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Network preparing tourism strategy



Economic Development Officers from White River to Kenora attended a regional meeting in Terrace Bay last week to formulate a tourism strategy. Bruce Strapp, chairman of the Northwestern Ontario Economic Development Network said the area has a lot to offer for tourists. Photo by Dave Chmara

Economic Development Committee organized. Strapp said, "the network invites the joining of Terrace Bay and Schreiber. We feel this area has lots of information on tourism and this can help develop the strategy we're currently working

on. This area provides phenomenal hospitality. This is one of the best meetings we've had. The services, accommodations and atmosphere was great. We'd like to thank the towns for making this occasion an eventful one."

By Dave Chmara

Economic Development Officers (EDO) of Northwestern Ontario met in Terrace Bay last week to formulate a Tourism Development strategy.

The EDO, members of the Northwestern Ontario Economic Development Officers' Network (NWOEDON), represent Economic Development Committees from Marathon to Kenora.

Bruce Strapp, chairman of the NWOEDON, said the network is putting together a strategy that can be of benefit to individual EDO.

"We're developing a strategy to work with other groups in the area," said Strapp. "The focus being the developing of opportunities for tourism development."

"We see tourism as a viable alternative towards developing our respective economics and this meeting will help set a path towards that goal."

Although the network works as a group, the focus is on community based planning for tourism development in each EDO area.

Each of the EDO from communities across Northwestern Ontario have been preparing a synopsis about the state of tourism in their areas.

They have also prepared a "vision" of what they would realistically like to see develop in their area with regard to tourism.

"Our task at hand is to set an agenda for action, a set of concrete steps we can collectively take as a network to achieve this vision," Strapp explained.

The network is studying marketing trends in tourism to determine the best approach to take to promote Northwestern Ontario to travellers.

Strapp said careful planning is involved before going ahead with

a project.

"Usually you only get a one shot deal for funding so when we meet we use the time to come up with a quality document out of each meeting," said Strapp.

The Investors Guide for Northwestern Ontario was the network's first project. It outlines investment opportunities located within Northwestern Ontario as well as many of the other beneficial aspects of the area.

Strapp said the guide has been presented to investors from the U.S. and from as far away as the Pacific Rim (Hong Kong).

"We've had an impressive response from people and groups about the Investors Guide," said Strapp. He mentioned the network is considering a second printing of the guide because it has been so well received.

The network also looks for entrepreneurs to work with.

"People are always looking for opportunities," he said. "They have access to education through the universities and colleges and additional help is available from Community Futures Committees, Business Development Offices and Economic Development Committees."

Strapp explained EDO are a wealth of information. "They know who to contact for various government programs and information."

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