

**CHAPLEAU
RURAL DIALOGUE
SESSION REPORT**

**JANUARY 23 - 24, 2001
CHAPLEAU, ONTARIO**

AUX TROIS MOULINS MOTEL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In January 2001, the Northern Ontario Rural Team met with nine community organizations from the Chapleau area to pilot a dialogue with rural community leaders in Northern Ontario. Over the course of two days, the representatives of the various organizations outlined their current goals and objectives, considered community development opportunities, and discussed the challenges that they face. In order of their presentations, the organizations that met with the Team were:

- Chapleau Arts and Advisory Committee
- Chapleau Cree First Nation
- Brunswick House First Nation
- Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation
- Chapleau Township Council
- Chapleau Regional Development Corporation
- Chapleau Health Services
- Chapleau Education and Training Coalition
- Louis Hémon Cultural Centre

This executive summary outlines the common issues raised by community representatives over the course of the Dialogue Session. A list of the Northern Ontario Rural Team members that participated in the Chapleau Dialogue is provided in Annex A. For detailed reports on the presentations made to the Team, please refer to Annex B.

In the cases of the Chapleau Arts and Advisory Committee, the Chapleau Township Council, the Chapleau Regional Development Corporation and the Chapleau Education and Training Coalition, written briefs submitted to the Team are reproduced.

Chapleau

Chapleau, a Northern Ontario community of approximately 2,900, lies about 320 kilometres northeast of Sault Ste. Marie. The nearest largest communities are: Wawa (140 kilometres to the West) and Timmins (200 kilometres to the East). Chapleau is located within the Boreal Forest Region and the Arctic Watershed. Its main industries are rail transportation, forestry and tourism. The community is also the gateway to the world's largest Crown nature preserve — the 700,000-hectare Chapleau Crown Game Preserve.

Situated within a seven-mile radius of the Township of Chapleau are three First Nation communities:

- Chapleau Cree First Nation — band membership 350; on-reserve population 92
- Brunswick House First Nation — band membership 565; on-reserve population 135
- Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation — band membership 36; on-reserve population 25

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR THEMES

Infrastructure

Community representatives expressed the need to ensure that the Chapleau area has the infrastructure necessary to support and sustain development. They identified rail, air services, roads and public transportation as the key components that need attention. Currently, the community relies on a VIA Budd Car service (Sudbury to White River Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday; White River to Sudbury Wednesday, Friday and Saturday). There is no scheduled bus service and the roads are remote.

This lack of adequate transportation systems has an impact on the community's ability to diversify their economy as well as to access health care services and educational opportunities. It also makes it difficult to secure and maintain gainful employment, particularly for Aboriginal youth living on-reserve. First Nations identified a shortage of housing in their communities, especially in light of the high rate of population growth and the increase in the formation of young families in First Nation communities.

Representatives called for funding formulas that recognize the limited ability of rural and remote communities to raise the funds needed for infrastructure projects. They also suggested that the government should establish a long-term infrastructure program designed specifically for rural and remote communities. This program should be sustainable and easy to access by individual communities.

Telecommunications

Representatives identified the need for state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure — high-speed data connections, cellular telephone service, and real-time video conferencing — so that all sectors, including health services and education, can participate in the new economy. They called for the various levels of government to work together to provide modern telecommunications infrastructure to all of Northern Ontario.

Economic Diversification

Industry downsizing in single-industry communities is a key driving force behind the need for economic diversification. Representatives agreed that Chapleau's challenge is to identify or create economic opportunities to replace those that have been lost in the forestry sector. They said that Chapleau has the assets needed to generate new ideas but lacks the financial resources and infrastructure it needs to diversify its economy.

Representatives wanted the federal government to facilitate the exchange of success stories between communities and to coordinate efforts among the various stakeholders involved in economic development. One representative made a request that the government recognize the arts sector as the key economic development player in the community. First Nation representatives indicated that they would like the government to serve as a “broker of ideas” and repeated that access to natural resources was the key to resolving First Nation economic concerns. Representatives also wanted the federal government to settle outstanding land claims so that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities can plan and implement their respective economic development strategies.

A Long-term Vision for Rural Canada

Representatives wanted the government to establish long-term funding that supports the rebuilding of communities. They identified the need for ongoing governmental support for the development and implementation of long-term community plans, rather than project-based assistance.

They also stated that the federal government should approach policy and program implementation from the “bottom-up” perspective. Government funding criteria should recognize the limited ability of rural and remote communities to come up with other funding. The criteria also need to reflect the increased cost associated with living in isolated, small rural communities, and acknowledge that per capita-based funding formulas can disadvantage rural and remote communities. This is because rural and remote communities cannot take advantage of the economies of scale that larger communities can.

Training Opportunities

Representatives indicated that the current funding criteria for education and training are not flexible enough to address the needs of rural and remote residents. They expressed a need for financial support of part-time, online and distance learning. Other measures, such as literacy training, the provision of child care and income support, access to public transportation, and access to state-of-the-art computer equipment, are needed so that citizens can pursue their career goals.

Access to Information about Government Programs and Services

Representatives generally felt that information on government programs and services was difficult to obtain and interpret. They highlighted the fact that, other than Canada Post, there is no federal government presence in Chapleau. They also suggested that the federal government should establish a single point of contact that the community could use to access all services and programs provided by all levels of government. The determination of this contact point should be flexible, based on the unique needs and characteristics of each community.

Human Resource Leadership

Representatives identified the need to sustain and promote leadership within the community. The current leaders may “burn out” since many have been in the leadership role for a long time. The representatives felt that the federal government could help attract new leaders by supporting leadership development and mentoring programs. Having new leaders would also help to build communities’ self-confidence.

Health Services

The representatives indicated that Chapleau Health Services faces five major challenges: accessibility of services, cost-effectiveness of services, implementation of new technology, recruitment of physicians and recruitment of other health professionals. Suggested solutions to these issues included: streamlining funding processes, improving medical personnel recruitment, improving telecommunication and transportation linkages to other communities, and implementing a small hospital funding formula. The representatives also indicated that the federal government could help improve the situation by addressing the indirect issues, such as telecommunications and transportation, which affect the delivery of health services in the Chapleau area.

Youth

First Nation representatives indicated that, given the high population growth rate, youth issues are a primary concern. They talked about high levels of drug and alcohol abuse, crime, high school dropout rates and unemployment, indicating that the First Nation communities do not have the resources to address these problems.

Chapleau is experiencing an out-migration of their youth to urban areas. According to the participants, the main reason for youth out-migration and the high dropout rate of First Nation youth is the lack of employment opportunities in the area. The participants wanted the federal government to work with the community to develop youth employment strategies, provide recreational opportunities for youth, and implement youth education and training initiatives.

Conclusion

This Rural Dialogue Session was conducted on a pilot basis. The Northern Ontario Rural Team will be conducting an evaluation of the process to see if the session accomplished the following objectives:

- provided an opportunity for community representatives to advise the Team of their key challenges and priorities as well as provided feedback on government performance;
- increased awareness of government programs and services;
- provided an opportunity for government to respond to community issues in an integrated manner;
- increased government visibility in a rural area; and,
- fostered enhanced partnerships which will support sustainable development in the community.

The Northern Ontario Rural Team would like to thank all the community representatives for their participation in the Rural Dialogue session. Team members gained an appreciation for the communities' past accomplishments as well as their current strengths and opportunities. The Northern Ontario Rural Team as part of the Rural Team - Ontario will fully examine the issues and opportunities presented by the participants, and identify immediate and long-term measures that would help overcome some of the challenges outlined in this report. In addition, the information gathered during this dialogue session will help set the direction of future pan-provincial strategies supporting rural community development in Ontario.

ANNEX A — NORTHERN ONTARIO RURAL TEAM REPRESENTATIVES

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA - RURAL SECRETARIAT	KAREN STREICH
AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA	MARIO PALUZZI
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CANADA	KEVIN DANE
CANADIAN MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION	SCOTT FLAMAND
HEALTH CANADA	CARMEN LEDUC
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA	SUZANNE DUPONT
INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA	BOB LEONARD
INDUSTRY CANADA – ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CANADA	KIM BIRD
INDUSTRY CANADA – FEDNOR	RAY HEMMERLING
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL	JACK NISHIYAMA
NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA	C. RODNEY SMITH
NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA	RICHARD MACNAUGHTON
MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP, CULTURE AND RECREATION	PAUL SABOURIN
MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND MINES	JOHNNY YESNO
ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION	RON CANTIN

ANNEX B — COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS' PRESENTATIONS

CHAPLEAU ARTS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Denis Rochon, Member

PRESENTATION 1
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CHAPLEAU CREE FIRST NATION
Simon Frogg, Economic Development Officer

PRESENTATION 2
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BRUNSWICK HOUSE FIRST NATION
Thomas Sanders, Elder
Isabelle Woods, Economic Development Officer
Evelyn Wolfe, Education Councillor

PRESENTATION 3
pg. 14

CHAPLEAU OJIBWE FIRST NATION
Chief Anita Stephens
Colin Lachance

PRESENTATION 4
pg. 16

CHAPLEAU TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
Earle J. Freeborn, Mayor
Keith (Buddy) Swanson, Councillor
Richard Bignucolo, Councillor
Mark Nyman, Councillor
Richard St. Amand, Councillor
Alan Pellow, CAO
Gary Champagne, CAO, Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB

PRESENTATION 5
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CHAPLEAU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Lucy Bignucolo, CRDC Director
Ross Broomhead, CRDC Vice-President /Chair Economic Development Committee
Buddy Swanson
Marty Peterson, Economic Development Officer

PRESENTATION 6
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CHAPLEAU HEALTH SERVICES
Gail Bignucolo, Financial Officer
Richard Bignucolo
David Bronicheski
Mary Boucher, Sudbury and District Health Unit

PRESENTATION 7
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CHAPLEAU EDUCATION AND TRAINING COALITION
Karen Gauthier, Chairperson
Linda Bouchard
Chantale Rousseau
Joan Longchamps
Sheila Henderson
Buddy Swanson
Janet Hazen
Marty Peterson

PRESENTATION 8
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LOUIS HÉMON CULTURAL CENTRE
Diane Jean, Coordinator, Louis Hémon Cultural Centre
Lillian St. Martin, Coordinator, FormationPLUS

PRESENTATION 9
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PRESENTATION 1 — CHAPLEAU ARTS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Representative: Denis Rochon, Member
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2001

Mr. Denis Rochon represented the Chapleau Arts and Advisory Committee. During the session, Mr. Rochon said that small communities, such as Stratford, Ontario and Chemainus, British Columbia, use arts and cultural activities to promote economic growth. He insisted that the arts are not a special interest group but an integral part of a community's fabric that focuses on growth from within and takes a "bottom-up" approach.

Mr. Rochon provided a breakdown of the economic impact of the arts sector in Chapleau in 2000, indicating that it amounted to almost \$463,000. He suggested that community development should include the arts sector because the arts are a rallying force that helps to build community spirit, awareness and involvement.

Mr. Rochon said that funding for arts-related projects is typically lower (percentage-wise) than for other initiatives, even though the payback is greater. Mr. Rochon further noted that local businesses in Chapleau are said to have directly benefitted from 66% of arts sector expenditures (\$235,820), while contributing less than 10% of the revenues (\$46,146).

In the year 2000, Chapleau's arts sector generated, directly or indirectly, 124 jobs (a combination of full-time and part-time positions). The arts sector contributed more than \$35,000 in indirect tax revenues (GST & PST) and \$182,450 in personal taxable income. Mr. Rochon concluded his presentation by providing a summary of funding by various levels of government and spin-off activities from the 2000 Year of the Arts program.

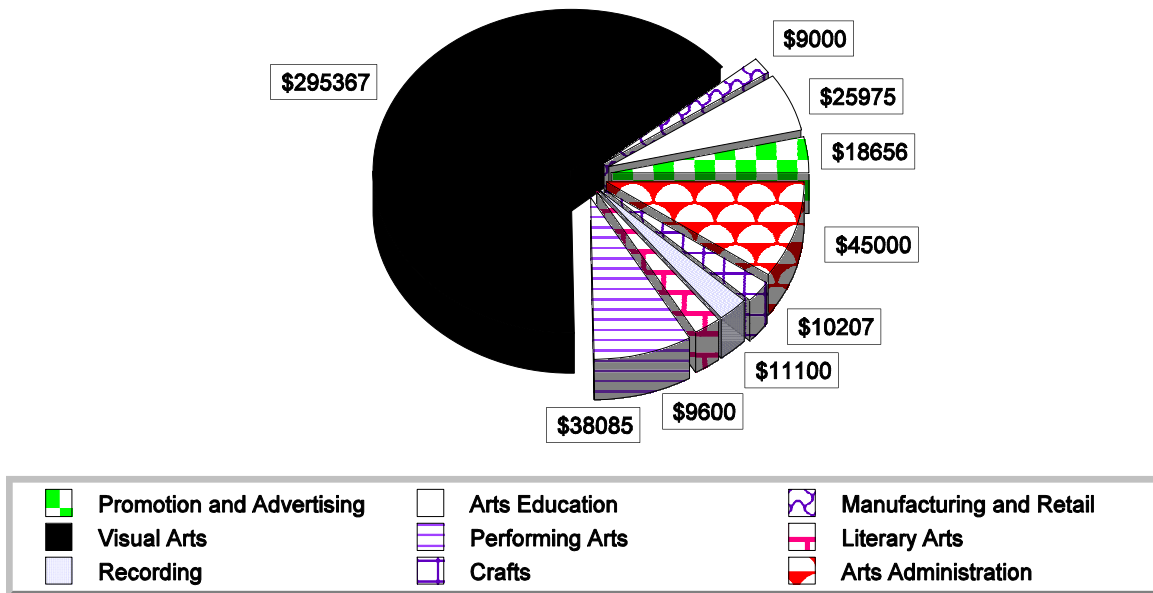
BELOW IS THE WRITTEN BRIEF THAT WAS PRESENTED TO THE NORTHERN ONTARIO RURAL TEAM BY THE CHAPLEAU ARTS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Economic Impact of the Arts Sector in Chapleau in the year 2000

In addition to their contribution to the quality of life, arts have a positive impact on the economy. Economic impact statistics demonstrate that the arts sector gives to the economy more than it receives in government support.

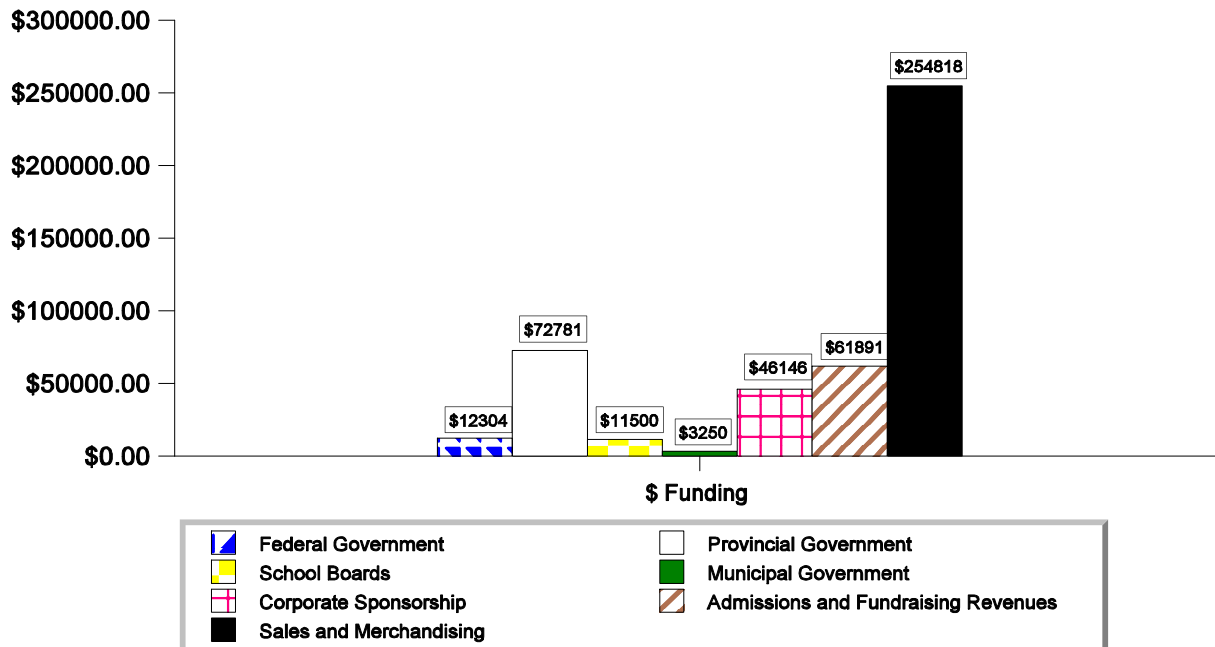
According to the Ontario Arts Council, Economic Impact is the economic consequences of the flow of expenditures through the economy related to a given project, program, industry or set of activities. Economic impact is expressed in terms of the effects on a standard economic indicator such as Gross Domestic Product, total output or employment.

Impact of the Arts Sector on Chapleau's Economy 2000



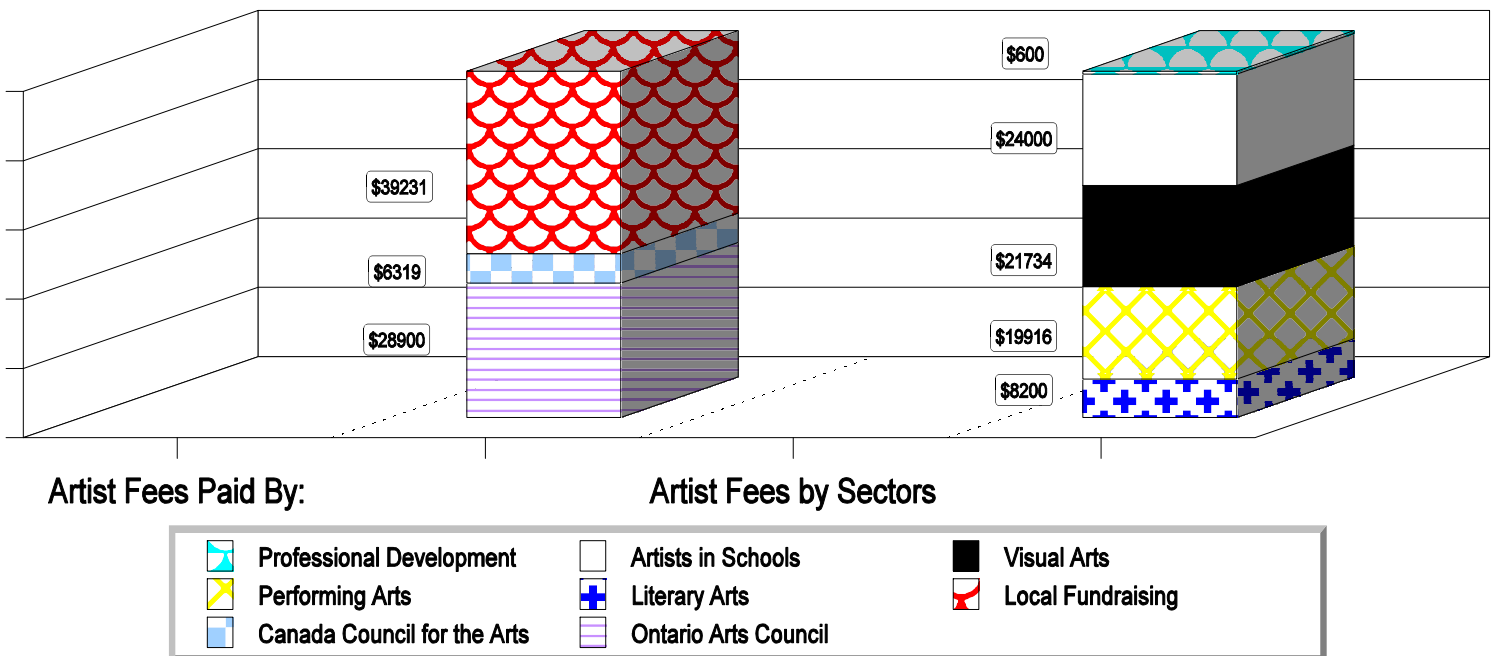
- In 2000, the direct impact of the arts on Chapleau's economy was \$462,990. Local businesses benefitted directly from 66% of the arts sector expenditures (\$235,820), while contributing to less than 10% of the sector's revenues (\$46,146).
- The arts sector provided an estimated \$35,373 of indirect tax revenues (GST & PST), and \$182,450 personal taxable income.
- Total of 124 positions were generated directly and indirectly by Chapleau's arts sector in 2000, whether full-time or part-time positions (4 paid employees, and 120 paid artists).
- 318 volunteers contributed to the planning and organization of the artistic activities in 2000.

Funding of Chapleau's Arts Sector



- Government spending on Chapleau arts sector totals \$99,835 (Federal \$12,304; Provincial \$72,781; Municipal \$3,250; School Boards \$11,500), while community and private funding for arts amounts to \$362,855.
- Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts grants totalled \$35,219, while fees paid to artists totalled \$74,450.

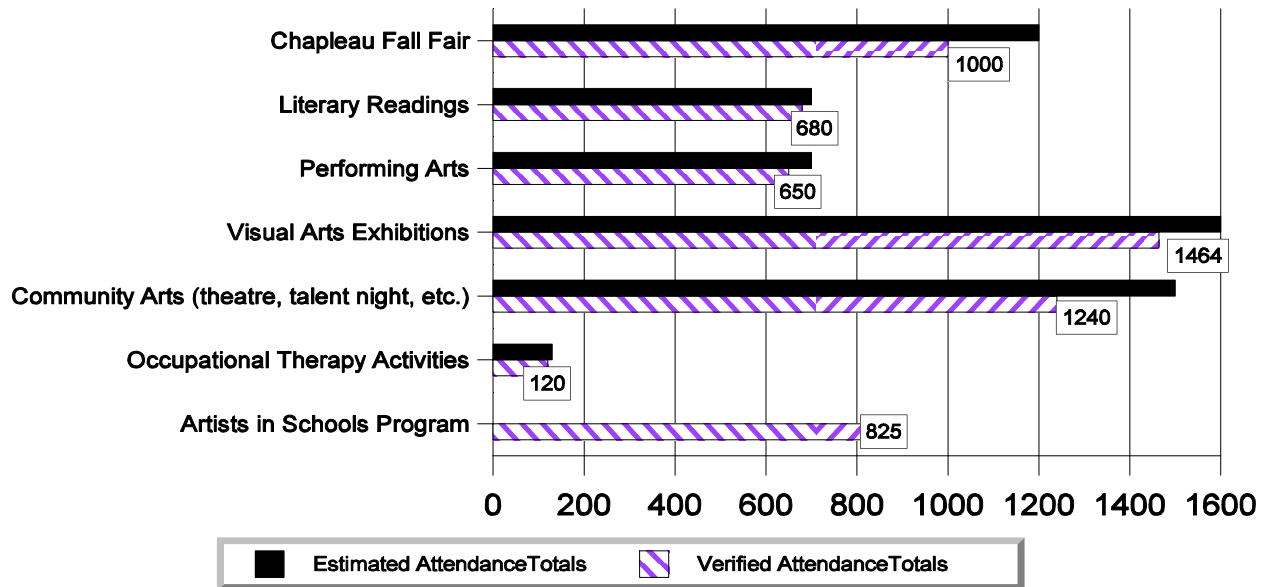
Art Councils' Contributions vs Artist Fees



Attendance to Chapleau Arts Sector Activities

- Chapleau area population totals 3,000. Year 2000 total audience and viewing public was 5,979 people. Per capita investment by Chapleau citizens in the arts sector was \$121.
- 3,380 hours tallied toward planning and organization of artistic initiatives in 2000, with another 466.5 hours of actual artistic activities. Total of 3846.5 hours logged for the arts.

Attendance to Chapleau Arts Sector Activities



Verified vs. Estimated Attendance – the verified attendance is comprised of documented figures such as guest books, ticket sales, attendance records. Estimated attendance is an assessment of undocumented but realistic figures in the various areas of artistic activities.

Spin-offs from the 2000 Year of the Arts activities

- Five performing arts presentations in spring 2001 thanks to successful fundraising campaigns with no deficit.
- Completion of the murals component of The Quatrain Project for spring 2001 (four new murals to be created in time for the centennial celebrations).
- Six-city tour of the Chapleau Centennial Art Exhibition, from January to June 2001, to be viewed by an estimated 12,000 people, generating additional projected sales of \$4,000.
- Release of a Chapleau Centennial Souvenir CD (400 copies generating revenues of \$8,000 and artist royalties of \$1,600).
- Construction of the Gisèle Benoit Wildlife Observation and Cinematography Centre in the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve. The Centre's mandate is to facilitate the collection of film footage, animal behaviour data, and inspiration for the creation of artworks, publication of books, and release of film documentaries for the international market.

- Release of the first solo CD by Chapleau singer/song-writer Jake Bertrand.
- Creation of the unique Chapleau Children’s Art Enrichment Program, the first of its kind in Canada.
- Additional dollars from new visitors and extended stays thanks to the creation and promotion of Chapleau’s permanent art installations.
- Inauguration of the first Waterfront Arts Festival, to be held June 26–27.
- Creation of the Chapleau Arts Council, part of the standing committee system for the Chapleau Township Council, approved unanimously by Council on January 8, 2001.

Sources

This study was conducted from January 3–12, 2001. The respondents that took part in this study were professional artists (3 musicians, 11 visual artists); Centre Culturel Louis Hémon (artistic figures – only a portion of the annual budget); Chapleau Performing Arts; Occupation Therapy (Cedar Grove); Chapleau Theatre Group; The Quatrain Project; Chapleau Children’s Art Enrichment Program; Troupe LaPointe; Chapleau Fall Fair; Union Culturelle des Franco-Ontariennes; Collins Art Gallery; and five local schools (3 elementary, 2 secondary).

PRESENTATION 2 — CHAPLEAU CREE FIRST NATION

Representative: **Simon Frogg, Economic Development Officer**
Date: **Wednesday, January 24, 2001**

The second presenter, Chapleau Cree First Nation representative Mr. Simon Frogg, outlined his background for the Team, emphasizing his thirty-plus years of experience in Aboriginal community economic development.

Mr. Frogg went on to say that a chronic shortage of housing and other services for First Nation communities is a key issue. He estimated that the 2–3% federal deficit reduction exercise resulted in a real decrease of 5–6% in funding (versus historic increases of 9%). This decrease in funding is making the situation much more difficult for the Aboriginal community. He also pointed out that First Nations are experiencing population growth and an increase in the formation of young families — a situation that is doubling the need for housing units. Mr. Frogg illustrated an example where First Nations increased the capital needed to create additional housing units by pooling funds from several communities.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has turned over accountability for housing to First Nations, despite being unable to overcome the shortage problems, Mr. Frogg said. But, he asked, “How are First Nations supposed to solve this issue when the government, with all its resources, could not?”

The Chapleau Cree representative said he was glad that the Northern Ontario Rural Team had been formed, particularly because it represents so many federal and provincial bodies. He said that he appreciated the opportunity to address representatives from all levels of government at once. He also said that the creation of the Northern Ontario Rural Team will facilitate future discussions.

Despite these improvements, however, Mr. Frogg feels that there are still fundamental differences in the First Nations’ philosophy (which emphasizes collective rights) and the government’s philosophy (which emphasizes individual rights). This forces First Nations to conform or lose eligibility for assistance. Mr. Frogg also expressed his concerns that the government’s per capita funding formulas are unfair to very small and remote First Nation communities, and that he feels First Nations have to deal with racism in the public sector.

He also suggested that transferring programs to First Nations for administration creates a different type of bureaucracy. He gave the example of the administration of the “Small Meeting Program”, transferred from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation to a First Nation organization. He warned that this arrangement could result in decisions based on political connections or proximity to geographical location of the administrative bodies.

Mr. Frogg indicated that the current initiatives of the Chapleau Cree First Nation include updating their Forestry Management plan (the old one is dated “1996”); converting the Profit Centre to a Community Entrepreneur Centre; turning over the trust fund to the people; creating a “closed loop” economic system to build community capacity and create viable businesses that can be purchased by individuals; and developing an on-reserve recreational centre. He added that an outline of a strategic plan for forest-based economic development is currently being written.

He identified eco-tourism as another endeavour that is important both culturally and economically to Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal Chapleau communities. The Chapleau Cree First Nation are currently looking at building a GIS database to identify possible eco-tourism sites. As a result of a discovery of artifacts dating back over 500 years, one such site is being developed in another community.

Mr. Frogg mentioned that the Chapleau Cree First Nation are also trying to promote an area organization that would foster partnerships with Chapleau and other First Nations.

A question was raised about whether the First Nations had any suggestions on how to overcome lending institutions’ reluctance to finance on-reserve businesses (due to an inability to secure proper collateral). Mr. Frogg said that a certain level of trust and creativity is needed to overcome this obstacle. He then talked about precedents that have been set in this area by both government and financial institutions.

PRESENTATION 3 — BRUNSWICK HOUSE FIRST NATION

Representatives: **Thomas Saunders, Elder**
 Isabelle Woods, Economic Development Officer
 Evelyn Wolfe, Education Councillor

Date: **Wednesday, January 24, 2001**

The representatives of the Brunswick House First Nation began by saying that they have a young and growing population (45–50% of the total population is between 19 and 29 years of age), and hence youth issues are their primary concern.

The representatives said that the Brunswick House First Nation is plagued by high levels of drug and alcohol abuse, crime, high school student dropout rates and unemployment. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of resources (they are able to afford only one part-time counselor and no full time staff). Brunswick House First Nation had applied for the Aboriginal Head Start Program but was not successful. The representatives said that there are many young parents in the community but no day care facilities. Without day care, many young parents are unable to work because they have no one to care for their children. In addition, there is a serious lack of public transportation facilities, making it difficult for young people to get to work.

The representatives said that they are concerned about the lack of skills and resultant apathy among youth. Many young people want training in trades such as construction, heavy equipment operation and plumbing, but under the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) criteria this type of training does not qualify as post-secondary. The lack of funding for training means no jobs; without jobs, the young people leave to go to large cities, and those who stay often become dependent on alcohol or drugs.

This lack of future opportunities within the First Nation community also plays a large role in the high school dropout issue. If education does not provide them with the necessary skills to obtain employment, the youth have no reason to stay in school.

Training in construction skills would not only provide jobs, but would also help address the severe shortage of adequate and affordable housing for this First Nation, the representative said. They also wanted the federal government to find a way to fund a recreation centre. This would give the young people a safe place to socialize.

The representatives said that Brunswick House First Nation would like to set up an Economic Development Corporation but the community members lack the specialized skills needed to develop strategic plans and educational programs. The First Nation asked the federal government to help them train leaders — people who can coordinate long-term strategic economic development efforts.

The representatives also indicated that Brunswick House First Nation is interested in developing mining and tourism opportunities. Ms. Woods, specifically, expressed an interest in developing and building an interpretive centre. She said that a multi-million dollar water treatment plant (funded primarily by INAC) was launched in the community but workers lacked the specialized skills needed to maintain or repair equipment and ensure that water safety testing protocols and standards are met. Economic Development Officer, Chapleau Regional Development, Marty Peterson asked if the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

(INAC) could provide a support person to help develop strategic plans. The Rural Team members responded by saying that at this time the human resources are unavailable from any of the government agencies, departments or ministries. However, they did offer the following suggestions as to how this and other issues could be addressed:

- Johnny Yesno said that funding for development of a strategic plan may be available through MNDM.
- Ray Hemmerling suggested that perhaps FedNor could provide funding to hire a consultant to carry out planning work under the Youth Internship Program. Another option, he suggested, could be to seek assistance from an existing Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) in the region. He suggested Brian Phillips as the person to contact to find out what FedNor can do regarding the planning issue.
- Scott Flamand indicated that funding for development of an economic development strategy may also be available through CMHC.
- Ron Cantin indicated that the Ontario Trillium Foundation may be able to provide assistance for pre-school and primary school students to encourage a desire to learn and stay in school.

Representatives of the Brunswick House First Nation indicated that in May 1999, a fire destroyed a great deal of forest and had a significant negative impact on housing. The fire also resulted in a loss of wildlife in the area. Forest and lands management people and conservation officers are needed to address these issues, they said.

Rod Smith mentioned that, under the CFS First Nations Forestry Program, help may be available for proposals aimed at building community capacity. Bob Leonard added that INAC's Resource Access Negotiation Program may also be helpful, and Ray Hemmerling mentioned that FedNor has an Aboriginal Forestry Development Officer (Gerry Lesage) in Sault Ste. Marie who may provide guidance in this area.

PRESENTATION 4 — CHAPLEAU OJIBWE FIRST NATION

Representatives: Chief Anita Stephens
Colin Lachance
Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2001

Mr. Lachance, a spokesperson for the Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation, commended the Team for coming to them instead of making the First Nation reach out to the various government bodies. He then said that First Nations economic development depends on their access to resources. Eco-tourism is important, especially given the existence of the Chapleau Game Preserve, but, he said, land claims issues must be addressed.

Mr. Lachance pointed out three areas where partnerships could be strengthened:

First, Mr. Lachance addressed the issue of strengthening partnerships among First Nations. The three local First Nations, as well as Michipicoten and Missinabie Cree, are involved in the land claims issue, he said. It is important to strengthen the dialogue among the First Nation communities, recognizing the fact that there are two language groups and two treaty areas.

Second, Mr. Lachance said that the relationship between the First Nations and the provincial government needs to be strengthened, especially with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). He complained that the politicians are not interested in working with First Nations, and said that there must be trust and a better cross-cultural understanding between the parties before significant progress can be made.

Third, Mr. Lachance expressed his concern regarding the federal government's relationship with the First Nations, saying that the federal government's fiduciary responsibility dwindles for those off-reserve. He feels that there is a strong reluctance on the federal side to move on this issue.

He said that there is a need for meaningful, non-confrontational dialogue and true consultation, and added that strengthening partnerships has an impact on all other Canadian Rural Partnership (CPR) priorities, so it needs to be addressed if the CRP initiative is to be successful.

Mr. Lachance said that First Nations do not want to continue with project-based assistance but are looking for support in developing a long-term vision and permanent solutions to their resource access challenges.

Environmental stewardship is critical, he said, but there is a fundamental difference in power structure — the government's approach is "top-down" while the First Nations approach is "bottom-up". He asked how this difference could be resolved and added that this issue affects many areas and is tied to First Nation Creator-based stewardship responsibilities.

Mr. Lachance said that capacity needs to be built at the community level but there is an inherent inequity in funding programs. This is because they are tied to the size of the community and project (economies of scale). This leaves small First Nation communities at a disadvantage.

A proactive approach is required whereby government representatives work in the community on a regular basis, Mr. Lachance said. First Nations need people to work with them in mapping out strategies. They want the government (both federal and provincial) to help them “find the door” to government goods, services and programs. The government needs to be a “broker of ideas,” and come to the First Nations with proposals, ideas and solutions rather than the other way around. Mr. Lachance insisted that a key to resolving First Nation economic concerns is to improve access to resources (land claims, fishing and hunting rights).

Karen Streich of the Rural Secretariat asked Mr. Lachance about the tools needed to improve the situation. Mr. Lachance replied that the tools are there but a different approach needs to be taken in utilizing them. Governments need to change “the way they do business” with First Nations, he said, so that they can use the available tools more effectively. He concluded by saying that all parties seem to accept their role in solving the Aboriginal issue but no one party wants to act as the catalyst that will bring First Nations, government, industry and the public together.

PRESENTATION 5 — CHAPLEAU TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

Representatives: Earle J. Freeborn (Mayor)
Keith (Buddy) Swanson (Councillor)
Richard Bignucolo (Councillor)
Mark Nyman (Councillor)
Richard St. Amand (Councillor)
Alan Pellow (CAO)
Gary Champagne, (CAO, Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB)

Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2001

BELOW IS THE WRITTEN BRIEF THAT WAS PRESENTED TO THE NORTHERN ONTARIO RURAL TEAM BY THE CHAPLEAU TOWNSHIP COUNCIL.

Airport Capital Assistance Program (ACAP funding)

Chapleau's Municipal airport, like many of our neighbouring community airports, is in a serious situation that threatens the very existence of this all-important facility.

Several years ago the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission discontinued NorOntair passenger air services. Since that time Chapleau has scrambled in its attempts to secure passenger air service for the community. The Province provided us and several other Northern communities with a \$75,000 subsidy to help defray the cost of obtaining this essential service. Last year this subsidy was discontinued. This is a considerable financial responsibility for a community of our size. ACAP funding is provided by the Federal Government; however, one of the criterion for funding is that airports must have 1,000 passengers per year to qualify. Obviously we cannot possibly qualify with those numbers. That means that we now not only have to come up with money to keep an air service operating into Chapleau but we have to somehow find the money to do capital improvements to our Airport such as runway repairs, lighting etc. These costs are very substantial without capital assistance from Government. At the minimum we need the 1,000 passenger qualification removed to take into consideration small airports like ours, otherwise Chapleau as well as similar communities to us, will not be able to afford to keep it as a viable operation in the future. Chapleau's airport is host to the Ministry of Natural Resources fire suppression water bombers and their base is strategically located because Chapleau is in the heart of Northeastern Ontario's wood basket which, in turn, is the economic stability for our town and the Region. The airport also serves the essential Medivac air ambulance service which is a critical component of local Health services. We cannot afford to lose either of these entities.

Infrastructure Funding

The Community of Chapleau was among many who welcomed the news of the OSTAR infrastructure funding program. Like most Northern municipalities we too have a lot of aging infrastructure both above and below ground that requires upgrading. Towns with large industrial tax bases are better equipped to pay their share of these programs. In a Town like Chapleau where the Industrial base is small and in fact our tax base is 75.27 % residential property taxpayers, this puts a huge burden on our small town budget and therefore infrastructure work is often done on a distinct needs and crisis basis rather than on a more realistic regular schedule. In addition, the infrastructure program is partnership driven and the expectation is that Municipalities should seek partners when making applications for infrastructure dollars. That may be fine in expanding areas of Southern Ontario where developers are only too willing to invest in these partnership arrangements to everyone's benefit but it is not the reality here in Chapleau. Who could we get to partner with us if we wanted to renew a sewer or water line on one of our town streets? Funding formulas must be modified to address small town needs. In addition, announcing infrastructure programs without announcing the funding formulas puts us at a distinct disadvantage not knowing the dollars the Township needs to designate to qualify for the funding.

Our financial responsibilities are further extended with the new drinking water regulations which in our case will cost in excess of \$700,000 to comply. Using a one-third formula this in itself is an expenditure exceeding \$200,000 that 75% of which will come out of our residential taxpayers pockets over and above our current anticipated levy.

Transportation Services

Chapleau has only one public means of transportation. That is the VIA Rail Budd Car Service that operates on the CPR line between Sudbury and White River going one way on opposite days and not running on Mondays. Recently VIA Rail has announced that they will be upgrading the Budd Car equipment through funding announced by the Federal Government and we applaud this initiative because the overhaul of this 50-year old equipment is long overdue. This service cannot be depended on due to the number of mechanical breakdowns it experiences, particularly in the winter months. This becomes a safety issue when we realize the remote nature of the track territory over which this train runs.

We have no scheduled bus service. We are in danger of losing our municipally-funded air service, as mentioned previously herein. Obviously, most of our citizens must rely on their own vehicular means of transportation to get to and from medical, business and personal appointments in Timmins, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Southern Ontario. Therefore, having good, safe and dependable highways are a must.

We have been pressing the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to have Highway 667 from the village of Sultan to Highway 144 extended and upgraded, a distance of 80 kilometres which would spur economic development for the whole of Northeastern Ontario as well as alleviate a lot of the safety concerns with the present road which is used extensively regardless of its condition. Although we have received considerable support for this project with the users such as Domtar, and from Northeastern municipalities, the trucking association of Ontario, local MPPs and thousands of residents via petitions in the Region, we have been unable to convince the Minister to make this a priority with his Government.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications upgrading to our community is vital as it is everywhere in Northern Ontario to enable us to keep abreast with the rest of the Province. Chapleau is presently involved in a Regional strategy to bring cellular telephone service to the community and a funding application has been submitted for the work plan study prerequisite for this project. Although Chapleau has fibre optic capabilities into the community it lacks the switching infrastructure required to enable the internal township system to be functional. Fibre optic linkages that connect our community sites, such as health, government, and education, are a necessity and presently non-existent. High speed data transmission capabilities are as important here as they are anywhere else if we are to attract economic development and enhance our current business climate. Chapleau is also included in the Net Central telecommunications project and we are optimistic of the potential for upgrading this project may present as the plans are finalized for this initiative. If Chapleau is to attract new business such as a Call Centre, it must have the proper high-speed data transmission facilities and equipment in place to do so.

Discussion Note

Council indicated that they were also trying to promote eco-tourism efforts on the Chapleau Game Preserve but were not necessarily interested in getting involved directly. Rather, they wish to position Chapleau as the gateway to the Preserve and capitalize on the increased traffic in and out of the Preserve. However, land claim issues with the First Nations are making it difficult to attract private investors who may be interested in developing opportunities.

PRESENTATION 6 — CHAPLEAU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Representatives: Lucy Bignucolo, Director, CRDC
Ross Broomhead, Vice-President, CRDC/Chair, Economic Dev. Committee
Buddy Swanson
Marty Peterson, Economic Development Officer
Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2001

BELOW IS THE WRITTEN BRIEF THAT WAS PRESENTED TO THE NORTHERN ONTARIO RURAL TEAM BY THE CHAPLEAU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION REPRESENTATIVES.

Who we are

The Chapleau and District Business Association was established in 1990 and incorporated as the Chapleau Regional Development Corporation or the CRDC in 1996. This not-for-profit corporation is mandated the specific tasks of fostering and promoting local development and growth.

The planning and work of the corporation is accomplished through the use of volunteer committees. The CRDC and its sub-committees exist to carry out specific functions. These committee members, which represent the different sectors of the community, meet to share ideas, provide input, make decisions and set goals.

The Chapleau Economic Development Committee is a partnership between the CRDC and the Township of Chapleau. It was formed to assist in expanding, stabilizing and diversifying the economic base of Chapleau and Area.

Our role is to attract new and different business ventures. We do this by keeping abreast of government policies on grants, loans, etc and municipal policies on land use, zoning etc. along with promoting what Chapleau has to offer.

Our objective is to help create as many new businesses and/or industries that are feasible for Chapleau and Area.

1. Support actions and policies:
 - . that maintain a viable forest product industry.
 - . that support diversification by promoting other businesses and industry in our community
 - . that maintain a viable rail industry in Chapleau.
2. Develop opportunities to expand the tourism potential by responsibly promoting our natural resources.
3. Promote activities and initiatives that support greater self-sufficiency of the community.
4. Take affirmative action to make our community more attractive and accessible through development

and improvement of transportation links.

5. Promote investment in the future of Chapleau by ensuring that improvements are made to the basic infrastructure and services while maintaining fiscal responsibility through wise use of resources and actions to increase the assessment base.

Our Accomplishments

The CRDC has been very successful in its endeavours for economic development in the Township of Chapleau.

CRDC is working to develop the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve as a major tourism attraction in Northern Ontario.

- A Feasibility Study was conducted on the Eco-tourism Potential of the Game Preserve.
- The CRDC was successful in bringing together the stakeholders to hold discussion and planning sessions.

Assisted the Chapleau Arctic Watershed Snowmobile Club with trail development.

- Assisted with efforts to obtain Sno-Trac Funding for trail development.
- Trails to Dubreuilville and Thessalon were built with this funding.
- Lobbied to complete trail to Timmins.
- Successfully partnered with Trail Rider Magazine to financially support the Chapleau Arctic Watershed Snowmobile Club.

Successful in lobbying Bell to upgrade switching.

- Successfully lobbied to bring fibre optic connection to Bell switching system.
- Lobbied Ontario Hydro to replace 10 kilometres of transmission line between Wawa and Chapleau to stabilize our hydro-electric power supply.

Instrumental in achieving a paved taxiway at the Chapleau Airport through our membership's physical participation by providing staff and equipment.

CRDC assisted the community in successfully applying for NOHFC assistance to construct a sewer infrastructure to the north side of the Kebsquasheshing River. Project allowed for the construction of a much-needed forty-unit motel and the creation of 20 jobs.

Successful tourism marketing campaign launched with assistance from FedNor, MNR, the Chapleau Tourist Association, the Chapleau Arctic Watershed Snowmobile Club and local businesses.

Increased visitations by 70% in 1999-2000.

Worked closely with the Chapleau Tourist Association to help them become a stable organization and grow. Through this partnership the Chapleau Tourist Association has hired a coordinator and membership has grown.

The corporation has created two youth internship placements.

- The first youth is currently employed at Canadian Pacific Railway
- The second program has just started.

In the past three years 4 students have been employed to work in our tourist information centre.

The CRDC has assisted the small hamlet of Sultan to obtain \$20,000 under the Community Access Program. This will allow students and residents in Sultan to learn about computers and the Internet.

The CRDC works with various local groups and organizations to support them in accessing financial assistance for their various projects. One such group is the Quatrain Arts Program, which has received praise from all levels of government.

Our Issues

Partnerships. The CRDC recognizes the importance of partnerships at the community level. However, building partnerships, or sustaining those that already exist, is becoming more difficult due to the increased pressures being placed on community resources. Although the time and resources that Chapleau residents can dedicate to their community is becoming increasingly limited, it would assist us greatly if governments would make long-term commitments to partnerships. All levels of government and rural communities should work cooperatively to establish long-term objectives to complete projects.

Economic diversification. Industry downsizing in single industry communities, particularly employment in the primary and resource sectors such as forestry, is a key driving force behind the need for economic diversification. The challenge for Chapleau is to identify or create economic opportunities to replace those that have been lost. Chapleau, as with many rural communities, does have the assets needed to generate new ideas but we lack the necessary financial resources and have only limited infrastructure to diversify its economy.

Despite these obstacles, Chapleau recognizes that there are opportunities for our community. In order to identify these, we recognize that our community needs to develop our vision of what we want to become. The CRDC is exploring value added and secondary processing business opportunities, acquiring new skills, encouraging new forms of business, exploring partnerships and working collaboratively.

The CRDC wants to find long-term sustainable solutions to our community's economic challenges. The CRDC would like to encourage the federal government to facilitate the exchange of success stories between communities and should coordinate efforts between the various players involved in economic development.

Beyond added skills, new ideas and partnerships, new business initiatives require access to capital. The CRDC feels that the government should provide start-up funding to new business ventures and should work closely with financial institutions to ensure that there is easier access to financing.

Opportunities for rural youth. The CRDC is concerned about the migration of our youth to urban areas. We recognize the value of FedNor's Youth Internship Program, but feel it does not provide a

long-term solution. To support the retention of youth in, and their return to, our community, the CRDC feels that it is important to explore and share opportunities with them — opportunities that could lead to a viable future within the community.

The federal government has a role to play by providing financial support and by working with Chapleau to identify employment strategies that will most benefit rural youth.

Human resource leadership and community capacity building. The CRDC would like to sustain and promote leadership within our community. Currently, there is a fear that a “burn out” will affect the leadership factor since many of the people that have a leadership role in our community are volunteers who have fulfilled this role for a long time.

The federal government can play a role in supporting strong leadership by approaching community development from the "bottom up", rather than the "top down." It can act as a catalyst to help attract new leaders by supporting leadership development and mentoring programs, which would also serve to build community self-confidence.

With respect to community capacity building, the CRDC believes that some erosion in capacity has occurred due to government restructuring and the loss of existing alliances between levels of government. The CRDC feels that the most effective way that the federal government can assist in community capacity building is through financial support, including maintaining transfer payments to the provinces and providing a pool of funding to support community programming. The federal government can also assist by promoting the value and importance of rural affairs in Canada. Further to this, consideration should be given to relocating government agencies and ministries to Chapleau.

Rural infrastructure. The CRDC feels that Chapleau’s infrastructure has eroded as a result of government downsizing and cutbacks and the decreasing size of the tax base in our community. Erosion is of particular concern in relation to transportation and water and sewer systems. Decision-makers lack an understanding of the consequences of this erosion on our community. This limited understanding may be driven by "city thinking," which results in government programs and policies not being adapted to rural realities.

The federal government can manage infrastructure issues by taking a long-term view when making infrastructure-related decisions. It should ensure that any infrastructure program put in place is comprehensive and will meet the needs of rural communities. Involvement from the grassroots level should be sought to identify solutions. The CRDC would like to suggest that the federal government could establish a long-term infrastructure program designed specifically for rural communities that is sustainable and that could be accessed by individual communities.

Access to rural health care. The CRDC feels there is a need to attract and retain health care professionals. Improvements to the infrastructure of our community such as transportation systems, recreation facilities and telecommunications is needed to recruit and retain health care professionals.

Access to rural education. The CRDC feels that financial resources should be made available to help maintain or improve access to post-secondary education in the community. The development of a telecommunications infrastructure and incentives to attract educators such as Sault College and

College Boreal are also viewed as possible means of supporting education in rural communities.

Rural telecommunications and use of the information highway. Chapleau like many rural communities is struggling to catch up to the technology age. Infrastructure to provide the latest advancements is not available in our community and the high cost of installing it is prohibiting Chapleau from economic growth. Rural communities need high-speed data connections, cellular telephone, real-time video-conferencing etc. This could be accomplished if Industry Canada, FedNor, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and private sector partner together to provide modern telecommunications at an equal level to all of Northern Ontario.

Access to information on federal government programs and services. The CRDC generally finds information on government programs and services difficult to obtain and interpret. We are learning about and accessing government programs and services after our urban counterparts.

The CRDC suggests that the federal government play a leadership role in establishing a single point of contact where our community could access all levels of government services and programs. The determination of this contact point should remain flexible and be based upon the needs and characteristics of each community.

Suggestions for Federal Government Actions

The CRDC would like to put forward suggestions for Federal Government Actions to create vibrant rural communities.

Develop a long-term vision for rural Canada. The CRDC recommends that the federal government establish long-term development to support the rebuilding of communities affected by the downturn in resource-based industries. The desire is for the development of sound sustainable initiatives, not “make-work” projects.

Promote rural and remote aspects of Canada. There is a strong desire for the federal government to develop various programs and activities to market Northern Ontario and promote awareness of our contribution to Canada.

Support the development and maintenance of rural infrastructure. The CRDC feels that action is required to ensure that our community has the necessary infrastructure to support and sustain development. Roads, railways, air services and communication systems are all identified as key components needing attention. The CRDC feels that the federal government should take action to ensure that priorities for infrastructure activities are identified to address the needs of rural communities such as Chapleau.

Define a list of minimum standards that apply to rural citizens. The CRDC would like to suggest that the federal government define basic levels of services and standards that should be available to citizens in each rural community. The federal government would also need to define financial assistance levels based on the levels of service defined.

Settle land claims and treaty rights for First Nations. The CRDC feels unsettled land claims and treaty rights are impeding the ability of the community to focus on economic development. One example is the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve, which could be a major attraction for Northern Ontario and provide employment opportunities for many citizens of the area.

Re-visit trade agreements. The CRDC suggests that the trade agreements with the United States and the European Union should be reviewed to assess their impact on rural Canadian citizens and communities.

Lumber prices are suffering. The federal government needs to look at the quota system imposed by the U.S. on Canadian lumber, yet significant imports from Russia is creating a surplus in the U.S. and driving prices to their lowest levels in 20 years. This is has a direct impact on Chapleau's economy.

Discussion Notes

The issue of sharing of success stories was discussed again at the end of the presentation and Lucy Bignucolo indicated that this can be done via the Internet but found that face-to-face meetings with counterparts from other communities were especially helpful. It allowed for a freer exchange of information, ideas and solutions to programs common to rural and remote communities. Trade shows are a good place to engage in such dialogues and it was suggested that the governments have a presence at all trade shows. Karen Streich advised that the Rural Fairs and Exhibits Program, which travels to fairs and trade shows, provides information on government programs and services. Some discussion ensued as to how to identify all trade shows and a suggested approach was to contact the CFDCs.

PRESENTATION 7 — CHAPLEAU HEALTH SERVICES

Representatives: Gail Bignucolo, Financial Officer
Richard Bignucolo
David Bronicheski
Mary Boucher (Sudbury and District Health Unit)

Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2001

Chapleau Health Services has a catchment area of approximately 3,500 people, and it is the only health care provider for Chapleau residents. The Chapleau General Hospital was built in 1976 to replace an aging existing facility. In April 1994, the hospital assumed responsibility for long-term care and formed SSCHS (Services de santé de Chapleau Health Services). In April 1995, SSCHS was designated as a “Multi-Service Agency”.

Currently SSCHS has 39 beds — 20 acute and 19 long-term — and a total budget of \$6 million (\$5 million for the hospital). Funding is currently received from 11 separate sources, eight from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care as well as the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Housing and the Northern Diabetes Health Network. SSCHS is a major employer in the region, employing approximately 100 people.

The hospital has developed a number of partnerships:

- Sudbury Regional Hospital (computer information system; radiology services)
- Sault Area Hospitals (pharmacy services)
- NE Ontario Regional Cancer Care Centre (chemotherapy clinic)
- Sudbury and District Health Unit (healthy babies program)
- University of Toronto (geriatric program)

The community issues affecting the health status of the population include:

- Geographic isolation
- Aging population
- Limited recreation facilities
- Limited social and cultural amenities
- High cost of education due to travel requirements
- Lack of public transportation to major cities for access to major health centres

The following are five specific challenges that SSCHS faces:

Accessibility of service. Chapleau’s isolation makes residents’ access to full range of medical services difficult. All specialized services are out of town. The community needs visiting specialist clinics.

Provision of cost-effective services. Higher operating costs in the North (heating, hydro, travel, training and education) are coupled with a lack of economies of scale (economic order quantities, optimal staffing ratios, regulatory reporting requirements - very detailed; must meet same reporting requirements as large urban medical centres). In addition, the lack of specialized consultants results in longer hospital stays, since diagnosis and treatment may take longer in many cases.

Implementation of new technology. Tele-health was launched in 1999 to facilitate physician education and specialist consults. Unfortunately there is a lack of operating funding for higher speed connections. SSCHS purchased PACS (digital imaging technology) equipment with funding from NOHFC. However, operational funding is required for connection to a major centre.

Physician recruitment. The community is designated for four physicians but has only two. The loss of one of them would likely result in the loss of both, since the remaining physician could not possibly be available seven days a week, around the clock. The current fee-for-service compensation system has not helped retention, especially for emergency or on-call services. An alternate payment plan for emergency services seems to be helping. Generally, there is a lack of available funding for recruitment incentives (i.e. salaried physicians, signing bonuses, etc.)

Health professionals recruitment (nursing and allied health). Chapleau is not attractive to new graduates and is usually only considered by those born or raised in the area. Due to the small number of health care professionals, there is a lack of peer support, further heightening isolation. Professional development opportunities are extremely limited and there is a severe shortage of attractive rental housing.

The SSCHS put forth a number of possible solutions:

A streamlined funding process. Block funding for all health care services provided by Chapleau Health Services would eliminate excessive bureaucracy. The transfer of funding from Sudbury CCAC for Chapleau to SSCHS would improve local case management and assessment. Transfer of funding for an Addictions Counselor for Chapleau from the Algoma Health Unit was also proposed. This service is presently contracted out of town because of the funding arrangement.

Improved medical staff recruitment. Since it is extremely difficult to recruit graduates from Southern Ontario or other parts of the country, creating a medical school in the North would be an excellent tool in attracting future medical professionals to Northern Ontario. It would also allow Northern Ontario youth interested in medical careers to remain close to their home communities. This would greatly enhance the chances of attracting and retaining much needed medical health professionals.

The representatives suggested that something like a “Northern Allowance” should be made available to allied health professionals who are willing to work in under-serviced areas. Additional funding for visiting specialists was also requested. This would cover the costs of visiting specialist clinics, surgeon(s) and anaesthetist(s) for elective day surgery and non-medical specialists and locums (i.e. geriatric psychologist, rehab professionals, etc.)

Improved linkages to other communities. The SSCHS requested additional funding for improved and expanded tele-health services and improved transportation links (public ground transport to Sudbury and Timmins and continued air transport in Chapleau).

Small hospital funding formula. The funding formula needs to address the lack of economies of scale and the increased costs associated with isolated, small rural communities. The funding formula needs to ensure all factors are taken into account, including recognition of native issues.

The SSCHS acknowledged that much of their concerns are under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Health but felt that the Northern Rural Team would benefit from a complete background on the state of health services in Chapleau. It is the hope of SSCHS that the Team could possibly effect changes on the indirect issues — such as telecommunications and transportation — that affect the delivery of health services in the Chapleau area.

Mary Boucher, the Sudbury and District Health Unit representative, profiled some of the factors that are affecting public health in the Chapleau area. Specifically, she addressed the lack of adequate public transportation facilities, lower rates of computer usage, high rate of tobacco usage, lower education rates and limited recreational opportunities for youth.

PRESENTATION 8 — CHAPLEAU EDUCATION AND TRAINING COALITION (CETC)

Representatives: Karen Gauthier, Chairperson
Linda Bouchard
Chantale Rousseau
Joan Longchamps
Sheila Henderson
Buddy Swanson
Janet Hazen
Marty Peterson

Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2001

BELOW IS THE WRITTEN BRIEF THAT WAS PRESENTED TO THE NORTHERN ONTARIO RURAL TEAM BY THE CHAPLEAU EDUCATION AND TRAINING COALITION REPRESENTATIVES.

What is the Chapleau Education and Training Coalition?

It is a working committee established 10 years ago to implement the community competence sector of the Chapleau Economic Development Strategy. A broad-based community consultation took place in 1991, which resulted in a comprehensive strategy for the Chapleau area. Many elements in the original strategy have been implemented and the EDC routinely updates the document to reflect changes in the external and internal environments

The CETC is a working sub-committee of the EDC whose purpose is to identify, co-ordinate and animate educational and training opportunities to foster life-long learning for the citizens of the Chapleau Area. We will provide you with a copy of our Terms of Reference as part of our written submission.

Who we are?

We are community volunteers representing the municipality, government agencies, economic development, training institutions that have a presence in the community, literacy, social services, aboriginal representatives, Francophone representation, our regional training board, business and industry.

A list of affiliation of the current CETC members will be provided in our handout. We meet monthly or as the need arises for effective networking and to plan and implement the projects we sponsor.

What do we do?

We have successfully lobbied to maintain the presence of Sault College and College Boreal in our community. We advised Community Social Services and the municipality of Chapleau on the creation of a JobLink Resource Centre. We submitted a brief on Chapleau becoming a part of the Timmins area training board...as a result, Chapleau is part of the Far North East Training Board. We have made local business and industry aware of training opportunities and have encouraged work experiences for High School students and youth seeking workplace placements.

What are we doing?

1. Literacy Centre

Our major project this year was to sponsor the establishment of a literacy centre to serve the needs of the Anglophone and Aboriginal communities. We submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to partner with Focus On Learning from Wawa to open a centre in Chapleau. This centre will serve the needs of basic literacy in Levels 1 and 2 of the Literacy and Basic Skills program, a service lacking in Chapleau. A Francophone centre already exists in Chapleau (FormationPLUS). The Chapleau Learning Centre has been up and running since January. An official opening and Open House is planned for February 8.

2. Information Technology

We are working with the government and business partners to upgrade the Sault College community computer lab to state-of-the-art capacity in order to be able to offer the latest in information technology training. Letters of request for funding partners have been sent to major employers and aboriginal groups in order to apply for the Access to Technical Opportunities Program (ATOP) for our community. The deadline for this application is March 31, 2001.

3. Roundtable Forum

On November 14, 2000 we coordinated, in collaboration with the Far Northeast Training Board, a roundtable discussion on training needs and issues in the Chapleau area. Karen Gauthier, Chair of the CETC, will address the issues raised at that time.

4. Canadian Rural Partnerships Dialogue

We have participated in the Canadian Rural Partnership's Rural Dialogue since its inception. I, along with other representatives of the community, attended a meeting in Timmins, facilitated by KPMG, which was part of the initial consultation with rural and Northern Canadians. I have keenly followed the evolution of the initiative and I am struck at the number of priority areas identified which dovetail with the priorities of the Chapleau Education and Training Coalition.

- a. Improve access to federal government programs and services for rural Canadians;
- b. Improve access to financial resources for rural business and community development;
- c. Strengthen rural community capacity, building leadership and skills development;

- d. Connect rural Canadians to the knowledge-based economy and society and help them acquire the skills to use the technology;
- e. Work with provincial/territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with access to education at reasonable costs;
- f. Foster strategic partnerships, within communities, between communities and among government(s) to facilitate rural community development; and
- g. Promote rural Canada as a place to live, work and raise a family recognizing the value of rural Canada to the identity and well-being of the nation.

Chapleau Education and Training Issues

Accessing information and services. There is a gap in access to information and services available to help clients achieve their educational and training goals. We are trying to develop a centralized location for employment and educational counseling services. These services should be local. Appropriate referral protocols need to be established. We need to market these services to our community and its surrounding area.

In identifying the need for full-time employment and educational counseling services, we hope to marry these services to our Chapleau Resource Centre in order to offer a one-stop shopping place for the citizens of Chapleau seeking employment and/or educational assistance. Clients will require such services as assistance completing complex government and funding agency forms (e.g. OSAP, HRDC Career Action Plan, etc.) The process for applying for assistance is complicated and clients are intimidated by it.

Is there funding available to assist us in the implementation of a local Employment and Education Counseling Centre in order for Chapleau citizens to access Career Action Programs?

Literacy. A year and half ago, the Chapleau Campus staff of Sault College identified an educational gap in the Literacy and Basic Skills programs being offered in Chapleau. Anglophone services in Level 1 and Level 2 of the LBS program were needed to complement Sault College's LBS program in Levels 3 to 5 and FormationPLUS Francophone program in Levels 1 to 5.

By working with community stakeholders, the Far North East Training Board, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Focus On Learning based in Wawa, the CETC has received MTCU funding to open the Chapleau Learning Centre as a pilot project until March 31, 2001. Interest in our centre is excellent. Since opening the doors to the Chapleau Learning Centre on January 8, we have 5 part-time students attending on a regular basis and have had several more inquiries. More students are anticipated to start before the end of January, and our volunteer group consists of 8 individuals to date.

We hope to secure funding for the 2001/2002 fiscal year from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, but funding dollars will not cover all our projected costs. Is there federal funding available for community literacy centres to enhance our provincial funding?

Barriers for clients. Training funds for clients receiving employment benefits from HRDC only cover 50% of training costs for full-time programs. Individual cases are assessed and negotiated for additional funding or if the training is on a part-time basis. Most clients cannot afford the other 50% of training costs and they don't have the negotiating skills to secure more funding or even have the knowledge that they can negotiate to secure more funding. Web-based online courses and distance education courses are not eligible under current guidelines. Our community would like the opportunity to provide on-going input into the establishment of these guidelines.

Social Services recipients who wish to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-town must apply for OSAP and lose all support from Social Services. If OSAP does not cover all tuition costs and living costs, clients are unable to go to school. Social Services will, currently, only cover educational costs up to Grade 12. Many full-time training programs could be available to clients in the community of Chapleau, but Social Services does not cover this type of training. Clients are left with very few options if they want to improve their education and follow a career goal.

The unemployed not receiving employment benefits or social services are, depending on their family income situation, often unable to afford today's educational costs. Many are unable to travel, move or buy a computer to take online courses. We want to help them reach their educational or employment goals too.

The reality for rural communities such as Chapleau is that part-time and long-distance learning are a way of life. Travelling is expensive and dangerous due to our long winters and abundant wildlife. The training costs for part-time courses are very expensive and financial assistance is not always available because the training is off-campus and part-time.

As a life-long learner who travelled every week to Sault Ste. Marie last year in order to complete a diploma program with Sault College, I can attest to family-related difficulties due to regular travel, daycare and other costs. Since relocating is not an option in my life right now I am taking web-based online courses this year in order to avoid travelling and to re-stabilize my family life that is centered around two young children and my husband. Fortunately, I am one of a few lucky individuals with access to an excellent retraining program through my employer. Most of the citizens in our rural community do not have access to such benefits when they wish to improve their educational or employment situation.

The CETC wishes to help the citizens of our community reach their employment or educational goals by eliminating these barriers to funding assistance. How can you help us?

Education and technology. More telecommunication technology is required for our community for local and distance education. A state-of-the-art computer lab is required to train individuals and businesses in the ever changing programs available today. We are working with Sault College and the Township of Chapleau to access ATOP funding to purchase a new computer lab. A total of \$21,000 is required from business and industry in Chapleau for the government to match the dollars to purchase the required equipment. Finding 50% of the equipment cost is a difficult task for our small rural community. If we are unable to secure the funds, we will have to downgrade our equipment requirements or live without certain equipment or technology. This is not acceptable in today's high-tech world.

Securing this new technology will allow Chapleau to retain and enhance services available through the training institutions operating satellite campuses in our community. It is part of our mandate to maintain these educational services. Chapleau citizens and business operations also want and prefer to take their training locally.

Are there federally funded programs available for the purchase of new technological equipment for rural communities?

Summary

In conclusion, as members of the CETC, we have seen first-hand the difference that local training opportunities have on the quality of life for our citizens and for the progress of our community. We are, therefore, committed to working together with all partners to finding ways to assure that our citizens have access to life-long learning opportunities without having to leave for urban centres.

Discussion Notes

Accessing Information and Services: Ray Hemmerling, Ron Cantin and Karen Streich indicated that they would like to meet with the CETC that evening to discuss this project and to explore funding options.

Literacy: Ron Cantin indicated that the Ontario Trillium Foundation may be able to offer funding for the Literacy program on an interim basis.

Barriers for Clients: Suzanne Dupont indicated that an in-class, web-based course would have to be, at a minimum, 25 hours per week to be eligible for support from HRDC. She would, however, like to have more details about the community's training requirements.

Education and Technology: Ray Hemmerling suggested that the CETC could approach the regional Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) for funding for their computer lab. FedNor recently announced a Local Initiatives Fund which provides the CFDCs with a lump sum that they administer (as opposed to FedNor). FedNor provides up to \$50,000 per community and the CFDC can provide up to \$5,000 per project. The CFDC decides whether the project meets the criterion of being an economic development initiative.

PRESENTATION 9 — LOUIS HÉMON CULTURAL CENTRE

Representatives: **Diane Jean (Coordinator, Louis Hémon Cultural Centre)**

Lillian St. Martin (Coordinator, FormationPLUS)

Date: **Wednesday, January 24, 2001**

The representatives of the Louis Hémon Cultural Centre said that there is a general lack of understanding regarding the additional expenses incurred by remote and rural communities in staging cultural events. Due to a limited revenue base and greater costs associated with bringing in talent, cultural events organized in remote or isolated communities are more expensive.

Currently, 65% of all funding is derived from the local community, and no major corporate sponsorships (e.g. Caisses Populaire, Canadian Tire, etc.) are available. The generosity of community residents and businesses has helped the centre to survive for 25 years, but costs are increasing at a greater rate than contributions. Currently, fundraising activities include social events, dances and donations from the public and local area businesses. Louis Hémon Cultural Centre representatives also stated that it appears that Francophone programs are among the first cut due to the relatively small French-speaking population. As a result, Francophone programs are not always available in communities.

Karen Streich said that the year 2001 is designated as the Year of the Volunteer and the federal government is currently holding meetings across Canada to discuss issues surrounding federal funding of the voluntary sector. A meeting for Northwestern Ontario will take place on January 30, 2001. She expressed hope that some of the issues raised at the session will be addressed as a result of these consultations.