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YORK REGION BUSINESS DIRECTORY 2006

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, March 8, 2006, 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 2006 be received.
2. The York Region Business Directory 2006 be made available in both print and electronic form to the public, area municipalities, various agencies and as marketing material in trade shows and corporate events.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the York Region Business Directory 2006 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 12,000 business listings and provides information on Regional business and employment trends. The directory also includes information on population and labour force analysis and economic development contact information. It 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.

This report serves to inform Council of the various products available that result from the annual York Region Employment Survey. It also provides insight and information on both business and employment, allowing for a better understanding 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.

3. BACKGROUND

The York Region Business Directory 2006 is based on information collected from the 2005 York Region Employment Survey, a door-to-door survey conducted with businesses located in selected employment areas in York Region between May and August, 2005.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The York Region Business Directory 2006 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 York Region Business Directory is also available online through the York Region web site. 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 employee range. Each business record contains the following information: business name, address, municipality, postal code, phone number and location map. Each business is sorted according to the main industry sector, as defined by the North American Industrial Classification system.

The 2006 York Region Business Directory is derived from the York Region Employment electronic Database. This database contains information on approximately 25,500 of the Region's estimated 28,000 local businesses. The remaining 2,500 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 print version of the Directory contains approximately 12,000 individual business entries, whereas the electronic version contains approximately 25,000 entries. 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 4.8% annually between 1998 and 2005. As of 2005, there were an estimated 28,000 businesses in the Region.
- There were an estimated 450,000 jobs in York Region in 2005.
- 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.

4.2 Benefits

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 brochure, highlighting population and employment statistics. It

provides interested parties with contacts to area municipal economic development personnel and promotes both York 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 Availability

The York Region Business Directory is available in three formats:

1. Internet (go to www.york.ca then follow the links for Business and Business Directory)
2. CD
3. Print

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 2004); and
- in person at various trade shows and corporate events attended by Economic Development.

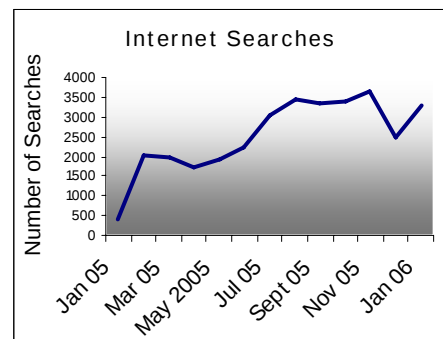
4.4 2005 Survey

Future updates of this Directory are planned on an annual basis as a by-product of the annual York Region Employment Survey. The 2006 York Region Employment Survey update is scheduled to commence in May.

4.5 Breken Partnership

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 will enhance 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. In addition to promoting local businesses and enhancing our survey coverage, this software also provides the Region with a contact management system to assist our Economic Development Department with the distribution of materials to a targeted audience.

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 has performed well in its first year of operation. In fact, directory searches experienced a 38% average monthly



increase over the year. Regional staff expect that this success will continue in the upcoming months/years as public awareness continues to improve. A large number of area municipalities have recently chosen to establish similar directories with the Breken Group of Companies Inc.

4.6 Municipal Partnership

York Region continues to lead the initiative created in 2004 to work collectively with local municipalities to expand the scope of the York Region Employment Survey. This partnership has resulted in an increase in the number of businesses surveyed and provides a more comprehensive analysis of Regional employment patterns at the micro and macro level. Local municipalities were supportive in providing financial aid that allowed for the hiring of additional staff 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.

4.7 Relationship to Vision 2026

The York Region Business Directory 2006 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 2006 products are as follows:

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

Copies of the Directory are available free of charge to non-profit organizations, local libraries and area municipalities.

Demand for the publication and CD continues to grow. Revenues for the York Region Business Directory have continually increased since 2001. As of February 28th, 2006, the 2005 Directory has raised over \$ 9,800 through sales.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Information contained in *Attachment 1*, Draft 2006 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 2004 York Region Employment Survey is also included in the introductory pages of the Directory. The information gathered for the York Region Business Directory is an essential component of the forthcoming Employment and Industry Report 2005. This report provides 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 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 2006 Directory is a direct result of the co-operative effort with local municipalities in undertaking the York Region Employment Survey.

The online version of the 2006 Directory is currently available, with the print and electronic version becoming available by the end of April. Detailed employment data at the local municipal level is currently being analyzed and is expected to be released at the May 10th Planning & Economic Development Committee as part of the York Region Employment & Industry 2005 report.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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