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FedNor Youth Forum  
Conférence Jeunesse 2000

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# ACTION PLAN







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## Table of Contents

I. Introduction .....	5
II. The Action Plan .....	6
A) Youth Working Group .....	6
B) FedNor Youth Coordinator .....	7
C) Communicating With Northern Youth .....	8
D) Informing Government on Youth Forum Recommendations .....	9
E) Maintaining the Current Youth Internship Program .....	9
III. Conclusion .....	10





## I. Introduction

**O**n May 12-13, 2000, FedNor held a one-and-a-half day forum to provide current and former participants of FedNor's youth initiatives and other key stakeholders, an opportunity to identify issues relevant to Northern Ontario youth and provide input for the development of relevant youth programs and policies. Ninety-one youth participated in the Forum as well as four Northern Ontario MPs, the Chair of the Prime Minister's Liberal Caucus Task Force on Youth Entrepreneurship, FedNor staff and various community stakeholders.

When consolidating participants' input, it was determined that most recommendations fell into one of six themes: Youth Internship Program, Involving Youth, School-to-Work Transitions, Improving Education, Technology, and Building Our Northern Ontario Identity. Recommendations were presented in this manner to offer a concise and organized framework that will help FedNor respond effectively to the issues.

Understandably, since the vast majority of Youth Forum participants were current or former Youth interns, many of the recommendations deal directly or indirectly with FedNor's Youth Internship Program (YIP) and provide ways this program can be enhanced for future interns.

Others relate to issues such as education and training, making the transition from school to work, technology, and how to promote Northern Ontario as a great place to live and work.

This information, contained in well over one hundred recommendations, was collected, condensed and organized into a document entitled, FedNor Youth Forum 2000: Summary & Recommendations. The following Action Plan was developed based on the information contained in this document. It addresses the six identified themes, by implementing a process which:

- maintains the spirit of FedNor's efforts to have a strategy developed "by youth for youth" through the establishment of a youth advisory body that will help FedNor develop and implement youth related initiatives and programming;
- designates responsibility within FedNor for youth policy, planning and coordination;
- immediately addresses recommendations related to communications between FedNor and Youth in Northern Ontario;
- advises other provincial and federal government departments and organizations of the issues raised and recommendations made at the Youth Forum;
- establishes time-frames for FedNor to develop new initiatives for Northern Ontario youth in order to keep them productively employed in the North;
- maintains the highly successful Youth Internship Program as a fundamental part of FedNor programming.



## II. The Action Plan

The following describes five separate initiatives that constitute the action plan. These are:

- A) Youth Working Group
- B) FedNor Youth Coordinator
- C) Communicating with Northern Youth
- D) Informing government on Youth Forum recommendations
- E) Maintaining the current Youth Internship Program

Together these five strategies address the basic themes of the recommendations developed at the Youth Forum and represent FedNor's on-going commitment to address the needs of Northern Ontario youth.

### A) Youth Working Group

Throughout the Youth Forum held in May, the need was expressed to have some capacity to have youth involved in the development of FedNor's youth related initiatives. This is reflected throughout all of the recommendation themes.

*Ten Youth Forum Planning Group members have agreed to continue their involvement in helping FedNor shape its youth agenda by joining a newly created Youth Working Group (YWG).*

When Youth Forum 2000 was being planned, a youth committee was established to advise FedNor how best to undertake this event. Northern Ontario youth from across the region helped FedNor make the conference a success. This committee became known as the "Youth Forum Planning Group".

With this in mind, it has been concluded that this youth advisory body will work with FedNor to formulate specific actions, initiatives and programs for youth. This a logical and consistent manner of maintaining the spirit and continuing the "by Youth, for Youth" theme of this entire initiative.

#### Action:

Ten Youth Forum Planning Group members have agreed to continue their involvement in helping FedNor shape its youth agenda by forming a newly created interim Youth Working Group (YWG). The interim Group will meet with FedNor staff in early October to review the Youth Forum summary and recommendations report and discuss a range of activities, initiatives and program options.





**FedNor's new Youth Working Group members are:**

Sarah Anderson, Parry Sound, Project Coordinator, Park-to-Park Trail

Kim Bird, Timmins, Development Officer, Aboriginal Business Canada Program

Lee Anne Dell, Sault Ste. Marie, Special Projects Officer, RAPIDS Community Investments Inc.

Paul Denis, Sudbury, COBSC Business Information Officer, Sudbury Regional Business Centre

Christine Dodd, Kenora, Marketing and Promotions Officer, Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation

Kimberly Fournier, Timmins, Venture Centre

Candyse Gurl, Terrace Bay, Development Officer, Superior North Community Development Corporation

Janet Mayes, Thunder Bay, Executive Director, Northwestern Ontario Junior Achievement Council

Denyse Nadon Holder, Timmins, NADF Account Manager, Aboriginal Economic Development for the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

Caroline Vaillancourt, North Bay, SEB Coordinator

***The YWG and FedNor staff will report back to the Secretary of State with a specific set of activities, initiatives and programs designed to attract and keep young people in Northern Ontario.***

The YWG and FedNor staff will report back to the Secretary of State with a specific set of activities, initiatives and programs designed to attract and keep young people in Northern Ontario. Recommendations that do not fall within FedNor's mandate will be forwarded to other government departments and ministries for their consideration.

## **B) FedNor Youth Coordinator**

Youth Forum 2000 identified a range of issues and recommendations focussing on attracting and keeping youth in Northern Ontario. In order for these matters to be at the forefront of FedNor's policy and program development activities, it must have some capacity to manage and coordinate them.

***This position will also enable youth in Northern Ontario and FedNor to have a focal point for the implementation of the action plan.***

### **Action:**

A policy officer with FedNor's Policy, Planning and Coordination Unit has been designated as FedNor's Youth Coordinator. This Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating youth related program matters within FedNor and be responsible for the



coordination and administration of the Youth Working Group. The Coordinator will work closely with FedNor's regional program delivery units in undertaking this function.

This position will also enable youth in Northern Ontario and FedNor to have a focal point for the implementation of the action plan.

## C) Communicating With Northern Youth

A variety of recommendations from the Youth Forum centred on the need to maintain a greater level of communication with youth and more specifically FedNor interns. Given the technological literacy of youth, it seemed logical to capitalize on this skill through the use of the Internet. A FedNor Youth Website was frequently mentioned as a means to share information, ideas and opportunities as well as network and maintain a sense of community.

*An enhanced website will enable FedNor to communicate more effectively with youth interns on issues and initiatives.*

### Action:

FedNor will develop a Youth section to its existing Website. This section will serve a variety of purposes including: act as a networking tool; identify internship and employment opportunities; provide internship news, give access to a directory of youth related services; allow for an effective feedback mechanism for

youth; etc. The Youth Working Group will serve as the advisory body to help guide FedNor in the development of this website.

Efforts to develop the Website are currently underway. Information on the FedNor's Youth Internship Program is already available on the Website. It is expected that a bulletin board system (BBS) will be available this fall. The BBS will enable FedNor and all FedNor interns (past and present) to communicate more effectively by providing an opportunity to comment on issues, ask questions and propose solutions. The system will be fully interactive allowing participants to view and respond to their fellow interns comments.



## D) Informing Government on Youth Forum Recommendations

Many of the recommendations identified at Youth Forum 2000, although outside of FedNor's mandate, raised questions and offered potential solutions of relevance to other government organizations doing business in Northern Ontario.

### Action:

The Summary & Recommendations report will be distributed to all impacted government stakeholders. The Secretary of State will also bring the document to the attention of his Cabinet colleagues as well as Provincial ministers, noting specific recommendations relevant to their respective portfolios.

## E) Maintaining the Current Youth Internship Program

FedNor's Youth Internship Program (YIP) is highly effective in assisting this target group. Launched in December 1997 as a pilot project, it became an ongoing FedNor program in November 1999.

In October 1999, a review of the initiative was conducted, mainly by gathering information from former interns and their host organizations.

### Some of the key findings from the review were:

- 96% of those who participated in the review were currently employed and 92% of those were working in Northern Ontario.
- Over half (52%) of those employed remained with the host organization.

### Action:

The program is working well as is evident in the results of the review. With the exception of minor improvements, it is not expected to change substantially. There does appear, however to be opportunities for program enhancement and related initiatives. These will be examined by the Youth Working Group in conjunction with FedNor staff, who will report back to the Secretary of State.



### III. Conclusion

**Y**outh Forum 2000 demonstrated the bright, vibrant and committed nature of Northern Ontario youth. Their enthusiasm and concern for the North were most evident. Young Northern Ontarians want to have opportunities to launch their careers in the north, to have access to education, training and the tools that will help them do so and to be part of helping the region prepare for the future.

This Action Plan is part of FedNor's on-going efforts to *open doors* and *build futures* in Northern Ontario. The recommendations from FedNor's Youth Forum will translate into improved programs and policies for the region's youth. FedNor is investing in the youth of today to help contribute to a prosperous Northern Ontario in the future.

***Young Northern Ontarians want to have opportunities to launch their careers in the north, to have access to education, training and the tools that will help them do so and to be part of helping the region prepare for the future.***