

Rural Oxford BR+E Update

Nov.1 2011



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Volunteer Training



Six community leaders met at the Thamesford Library on Thursday, October 5, to prepare for the community's economic future. These community leaders have all volunteered their time to become Volunteer Visitors for the BR+E project.

The night's session was led by Carla Garrett, the BR+E Project Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator, Karen Nelson Hamilton, the BR+E Coordinator, and Shawna Stonehouse, a trained BR+E Ontario Consultant from OMAFRA.

The Volunteer Visitors, along with staff, will be visiting over 200 businesses between November and March. During each visit, the volunteers will use a survey to gather information about each business. The training session was held to help prepare the volunteers for their interviews.

Website

We have created a website to showcase the profiles of the rural communities as well as provide updates on the BR+E project. We have been working hard to ensure that all important information is on the website and that it looks visually pleasing to all those who visit.

During the training, volunteers viewed a BR+E video and had a chance to look over the survey and practice on each other. It was emphasized that the information gathered through the surveys would be strictly confidential.

An additional training session will be held in November (date to be determined). Please contact Carla Garrett at cgarrett@zorra.on.ca for more information or to sign up for the training.

Please take the time to visit the website (www.roed.ca) and provide us with any feedback you have. Also, please take the time to link us to your site, and distribute this website to all your friends, clients and coworkers who may be interested in the project!



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Business Surveys & Visits

Beginning this week, community businesses will be given the opportunity to voice their opinions about the local economy.

The business visits will begin this week as trained volunteers and staff meet with local businesses to identify their needs and concerns, ask their opinions about government, and determine in what ways the local business climate can be improved.

The visits with local businesses have four purposes. First we want to show our local businesses that we really appreciate the contributions they are making to our local community. Second, we want to see if they have any concerns, and, if so, if there are ways we can help. Third, we will be offering to help our local businesses take better advantage of business resources. Finally, we want the businesses to help us set priorities on future directions of local economic efforts.

Businesses will receive an information package containing an introduction letter, discussing the purpose of the project, as well as a copy of the survey. Due to the large number of businesses that will be contacted, the information packages have been divided into four phases, and will be sent out over the next four weeks. We will begin contacting the businesses about a week after the information package is sent to ensure that the business owners already have an understanding of the project.

All information collected from the surveys will remain confidential. The data will be entered into an online tool, which will provide reports on the information that was collected.



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ROED Rural Oxford Economic Development

274620 27th Line, P.O Box 306
Ingersoll, ON N5C 3K5

P 519-485-2490 x 242

E knelsonhamilton@zorra.on.ca

www.roed.ca