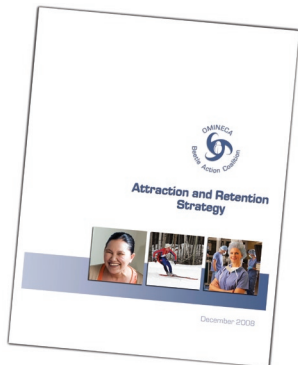


- Develop and implement community employment strategies which will provide youth and others in the region with relevant information on training and employment opportunities and assist them in finding employment in the region;
- Collaborate and exchange information relevant to attraction and retention across all communities in the region;
- Develop community level youth retention strategies;
- Assess needs and further develop the services and amenities required by the region's growing senior population;
- Develop a strategy designed to improve the delivery of education and health care across the region and which utilizes modern communications technology ;
- Ensure that health and education funding and services will remain in place for up to up to five years following major economic downturns;
- Create a "fair labour market" which provides employers incentives to take on first time workers, recent graduates of secondary and post-secondary institutions and apprentices;
- Provide information and support for the development of self-employment opportunities.



These actions and overall implementation of this strategy will require key and timely decisions and actions by the provincial and federal governments. OBAC communities look forward to working with key implementers to make the vision a reality.



To obtain a copy of the Attraction and Retention Strategy or for information on the Coalition please visit our web site at www.ominaccoalition.ca or contact us:

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Attraction and Retention Strategy



December, 2008

What is OBAC?

In September 2005 the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) received financial support and mandate from the BC Government. OBAC is building priority topic strategies and a diversification plan and taking action that supports long-term sustainability for the Highway 16 communities impacted by the mountain pine beetle. OBAC is led by the local government leaders of the region and is accountable to local communities and the provincial government. OBAC works in partnership with First Nations, professionals, researchers, plus all sectors and levels of government.

Why is OBAC Important?

British Columbia is currently experiencing the largest mountain pine beetle outbreak in recorded history. This forest health epidemic is causing widespread mortality of lodgepole pine, the interior's most abundant commercial tree species. Strategies must be developed to mitigate the social, economic and environmental consequences of this epidemic now and in the future.



What is the Attraction and Retention Strategy?

The prosperity of the OBAC region has long been reliant on its timber resources. However the mountain pine beetle epidemic is expected to diminish opportunities in the traditional forest sector for several decades. OBAC is developing a number of industrial sector strategies that are designed to diversify the region's economy and create more resilient communities. As well as



these industrial strategies, it is also necessary to develop strategies to attract and retain the workers and other community members needed to develop diversified, resilient communities. The strategy presents a vision of how the region's communities can attract and retain a diverse range of people over the next ten year period, and ensure our communities remain desirable places to live.



This strategy was developed by with the assistance of specialists with expertise on the service needs and opportunities in the region.

Vision, Objectives and Recommendations

OBAC communities envision a future where the region's communities are recognized as desirable places to live, learn, work, play and invest. The assets of the region, including its natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities are well known and appreciated by current and prospective residents. The region's young people and others are provided good opportunities to train and work in the communities. Its resources support diverse business and employment options and the needed work force is available to realize these opportunities.



The four objectives are:

1. Diversify the region's economy and support good employment and self-employment opportunities
2. Retain and attract the skilled workers and professionals needed by business, government, and service providers.

3. Improve retention of the region's young people and other community members by improving linkages between training and employment opportunities.
4. Develop synergistic and cooperative opportunities for attraction and retention across all communities in the region.

Five recommendations have been developed to achieve these objectives. The recommendations are:



1. Continue to diversify and strengthen the region's economy.
2. Market the region's considerable assets which make it a desirable place to live, work, play, and invest.
3. Provide assistance to the region's young people and other residents to access training, obtain jobs and facilitate self-employment opportunities.
4. Further identify and develop the services and amenities required to attract and retain young people, seniors, skilled workers, professionals and others.
5. Develop and implement improved service delivery models to better meet health care and education needs.

Priority Actions include:

- Establish a Regional Economic Development Office;
- Ensure that municipalities have support from the province during periods of sudden economic downturns;
- Develop a regional marketing program, which includes an Omineca Brand, that highlights the regions environmental, outdoor recreation and other assets;
- Ensure that students in the region are provided excellent secondary school opportunities which are relevant both to them and their communities;