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YORK REGION BUSINESS DIRECTORY 2004

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, March 22, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. This report and the attached excerpt of the draft York Region Business Directory 2004 be received for information purposes; and
2. The York Region Business Directory 2004 be circulated by Planning & Development Services in print and electronic form to the public, area municipalities, various agencies, as marketing material to trade shows and corporate events.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the York Region Business Directory 2004 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. The print version of the Business Directory contains approximately 10,800 business listings, plus information on Regional business and employment trends, population and labour force analysis and economic development contact information, making it a valuable resource guide for business-to-business contact and a useful tool for highlighting the diverse nature of York Region's economy.

The report also serves to inform Council of the variety of employment survey products available.

3. BACKGROUND

The York Region Business Directory 2004 is based on information collected from the 2003 York Region Employment Survey, a door-to-door survey conducted with businesses located in selected employment areas in York Region between May and August, 2003. This data was also supplemented with information obtained from previous Employment Surveys for businesses located outside the 2003 survey coverage areas or those we were unable to contact in 2004.

4. ANALYSIS

The York Region Business Directory 2004 is an annual publication that provides an important point of contact to York Region residents and businesses alike. The Directory is available in print form and electronically on CD-ROM.

The 2004 York Region Business Directory is derived from the York Region Employment Database. This database contains information on 23,600 of the Region's estimated 26,000 local businesses. The remaining 2,400 businesses which are not included in the database represent businesses that surveyors have either been unable to contact or are located outside the employment survey area.

Where updated information is not available for a particular firm, information is supplemented with the most recent data available from previous years. The electronic version of the Business Directory contains information on 18,900 firms across all business sectors, with information on 13,560 firms updated in 2003. This represents an increase of 77.7% over the number of firms updated in the previous directory.

The print version of the Directory contains 10,800 individual business entries, with information on 8,430 firms updated in 2003. This represents a 62% increase over the number of firms updated in the 2003 Directory. The print Directory focuses specifically on commercial and industrial firms. *(Information on businesses in the following sectors has been excluded from the print version of the Business Directory due to space limitations: farming, retail and personal services, restaurants and recreational facilities, health care and public administration.)*

4.1 Directory Highlights

- Information on business and employment trends are also included at the beginning of the print Directory. Highlights of this section include:
 - The number of businesses in York Region increased 2.8% annually between 1998 and 2003. As of 2003, there were an estimated 26,000 businesses in the Region.
 - Small businesses dominate the Region's business sector, with 83% of firms employing less than 20 people in 2003. In addition, 69% of York Region firms are independently operated (i.e., not a branch, franchise or public-sector firm). These figures highlight a strong entrepreneurial spirit in the Region.
 - There were an estimated 415,000 jobs in York Region in 2003. By 2026, employment in York Region is expected to reach 696,000.
 - Full-time employment accounts for the majority of jobs in York Region, with 79.1% of all jobs being full-time. This is encouraging from the standpoint that full-time jobs are typically considered to be higher paying and more stable than their part-time counterparts.
 - Hiring intentions of businesses in 2003 declined from 2002 levels, likely due to the many economic setbacks experienced across Ontario throughout the year (e.g.,

a rising Canadian dollar, SARS and the August hydro blackout). Approximately 17% of firms indicated their intent to hire additional staff in 2003, down from 27% a year earlier.

- 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.
- Based on survey data between 1998 and 2003, manufacturing continues to be the dominant employment sector in York Region accounting for 23% of jobs. A number of other employment sectors have experienced growth during this period as well. Business services was the fastest growing sector between 1998 and 2003, growing 48%. This sector now accounts for 16% of total employment in the Region. The Retail and education sectors were ranked second and third in terms of growth at 39% and 37%, respectively.
- Detailed employment data at the local municipal level is currently being analyzed and will be released at the May 5 Planning & Economic Development Committee as part of the York Region Employment & Industry 2003 report.

4.2 Benefits

The York Region Business Directory 2004 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 brochure, highlighting population and employment statistics, providing interested parties with contacts to area municipal economic development personnel and promoting the Region and its many diverse business sectors. An analysis of employment information obtained from the Directory also provides a better understanding of the Regional economy.

4.3 Marketing Strategy

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., Opportunities for Investment, Employment & Industry 2003).
- In person at various trade shows and corporate events attended by Economic Development.
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In addition, as part of the public awareness campaign for the 2004 York Region Employment Survey, an article on employment growth in York Region and a print advertisement are planned to appear in local newspapers prior to the commencement of

the survey. Both the article and the advertisement will make reference to the York Region Business Directory.

4.4 2004 Survey

Future updates of this Directory are planned on an annual basis as a by-product of the annual York Region Employment Survey. Preparation for the 2004 York Region Employment Survey is currently underway, with an estimated start date of May 3, 2004.

4.5 Municipal Partnership

York Region also continues to lead the initiative created in 2003 to work collectively with local municipalities to expand the scope of the York Region Employment Survey, thereby enhancing the Regional Business Directories. This partnership has experienced positive feedback from all participants, with many indicating their desire to participate again in 2004 pending budget approval. This partnership resulted in a 72% increase in the number of businesses surveyed in a given year and provided a more comprehensive analysis of Regional employment patterns at the micro and macro level. This partnership has also aided local planning and economic development staff in a number of local initiatives.

4.6 Relationship to Vision 2026

The York Region Business Directory 2004 supports the Vision 2026 goal of creating a vibrant economy through its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in 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 2004 products are as follows: *(Copies of the Directory are available free of charge to non-profit organizations, local libraries and area municipalities).*

- Electronic directory - \$175; and
- Print directory - \$50.

Revenues for the 2004 York Region Business Directory have increased 286% over the 2001 version. As of March 1, 2004, the 2003 Directory has raised \$7,950.

Funding for the 2004 Employment Survey is included in the approved Planning and Development Services Department budget.

In 2003, local municipal partners contributed \$46,730, or 57% of the total \$82,368 2003 labour budget for the York Region Employment Survey. The York Region Business Directory is a by-product of the York Region Employment Survey.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Information contained in the attached draft 2004 Directory excerpt presents business contact information at the local municipal level sorted by business sector. Regional employment and demographic data compiled from Census data and the 2003 York Region Employment Survey is also included in the introductory pages of the Directory. The York Region Business Directory 2004 will provide all those using this document with 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.

Regional staff has provided the employment and business data obtained from the 2003 survey to area municipal staff and are working co-operatively on an expanded 2004 survey to improve data accuracy and avoid duplication.

7. CONCLUSION

The York Region Business Directory is one of many 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, to assist residents in targeted job searches and to analyze the Regional economy. The significant increase in the number of updates available in the 2004 Directory is a direct result of the co-operative effort with local municipalities in undertaking the York Region Employment Survey.

The electronic version of the 2004 Directory is currently available, with the print version becoming available by the end of April. Detailed employment data at the local municipal level is currently being analyzed and will be released at the May 5 Planning & Economic Development Committee as part of the York Region Employment & Industry 2003 report.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing has been forwarded to each Member of Council with the April 7, 2004 Planning and Economic Development Committee agenda and a copy thereof is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)