time Administrative Clerk from a contracted resource to York Region employees. Staff for 2008 consists of a Small Business Consultant and a Permanent Part Time Administrative Clerk.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Economic Impact

Economic impact at Small Business Enterprise Centres in Ontario has been defined by the MSBE utilizing the 4 numerical criteria of businesses registered, new business start-ups, business expansions, and jobs created. Table 1 indicates the counts obtained by the York Region Small Business Centre from 2006 and 2007 and projected to 2008.

Table 1
York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre Performance Indicators

Activities	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Projected 2008
Businesses registered	96	104	112
New business start-ups	67	132	197
Business expansions	10	14	18
Jobs created	102	114	126

The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee remains an integral part of the program, with members participating actively in quarterly meetings, seminars, workshops, and youth programs. The members actively contribute their time as mentors to the 2 Youth Programs: Business Plan Challenge and Summer Company. The 2007/2008 Advisory Committee members are listed in *Attachment 1*.

Small Business Advice, Education, and Youth Programs

In 2007, the Centre remained an important resource for start-up and existing small businesses. Table 2 is a comparative of small business activities completed in 2006 and 2007, and the projected actions for 2008.

Table 2
York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre Service Levels

Activities	York Region Actual 2006	York Region Actual 2007	Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Target 2007	York Region Projected 2008
General Enquiries	6,373	8,385	7,000	9,623
Consultations	257	240	260	270
Seminars	4	3	12	5
Workshops	8	7		8
Bridges to Better Business	1	1	1	1
Enterprising Women's Conference	1	1	1	1
Summer Company	1	1	1	1
Business Plan Challenge	1	1	1	1

Business Start-ups

As a result of direct intervention by the Small Business Consultant, the following are examples of new businesses that have started their operations in the Region:

- Aurora: Matrix Repatterning Centre
- Georgina: Alliance Interiors Inc.
- Newmarket: Mr. Wardrobe

Seminars and Workshops

Listed below are the 3 seminars and 7 workshops which attracted 393 participants:

- Leveraging Existing Investments in Information Technology
- Marketing Systems for Profitable Revenue Growth
- Strategic Growth for 2008
- Introduction to Bookkeeping and Taxes Workshop (2 sessions)
- Marketing and Sales Secrets Revealed Workshop (1 session)
- Starting a Small Business Workshop (2 sessions)

The seminars run for 1 ½ hours and the workshops for 3 hours. The workshops are restricted to a maximum of 22 participants to ensure interaction of the businesses.

Bridges to Better Business Conference

Challenging the Marketplace was the theme of the 2007 Bridges to Better Business Conference held on November 6 at the Cardinal Golf Club. Following a presentation on

Business Trends and Updates, the participants were engaged in roundtables to discuss issues facing start-up, growth, and established businesses.

Topics included Effective Marketing on a Shoestring, Best Practices for Hiring and Managing Employees, Government Programs for Established Businesses, Accounting Tools to Manage Your Business, Pitfalls to Avoid When Leasing, and Succession Strategies.

Enterprising Women's Conference

For the fourth consecutive year, the Centre was a sponsor and co-organizer of the Enterprising Women's Conference held in March.

Youth Program: Summer Company

Summer Company was one of the youth initiatives launched by the Government of Ontario, and is delivered through the Small Business Enterprise Centres across the province. The program offers students up to \$3,000 upon successful completion of their Summer Company business. They also receive hands-on business training and mentoring to help with the start-up and running of their businesses.

A total of thirty-one applications were received and the following 7 projects were selected to participate in the Summer Company program:

- Town of Aurora (3): digital photograph enhancing, dog walking and pet care, tutoring
- Town of East Gwillimbury: jewellery design and manufacturing
- Town of Newmarket: travelling swimming lessons
- Township of King: swimming school
- Town of Richmond Hill: magician for events

Youth Program: Business Plan Challenge

Business Plan Challenge was launched by MSBE in 2002 to celebrate the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Ontario's high school students. Students from across the province submit business plans and compete for up to \$5,000 in cash awards.

The program attracted 60 submissions with 3 business plans achieving submission to the Provincial finals. The Regional Small Business Enterprise Centres Awards Banquet was held in Aurora in June 2007. The Provincial Awards Banquet was held in Ajax on November 24, 2007.

David Wilkings, a resident of East Gwillimbury and, in 2007, a Grade 12 student at Pickering College, Newmarket, was the first place winner of the provincial business plan challenge. His business plan was for a motorcycle race track & an e-retail accessories

business. David Wilkings succeeded in scoring first place at all three levels: York Region, Central Region, and the MSBE competition winning a total of \$3,500.

Sponsorships and Grants

In addition to the base funding of \$50,000 from the MSBE, the Centre secured operating sponsorships and grants totalling \$39,500.

4.2 MARKETING PLAN FOR 2008

The service targets set by MSBE for 2008 were surpassed by the Centre in 2007, particularly with regards to general enquiries. The 2008 target set by MSBE is 7,000 and in 2007 the Centre had 8,385 general enquiries. The actual for 2006 and 2007 and the target and projection for 2008 are provided in Table 2.

Youth Program: Business Plan Challenge

Promotion for the 2008 Business Plan Challenge has commenced and schools are invited to participate in the 2008 challenge. The deadline for submissions is June 2, 2008 with the provincial competition scheduled for fall 2008.

Youth Program: Summer Company

It is anticipated that the response to Summer Company will result in 10 approved applications. Submissions are incoming from students of the Region's local high schools. Members of the Centre's Advisory Committee will be involved as mentors for the program.

2008 Seminars and Workshops

In 2008, the Centre will host 4 seminars: Cold Calling, Avoiding Time Traps, Internet Selling, and Strategic Planning for 2009.

A series of 4 small business workshops, repeated twice, will be held during the year. The workshops will offer hands-on training to small groups of 15 to 25 attendees on topics that are critical to the success of small business ventures. In 2008, the workshops will be offered in partnership with the Northern Six Municipalities. The workshop and seminar schedule is provided as *Attachment 2*.

Community Partnership Outreach

The Centre will continue with the services it currently provided new entrepreneurs. In view of the increasing demand for support to growth companies with less than 10 employees, the Centre will expand its services to these companies through partnerships

with community-based organizations including the Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, and the South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation.

To enhance participation in the communities the Centre serves, the Northern Six Municipalities and/or their Chambers of Commerce will promote and host the 2008 Workshops.

Enterprising Women's Conference in March 2008

The Enterprise Centre will be involved as a sponsor and co-organizer of the Enterprising Women's Conference organized by the Women's Centre of York Region in March.

Bridges to Better Business Conference in November 2008

A Bridges to Better Business Conference is scheduled for November as part of the Small Business Month celebration.

York Small Business Television Show (YSBTv) launched in September 2008

The thirteen episodes of thirty minute duration of York Small Business Television (YSBTv) was launched and aired on September 5, 2008. The half-hour program profiles innovative entrepreneurs who share their success stories, showcases growth industries and emerging technologies, provides resources entrepreneurs need to succeed, profiles innovative ideas from the hottest markets around the world, and offers business management tips and informative business advice.

All operating costs for YSBTV were covered through sponsorships. Sponsorship for the series was secured from: Deloitte & Touche LLP, Ontario Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (MSBE), Rogers SOHO, York University, and York Region Media Group. From September 5, 2007 to November 31, 2007, YSBTV was broadcast on Rogers Television Channel 10 and Channel 63. The episodes are repeated beginning December 19, 2007 until March 17, 2008 at the times indicated in Table 3.

Table 3
YSBTv Airing Schedule (Repeats) 2008

Day	Time
Monday	8:30am & 12:00pm
Wednesday	8:00pm (initial airing)
Thursday	6:30am
Friday	12:30am & 5:00pm & 8:00pm
Saturday	1:00am
Sunday	3:00am & 10:00am & 1:00pm

The Small Business Enterprise Centres in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan were featured through a special feature episode.

4.3 RELATIONSHIP TO VISION 2026

The York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre facilitates the growth of entrepreneurship and small business in York Region and supports the Vibrant Economy goal of Vision 2026.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Table 4
Total 2007 Operating Expenses

Funding Sources	Amount
Ontario Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship	\$ 96,250
York Region	\$ 22,320
Other Sources	\$ 14,860
Total	\$133,430

York Region's share of the operating cost for the Centre has been included in the proposed Economic Development Budget for 2008. The total net cost to the Region is proposed at \$36,000.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre serves entrepreneurs and small businesses in the Northern Six Municipalities of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville. Partnerships have been established with the centres in Richmond Hill and Vaughan to deliver programs such as Summer Company and Business Plan Challenge. These partnerships have increased the exposure of the 3 Small Business Enterprise Centres and have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of services being delivered to small businesses in the Region as a whole.

7. CONCLUSION

The York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre is a member of a network of 46 Small Business Enterprise Centres across Ontario, created as a partnership between the Region and the Provincial Government (MSBE). The increasing number of clients served by the Centre in the Northern Six Municipalities is testimony to the entrepreneurial spirit in the Region.

It is recommended that Council continue to offer its support to the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre program, and that the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to execute the necessary funding agreements with the Province and other sponsors.

For more information on this report, please contact Sharon Végh, Program Manager, Economic Strategy, at Ext. 1509, or Patrick Draper, Director, Economic Strategy & Tourism, Ext. 1503.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The two attachments referred to in this clause are included with this report.)