

# The Voice of the People

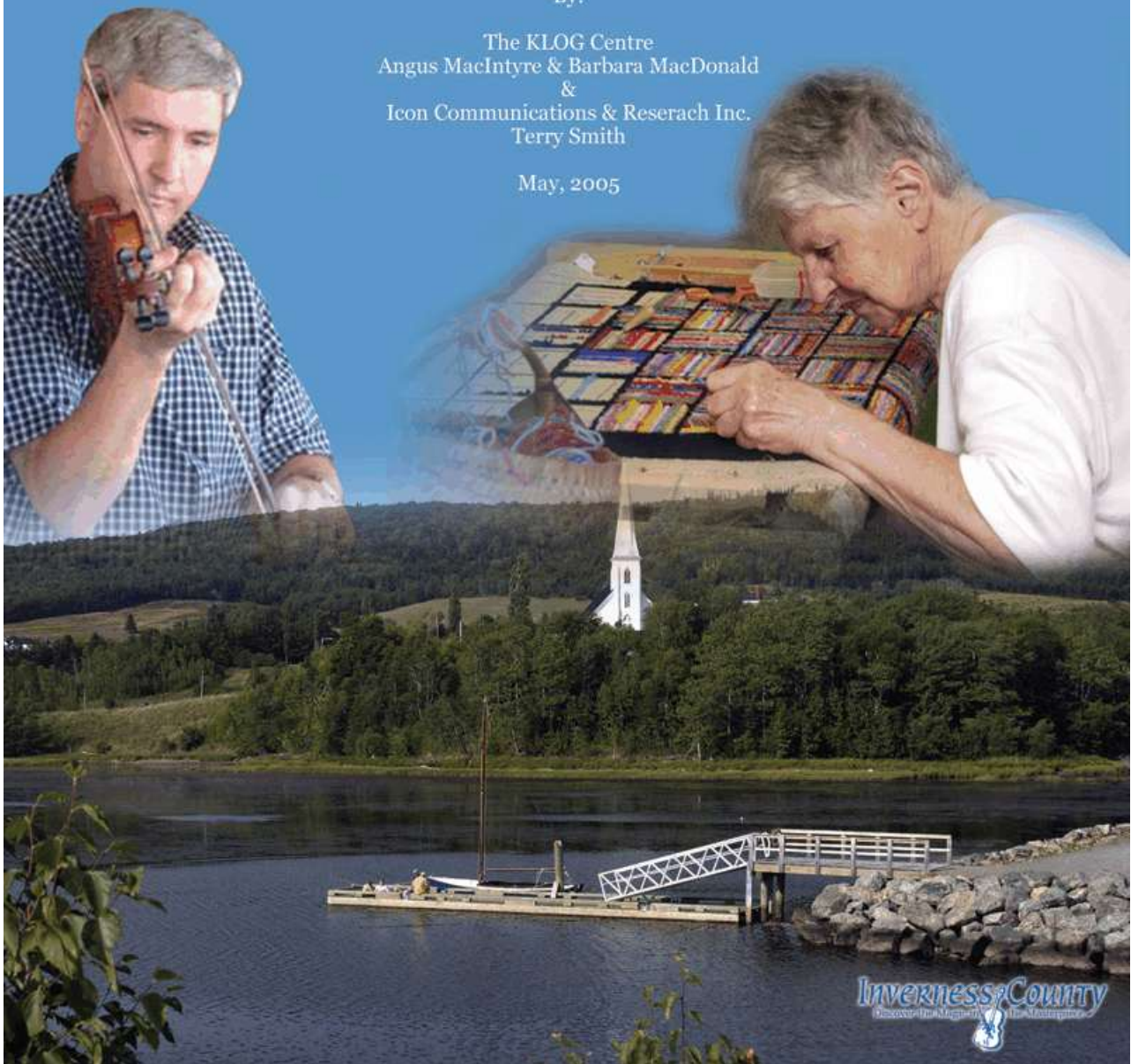
"The future of every community lies in capturing the passion, intelligence, imagination and resources of its people."

A Report on  
The "Quality of Life" in Inverness County

By:

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Inverness County, the KLOG Centre and ICON Communications are indebted to the residents and business people of Inverness County for their time and ideas while completing the quality of life surveys conducted during the past nine months. Whenever high quality work has been accomplished one can always point to the dedication and skills of individual committed people who care deeply about the work that has to be done and its importance in the overall scheme of things. This has certainly been the case of the Inverness County Quality of Life residential and business surveys that have been conducted over the past fall and winter and which form the essence of this report.

Once the decision to conduct this survey had been made Inverness County was divided into four regions or quadrants. A Coordinator, Shirley Miller, from Margaree was selected to oversee the project. She was assisted by local facilitators Carole Aucoin for quadrant 1, Jeff Burke for quadrant 2, and Jesslyn Timmons for quadrants 3 and 4. In addition to assisting with the residential surveys the local facilitators and Coordinator conducted the business surveys. Criteria for the selection of field workers were established before individuals were interviewed for the positions. These criteria were extensive and included personal knowledge of the local community where they would be working, willingness to work long and irregular hours, the ability to work unsupervised, the ability to relate to people from all walks of life, patience, and a commitment to the overall objectives of the exercise. Data entry was done by Margaret Beaton, Francis MacDonald, and Rose MacDonald.

The phenomenal response rate of over 68% that was achieved is due to the dedication and commitment of these individuals chosen to collect and assist in the completion of the surveys. The challenges were indeed great ranging from phoning ahead so the resident would take their dog in so the surveyor could collect the completed form in safety, to facing traveling conditions during the difficult weather conditions that only Inverness County can offer in winter months.

We would also like to acknowledge the individual field workers.

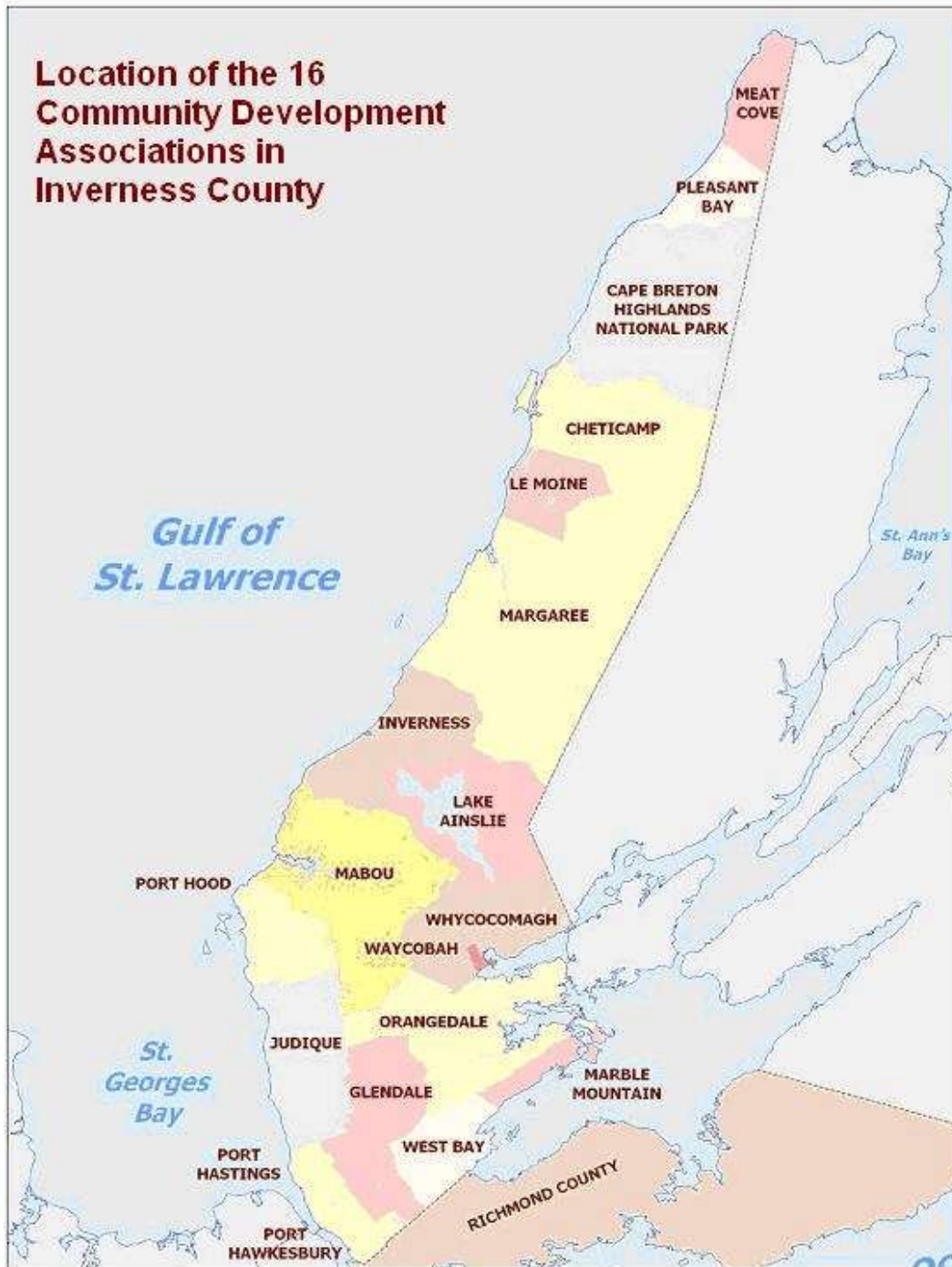
Quadrant # 1, the northern part of the County, included the communities of Meat Cove, Pleasant Bay, Cheticamp and St. Joseph DuMoine. The field workers in this quadrant were: Bernice Deveaux, Marie Claire Doucet, Julie Deveaux, Kathleen Chiasson, Lisette Poirier, and Patricia Roach.

Quadrant # 2, the Margaree area, included the communities of Grand Etang, Belle Cote, Petit Etang and the entire Margaree area. The field workers in this quadrant were: Connie Jennex, Hilda Phillips, Arlene Burton, Martha Buckles, and Dorothy Gillis.

Quadrant # 3, the central part of the County, included the communities of Inverness, Lake Ainslie, Whycomagh and Mabou. The field workers in this quadrant were: Leeann MacKinnon, Gail Rankin, Alexis Beaton, Catherine Marquis, Joan MacDonald, Ethel MacIntyre, Brenda Campbell, and Ryan MacIsaac.

Quadrant # 4, the southern part of the County, included the communities of Port Hood, Judique, Port Hastings, Glendale, Marble Mountain, West Bay and Orangedale. The field workers in this quadrant were: Marion S. Gillis, Arlene MacDonald, Harriet Petrie, Julia MacKinnon, Coleen Beaton, Sally Dacey, Marian MacEachern, Maureen DeMone, and Susan Mallette.

**Location of the 16  
Community Development  
Associations in  
Inverness County**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“Let’s do a report and then decide what to do with the results.” In such a case the report is probably unnecessary and certainly inadequately conceived. Thanks to the commitment of the leaders in Inverness County this is not the case with this report.*

**This report** on quality of life in Inverness County has been **produced by a partnership** between residents, businesses, sixteen Community Development Associations, federal, provincial and municipality levels of government, and the quasi-governmental agencies in the helping professions that are in existence to support “quality of life” in Inverness County.

**The overall objective** of this project was to provide the raw data on employment characteristics and training needs for the sixteen Development Associations to plan for their future. A secondary objective was to increase their leadership ability to use “participatory research” to influence policies and programs that contribute to the quality of life in Inverness County.

In addition, the report is intended to provide feedback to all residents of the County and those responsible for the provision of programs or services to the County on what residents and the business community feel about the quality of life in Inverness County. It is hoped it will provide a blueprint for a plan of action about what has to be done to improve what is deemed to be a high quality of life already existing in the County.

**The report is organized in eleven chapters** that cover key dimensions of quality of life determinants in Inverness County. Chapters 1-6 are an overall summary of the results of the surveys and four “Quality of Life” workshops that were conducted throughout the County:

- Chapter 1 - survey results of each resident over the age of 18 in that region of the County; (68% return rate)
- Chapter 2 - survey results from conducting extensive personal interviews with every business in the County willing to be interviewed; (70% of businesses in the county); and
- Chapter 3 - 6 - results of detailed quality of life surveys and discussions with a cross-sectional representation of people from the four regions of the County conducted during a series of regional workshops in each of the four quadrants.

Here are a few examples from the regional “Quality of Life” workshops.

We have a great combination of cultural, recreational, and social opportunities of every type and our natural resources are unparalleled

I am amazed at the quality and integrity of the local culture in the County.

We have four to five major cultural events a year but could do more

There should be a satellite office for Social Services in our centre – even 2 days per month for a few hours. This could be coordinated with an adjacent community to reduce the cost

We need more preventative services, community health boards are vital, regular doctor and prescription outlet in Margaree, info sessions by public health, more doctors & keep them here, more specialists to Inverness Memorial Hospital on a regular basis, mini-bus for seniors to local and regional health facilities, local diabetic clinic

Cell phone service and high speed internet are required

We should focus on youth and kids so they stay and stop fearing immigration

We have strong family values and a great sense of community

Inverness County is a great place to live.

Additional comments included a:

Split assessment on community development services and programs

Poor rating for social services

Requirement for a paid community development person, investment in local community to help people stay; to revisit Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) and adapt to smaller project, more cottage industries and value added in all natural resources

Positive assessment of cultural facilities.

This report is intended to be a starting point for discussion, analysis, interpretation, implications, further fact finding, and action. Questions are provided at the end of chapters seven and eight to facilitate thinking and discussion about what the data means for quality of life in Inverness County.

An electronic version of this report can be downloaded from the Inverness County website, [www.invernessco.com](http://www.invernessco.com), along with other information not included in this report. For example, the detailed worksheets from the regional quality of life workshops have been recorded and are available at the municipal office. A copy of the report will be available at all sixteen Development Associations, at the Municipal Office in Port Hood, and in all libraries in the County.

## INTRODUCTION

### WHY WAS THE PROJECT CONDUCTED IN THE FIRST PLACE?

In the spring of 2003 sixteen Development Associations and the Inverness County Council of the Arts worked with County Council in developing the following vision for Inverness County.

***“The community of Inverness County, while preserving our values and traditions, has developed a dynamic process for constantly enhancing our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. This process will ensure we will always have a healthy and vibrant place to live.”***

In order to realize this vision the Council of Inverness County required the help of residents, businesses, special interest groups such as the Development Associations, and those government and quasi-government agencies providing programs and services to County residents.

The first step in the project was for Council to ask Inverness Municipal County staff to obtain the necessary resources from HRSDC to conduct “action research” to find out the facts of the existing situation. The next step was to provide a process to recommend an action plan to improve the quality of life in the County based on the findings.

Council and staff were determined not to produce another report that would sit on a shelf and be ignored. Therefore, up-to-date, accurate information was considered essential if the project was expected to produce usable results. This type of data was simply not available for quality of life questions facing the County. The systematic collection of relevant information to provide “information users” with the data they needed to assess the present condition of the quality of life in the County was considered a central ingredient to provide practical tools communities (Development Associations) and business can use to influence policy at all three levels of government.

Inverness County Council contracted with the KLOG Centre to design the required surveys, train staff for resident and business interviews, conduct the regional workshops and write this report. Thanks to assistance from HRSDC additional staff were hired to distribute the residential surveys, assist those who requested help with the questions, pick up the completed surveys, and assist with the data entry. ICON Communications from Sydney were also contracted to provide specialized expertise in survey design, data entry and analysis to assist in the project.

What aspects of life in Inverness County should be examined in order to gauge the well being or quality of life in the County?

Although there are no easy answers to this question, KLOG has taken a broad approach that looked at the quality of living in our selection of questions. In keeping with our values of “participatory research” KLOG began by involving residents of the County, special interest groups, and government and quasi-government agencies in designing the surveys. All surveys were field tested and changes made before the final versions were approved by the project manager, John Cotton, the Director of Recreation and Tourism for the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

There is currently very little information available in Nova Scotia to determine the accessibility, acceptability, appropriateness, and effectiveness of health and social services in rural Nova Scotia. This report is intended to partially address this challenge.

According to a report in 2003 on Rural Communities Impacting Policy health literature is beginning to recognize that “quality of life” is determined by more than just material factors. They identified the fact that social, economic, and environmental factors play a key role in quality of life. There is a link between health and social inequalities, and societal and economic structures have a direct impact on health. Factors such as wealth, poverty, job insecurity, education, social mobility, and stress contribute to the health and well being of people living in all communities. However, some factors are more pronounced in rural communities. For these reasons, the information we have selected to survey reflect the conditions that impact daily lives and quality of life in Inverness County.

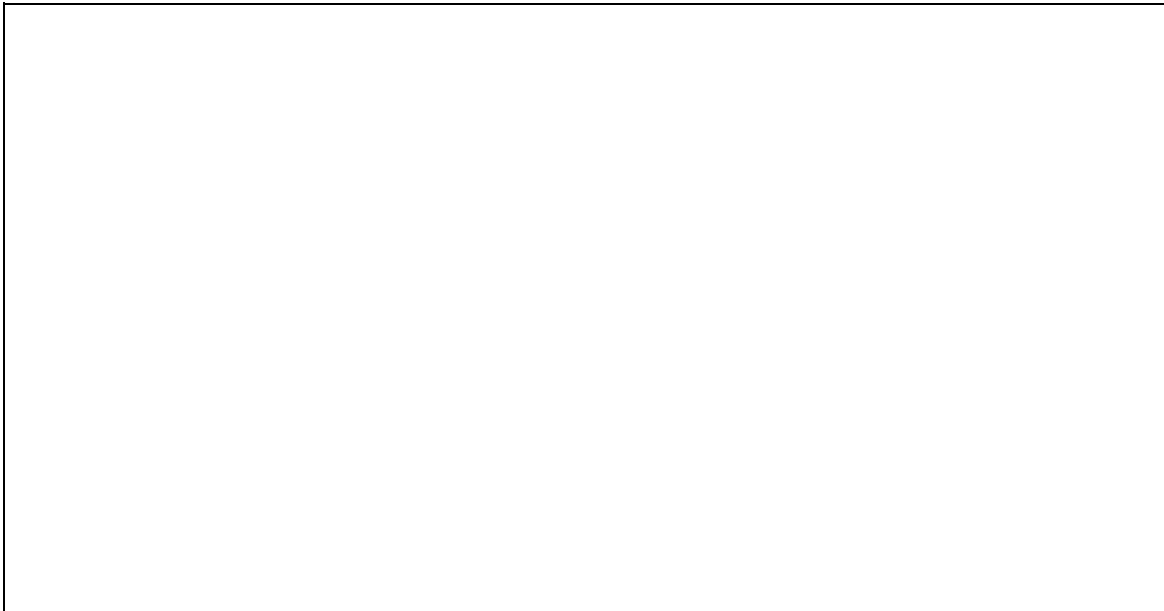
As a result this report focuses on recreation opportunities and facilities, cultural opportunities and facilities, adult education and literacy, health services, social services, community development, economic development, tourism, and any other item residents cared to bring to our attention. Each of these dimensions is addressed in the first six chapters of the report.

## CHAPTER 1

### RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL RESIDENT'S SURVEYS

In addition to the information recorded on the following bar charts residents made 123 comments of a general nature. Most of these were suggestions about how the quality of life in Inverness County could be improved. These comments are available to departments and agencies providing program and services in Inverness County.

#### 1. Please check the age range of each person over the age of 18 in the household?

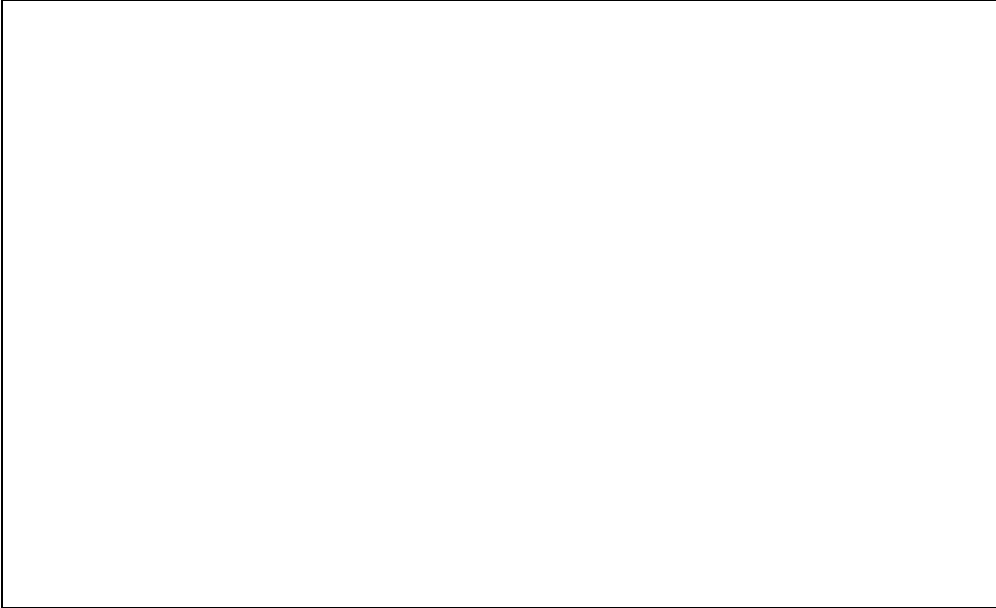


The population of Inverness County is much older than the national average and will be facing many of the effects of an aging population before the rest of the country. Quadrant 1 is the oldest region within the County.

**2. What is the gender of the people over 18 in the household?**

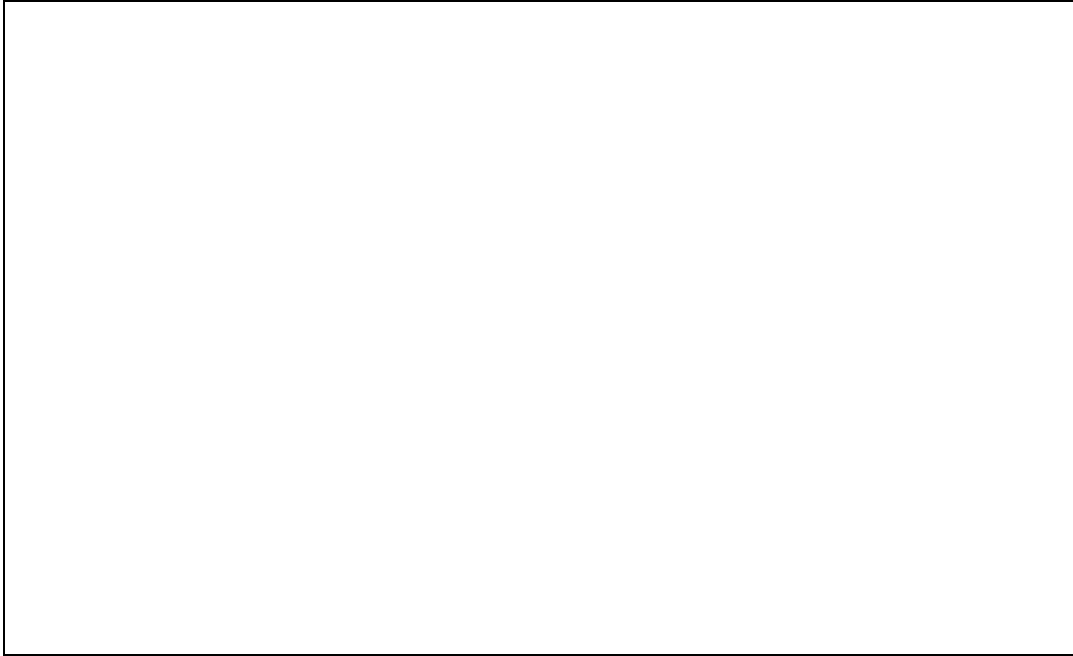
Inverness County has a slightly higher percentage of females than the national average.

**3. Which best describes each person's situation?**



Approximately 80% of the County's residents were born there.  
Quadrant 1 has the highest percentage of residents who moved away, but returned.  
Quadrant 4 has the highest percentage of residents who grew up elsewhere and moved to the County.

**4. What is the highest level of education completed for each?**



Quadrant 1 has the highest percentage of people with less than high school education. Most are either retired or work in the fishery.

Quadrant 4 has the highest percentage of university or post-secondary graduates.

**5. If anyone has not completed high school, would he/she be interested in upgrading his/her education (e.g. local adult upgrading class/GED)?**



Only a relatively small percentage of those who have not completed high school are interested in upgrading.

The largest concentration of those interested in upgrading live in Cheticamp.

**6. What other education or training is each person interested in obtaining?**

**Training Interests – Top Five Responses**

	<b>Quadrant 1</b>	<b>Quadrant 2</b>	<b>Quadrant 3</b>	<b>Quadrant 4</b>	<b>County</b>
1	Computer training	Computer training	University education	University education	University education
2	Trades	University education	Trades	Computer training	Computer training
3	University education	Trades	Computer training	Trades	Trades
4	LPN/PCW/health care	Heavy equipment operation	Business administration	Business administration	LPN/PCW/health care
5	French language	LPN/PCW/health care	LPN/PCW/health care	LPN/PCW/health care	Business administration

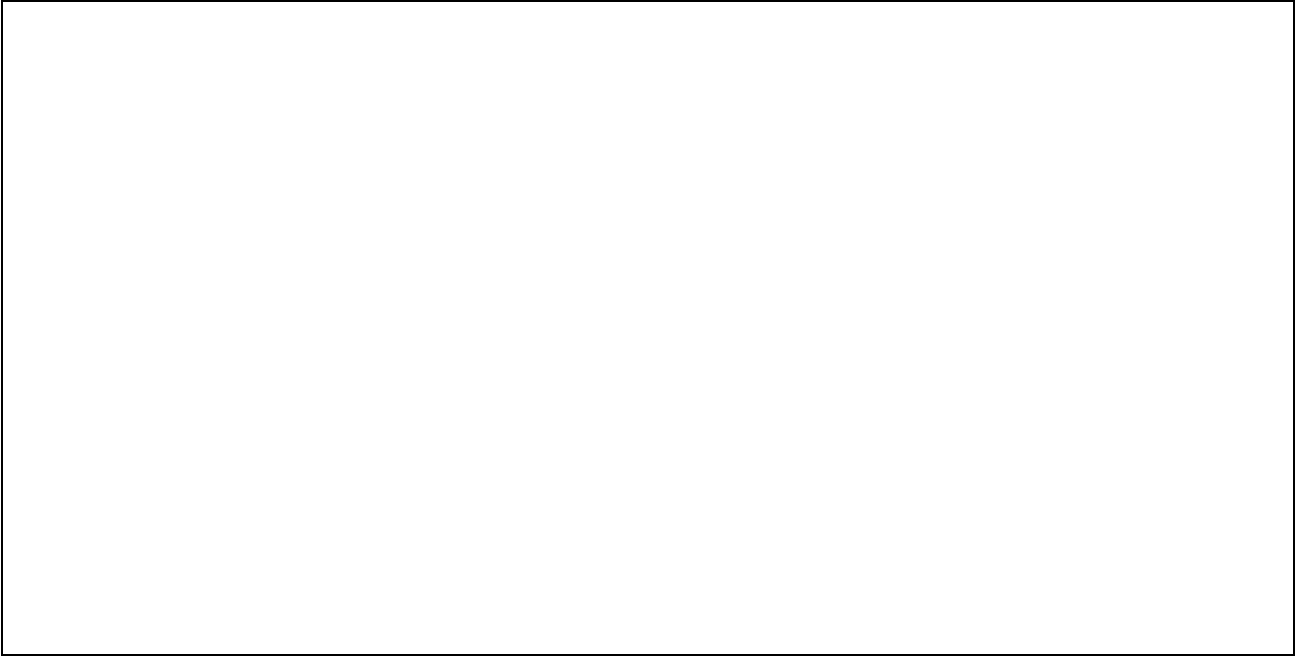
A significant number of residents would like to obtain their university education, particularly in Quadrants 3 and 4.

Computer training is also desired by a significant portion of the population.

**7. In what language would each prefer this training?**

Over 98% of residents interested in receiving training would prefer the training in English.

## 8. Does each person work...



Quadrants 1 and 2 have the highest percentage of seasonal workers, largely due to employment in the fishery or tourism.

Quadrants 1 and 3 have the highest percentage of retirees.

Quadrant 4 has the highest percentage of full time employment, but also the highest percentage of unemployment. Quadrant 1 has the lowest percentage of unemployment.

**9. Given a choice would each person prefer to...**

The vast majority of residents would prefer to work full time, year round. As a result, there is significant underemployment within the County.  
 Approximately one-third of retirees reported that they would still like to work.

**10. List reasons (if any) that are preventing members of your household from obtaining the employment they desire.**

**Reasons Preventing Employment – Top Five Responses**

	<b>Quadrant 1</b>	<b>Quadrant 2</b>	<b>Quadrant 3</b>	<b>Quadrant 4</b>	<b>County</b>
1	Lack of employment opportunities	Lack of employment opportunities	Lack of employment opportunities	Lack of employment opportunities	Lack of employment opportunities
2	Health reasons	Health reasons	Health reasons	Health reasons	Health reasons
3	Age	Caring for children or family member	Cost of education/training	Caring for children or family member	Caring for children or family member
4	Cost of education/training	Age	Lack of education	Lack of education	Lack of education
5	Lack of education	Cost of education/training	Currently obtaining education	Currently obtaining education	Cost of education/training

A lack of employment opportunities was the number one response in every quadrant for reasons preventing residents from obtaining the employment they desire.

**11. If any household member is employed, what is his/her present occupation?**

**Occupations – Top Five Categories**

	<b>Quadrant 1</b>	<b>Quadrant 2</b>	<b>Quadrant 3</b>	<b>Quadrant 4</b>	<b>County</b>
1	Fishery	Health care	Health care	Building/construction/ trades	Health care
2	Health care	Building/construction/ Trades	Light industrial	Retail/personal services	Building/const'n/ Trades
3	Retail/personal services	Financial/business services	Building/construction/ Trades	Heavy industrial	Fishery
4	Food service	Forestry	Retail/personal services	Light industrial	Retail/personal services
5	Building/construction/ trades	Hospitality	Education	Health care	Light industrial

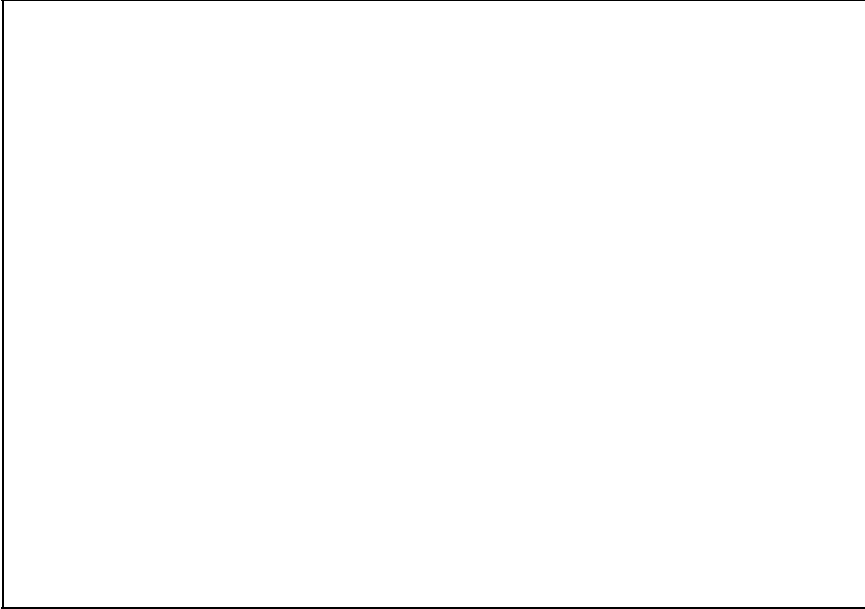
Health care is the largest sector, employment wise, within the County, followed by building/construction/trades and the fishery.

The fishery is the largest sector for employment in Quadrant 1, while building/construction/trades was the largest in Quadrant 4.

**12. Is their employment outside of Inverness County?**

Approximately 20% of residents reported working outside the County. This percentage is highest in Quadrants 2 and 4.

**13. If working outside of the County, approximately how many kilometres do they drive to work one way?**



The majority of residents who travel outside the County to work drive less than 50 kilometres one way. This is highest in Quadrant 4 where it is assumed that a large number of residents work in Port Hawkesbury or Point Tupper.

**14. Does anyone have to leave home to work for extended periods of time?**



Only a small percentage of residents work outside the County for extended periods and the majority of those who do work outside the province.

**15. Please identify other training you have received, that may not apply to your current job situation.**

**Training Received – Top Ten Categories**

	<b>Quadrant 1</b>	<b>Quadrant 2</b>	<b>Quadrant 3</b>	<b>Quadrant 4</b>	<b>County</b>
1	Secretarial	Secretarial	University courses/degree	University courses/degree	Secretarial
2	Mechanic	Carpentry	Welding/Pipe Fitting	Secretarial	University courses/degree
3	University courses/degree	Mechanic	Secretarial	Welding/Pipe Fitting	Welding/Pipe Fitting
4	Welding/Pipe Fitting	Welding/Pipe Fitting	Cosmetology	Heavy Equipment Operation	Carpentry
5	Cosmetology	CPR/First Aid	Electrical	Carpentry	Mechanic
6	Carpentry	Heavy Equipment Operation	Carpentry	Mechanic	Cosmetology
7	Electrical	Computer	Heavy Equipment Operation	Millwright	Heavy Equipment Operation
8	Nursing	Cooking	Nursing	Bookkeeping/Accounting	Electrical
9	Personal Care Worker	Nursing	Teaching	Computer	Nursing
10	Retail Merchandising	Personal Care Worker	Bookkeeping/Accounting	Cosmetology	CPR/First Aid

**16. In the areas you’ve identified in Question 15, please indicate if it is on-the-job training, diploma, certificate, journeyman papers, degree, etc.**

Approximately one-third of County residents have received diploma training. The percentage is even higher in Quadrants 3 and 4.

A significant number of residents have also reported receiving on-the-job training and a certificate.

**17. What are the future plans for each person regarding work?**



The vast majority of residents plan to stay in the area. The majority of those who state that they plan to leave, say that they will return when opportunities exist.

**18. What was the gross income last year for each person?**



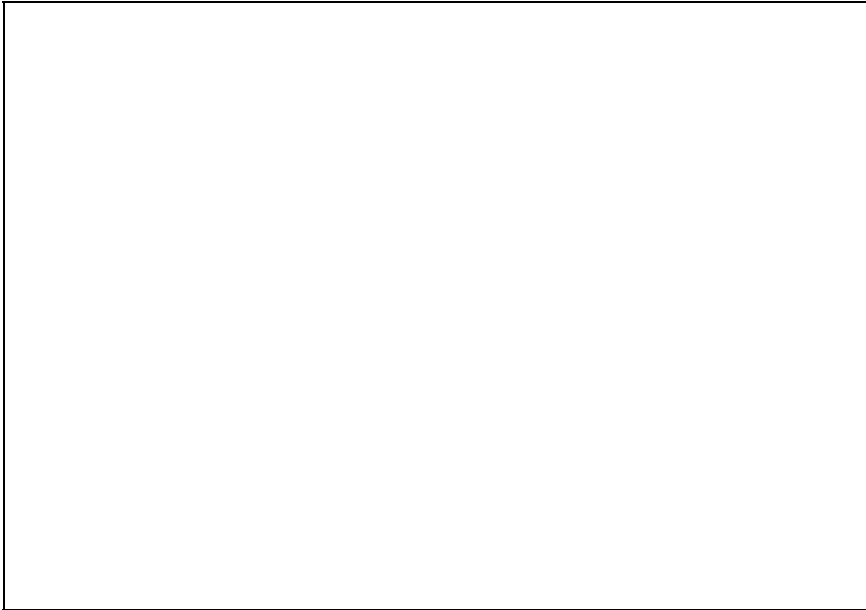
Quadrants 1 and 2 have the lowest average income. Quadrant 4 has the highest average income and more than doubles the other quadrants in the percentage of residents with incomes above \$60,000.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESULTS OF BUSINESS INTERVIEW SURVEYS

In addition to the information recorded on the following bar charts business people made 1,540 comments. Most of these were suggestions about how the various government and quasi-government agencies could improve support for existing or starting a new business in Inverness County. These comments are available to the various departments and agencies providing services to the business community in Inverness County.

#### 1. Do you have more than one business?



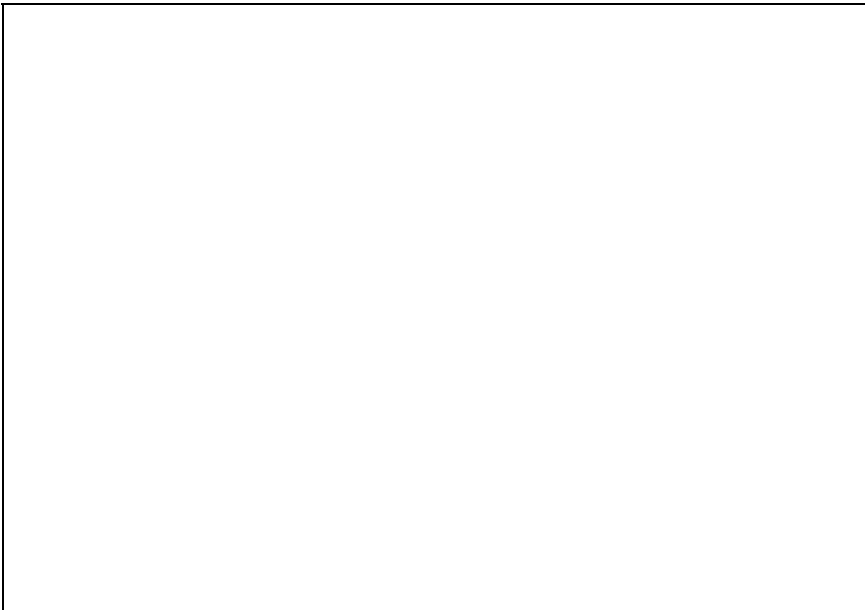
Approximately one quarter of respondents indicated that they had more than one business.

**2. What type of business(es) are you in?**



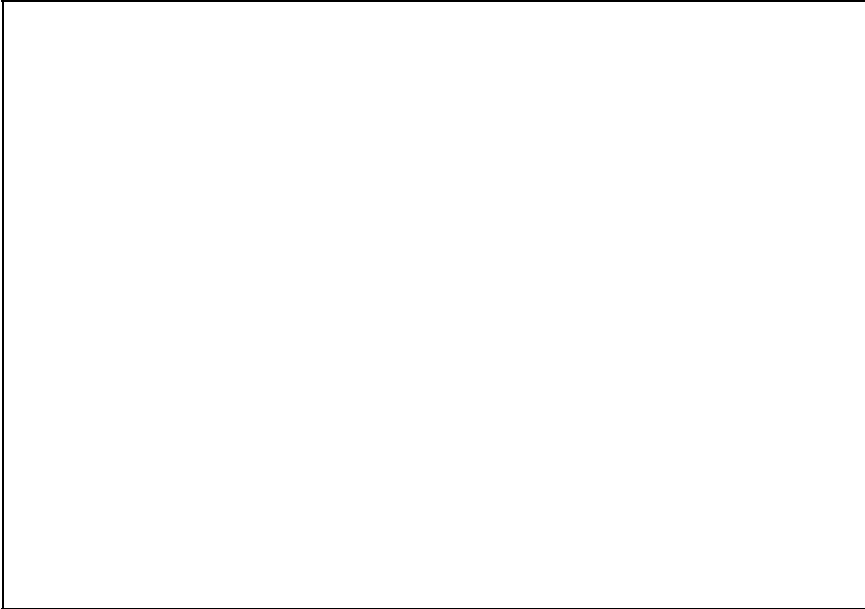
Just over one-third of businesses indicated that they were in the small business/service sector, followed by hospitality and then tourism.

**3. Is Inverness County a good place to conduct a business?**



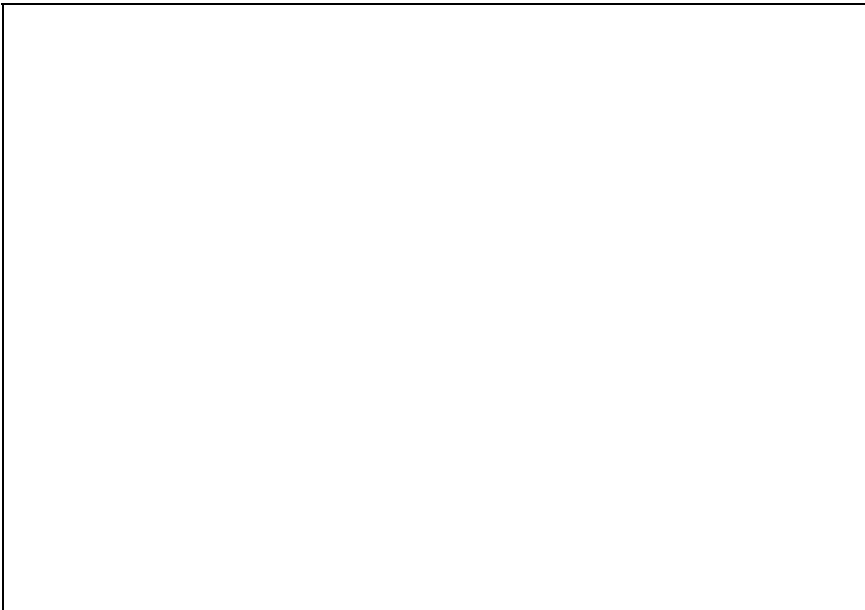
Over 80% of businesses felt that the County was a good place to do business. Those who felt that the County wasn't a good business location most often stated the reasons being the small population base or the limited tourism season.

**5. Is obtaining reasonably priced capital an issue for you at the present time?**



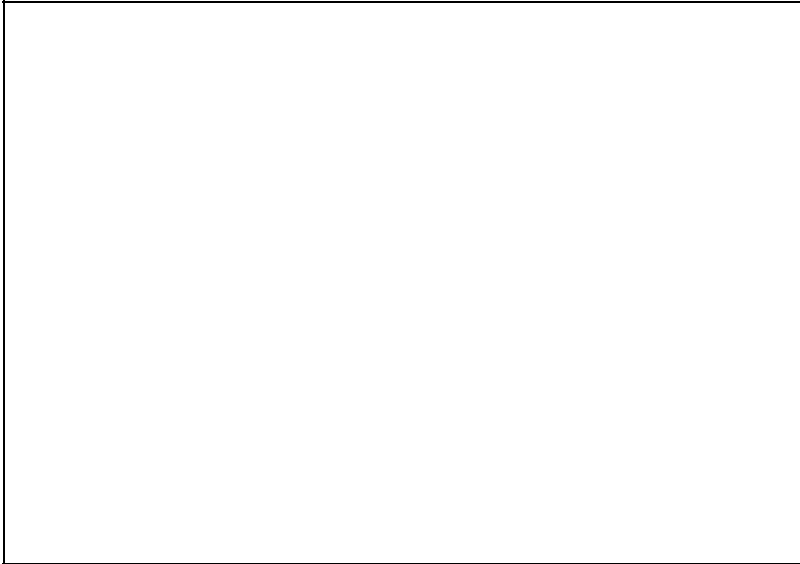
Obtaining capital was an issue for almost one-third of businesses in the County.

**6. Is obtaining qualified and reliable employees a problem for you at the present time?**



Obtaining qualified and reliable employees was reported as a problem for 41% of businesses.

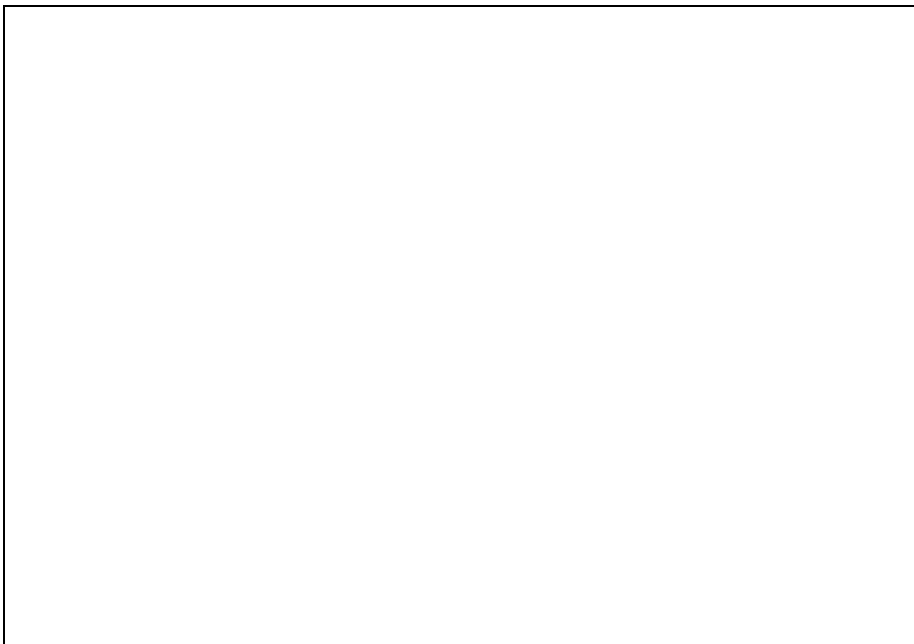
**7. Do you want to expand your present business?**



Almost half of the businesses in the County reported that they would like to expand their business.

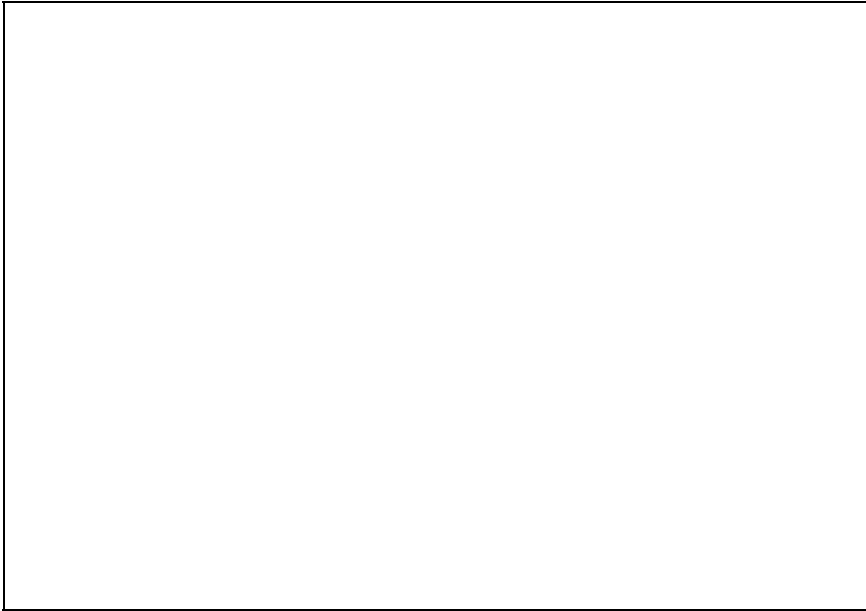
Access to affordable capital was the most common reason for not being able to expand at this time.

**9. If you were to receive these things would you expand your present business?**



Almost 55% of businesses said that if they received the things they needed to expand (e.g. access to affordable capital), they would expand immediately. In total, over 80% of businesses said they would expand within a year if they received the things they needed.

**11. Are potential employees available locally?**



Over 70% of businesses felt that potential employees were available locally.

**12. Would you hire someone if he/she was qualified and available immediately?**



Even though 41% of businesses felt that obtaining qualified labour was an issue, only 27% would hire qualified employees if they were available immediately.

**13. What other kinds of qualities do you want an employee to have besides their technical qualifications?**

**Top Five Responses – Employee Qualities**

Response	
People/communication skills	22.64%
Honest/trustworthy	18.07%
Friendly personality/positive attitude	15.88%
Reliability/responsible	10.81%
Good work ethic	7.77%

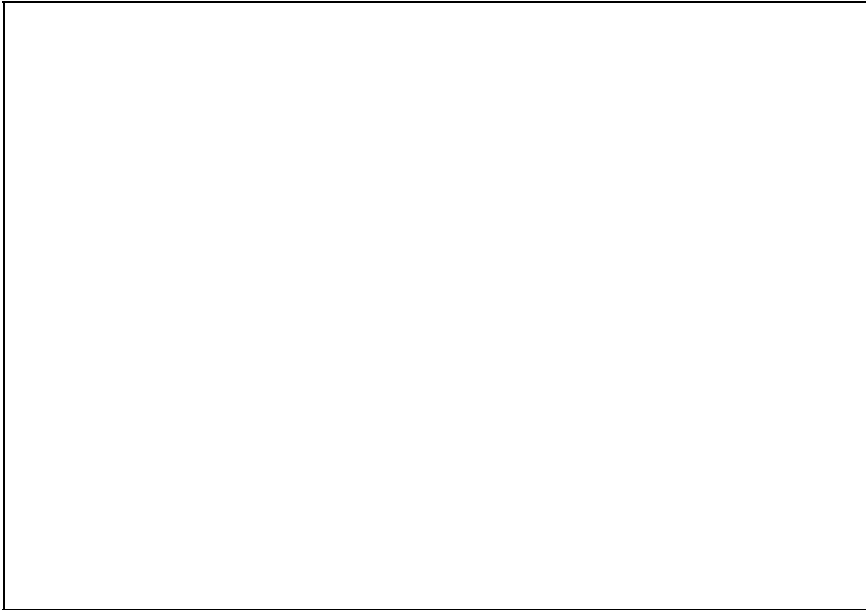
The responses most likely echo the responses of most businesses.

**14. Do you provide in-house (on-the-job) technical training for an employee?**



Over 90% of businesses reported that they provide on-the-job training.

**15. How many hours of training are required before the person is fully employable?**



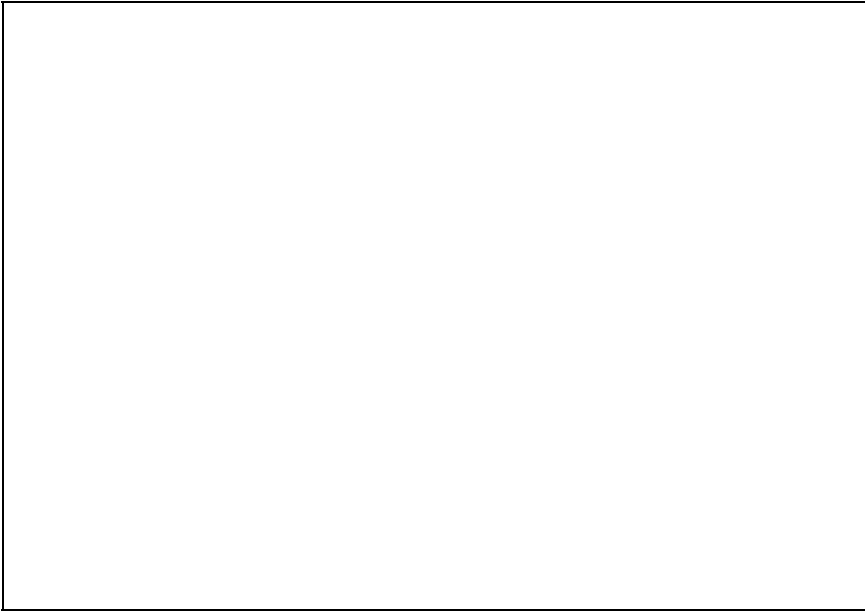
Over 55% of businesses reported that less than 40 hours of training were required before a person is fully employable at their business.  
Approximately 23% of businesses reported that more than 120 hours (or three weeks) of training was required.

**16. Do you encourage your employees to seek additional training?**



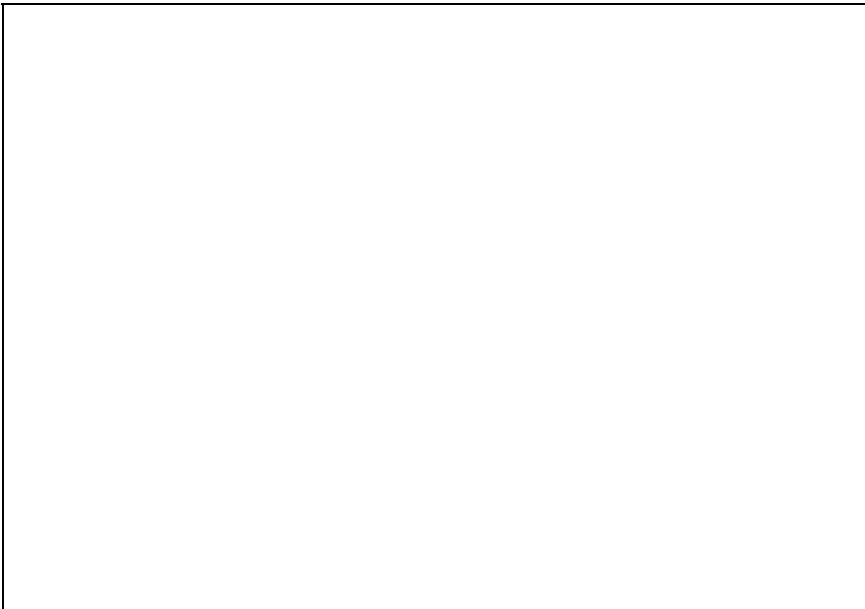
Over 70% of businesses reported that they encourage their employees to seek additional training.

**17. Do you or are you willing to provide wages while the employee seeks additional training?**



The vast majority of businesses who encourage employees to seek additional training will provide wages while they do so.

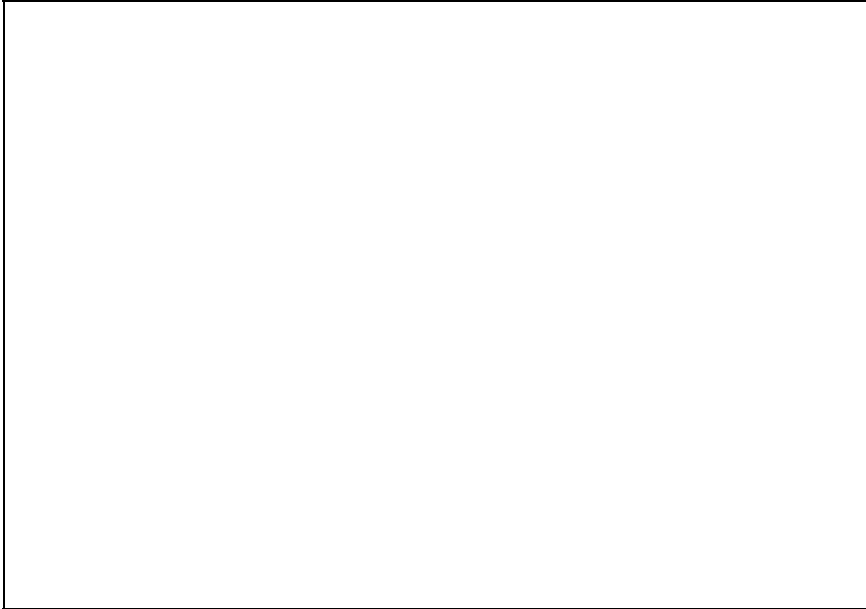
**19. Have you ever had occasion to use any of the existing business support programs...**



Programs offered by HRDC were the most widely used by businesses in the County, followed by InRich and Credit Unions.

There was very low utilization of provincial programs reported.

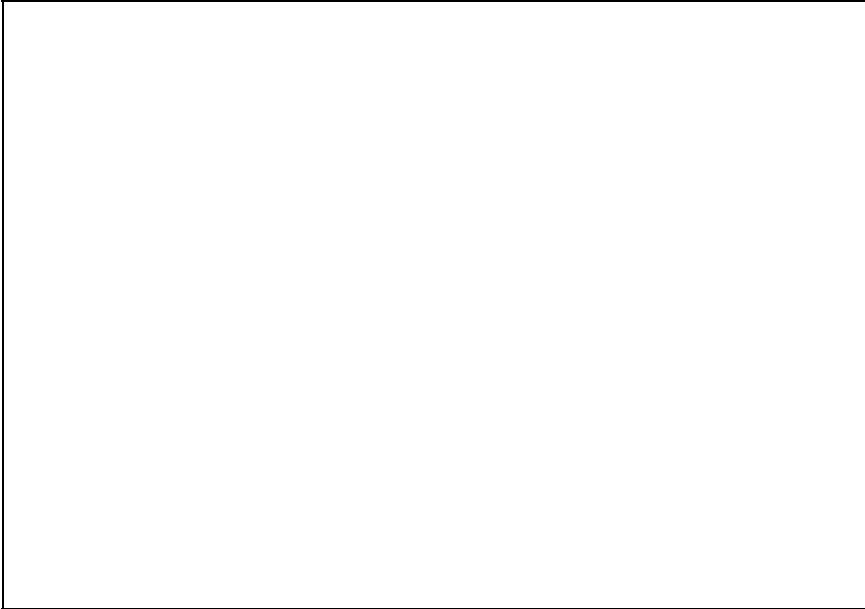
**20. What was your experience with these programs?**



Over 80% of businesses who used business support programs found them to be positive.

Negative experiences were most often associated with too much paperwork or frustration in dealing with bureaucracy.

**22. Are there local community business advisory services to *established* businesses?**

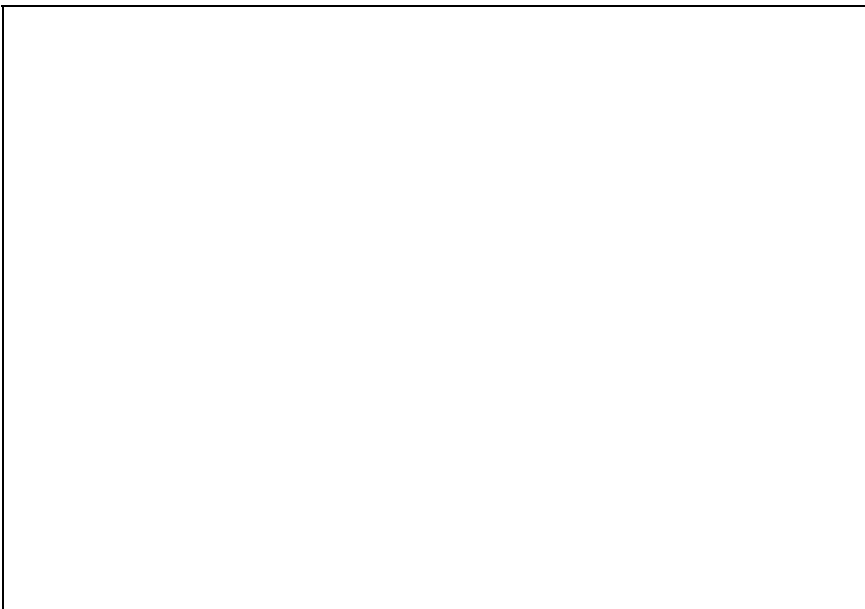


The majority of businesses felt that there were no community business advisory services for established businesses.

Of those who felt there were services, the most common responses were: 1) InRich, 2) Development Associations, and 3) Accountants.

Financial and business advisory services were reported as the most needed.

**23. Are there local community business advisory services to *new business* investment?**



Over 58% of businesses felt there were community business advisory services for new businesses. ECBC was the most commonly reported service in this case.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESIDENT AND BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARIES BY QUADRANT

#### **Quadrant 1 (Northern Region)**

##### ***Demographics***

The Northern Region has the oldest population on average, with 24% of its adult residents aged 65 or older, compared to the national average of 17% of the population 65 or older. As well, 41% of their population falls into the next oldest segment, age 46 to 65, while this segment only represents 33% nationally.

The region has the highest percentage of females at 53%, compared to 51% for the County. This may be attributed to the older population and the fact that females live slightly longer than males on average.

Approximately 55% of residents have lived in the County all their life and 31% moved away but returned, indicating a strong desire to settle in the area by those who grew up there. However, only 14% of the population grew up outside the County – the smallest percentage of the four regions.

The region has a low average income compared to other the other regions of the County, with over 57% of residents reporting an income of less than \$18,000 per year. Only 12% of residents reported having an income of \$40,000 or greater.

##### ***Education and Training***

Quadrant 1 has the highest percentage of people with less than high school education at 51% of the adult population. Most of these residents are either retired or work in the fishery. Conversely, only 21% have completed post-secondary education, which is the lowest percentage in the County.

Of those who have not completed high school, only 22% are interested in upgrading, with computer training and trades reported as the most sought types of training. Although the region has a large French speaking population, 94% of residents interested in upgrading stated that they would prefer the training in English.

When asked to indicate training received that may not apply to their current job situation, secretarial (12%), mechanic (7%) and university courses/degree (6%) were the most common responses. This training was most often received in certificate or diploma programs.

##### ***Employment***

The region has the highest percentage of seasonal workers, with 24% reporting that they work seasonal but full-time and 6% working seasonal part-time. Only 21% of residents are working full-time year-round. 32% of residents are retired.

The region has the lowest percentage of residents reporting that they were unemployed at less than 6%.

Over 53% of residents stated that they would prefer to work full-time year-round, signalling that there is significant underemployment in the region.

Only 21% of residents stated that they would prefer not to work, indicating that a percentage of retirees would like to work in some capacity. The top sectors for employment are fisheries, health care, and retail/personal services. Only 8% of residents reported working outside the County – the lowest percentage of the regions.

### **Businesses**

Over 79% of businesses indicated that Inverness County is a good place to do business. Approximately 29% of businesses stated that obtaining capital was an issue for their business. Approximately 27% of businesses stated that obtaining employees was an issue for their business. This is a significant percentage, but much lower than the County average of 42%. Over 51% of businesses stated that they would like to expand and cited access to capital as the major hurdle. A business case can be made for attracting a call centre to the region.

## **Quadrant 2 (The Margarees)**

### ***Demographics***

The Margarees Region has a relatively older population, with 22% of it's adult residents aged 65 or older, compared to the national average of 17% of the population 65 or older. 27% of their population falls into the 30 to 45 range, the highest percentage for this segment in the County.

The region has a higher than average percentage of females at 51.5%, compared to 51% for the County.

Approximately 51% of residents have lived in the County all their life and 25% moved away but returned. 24% of the population grew up outside the County, which indicates a fairly significant percentage of in-migration to the region.

At close to 29%, the region has the highest percentage of residents reporting an income of less than \$12,000 per year. In total, approximately 48% of residents earn less that \$18,000 per year. Only 13% of residents reported having an income of \$40,000 or greater.

### ***Education and Training***

The region has the second highest percentage of people with less than high school education at 32% of the adult population. 34% have completed post-secondary education, which is the also the second highest percentage in the County.

Of those who have not completed high school, only 12% are interested in upgrading, with computer training and university education reported as the most sought types of training.

When asked to indicate training received that may not apply to their current job situation, secretarial (9%), mechanic (7%) and carpentry (7%) were the most

common responses. This training was most often received in diploma programs or on-the-job training.

### ***Employment***

Approximately 23% of residents reported that they work full-time year-round, while 19% work seasonal but full-time. 28% of residents are retired.

The region had the highest percentage of residents reporting they were self-employed at 8%.

The region has a low percentage of residents reporting that they were unemployed at just over 7%.

Approximately 60% of residents stated that they would prefer to work full-time year-round, signalling that there is significant underemployment in the region.

Only 17% of residents stated that they would prefer not to work, indicating that a percentage of retirees would like to work in some capacity.

The top sectors for employment are health care, building/construction/trades and financial services.

Over 23% of residents reported working outside the County – the second highest percentage of the regions. The majority of these individuals drive less than 50 km one way to work.

### ***Businesses***

Over 87% of businesses indicated that Inverness County is a good place to do business – the highest confidence rating in the County.

Approximately 22% of businesses stated that obtaining capital was an issue for their business – the lowest percentage of the four regions.

Approximately 38% of businesses stated that obtaining employees was an issue for their business. This is a significant percentage, but lower than the County average of 42%.

Only 42% of businesses in the region stated that they would like to expand, compared to 50% for the County as a whole. Most businesses interested in expanding are in the tourism sector and cited access to capital as the major hurdle.

Many businesses are seeking more information on funding programs and financial services available.

## **Quadrant 3 (Central Region)**

### ***Demographics***

The Central Region has a relatively older population, with 22% of it's adult residents aged 65 or older, compared to the national average of 17% of the population 65 or older. However, 14% of the region's population falls into the 18 to 29 range, which is tied for the highest percentage of young adults in the County.

Approximately 55% of residents have lived in the County all their life (the highest rate in the County) and 26% moved away but returned. Only 19% of the population grew up outside the County – the second lowest percentage of the regions.

At 27%, the region has the highest percentage of residents reporting an income of less than \$12,000 per year. In total, approximately 44% of residents earn less than \$18,000 per year. Over 16% of residents reported having an income of \$40,000 or greater – the second highest percentage of the regions.

### ***Education and Training***

Approximately 27% of the residents in the region have less than high school education. 32% have completed post-secondary education, and 19% have either completed a university degree or are presently attending university, which is the highest percentage in the County.

Of those who have not completed high school, only 8% are interested in upgrading, with university education and trades reported as the most sought types of training. When asked to indicate training received that may not apply to their current job situation, university courses/degree (12%), welding/pipe fitting (8%), and secretarial (8%) were the most common responses. This training was most often received in diploma programs or on-the-job training.

### ***Employment***

Just under 30% of residents reported that they work full-time year-round, while 18% work seasonally (full-time or part-time). Approximately 30% of residents are retired, the second highest percentage in the County.

The region had the second highest percentage of residents reporting they were self-employed at 6%.

The region has a low percentage of residents reporting that they were unemployed at just over 7%.

Approximately 64% of residents stated that they would prefer to work full-time year-round (the highest percentage in the County), signalling that there is significant underemployment in the region.

Just under 20% of residents stated that they would prefer not to work, indicating that a percentage of retirees would like to work in some capacity.

The top sectors for employment are health care, light industrial and building/construction/trades.

Approximately 18% of residents reported working outside the County, with the vast majority of these individuals driving less than 100 km one way to work.

### ***Businesses***

Approximately 77% of businesses indicated that Inverness County is a good place to do business. While still high, this is the lowest confidence rating in the County.

Approximately one-third of businesses stated that obtaining capital was an issue for their business, which is the highest percentage of the four regions.

Approximately one-third of businesses stated that obtaining employees was an issue for their business. This is a significant percentage, but lower than the County average of 42%.

50% of businesses in the region stated that they would like to expand, with most citing access to capital as the major hurdle.

Many businesses are seeking enhanced promotion for tourism.

#### **Quadrant 4 (Southern Region)**

##### ***Demographics***

The Central Region has a relatively older population, with 20% of its adult residents aged 65 or older, compared to the national average of 17% of the population 65 or older. However, it is generally the youngest region in the County with over 40% of the region's population under 45 years of age.

The region is the only area of the County with more adult males (51%) than females (49%).

Just over 50% of residents have lived in the County all their life (the lowest rate in the County), while 23% moved away but returned. Almost 27% of the population grew up outside the County – the highest percentage of in-migration of the regions. The region has the highest income in the County. Over 29% of residents reported having an income of \$40,000 or greater, which is by far the highest percentage of the regions. Approximately 40% of residents earn less than \$18,000 per year, which is the lowest percentage in the County.

##### ***Education and Training***

Less than 25% of the residents in the region have less than high school education, which is the lowest percentage in the County. Approximately 35% have completed post-secondary education - the highest percentage in the County. Over 10% reported, having completed a university degree, while almost 4% have completed a post-graduate degree.

Of those who have not completed high school, only 14% are interested in upgrading, with university education and computer training reported as the most sought types of training.

When asked to indicate training received that may not apply to their current job situation, university courses/degree (9%), secretarial (8%), and welding/pipe fitting (6%) were the most common responses. This training was most often received in diploma programs or on-the-job training.

##### ***Employment***

Over 36% of residents reported that they work full-time year-round (the highest rate in the County), while only 14% work seasonally (the lowest rate in the County).

Approximately 27% of residents are retired - the lowest percentage in the County.

The region has the highest percentage of residents reporting that they were unemployed at just under 10%.

Over 61% of residents stated that they would prefer to work full-time year-round, signalling that there is significant underemployment in the region.

Just over 20% of residents stated that they would prefer not to work, indicating that a small percentage of retirees would like to work in some capacity.

The top sectors for employment are building/construction/trades, retail/personal services and heavy industrial.

Approximately 26% of residents reported working outside the County – the highest percentage in the County, but understandable given the fact that the region is closer to nearby centres such as Port Hawkesbury and Antigonish. Two-thirds of these individuals drive less than 50 km one way to work.

### **Businesses**

Approximately 88% of businesses indicated that Inverness County is a good place to do business. This is the highest confidence rating in the County.

Approximately 26% of businesses stated that obtaining capital was an issue for their business, which is the lowest percentage of the four regions.

Approximately 45% of businesses stated that obtaining employees was an issue for their business, making this a significant concern. This was a particular concern for agriculture operations.

53% of businesses in the region stated that they would like to expand, with the exception of agriculture operations. The most common hurdles to expansion were a lack of employees and a lack of information on government programs.

Many businesses are seeking enhanced business advisory services. Tourism operators are seeking improved trail developments and enhanced signage.

## CHAPTER 4

### REPORTING OF RESULTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEYS

#### IN *THE NORTHERN REGION* (QUADRANT # 1) OF INVERNESS COUNTY

The northern region of the project comprised the communities of Meat Cove, Cheticamp, Pleasant Bay, and St. Joseph Du Moine. Pleasant Bay chose not to participate in the quality of life workshop part of the survey because of the lack of action on concerns identified at previous planning exercises. This chapter summarizes material found in individual reports for each of these communities from the regional workshop. These individual reports are available from each of the Development Associations or upon request to Inverness County Council.

#### **1. Recreation Opportunities and Facilities**

There was overwhelming satisfaction with the quality of recreation opportunities and facilities available throughout the northern region

People were pleased with the combination of recreational and social opportunities, programs, and services offered in their communities

Many of the suggestions for improvements related to how to build on what was already in existence

Generally speaking these ideas were not particularly costly.

#### **2. Cultural Opportunities and Facilities**

Residents were genuinely pleased with cultural opportunities and facilities that exist despite their feelings that there is always the need for constant up-grading and improvement.

A common complaint was the amount of volunteer time and paper work it takes to apply for, administer, and report on seasonal, make-work community projects from the various federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.

Local people were of the opinion that much of this paper work was duplication and could be avoided if government agencies got their act together and standardized reporting procedures so the same information could be shared among the different departments.

They were willing to help design such a system that would meet the needs of the funding agencies and at the same time provide a useful document for them to evaluate the effectiveness of the project to their organization or community.

### **3. Adult Education & Literacy**

While there was general approval of existing adult education and literacy programs offered in their region there was a recognition that more could be offered.

Suggestions included better promotion of courses but, just as important, was the feeling that residents should receive much earlier notice of courses being offered.

In addition there was the observation that new courses taught by local people was a realistic alternative to the present system of frequently bringing people into the community to teach courses.

### **4. Health Services**

Health services came in for very high praise among representatives from all communities in this region of the County.

As pleased as they were with the facilities, they always singled out medical personnel at all levels of the delivery system for praise of the quality of service offered and the willingness of staff to go the extra mile for people.

More services in French was identified as a concern and the lack of public transportation, especially for seniors to regional facilities was a common complaint.

Alternatives to help seniors climb stairs in seniors' housing needs to be examined.

A shortage of RNs and LPNs was also identified.

More access to psychiatrists

### **5. Social Services**

The department of Social Services received consistent negative ratings among all communities at the workshop.

Social services and mental health professionals that have experience were needed, not always new graduates.

There is a perception that services are inadequate and programs are often ineffective, inappropriate to the needs of the people, and resources too limited to address the requirements.

It was perceived that the ability of staff to do their jobs was not as much of a problem as the lack of appropriate policies and access to or the availability of staff. For example, Meat Cove felt they could provide office space for social service staff for one-half day a week. This could be coordinated with Pleasant Bay so a worker would not have to travel to the area twice.

More continuity of social service programs for people in need.

More information and understanding of what services are available.

This was seen as a method to be proactive and resolve difficult social situations before they demanded more drastic intervention.

## **6. Community Development**

Generally speaking people were unclear as to what was meant by community development. However, once examples were given it received mixed reviews.

More workshops in which communities communicate with each other

While there are lots of local groups active in all three communities, volunteer burnout was a common complaint.

There was a perceived need for a community development worker for the region to assist them in their development efforts.

More community development activity to offset individual apathy.

## **7. Economic Development**

While more positive comments were made in this area than the previous category, there was still the feeling that there was much room for improvement.

In addition to having a local person to promote economic development the need for greater and more appropriate assistance from the RDA and the Office of Economic Development was required.

The need for regular visits and having consistency among people coming to help were suggested as areas for improvement.

## **8. Tourism**

While participants were asked to evaluate the efforts to attract tourists and to keep them in the area longer it would appear that some people chose to comment on the tourist attractions themselves.

It was felt that the natural beauty of the region, the many unique cultural, social, and recreational activities were indeed superior to anywhere else in Canada.

Again volunteer burnout was identified as a problem as well as the need for better promotion and advertisement.

It was hoped that ideas for the proposed new Tourist Information Centre at the strait would be discussed with them before plans went much further than they are at present.

## **9. General Comments**

Given the situation at Meat Cove last winter when a house was lost and people's lives were put at risk because of the condition of the road a long term solution to this problem was requested.

Improved public transportation to health facilities was identified by all three communities.

Alternatives to get seniors up and down stairs in their facilities was a major concern in Cheticamp as this situation has the potential for serious injury.

All services should be available in French at all times.

## CHAPTER 5

### REPORTING OF RESULTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEYS

#### IN *THE MARGAREE REGION* (QUADRANT # 2) OF INVERNESS COUNTY

The Margaree region of the project comprised the communities Margaree Forks, Belle Cote, South West Margaree, East Margaree, and North East Margaree. This chapter summarizes material found in individual reports for each of these communities from the regional workshop. These individual reports are available from each of the Margaree Development Association or upon request to Inverness County Council.

#### THE MARGAREES

##### **1. Recreation Opportunities and Facilities**

Recreation opportunities and facilities received a mixed assessment from communities in the Margaree region.

While recreation facilities received a high rating there was recognition of problems of access, cost of insurance, volunteer burnout, and the need for more staff.

There was a strong value placed on building recreation opportunities on the natural resources while having minimum impact on them.

##### **2. Cultural Opportunities and Facilities**

Participants felt there were lots of great cultural opportunities and mostly positive remarks about cultural facilities in their area.

Poor acoustics in local community halls was pointed out as a problem.

There was a suggestion to establish a centre to celebrate the history and traditions of the Margaree region.

##### **3. Adult Education & Literacy**

Adult education and literacy efforts in the area received a very low rating by most of the five communities.

There are still strong feelings of not being listened to in their efforts to save their local schools.

The aging population resulting in fewer kids in the area was identified as a serious concern.

A greater variety in adult education classes was recommended.

#### **4. Health Services**

While health services received a mixed assessment the skills of medical staff were highly appreciated.

However, long waiting times were not appreciated at all.

Preventative education programs were thought necessary as was the provision of a local outlet to get prescriptions filled.

Transportation to medical services and facilities was problematic as was the lack of a diabetic clinic.

There are no mental health services or physiotherapist services in the area.

Community Health Boards need more resources and more attention paid to them.

#### **5. Social Services**

The Department of Social Services was singled out for particularly harsh criticism.

While residents recognized that their low population, location, and a high case load made it difficult to provide social services, nevertheless, they felt the need for improvements in many areas.

Child protection, poor counseling for drug problems, the lack of coordination between agencies providing services were all mentioned as concerns.

On the positive side home care for the elderly was appreciated.

There was a suggestion to have the provincial government take over child care services and locate them at the Inverness Memorial Hospital.

#### **6. Community Development**

Community development efforts received a mixed review.

There was a feeling that with the closing of the schools there was a loss of a “sense of community” in the area and communities lost their source of focus.

It was becoming more and more difficult to get people involved and volunteering in their community. All groups and organizations were experiencing this phenomenon.

Day care availability was part of the problem.

It was also recognized that people within a community or between communities did not always work together.

#### **7. Economic Development**

There was a similar mixed assessment on the effectiveness of economic development efforts in their region of the County.

There is still frustration over the lack of follow-up to their last effort in producing vision and mission statements and a plan for the future of the Margaree region.

While more jobs and development were desired there was also the caution not to destroy the natural environment, like the Margaree River, in an effort to get more growth.

Value added based on natural resources (fish, forestry, and farming) were identified as natural areas for improvement.

Transportation for seniors is a concern as was the lack of reception for cell phones.

## **8. Tourism**

The efforts to increase tourism in the area received mixed reviews.

Not everyone wanted more tourism and some felt there was too much dependency on seasonal tourism rather than year round, better paying, permanent jobs.

The conditions of roads and service in restaurants were identified as problems.

The area around the Library at the Forks was identified as having good facilities for locals and tourists alike.

While concerned about how eco-tourism was defined, a boardwalk along the river, better access to beaches, extended season, retreat themes, package deals, an advertising blitz, treasure hunts were all suggested for future consideration to attract more people to the Margarees.

## **9. General Comments**

People felt strongly about the high quality of life they have in the Margarees.

There was a strong sense of community, although this is being threatened because of more travel to other areas for social, cultural and economic reasons, strong family values and a feeling that anywhere in the Margaree valley was a great place to live.

## CHAPTER 6

### REPORTING OF RESULTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEYS

#### IN ***THE CENTRAL REGION*** (Quadrant # 3) OF INVERNESS COUNTY

The Central region of the project comprised the communities Inverness, Lake Ainslie, Whycocomagh, and Mabou. This chapter summarizes material found in individual reports for each of these communities from the regional workshop. These individual reports are available from each of the Development Associations or upon request to Inverness County Council.

#### **1. Recreation Opportunities and Facilities**

Recreation opportunities and facilities received a high rating from workshop participants.

People recognized and had praise for the great natural resources and the high quality of programs and services offered.

Nevertheless, there were many suggestions about how opportunities and facilities could be made better use of and improved in the future.

#### **2. Cultural Opportunities and Facilities**

Cultural opportunities received an excellent assessment while cultural facilities received a very high rating.

Participants saw for the need of a full time person to help with culture, recreation, economic, and community development.

The present system of financially supporting the larger events and organizations at the expense of the smaller ones was seen as inequitable.

More effort to work with youth, possibly a youth centre, was suggested as opposed to canceling dances when problems arose.

History and genealogy should be enhanced along with more opportunities for social interaction and story telling.

Expanded programs, more leadership, better accountability and walks at museums were all put forward as ways to improve cultural opportunities and facilities.

#### **3. Adult Education & Literacy**

There was a fifty-fifty split on this category.

The CAP sites, regional library, recreation programs and offering of GED were all seen as positives.

However, there were not sufficient art classes or computer skills at a high level being taught, school was not accessible enough, and not sufficient notice when promoting courses.

More research on interests/needs of local people, more advertisement, more use of schools, a library, high speed internet, courses on community development, computer guru one night a week, better paid for staff to help organize local communities, reading room & periodicals, guest speaker nights, easier access to NSCC courses, distance education with latest technology, and courses in horse care and training were all suggested.

#### **4. Health Services**

There was overall high satisfaction with health services.

Keeping people in their homes as long as possible was thought to be important. Improved day care, nutrition classes, transportation for seniors to local and regional facilities, more specialists on a regular basis, more clinics, drug awareness for youth, improved mental health services, more nurse practitioners, and more information about what is available were all suggested.

A small clinic in Whycocomagh was also suggested.

Through collaboration with the local Development associations, health promotion could be strengthened through the population health (determinants of health) approach.

#### **5. Social Services**

Social services received a very poor rating.

Lack of counseling for drug abuse and gambling, insufficient senior citizen units, more information of what social services are available are all needed.

Some suggestions included: a reduce tax fuel, social workers come to local area (facility), better needs assessment & more awareness of programs, senior complex, gambling counseling, increased funding for single parents education programs on substance abuse, more training on depression for GP doctors, more church involvement, and an ombudsman for nursing home residents.

A need to evaluate Children's Aid Society and examine alternatives to them providing services in the area was seen as necessary.

#### **6. Community Development**

There was a split assessment on whether or not community development services and programs were adequate in their region.

Those comments on the positive side identified having a community plan, regular meetings, volunteer appreciation night, support for community organizations and businesses, waterfront development, efforts to enhance stream and brook improvements were all indications of community development support.

Others felt that volunteer burnout was an issue, a development person to work with the various communities and support agencies was necessary, more communications among development associations was needed, housing for retired people was lacking, and road improvements required.

Suggestions for improvement included more cooperation and coordination among federal and provincial departments who are supposed to help, more farming to meet local needs, and more participation on behalf of the community residents.

## **7. Economic Development**

Four out of five communities rated efforts at economic development as inadequate.

Many felt that government was not interested in promoting the development of natural resources, only in oil and gas, too many studies have been done and not enough action taken, a lack of sidewalks and senior's housing in several communities, and Whycomagh needs a marina and improvements at the provincial park.

A development person to encourage investment in local business development, promote cottage industries, work on value added in all natural resource areas, and prepare submissions to change the criteria for CDIF programs so the fund can respond to smaller projects were all suggested.

## **8. Tourism**

Assessment of tourism promotion efforts is generally low.

There was a perception that this regions has the best natural beauty on the Island, top campsites and beaches but needed more money for advertisement and marketing and promotion.

It was thought that more effort was required to reach the tourists before they leave home to help them plan their itinerary resulting in them staying longer than a day or two.

Some suggestions for improvements included more promotion, focus on niche markets, more money for Doers & Dreamers, more trails, attraction to make tourists stop, roadside clearing of trees so lakes can be viewed, make Inverness a destination area, more eco-tourism, better accommodations, creating comprehensive pre-arranged packages.

## **9. General Comments**

More leadership in all areas of quality of life, more accountability from government, a coordinator for each quadrant, more linkages between Development Associations, NS Community College provide more courses in community, more distance education courses, more people/immigration, protect our environment, more interest in Bras D'Or Lakes, improve relationships in communities.

Development Groups should meet in summer - do this forum as a town hall meeting, let Development Associations design make-work projects and grants, and do more to promote the trades to high school students.

## CHAPTER 7

### REPORTING OF RESULTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEYS

#### IN ***THE SOUTHERN REGION*** (Quadrant # 4) OF INVERNESS COUNTY

The Southern region of the project comprised the communities Port Hood, Judique/Creignish, Port Hastings, Glendale, Marble Mountain, and Orangedale. This chapter summarizes material found in individual reports for each of these communities from the regional workshop. These individual reports are available from each of the Development Associations or upon request to Inverness County Council.

#### **1. Recreation Opportunities and Facilities**

Recreation opportunities in this region of the County were rated as very high despite the fact that they are some distance from the major recreation centers in the County.

The terrific natural resources of the area were greatly appreciated by the residents allowing the public to take advantage of innumerable outdoor recreation opportunities.

However, trail development, improved roads, and mapping of local water falls were seen as areas requiring improvement.

On the other hand, recreation facilities received a mixed review.

The need for affordable insurance for all groups was identified as a common concern throughout the region.

#### **2. Cultural Opportunities and Facilities**

Cultural opportunities were perceived as generally positive while cultural facilities had a mixed review.

Volunteer burnout was identified as a major concern while the quality of local talent was greatly appreciated.

A revival for local dances and “callers” for square sets were seen as necessary. The major cultural centers in the County were widely used and appreciated by residents of the Southern region.

The need for help with grant applications was identified and was the need for assistance in running local museums.

#### **3. Adult Education & Literacy**

Adult literacy programs and services received a very high rating.

Access through existing academic institutions, libraries, and the internet seems to be meeting many local needs resulting in little demand for additional programs.

However, more advertising and promotion for programs could use some improvement.

#### **4. Health Services**

Health services received a mixed review.

While satisfied with most of the services there was a feeling that there is still plenty of room for improvements.

Long waiting times, the lack of specialists, young doctors to replace those retiring, better use of technology were all mentioned as concerns.

Upgrading for paramedics, better doctor recruitment and support of students wishing to serve rural areas were suggested to improve the situation.

#### **5. Social Services**

There was mostly a negative view of social services in the area.

However, the individuals providing these services were not perceived as the problem but rather the policies or lack of resources to do their job adequately were identified as the problem.

L'Arche CB was singled out as providing exceptional service.

Local transportation to medical services especially for seniors was a common factor.

More time for home care, a local advisory group to work with helping agencies to improve services, and drug awareness programs started at an earlier age were all suggested.

#### **6. Community Development**

Community development received a mixed review.

The County's 50-50 funding for certain projects such as summer students and volunteer recognition night, were seen as positive efforts by the County to help local communities.

Suggestions included combining the resources of the various Development Associations to employ a full time person to work with the volunteers that are burning out, help groups work to overcome escalating liability costs, and share information about what is going on in other parts of the County.

#### **7. Economic Development**

There is great disappointment with the past efforts to improve economic development in this region of the County.

They feel largely ignored.

Little employment is generated from local facilities like hiking trails, little assistance to start a new business, no workshops to generate new ideas for employment, little work for local trades people, and the inability to take advantages of the natural resources were all perceived as limiting economic development.

More information about funding programs and services, seed money and investment fund is needed, and more advice for second stage development of potential products is required.

Volunteer burnout was repeated several times as a common problem among the various communities.

## **8. Tourism**

While appreciating the value of tourism they perceived themselves as getting little direct benefit from this industry.

The problem begins at the causeway with no proper orientation to Cape Breton Island and the attractions along route # 105.

Because eco-tourism is almost non-existent in this area, there is limited picnic and parking near the waterfalls, low paying jobs in tourism, and the short season tourism was perceived as being underdeveloped.

## **9. General Comments**

Everyone at the workshop recognized that having a small spread out population in the area made it difficult to have sustained development.

But the feeling was that this is all the more reason to have a greater coordinated effort to deliver programs and services in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Local post offices were seen as essential to a “sense of community”.

Greater efforts to attract and keep younger families are required to keep several local communities from dying.

## CHAPTER 8

*“Solutions are much too important to be left to the experts.”*

### ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The picture of Inverness County that is painted as a result of these surveys is a very positive one. The degree of satisfaction with many of the existing programs and services is very high. Generally speaking, people are happy to be living in Inverness County and have a feeling that in many ways they have “the best of all worlds”.

The need for more jobs, to prevent young people from leaving and for those not planning to leave, was identified as important. However, jobs at any price is not what is wanted. Residents want their environment protected for present and future generations to enjoy. People always talked about the need to balance growth and development with a respect for the environment and the traditions and culture of the County. They want to live in an area where people know and care for each other. Maintaining a “sense of community” was important to everyone who participated in the various surveys.

Education and training were seen as important not only to obtain employment and to make people more employable, but also to enhance every person’s ability to enjoy the good life. People want the right and the tools to choose whether to stay or to leave. Even those that are choosing to leave still want the opportunity to return if and when they decide to do so.

The history, traditions and culture of the area were seen to contain value and beliefs of the community. It is this “sense of community”, this “sense of belonging”, that people hold dear to their hearts. Some of these qualities are being lost and this is causing concern in local communities. In pointing out areas for improvement people were always careful to point the finger at themselves by acknowledging the fact they do not always work cooperatively between communities. They also said this was not in keeping with their history and traditions.

Preventative measures to improve social and health services were seen as important strategies to improve things in the long-term. Short-term, quick-fix solutions were judged to be ineffective and inefficient. People throughout the County wanted drug abuse education programs to begin at an earlier age and better mental health services in all areas. Inverness was identified as an ideal location for more directed research and study into proactive initiatives to keep individuals healthy and at home. Even when it becomes necessary to provide more direct support to ailing individuals, there was a feeling that these services and policies should be designed by the local community. Local communities have local knowledge about what works best in each particular circumstance.

Here are some questions we invite you to think about when doing your own analysis.

1. Do you have a different analysis and interpretation and what it is telling us?
2. Are there trends or themes that were missed in this chapter?
3. What might each Community Development Association do with the results of this chapter?
4. What might governments do with the results of this chapter?

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **IMPLICATIONS ABOUT WHAT THE DATA IS TELLING US**

It is important to recognize and build upon the positive attitudes of the residents of the County. Even though there were many suggestions about how things could be improved, almost to a person, people were happy to live in Inverness County and appreciated the many social, recreation, cultural, health and social services they have at their disposal.

Numbers (quantitative data) and opinions (qualitative data) must be given an interpretation (subjective judgment) if they are to have meaning or to be useful. Numbers are not bad or good, they're just numbers. Opinions are just that, they are not necessarily factual nor are they necessarily false. Judgments have to be made about the accuracy and meaningfulness of numbers and opinions. The implications for what the data is telling us means we must think about what the data means and how it can be used. There are no magic formulas for how to interpret the data. Interpreting the data and figuring out it's implications is a human process, not a computer process. The best guide may be Einstein's dictum that "the important thing is to keep questioning."

The data generated in this report is an indication or representation of what the world is like in Inverness County at present. Just as a map is not the territory it describes, the statistical data contained here is an indication of what programs and services are like and provides us with a means to understand them better. They are not the program themselves. Generating data is not an end in itself.

Because of our concern for the usefulness of what we have learned in this process, we have spent considerable time in providing the opportunity for stakeholders to provide their own interpretations of the data, before we have drawn our conclusions. Traditionally this has not been the role of consultants who only supply the data, leaving the decision makers alone to make the judgments. While we may have been influenced by the feedback sponsors gave us we take full responsibility for our interpretation, judgments and conclusions from the data and the final recommendations contained herein.

Here are some questions we invite you to think about when discussing each chapter.

1. What are the implications for each Community Development Association?
2. What are the implications for all levels of government and others providing programs and/or services to Inverness County?

## CHAPTER 10

*“Simplicity as a virtue is not simple, but it can be effective”*

### THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The determinants of health is a complex subject including a person’s status in our society, the health of an individual or community as compared to other individuals or communities, general population health, health indicators, conditions, health system characteristics and outcomes.

The Nova Scotia Department of Health has already adopted the following strategies essential to the population health:

- focus on health of entire communities and populations;
- address determinants and their interactions;
- base decisions on evidence;
- increase investments to maintain health;
- address root causes of health and illness;
- apply multi-level strategies incorporating prevention, protection, and promotion of health;
- promote joint action among health and government sectors along with community, voluntary, non-profit, and private groups;
- provide opportunities for public involvement through increased engagement, communication, and consultation with citizens.

These strategies are totally consistent with what the residents of Inverness said about their communities and their quality of life. They are also consistent with what the federal government has found as a result of extensive research into conditions that promote healthy living.

According to Health Canada “at every stage of life, health is determined by complex interactions between social and economic factors, the physical environment and individual behavior. These factors are referred to as 'determinants of health'. They do not exist in isolation from each other. It is the combined influence of the determinants of health that determines health status.”

## CHAPTER 11

### RECOMMENDATIONS

*“It is easier to select a method for madness than a single best method for how to proceed, though attempting the latter is an excellent way of achieving the former.”*

There are four parts to making sense out of this report:

1. Description and analysis – what are the facts, the actual data
2. Interpretation – what do the results mean & why did it turn out this way? What are possible explanations of the results?
3. Judgment – bringing in values to bear on results (good/bad – desirable/undesirable, etc. based on value judgments or merit & worth)
4. Recommendations – flow from the above.

KLOG and ICON have worked with stakeholders so that they have been actively involved in all four processes so they fully understand the findings and their implications.

The recommendations made in this report are based on the results of all three surveys. They are made in clear, brief language so they are open to the least amount of interpretation. In order to target the recommendations they are focused on a particular interest group. A process for dealing with issues at a systemic level has been recommended rather than individual recommendations for every problem identified.

Whenever appropriate several options are presented for implementing recommendations. For the most part, the recommendations are not particularly expensive. When costs are required these may be shared by several agencies and local groups. In most cases the benefits of implementing a particular course of action (i.e. preventative and proactive activities to improve health care) far outweigh the costs involved. Major policy changes or new program initiatives are not required in most instances. Finally, many of the recommendations can be implemented at the local community level and do not require major shifts in policies. What is often required are different interpretations about the way policies are interpreted at the local level.

However, if these recommendations are to take life and not sit on a shelf in someone’s office, the responsibility for initiating action rests with the sixteen Community Development Associations. It must be understood by those who have put so much into this research that it is simply too important to leave the responsibility for initiating action anywhere but at the community level. While it is reasonable to expect the three levels of government to respond appropriately to the findings contained herein, it is unrealistic to expect any level of government to take the lead role in addressing the issues identified in this report. The authors of this report are convinced that the political leaders at the municipal level and their staff are willing to do their part in assisting with the coordination and arrangements for follow-up meetings or workshops. But it will be up to the various Development Associations to initiate any action. Otherwise the report will follow the fate of so many other worthwhile efforts.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

1. Each of the Development Associations take responsibility for requesting follow-up meetings to resolve outstanding problems with the various government departments and agencies identified in the body of this report. In the interest of efficiency, some of these meetings with the various stakeholders, may be arranged on a regional basis with other Development Associations.
2. These follow-up meetings should be held in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. They should not try and assess blame. While informal in format, they would address specific problems identified at the Quality of Life Workshops with a view to identifying innovative solutions to the existing situation. These meetings could be coordinated by Inverness County staff. However, they should be requested, arranged and chaired by the local Community Development Association.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF**

1. This report should be sent to all relevant federal and provincial government departments providing programs and services to the residents of Inverness County for their review and action. The key federal departments are HRSDC, Health Canada, and Infrastructure and Communities. The key provincial departments are Health, Social Services, Office of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture & Heritage, Education and Highways. Other quasi-government agencies should also receive this report for their information and invited to follow-up sessions. For example, the Inverness County Health Board, the Strait Highlands Regional Development Authority (SHRDA), InRich Development Corp, Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), St. Ann's University, and Port Hawkesbury & Area Chamber of Commerce.
2. Each of these groups or agencies should be asked to respond to this report by indicating their commitment to meet with the various Development Associations and local communities to build new working relationships based on mutual goals and support for addressing outstanding problems.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INVERNESS COUNTY COUNCIL**

1. In the interest of creating an even greater "sense of community" than exists at present, Inverness County should consider coordinating a pilot project to better use schools and other community facilities to address some of the educational and social needs of the communities that do not fall easily into specific categories. These local "community schools" (although not necessarily held in a school) would run for ten weeks between the middle of January and the end of March.

They would be organized by a local committee, possibly a sub-committee of the Community Development Association (CDA). This would require a part-time Coordinator for two months before the sessions begin, while the sessions are being conducted, and for one month afterwards to prepare for the next year's operation. A critical element would be for all classes to break for one-half hour when all participants would come together for "light refreshments" during which time they would be encouraged to socialize with people not in their particular class.

**Option A** – One option would be to fund this position as a pilot project with the various federal and provincial departments with responsibilities in this area of functioning.

**Option B** – Another option might be to get a corporate sponsor or service club or recreation association or foundation interested in testing the concept for general application across the province.

**Option C** – Examine existing programs at the municipal and or provincial level to see if someone's time could be freed up to provide this coordinating service.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS

1. A pilot project be requested from Health Canada for the purpose of identifying how

the various individual aspects of the determinants of health are connected to the entire community and cannot be approached on a "piece-meal" basis. This is a rare opportunity to demonstrate how the determinants of health can be made to impact the health of multi-communities on a county-wide basis. Cheticamp should be used as a model as they have already taken concrete steps to bring all organizations in their community together under one structure in order to ensure coordination and efficiency of operations. A specific example is when Cheticamp obtained space in the school and purchased equipment from a defunct health club for use by the entire community.

2. The County of Inverness should examine the possibility of obtaining the services of

two Regional Community Development Coordinators for the purpose of working with the local CDA's in helping them address the recreational, social, cultural, and economic needs of their region.

**Option A** - One option would be to fund this position out of the existing dollars allocated annual to support the Community Development Associations.

**Option B** – Another option would be to work with the Strait Highlands Regional Development Authority (SHRDA) to work with the Development Associations in providing this service.

In either case, detailed job descriptions should be prepared by the CDA's in order

to ensure there is clarity of job function, outcomes, accountability, reporting mechanisms, and the evaluation process.

## CHAPTER 12

*“Unless one is a genius it is best to aim at being intelligible.”*

### A COMMITMENT TO ACTION

This report is written in an effort to assist the people of Inverness County, as represented by Inverness County Council and the sixteen Development Associations, to understand and address the quality of life issues facing them.

Libraries are full of reports that have never been used nor the recommendations implemented. There are many reasons for this fact, not the least of which is a strict adherence to the traditional approach to report writing and recommendations.

Traditional approaches to report writing strongly advocated the consultant’s role as being objective and independent with responsibilities to: a) design criteria to judge outcomes against, b) collect the data, c) draw conclusions from the data collected, d) make judgments about the results, and finally e) make recommendations about the programs.

The approach taken by the KLOG Centre, “utilization focused reports” involves design criteria, data collection, analysis, interpretation, judgment and recommendations that have a purpose. The purpose is use. In other words to improved programs and make better decisions. This is why we involved the real “stakeholders” not only in deciding what to study but in interpreting the results of the process. Our approach used a combination of traditional quantitative methods and innovative qualitative methods. However, from the very beginning, it has been concerned with intended use by intended users. This is consistent with the values of Inverness Council and staff to ensure that this report will not sit on shelves and be ignored.

If the quality of life in Inverness County is to be improved a new way of doing business or providing programs and services is needed. What is required is a constellation of departments and agencies around certain themes as opposed to everyone doing their own thing in their own little boxes. Even if everyone agrees with this statement it will not be easy to achieve. It will be perceived by some not be in their best interest to operate in this manner. There may be a fear of losing some control over limited resources or, in some cases, the fear of losing their jobs. If properly planned and managed this will not be the case. Any part of this report can be implemented by working smarter, not harder or with less people.

Ownership of follow-up activities arising from this report rests squarely on the shoulders of the sixteen Development Associations in Inverness County. To rely on any one level of government to take the initiative to implement the recommendations will ensure the “status quo” and the likelihood that little will be done as a result of this research. It is imperative that each Development Association take responsibility for initiating action to see that this report does not sit idle on a shelf in some government office. If the Development Associations take ownership of this report, implementation will be assured.

## APPENDIX A

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS AND CONTACT PERSON

## APPENDIX B

### AGENCIES TO RECEIVE THIS REPORT

## APPENDIX A

### Community Development Associations and Contact Persons 2005:

#### **Cheticamp Development Commission**

Matt Poirier, Executive Director  
PO Box 565  
Cheticamp, NS B0E 1H0  
Tel: 424-3349  
Fax: 224-2801  
Email: [cdc2000@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:cdc2000@ns.sympatico.ca)

#### **Glendale & Area Community Co-operative**

Donnie MacInnis, Pres.  
Glendale, Box 22 West Bay Road  
Inverness Co., NS B0E 3L0  
Tel: 625-2055

#### **Inverness Development Association**

Tony MacDonald  
PO Box 743  
Inverness, NS B0E 1N0  
Tel: 258-2282

#### **Judique & Area Development. Association**

PO Box 156  
John MacInnis  
Judique, NS B0E 1P0  
Tel: 787-2475  
Alternates: Gordon Johnson: 787 - 2551

#### **Lake Ainslie Development Association**

Attn: Greg Nearing  
Box 309  
Whycocomagh, NS B0E 3M0  
Tel: 756 - 9111  
Email: [gninla@canada.com](mailto:gninla@canada.com)

#### **Lemoine Development Association**

Attn: Leandre LeBlanc  
PO Box 53  
St. Joseph du Moine, NS  
B0E 3A0  
Tel: 224-3889  
Fax: 224-4119

**Mabou Development Association**

John MacInnes  
PO Box 232  
Mabou, NS B0E 1X0

**Marble Mountain Wharf Preservation Society**

Attn: Russell B. White  
RR #1 West Bay, NS B0E 3K0  
Tel/Fax: 756-2233

**Margaree and Area Dev. Association (MADA)**

Attn: Marilyn Harrison  
PO Box 561  
Margaree Forks, NS B0E 2A0  
Tel/Fax: 248-2226

**Meat Cove Development Association**

Attn: Derrick MacLellan  
Meat Cove, NS B0C 1E0  
Tel: 383-2284 / 2281

**Orangedale Improvement Association**

Attn: Randy MacDonald  
PO Box 18, 15 MacMillan Drive  
RR #1 Orangedale, NS  
B0E 2K0  
Tel: 756-3338/ 756-2688  
Fax: 756-2830  
Email: [r.macdon@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:r.macdon@ns.sympatico.ca)

**Pleasant Bay Development Association**

Attn: George Fraser  
Pleasant Bay, NS B0E 2P0  
Tel: 224-4206 (Resource Centre)  
Fax: 224-1828

**Port Hastings Community Development Association**

Attn: James MacFadyen  
43 Bethel Drive  
Troy, NS B9A 1J1  
Tel: 625-5045

**Port Hood Area Development Society**

Attn: Susan Mallette, Pres.  
PO Box 24  
Port Hood, NS B0E 2W0  
Tel: 787-2930

**West Bay Road Community Group**

Attn: Bob MacEachern  
West Bay Road, NS B0E 3L0  
Tel: 625-1601  
Tel: 625-3040

**Whycocomagh Development Commission**

Box 329  
Whycocomagh, NS B0E 3M0  
Jim Austin Tel: 756 - 9042 or 2728  
Marilyn MacLeod Tel: 756 - 2627

**APPENDIX B**

**Agencies to Receive this Report:**

***Federal Government***

Infrastructure Canada  
Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund  
400 Cooper St. - 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0R5

Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation  
Rick Beaton  
32 Paint St., Unit 1  
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia  
B9A 3J8

***Provincial Government***

Dept. of Community Services  
Frank Capstick  
360 Prince St.  
Provincial Building  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1P 5L1

Dept. of Education, Adult Education Division  
Barbara Moreton  
c/o Strait Area Campus  
Nova Scotia Community college  
226 Reeves St.  
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia  
B9A 2A2

Dept. of Economic Development  
Albert LeBlanc  
32 Paint St., Unit 3  
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia  
B9A 3J8

Dept. of Health  
Box 488  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 2R9

Dept. of Tourism & Culture  
Frances MacEachen  
Main St.  
Mabou, Nova Scotia  
BOE 1XO

Department of Transportation  
Charlie MacDonald  
PO Box 10  
Baddeck, Nova Scotia  
BOE 1BO

***Other Organizations/Institutions***

University Sainte Anne  
PO Box 59  
St. Joseph Du Moine  
Inverness County, Nova Scotia  
BOE 3AO

Nova Scotia Community College  
Bert Lewis, Principal  
226 Reeves St.  
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia  
B9A 2A2

Cape Breton District Health Authority  
John Malcolm, CEO  
1482 George St.  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1P 1P3

Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority  
Kevin MacDonald  
24 Bay St.  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
B2G 2G5

Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia  
David Muise - Executive Director  
164 Charlotte st.  
Sydney, Nova Scotia

Children's Aid Society of Cape Breton Victoria Counties  
Marie Boone - Executive Director  
360 Prince St.  
Sydney, Nova Scotia

ST. F. X. Extension Dept.  
PO Box 5000  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
B2G 2W5

Cape Breton University  
PO Box 5300  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1P 6L2

Strait & Area Chamber of Commerce  
4 MacIntosh Ave.  
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia  
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Rodger Cuzner  
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Strait Highlands Regional Development Agency  
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Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia  
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