



Rural Secretariat/
Strategic Social Plan
Newfoundland and Labrador

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Keeping you up-to-date with the Cormack-Grenfell Regional Steering Committee

Survey will define HR challenges

Seventeen thousand employers will participate in surveys that will paint an accurate picture of labour demand and changes in the labour market in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The ongoing Wage Rate and Human Resources Survey is being conducted by Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency. Data are being collected on behalf of the agency by Bristol Group/Omnifacts Research. The survey will provide an updated look at three issues facing employers - recruitment, retention, and skill sets.

Demographic changes that include an aging population and out-migration have created challenges and opportunities for employers, educators and government. Employers in the Cormack-Grenfell region realize they must prepare now for upcoming baby boomer retirements. The results of these surveys will help them prepare for skills shortages, as well as remain competitive in terms of wages and benefits.

The survey will unroll in three phases. Aggregated data will be available through Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency for public use. Participating employers will have early access to the information, through a special website.

HR project moving into public information stage

Joanne Kendrick, researcher with the Rural Secretariat/Strategic Social Plan, is delivering presentations on the key findings of the SSP Human Resources project.

On July 20, Kendrick met with representatives of the five western Newfoundland Regional Economic Development Boards, the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, School District 4 and the Development Alliance of Western Newfoundland to discuss the four surveys carried out by the SSP as part of the HR project. The day-long session allowed participants to discuss the findings in small group settings, and relate those to their own area or zone.

It's anticipated that people taking part in this workshop will help the SSP move the HR communications strategy forward by hosting presentations in the fall.

Terrific response to Skilled Trades initiative

In April, School District 4 participated in a project designed to help Grade 7 and 8 students learn more about the skilled trades. Representatives of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) Newfoundland and Labrador Division visited several schools in the Stephenville and Port aux Basques areas to increase awareness of industrial careers by inviting students and teachers to participate in a career exploration activity.

Activity centers designed by two College of the North Atlantic students were set up in each participating school. Students moved from centre to centre learning a little something about a variety of skilled trades along the way.

Securing Our Future Project a first for western region

Securing Our Future, an initiative of School District 3, will determine the feasibility of establishing school-based social workers in the region. The project funded in part through the Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy attaches a social worker to a school. Unlike social work positions that are legally mandated and protection focused, this position is preventative and requires the voluntary involvement of parents, children and communities.

Research completed by Rick Ash, Director of Child Care and Youth Justice Services for Health and Community Services Western, for a Masters of Social Work degree from Memorial University, identified preferred conditions to support social work practice in a school environment. C.C. Loughlin Elementary in Corner Brook was identified for the position in the western region. In June, Jennifer Howlett, a registered social worker, was hired to work with community groups, children and families that will enter that school in September 2004.

Congratulations to Rita Malone on being appointed Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Development, for the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. Rita is a long-time member of the SSP Regional Steering Committee and has made valuable contributions to its numerous projects. Her support has been greatly appreciated and we look forward to a long and continued working relationship.

News at DAWN off the press

The second edition of News at DAWN, a joint effort of the Rural Secretariat/Strategic Social Plan and the Development Alliance of Western Newfoundland was published in June.

Copies are available at the SSP office in Corner Brook.