

PARTNERSHIP STARTS MEASURING ANTIGONISH PROJECT

The Antigonish Area is about to become an ever smarter community. The Antigonish Area Partnership has begun the process of developing Measuring Antigonish following approval from ACOA for a grant to help fund Phase 1 of the project.

“We are very pleased to have ACOA as a funding partner for this phase of the project,” said Partnership President and CEO, Brian Segal, “this start-up phase will provide the structural foundation upon which the entire Measuring Antigonish project will be built.”

Measuring Antigonish is a system for analysis and interpretation of data leading to a better understanding of how to answer such important questions as: What are the opportunities? How do we proceed? What resources will we need? Where do we get our resources?

Phase One will see the project’s sources of data defined, templates created and a set of measuring indices established. This fundamental work will permit the further development of the project into Phase Two - an on-going data gathering and analysis system focused on the local economy of the Antigonish Area. As well, the project will create a set of comparative measurements in order to compare our economy with the economies of other similar communities in Canada.

“Measuring Antigonish is a unique opportunity for a small community to be able to measure and utilize information that is normally only available to much larger centres,” Segal explained, “due to a variety of technical and protocol issues, it is very difficult for small communities to get accurate data in a number of areas. This project will allow us to clear those hurdles, and get a much clearer knowledge-base about the community. That knowledge-base will allow our businesses and institutions to plan better, and to recognize and capitalize on opportunity.”

The ultimate goal of the project is to help local and/or incoming businesses and institutions develop and utilize verified information rather than extrapolated numbers based on much larger populations. “We know that the Antigonish Area is a unique economic environment. We also know that due to the limitations of current information, it is more challenging than it has to be for investors to size up opportunity. The best business plans come from the best information – and that is an important aim of this project.”

As with most projects developed by the Partnership, Measuring Antigonish draws upon the skills and resources of a number of groups and individuals. Phase One includes economists and business department faculty from StFX, the StFX Enterprise Development Centre, Community Counts Nova Scotia and Statistics Canada. In addition, the project working committee will be in contact with a number of data partners and suppliers including Bergengren Credit Union, the municipalities, the RDA, the Chamber and a variety of other businesses and institutions who have agreed to help build the databases required by the project.

“We are delighted at the response this project has received at the local, provincial and national levels,” commented AAP Chair, Irene MacLeod, “this project is a unique opportunity to advance the capabilities and competitiveness of small communities. Our success will provide benefits to the Antigonish Area. Furthermore, the templates we develop will help other communities who want to develop a similar system for themselves.”

Measuring Antigonish is one of four major projects that make up the Partnership’s 2005 Action Plan. “This project will create a fundamental building block for the community, and will help us and our partners in our mission to promote sustained economic growth for our community,” Segal concluded.

More information about the Antigonish Area Partnership can be found at their website at: www.antigonisharea.com.

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