

THE ONTARIO BUSINESS REPORT

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October 2001

**SALUTE TO
SMALL BUSINESS MONTH**

Small business looks to the future with enthusiasm



As the economy in the 21st century evolves, small business entrepreneurs are armed with an aggressive strategy to meet new challenges head-on.

Yet while it continues to receive much notice, Ontario's small business sector as a whole continues to grow at a brisk pace without much fanfare.

"Our members are generally optimistic," says Brien Gray, Senior Vice-President, Policy and Provincial Affairs at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB). "When we last surveyed them in April, optimism was down, but not as much as some other studies showed. We're surveying our members again, and we're not hearing a lot of doom and gloom."

In the CFIB survey, close to half of Ontario respondents (45.8 per cent) said they expect a stronger business performance in 2001 compared to last year.

One-third of Ontario respondents plan to hire more staff in the next three years. The most optimistic expectations were among firms in the business services, financial and manufacturing sectors.

Gray points out that the recent slower pace of economic activity has been concentrated in part on the technology sector.

"I think that there are, in effect, two economies out there right now," he says. "There's the high-tech economy, which is currently under-performing, and the other, larger economy, a mix of high-tech and the traditional economy. A lot of the high-tech demand came from the dot.com sector and Y2K projects. We're also coming off three very strong years in economic terms. In the end, the overall small business picture is not as good as last year's, but it's not seriously off, either."

Ontario Chamber of Commerce President Douglas Robson agrees, noting that economic growth in the two per cent range is a long way from recession.

"The essential elements for a strong economy are present," he says. "Inflation is under control, employment is relatively high, and interest rates are down. With that, the structure of the Ontario economy has changed. We have a more balanced economy now, where the service and tech sectors have grown in influence."

Experts agree that while the challenges facing small business have changed over the past year, the long-term outlook remains positive.

"In some ways it's a good problem to have," says Professor Niraj Bhargava, Managing Director of the Queen's Centre for Enterprise Development (QCED) in Kingston, Ontario. "Sustainability is key now, and this forces companies to come up with a good business model early on."

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Red Tape Commission consults with small business

The owners and operators of hundreds of small businesses across the province had the opportunity to speak their minds about the barriers to small business when the Red Tape Commission came to town during late-summer and fall, 2001.

“Small- to medium-sized businesses are responsible for creating more new jobs than any other economic sector,” said Premier Harris, who directed the Commission to consult with small business across Ontario on a range of issues and identify barriers to economic growth. “What small business owners and operators have to say is important to us and to the future of the province.”

“Economic competitiveness can never be taken for granted in the global economy,” agreed Doug Robson, President of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. “I’m delighted to see that the Red Tape Commission is actively seeking input and advice from small- and medium-sized business across Ontario.”

“Along with cutting taxes, the Harris government places a priority on cutting red tape because it is key to creating jobs,” added Economic Development and Trade Minister Bob Runciman. “Most new jobs are created by small business, so it stands to reason that policies and restrictions that hurt small business also hurt job creation, and ought to be removed.”

Identifying Barriers to Small Business

Commission Co-chairs Frank Sheehan and Scarborough East MPP Steve Gilchrist conducted the consultations.

“We asked questions, we listened and we will respond by removing unnecessary red tape that small businesses face,” said Sheehan. “We want to ensure Ontario continues to offer a positive business climate that attracts investment and job creation because the people of Ontario want to enjoy the benefits that a strong, efficient and growing economy provides.”

“We will continue to take steps to eliminate red tape that kills jobs and impedes investment,” said Gilchrist.

The findings from these meetings will provide advice to the Ontario Government on concrete solutions to remove barriers to business.

The consultations were held with local small business owners from a cross-section of economic sectors. The communities visited included Belleville, Brockville, Burlington, Chatham, Gravenhurst, Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara Falls, North York, Penetanguishene, Peterborough, Port Hope, Sarnia, Scarborough, St. Catharines, Stratford, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Windsor.



A representative sample: Ontario's Premier Mike Harris (centre) and Red Tape Commission Co-chairs Steve Gilchrist and Frank Sheehan pose with a small sample of the hundreds of thousands of pages of forms and paperwork Ontario is eliminating in its drive to get government out of the way of business.

Next steps

The Commission, which has helped 170 businesses and individuals with their red tape problems, has amended outdated rules and regulations in order to make it easier to do business.

“This government has already moved decisively to keep its promise to cut red tape,” said Gilchrist. Ontario has passed 13 red tape reduction bills, repealed more than 50 acts, amended more than 200 other acts, and eliminated 1,700 regulations. “Now we’re tackling major red tape challenges as well, and we need continuous input from stakeholders to let us know what’s important to them so we can effectively improve the business climate.”

This round of meetings built on that success.

If you want to learn more about the Red Tape Commission, please visit its web site at www.redtape.gov.on.ca.

Business clients get online with government

Most governments now provide vast amounts of information online, but few are offering the range of services now available to Ontario's small business sector. Whether you want to register a new company online, embark on a "virtual" trade mission, or have instant access to the latest legislation affecting your business, Ontario is the place to be.

"We want to give the business client better access to government services," says Jim Evans, Senior Consultant at the Integrated Service Delivery Division of the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. "The underlying trend is for business to be able to deal with government the same way they deal with other businesses."

Mr. Evans is the executive lead at Ontario Business Connects, a key

component of the government's strategy to cut red tape for business. Ontario Business Connects allows small business to complete common government registrations at one of 145 self-help computer workstations throughout the province. Transactions such as business name searches or registration used to take weeks to complete. They are now done electronically in 20 minutes. Applications for Retail Sales Tax, Employer Health Tax and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board can be made at the same time.

Ontario has also partnered with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) to create a "one door" approach for several common transactions with the provincial and federal levels of government. Business people can now register for goods and services tax (GST), corporate income tax, payroll deductions, and import/export accounts at the same time they register or renew their business name with the Ontario government.

These online services are available at 16 federal workstations across the province.

Ontario's lead trade agency, Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI) is also taking advantage of the e-business revolution. Establishing a presence in a foreign market can be expensive and time consuming. Ontario Exports Inc.

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What's MyBIS?

The wealth of information available online can create problems of its own: how can business people stay abreast of what's new, without spending half of the day surfing the Internet? Ontario Business Connects has a new e-mail service that keeps you well informed with minimum effort.

Subscribers to "MyBIS" (the Business Information Service) receive regular e-mail updates tailored to their specific

needs. Subscribers select options (taxation, training, export, import, etc.) that best fit their area of business. Based on the selections, the system searches partner databases and automatically sends personalized e-mail with current and updated hyperlinks. Subscribers only receive e-mail when new relevant hyperlinks are added or updated to the MyBIS resource library. To subscribe to this free service, visit www.ccr.gov.on.ca/obc/.

VIEWPOINT



October is *Salute to Small Business Month*. Every year, throughout this month, our government celebrates the huge contribution of small businesses across the province. We note the achievements of our many dynamic entrepreneurs. We formally recognize that small business is a major driving force in our economy. And we thank small business owners for creating more than 50 per cent of new jobs in Ontario.

In this issue, we profile several of Ontario's successful small businesses. We also highlight many of the actions that our government is taking to ensure that they can continue to compete, succeed and grow.

For instance, we recently introduced a new small business strategy that responds to this important community's changing needs. It hinges on converting the province's network of Self-Help Offices to Small Business Enterprise Centres that offer a broader range of services. My colleague Joe Spina, MPP Brampton Centre championed the creation of Small Business Centres some years ago and that idea is being expanded. Each of these Centres will help business owners through their startup period and their crucial first five years of growth. A Small Business Advisory Council will also be established to make sure that, province-wide, our support network is doing all that it can to assist the small business community.

We are also working to give small businesses better, faster access to government services. By using technology, businesses can now conduct such common activities as name registration online, companies can establish a presence in a foreign market, without physically traveling abroad. The province's lead trade agency, Ontario Exports Inc., has developed "virtual" trade missions, a cost-effective way for companies to learn about export opportunities and meet potential customers through video-conferencing.

Our government is working in many other ways to meet the needs of the small business community. And we *continue* to listen to its voice. The Red Tape Commission is actively consulting with small- and medium-sized businesses to listen to their concerns about red tape and barriers that restrict company growth. Our goal is to address these concerns æ both to save businesses time and money, and to help Ontarians benefit from the economic strength and jobs that flow from small business success.

Since 1995, small businesses have helped lead the way in job creation, contributing significantly to 836,000 new jobs. Our government will continue to ensure sound business conditions remain in place so that they can do more. And during *Salute to Small Business Month*, we will celebrate the determination, the commitment and the contribution of Ontario's many entrepreneurs.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I would like to say "thank you" to small business, and all business, in every town, city and community across Ontario. Working together, we will ensure that our province remains competitive, prosperous and strong.

Bob Runciman
Minister of Economic Development and Trade

Diverse and bilateral associations support Ontario's many communities

Ontario has long celebrated its diversity. The City of Toronto, in particular, is heralded as one of the most multicultural cities in the world. It is estimated that 48 per cent of its population is made up of immigrants, and more than 100 languages are spoken. Members of these many diverse communities also bring their entrepreneurial skills to all areas of the province, often building successful businesses and creating jobs for Ontarians.

To help entrepreneurs start up and develop businesses, there are a wealth of ethnic business associations and organizations across the province they can call upon for assistance. The Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs (ACCE) is one such organization. Since 1992, ACCE has promoted entrepreneurship and helped Chinese Canadians develop new businesses. They do this through a solid membership network, as well as offering seminars, workshops and conferences.

For the past three years, the ACCE has held a Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs Business Conference, a significant event for business information sharing. "This year, for the first time, we will link this conference with mainstream business organizations through a joint event with Enterprise Toronto," says Wilbert Lai, President of the Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs. "We want to help Chinese entrepreneurs link together with all Canadians." This conference, with sessions in Mandarin, Cantonese and English, will take place in November at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The ACCE works with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and other partners, on the annual Chinese Canadian Entrepreneur Awards. This high-profile event takes place in March, and celebrates business successes within the Chinese community across Ontario. Award winners are subsequently invited to a business forum to share their experiences with other entrepreneurs. Information about nominating businesses for the 2002 Awards can be obtained by visiting www.acce.ca.

"Business activity is a very natural way of integration," says Lai. "Our association links up with grass-roots organizations, so that new immigrants know our services are available. We provide entrepreneurs with a good network of government resources, educational resources, bankers and more. We help make sure they are aware of all of their choices."

The Italian Chamber of Commerce of Toronto is another prominent business organization. As the Ontario arm of an international network of 66 Italian Chambers operating around the world, this Chamber promotes bilateral business between Italy and Canada. For 40 years, it has offered support to Ontario's Italian business community, helping businesses develop, grow and export to new markets. It also helps Italian companies seeking a position in the Canadian market.

"The Italian business community in Toronto comprises mainly small-to medium-sized enterprises, with the agri-food industry forming the largest sector," says Luigi Casagrande, Managing Director of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Toronto. Currently 300 members belong to the organization. The Chamber keeps its members informed of business and joint venture opportunities; organizes trade shows and trade missions; and offers seminars, conferences and networking opportunities. "We help businesses get into a new market, and help them make the right contact at the right moment," says Casagrande.

The Canada Pakistan Business Council is equally focused on promoting trade. It organizes trade missions between Canada and Pakistan; introduces members to government agencies for trade inquiries or assistance in exporting products; and helps companies find the right agents or partners. "Health, education, IT, agri-food, environment – these are all big strengths in Ontario and we encourage Pakistani companies to see the potential. We also



work with Canadian companies looking for technology transfers for joint ventures with Pakistan," says Andy Merchant, President of the Canada Pakistan Business Council.

The European Union Chamber of Commerce in Toronto (EUCOCIT) is another effective business association. It was established in 1995 to help promote business links between the European Union and Canada. The organization comprises 14 members, each representing a member state of the European Union. Seminars and events concerning trading, investing and operating a business in the European Union are planned by the EUCOCIT, and promoted by member Chambers of Commerce.

"The current issue is the final transition to the Euro/dollar," says Lionel Goffart, Corporate Secretary and Controller of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in Toronto. "Surprisingly, we find there are Canadian businesses who do business with Europe that are not knowledgeable about the Euro. We want to help rectify that before it becomes Europe's sole currency on January 1, 2002." EUCOCIT plans to hold a seminar in November on this final transition.

Information on these and many other bilateral business organizations can be found at www.infoexport.gc.ca/bilateral/tableofContent-e.asp.

Breaking down the barriers

What's the biggest barrier to small business success? Ask any entrepreneur, and nine out of 10 will tell you that obtaining financing, especially seed financing, was the biggest challenge they faced in establishing their new enterprise. For would-be entrepreneurs new to Canada, the challenge is even greater. With no network of friends or business associates and a non-existent credit rating, the immigrant entrepreneur is usually left to his or her own devices.

Ganesan Sugumar was in exactly that situation when he arrived in Canada from Sri Lanka in 1992. Although he was already a successful businessman, with interests in financial and travel operations, Mr. Sugumar and his wife decided to re-establish themselves in Canada. Today, the Sugshe Group is a thriving enterprise with four retail stores in downtown Toronto, a specialty jewelry shop in Scarborough, and, most important to Mr. Sugumar, Sugshe Finance Canada Inc.

"I have a background as a financier, and I also saw first-hand what people go through when they are trying to borrow money to set up their business," says Mr. Sugumar. "I knew that once I had my own business up and running, I would establish a finance company to help others get started."

Sugshe Finance Canada Inc. was established in 1998, to provide small business loans and start-up advice to new entrepreneurs. The company has since helped 18 entrepreneurs set up successful businesses in a variety of sectors, including software development, retail, confectionery, and import/export.

"We've lent out more than \$1 million," says Mr. Sugumar, "and at the same time we've paid back a 20 per cent dividend to our board. There's a lot of potential for lenders out there."

Mr. Sugumar notes that all of the finance company's clients have at one time or another been rejected for a loan by a traditional financial institution. Offering loans from \$500 to \$50,000, Sugshe Finance Canada Inc. serves a market that larger companies have virtually ignored.

"I had my own loan application rejected when I was starting out, so I know what



Ganesan Sugumar – "I believe you have to look beyond your own particular ethnic communities and do business with people from all over."

it feels like," he says. "I don't want people to be afraid when they start out in business. Now that I'm established on my own, I can help others get started."

Many immigrant communities solve the start-up financing problem with personal loans from family or friends, either in

Canada or in their home country. The Sugshe Group takes a different approach.

"I believe that you have to look beyond your own particular ethnic communities and do business with people from all over," says Mr. Sugumar. "I do that in my own retail business, and we do that with the finance company as well. If I had just stuck to my own community, I don't think I would have been as successful."

Mr. Sugumar's retail stores demonstrate this principle, with a wide variety of specialized products (souvenirs, clothing, food staples) that draw both tourists and customers from at least 50 ethnic groups. His retail staff represents 10 different countries.

"Nowhere in the world can you see so many people from all over the globe," says Mr. Sugumar, who represented Canada as an election monitor in Serbia last year. "Choosing to live in Ontario was the best decision for me. I have no regrets."

Small business means big business

Small- and medium-sized businesses in Ontario make a big impact in terms of economic growth and jobs in our province.

- Small businesses have created a majority of the 836,000 new jobs produced in Ontario since 1995.
- Small businesses will generate more of the 825,000 new jobs expected in Ontario between 2000 and 2005 than any other segment of the economy.

And, according to the most recent (1998) small business figures from Statistics Canada's Employment Dynamics:

- Almost 53 per cent (52.9 per cent) of total jobs are created by small businesses with less than 50 employees.
- Firms with less than 100 employees are responsible for 61.7 per cent of total job creation in Ontario.
- Ontario firms with less than 100 employees account for 96 per cent of all firms in the province.

The future looks bright

Prospects for Ontario's small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) look bright.

Expectations among business owners remain strong this year with business confidence highest in Ontario. According to a Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) 2001 Hard Facts Annual Survey, 44.7 per cent of 8,000 respondents expect a stronger business performance in 2001 compared to last year.

The job outlook for small business in Ontario also looks promising. One-third of all respondents said they plan to hire more staff over the next three years in the business services, manufacturing and financial services sectors.

There is more good news as a higher percentage of small business operations continue to do well. According to the December 2000 issue of Industry Canada's Small Business Quarterly, 2,498 bankruptcies were reported in the second quarter of 2000 as compared to 2,564 in the second quarter of 1999. This represents a 2.6 per cent decline for the number of business bankruptcies for that period.

New strategy supports Ontario's small businesses

Small business is vital to the growth and success of Ontario. Whether it's the high tech start-up or the pizza shop around the corner, small businesses everywhere make an enormous impact on the province's economy. They create knowledge and new wealth, meet consumer demand and fulfill entrepreneurial dreams. Small businesses (with less than 50 employees) *also* create 53 per cent of all new jobs in Ontario.

The government of Ontario has long recognized the importance of small business and, since taking office, has worked with municipalities and the private sector to provide relevant services to help small business succeed.

"We are proud of the assistance we have offered small businesses. At the same time, we also recognize that it is an increasingly competitive world and the demands on entrepreneurs have grown," said Bob Runciman, Minister of Economic Development and Trade. "After listening to the small business community, we have developed a new strategy

specifically designed to meet these changing needs."

Announced in June, *Small Business Enterprise Centres – A Strategy for Ontario* takes the services the government



Small Business Enterprise Centres help small business owners through their first critical years.

offers small businesses and moves them to the next level. This strategy was developed in consultation with the small business community and municipal and private sector partners. It includes:

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Small business looks to the future with enthusiasm

In the tech sector especially, we've been through a bit of a gold rush, where everybody stakes his or her claim. Overall, the shift has put the challenge on small businesses to focus on their core competencies. In the long-term, that's healthy for them."

In June, 2001, Parliamentary Assistant Ted Chudleigh on behalf of Economic Development and Trade Minister Bob Runciman launched a new strategy designed to meet the changing needs of Ontario's small business community.

"We've seen an increase in the number of entrepreneurs, and their needs are changing," says Chudleigh. "We've listened to the small business community, and we are responding."

The strategy will convert MEDT's network of Self-Help Offices to Small Business Enterprise Centres, providing

entrepreneurs with one-stop shopping services from startup through the crucial first five years of growth.

"This is the right strategy to build on Ontario's entrepreneurship support programs," says Brenda Valois, Chair of the Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee. "The Enterprise Centres will ensure that new and recently launched entrepreneurs are equipped with the information, skills, and networks they need to succeed."

This early support is vital to young companies looking for investment in a more discerning money market.

"Investment capital is a lot harder to find now," says Professor Bhargava, "and business people are looking for more advice and support. They have to get their business model on sound footing earlier, to attract that investment and to produce

the sales they need to generate their own capital. And their cost controls have to be effective."

In short, entrepreneurs have to be more shrewd to keep pace with the growing competition. With the right support, their chances of long-term success are much greater in the present economy.

"The Ontario government is serious about working with our partners to provide an improved support network for the small business community,"

Mr. Chudleigh says. "As part of the strategy, we're establishing a Small Business Advisory Council to co-ordinate research, eliminate duplication and enhance customer service standards across the network. It's another step in our goal to provide the best possible economic climate in which entrepreneurs can prosper."

Ontario Programs and Services Help Small Business

**SALUTE TO
SMALL BUSINESS MONTH
SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION**

Entrepreneurs and small business play a crucial role in creating and maintaining a dynamic and innovative economy. The **Ministry of Economic Development and Trade** (MEDT) assists these companies and individuals to improve their chances of success from the outset.

The ministry's strategy, based on research, is to focus on helping entrepreneurs build their capacity both in the short and long-term.

The short-term concentrates on viable business start-ups. The ministry assists business operators using a self-help concept, resulting in a focused business plan.

MEDT and other ministries help small business build their capacity through:

Small Business Enterprise Centres

In partnership with local municipalities, these centres take the self-help concept a step further with an emphasis on mentoring, and giving small business operators and entrepreneurs the management tools they need to achieve success beyond startup, through the critical first five years of operation.

Phone: (416) 954-4636 or (800) 567-2345
Fax: (416) 954-8555
Web site: www.ontario-canada.com

Business Self-Help Offices In partnership with local municipalities, the Ontario government operates Business Self-Help Offices in communities across Ontario. Each office has a general business consultant on staff as well as publications on a range of topics that address small business concerns.

Phone: (416) 954-4636 or (800) 567-2345
Fax: (416) 954-8597

Field Services

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's 11 regional offices provide business consulting services to innovative growth firms, as well as consulting services to associations and municipalities.

Our Business Development Consultants work with thousands of companies across Ontario by assessing their situation, supporting development of future plans and providing options for achieving their goals. They link firms with the right people, information and business resources to enhance competitiveness and profitability.

Consultants also assist with export marketing strategies, provide access to programs in R&D and new technology, and develop opportunities for strategic alliances and partnerships.

Central Region:

Phone: (416) 235-4278
Fax: (416) 235-4338

Eastern Region:

Phone: (800) 267-6592
Fax: (613) 241-2545

Southwestern Region:

Phone: (800) 265-2428
Fax: (519) 571-6104

Field Services in Northern Ontario

Field Services in Northern Ontario are delivered by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Please refer to the blue pages of your local telephone directory under 'Economic Development' or visit the MNDM web site at www.mndm.gov.on.ca.

In addition, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines operates a network of Area Teams, which are strategically located across the region. These provide a focal point for economic development in each of their respective areas. Working together, the Teams deliver the province's economic and social development programs and services in the North. Area Teams also promote and provide access to trade and investment marketing opportunities.

With expertise in key economic sectors, including tourism, mining, forest products, business and industry and Aboriginal economic development, as well as representatives in specific communities, Area Teams support a healthy, competitive and sustainable northern economy that includes businesses of all sizes and types.

Kenora Area Team (807) 468-2937
Thunder Bay Area Team (807) 475-1648
Sault Ste. Marie Area Team (705) 945-5914
Timmins Area Team (705) 235-1664
Sudbury Area Team (705) 564-7517
North Bay Area Team (705) 494-4045
Web site: <http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca>

Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre

The Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre provides comprehensive information on business-oriented programs, services and regulations of provincial and federal government departments and other organizations.

Phone: (416) 954-4636 or (800) 567-2345
Fax: (416) 954-8597
Web site: www.cbosc.org/ontario

Business Immigration Services (BIS)

BIS engages in marketing programs designed

to maximize Ontario's share of business immigrants (entrepreneurs, investors and the self-employed) admitted to Canada and works with the federal government to develop programs that can address skill shortages. BIS also provides services to business immigrants to assist them with their investment and business establishment decisions.

BIS also has a consulting and advocacy role with multi-national investors to expedite company internal transfers of expatriate managers and other specialized staff.

Phone: (416) 325-6777
Fax: (416) 325-6653
Web site: www.2ontario.com/bi/home.asp

Immigrant Investor Program

The Immigrant Investor Program allows qualified business people the ability to make passive investments into government-approved privately administered projects and/or funds, as well as becoming landed immigrants. Contact Business Immigration Services.

Phone: (416) 325-6777
Fax: (416) 325-6653
Web site: www.2ontario.com/bi/bi_immigration_iip.asp

The Aboriginal Business Service Network

(ABSN) provides improved access to general business information, pathfinding, counselling services, and business tools for Aboriginal businesses across Canada. In Ontario, ABSN is a partnership between:

- FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario),
- The Canada Ontario Business Service Centre (COBSC) and
- Aboriginal Business Canada.

Phone: (877) 699-5559
Fax: (800) 240-4192
Web site: www.cbosc.org/ontario/ABSN
Email: info@cbosc.org

Government Information Centres

A province-wide network of 58 Government Information Centres provide general information and referral services through a combination of electronic and over-the-counter channels for individuals and businesses.

Phone: (416) 326-1234 or (800) 267-8097
Fax: (416) 325-3407
Web site: www.gov.on.ca/MBS/english/maps/gic/index.html
E-mail: feedback@gov.on.ca

Innovators Alliance

The Innovators Alliance is a non-profit network of presidents and CEOs, designed to help sustain and accelerate the growth and success of emerging firms. The goal is to allow these companies to create more jobs and lead economic growth.

Phone: (905) 332-0340 or (877) 799-5001
Fax: (905) 332-4768

Market Ontario

Market Ontario plans and manages investment attraction programs in the primary target markets of the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and France. Activities include advertising, media relations, media tours, development of promotional materials, and direct marketing including corporate calls, investment seminars, trade shows, and an active business ambassador program.

Phone: (800) 819-8701
Fax: (416) 360-1817
Web site: www.2ontario.com

Ontario Exports Inc.

Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI) is the government's lead trade agency. It is strengthening its commitment to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a budget increase of \$20 million over the next four years. The objective is to assist SMEs to build their export capabilities, encourage export market expansion and diversification, celebrate excellence, and provide commercial advocacy at home and abroad. Programs such as Trade Days Seminars, News Exporters Tours to Border States and Team Ontario Trade Missions abroad help to showcase Ontario's outstanding products and services and foster a stronger global mind-set among Ontario-based SMEs.

Phone: (416) 314-8200 or toll-free (877) 468-7233
Fax: (416) 314-8222
Web site: www.ontario-canada.com/export

Ontario Global Traders Awards

The Global Traders Awards celebrate Ontario's export success in all regions of the province and raise awareness about the potential of exporting to a company's success and job creation. The Ontario Global Traders Awards program recognizes the important contribution exporters make to the Ontario economy. Contact Ontario Export Inc.

Phone: (416) 314-8200 or toll-free (877) 468-7233
Fax: (416) 314-8222
Web site: www.ontario-canada.com/export

Strategic Skills Investment Program (SSI)

The Strategic Skills Investment program is a multi-year initiative that supports projects that best accelerate skills development efforts

between business and training providers. SSI focuses on projects that create strategic skills essential for building business competitiveness and increasing the responsiveness of Ontario's training institutions and business needs.

Phone: (416) 325-6867
Fax: (416) 314-7014
Web site: www.ontario-canada.com
E-mail: strategic.skills@edt.gov.on.ca

Summer Company

The Summer Company Program provides hands-on business training and mentoring, and up to \$3,000 to help students – aged 15 to 29 – to start up and run their own summer businesses.

Phone: (416) 954-4636 or (800) 567-2345
Fax: (416) 954-8555
Web sites: www.youthjobs.gov.on.ca

My Company

This program is designed to provide business training and low interest loans of up to \$15,000 to help young people – aged 18 to 29 – create their own businesses.

Phone: (416) 954-4636 or (800) 567-2345
Fax: (416) 954-8555
Web sites: www.ontario-canada.com;
www.youthjobs.gov.on.ca

Future Entrepreneurs

This is a program for teachers that introduces an entrepreneurial mindset and skills to students in Grades 7 and 8. Students will learn about entrepreneurship as a viable career option, and develop entrepreneurship skills.

Phone: (416) 954-4636 or (800) 567-2345
Fax: (416) 954-8555
Web sites: www.ontario-canada.com;
www.youthjobs.gov.on.ca

Wisdom Exchange

The Wisdom Exchange is an annual event that brings together presidents and CEOs of Ontario's fastest-growing companies for face-to-face exchange of experiences and insights into managing their firms.

Phone: (416) 325-6740
Fax: (416) 325-6757
Web site: www.ontario-canada.com/wisdomexchange

Red Tape Commission (RTC)

The RTC is mandated to prevent and eliminate non-essential procedures, forms, licenses and regulations that do not protect public health, safety or the environment and only add to the cost of dealing with government. By removing red tape barriers to business, the Commission helps to improve Ontario's business climate for investment and job creation. It addresses major red tape challenges with

ministry partners across government, and intervenes on behalf of businesses, institutions and members of the public seeking assistance. The commission reviews proposed policy and regulatory proposals, and develops legislation that reduces barriers to business, investment and job creation.

Phone: (416) 314-5621
Fax: (416) 325-3732
Web site: www.redtape.gov.on.ca

Other Ontario Government Initiatives

Ministry of Consumer and Business Services (MCBS)

The Ministry of Consumer and Business Services' (MCBS) vision is to be a responsive, innovative world leader in customer service and consumer protection by delivering quality products for a fair, safe and informed Ontario marketplace. Along with its agencies and private and public sector partners, MCBS is working to improve and integrate new enterprise-wide service delivery systems to Ontarians, ensure safer communities, stimulate economic development and prepare government for the world of e-business. It facilitates the provision of consumer information and education and services, registers and maintains accurate records and provides public access to commercial data on real property, personal property, and Ontario companies. MCBS provides individuals and businesses with greater choice in how, when and where they access government services and products through a customer-focused, flexible, cost-effective delivery system.

Ontario Business Connects (OBC)

Ontario Business Connects can get your business up and running in no time. Everything from how to start a business, to directing you to resources for ongoing business planning. You can register for core provincial programs (business name, RST, EHT, WSIB) and you can even get your Master Business Licence from OBC. (An MBL is your business passport you need this for opening a business bank account, and a lot more.) Through OBC's partnership with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, you can even register for GST, corporate income tax, payroll deduction and import/export accounts. All of this, by simply using a computer www.cbs.gov.on.ca/obc. Once you're on the site check out MyBIS – it's a business newsletter and personalized e-mail account. MyBIS offers you invaluable information that can be tailor-made to your needs, regarding business transactions you need to make with the government. MyBIS also has general information in areas such as taxation, training, intellectual property, etc.

If you're not hooked up to the Internet at home you can visit one of the OBC workstations. There are 140 throughout the province.

Not only are these workstations easy to use, they also give your applications priority processing. These workstations are placed in business-related organizations, like business self-help offices and Government Information Centres. So visiting workstations often kills two or three birds with one stone, saving you time and a lot of running around.

Call (800) 565-1921 to find the OBC closest to you, or check us out on the net www.cbs.gov.on.ca/obc.

Electronic Real Property Registration

The Real Property Registration Branch manages and operates 55 Land Registry offices throughout Ontario, which register, store and manage documents such as deeds, mortgages and plans of survey. The land registration records are being automated and converted to Land Titles. Electronic searching of records at certain Land Registry Offices is available through Teranet Land Information Services Inc.

MCBS is also the first jurisdiction in the world to provide electronic registration of land-related documents. A successful pilot program in Middlesex County is being expanded across Ontario beginning with on-line land registration in the counties of Halton, Wentworth, Peel, Dufferin, York, Durham and Ottawa. Over 80,000 electronic documents have already been registered.

Phone: MCBS – (416) 326-8555 or (800) 268-1142
Phone: Teranet – (800) 208-5263

Electronic Personal Property Security Registration (PPSR)

PPSR records and reproduces information concerning personal property that has been used to secure loans. Businesses large and small rely on PPSR to maintain records on secured assets other than real estate. Online submissions to the PPSR database are registered and accessible to clients within 24 hours. Electronic searches of the data base are also available. Both registration and search activities will be available through internet access in 2001.

Phone: (416) 325-8847 or (800) 267-8847
Fax: (416) 325-0487

Electronic Incorporation, CIA/1 Filing, and Company Searches

Electronic incorporation, corporate information updates and company CIA/1 Filing and company searches may be conducted via the Internet or dial-up access.

Electronic incorporation allows clients to electronically file Articles of Incorporation for business corporations from their home or office and receive a Certificate of Incorporation in minutes.

Electronic filing of the Initial Return, Notice of Change Form 1 and Annual Return Form 1 under the *Corporations Information Act* for Ontario corporations is updated to the Public Record instantaneously and the client receives confirmation of the update within one business day.

Electronic searching of corporate and business name information offers online access to the ministry's Companies Branch public record.

These services eliminate the need to submit paper documents to MCBS' Companies Branch. For further information, please contact the following Primary Service Providers, under contract with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services:

OnCorp Direct Inc.

Internet Address: www.oncorp.com

Phone: (416) 964-2677 or (800) 461-7772

Cyberbahn Inc.

Internet Address: www.cyberbahn.ca

Phone: (416) 595-9522 or (800) 806-0003

Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) Working Partnerships Program

A five-year \$11.8 million program designed to encourage more Aboriginal partnerships with the Corporate Sector. The program is expected to help corporate Ontario understand the opportunities in working with Aboriginal businesses and better understand the culture and traditions. The program provides eligible Aboriginal organizations with funding to hire staff who work at the community level to promote partnerships and develop business expertise.

Phone: (416) 326-2364

Fax: (416) 326-4017

Web site: www.nativeaffairs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/baeh.htm

Ministry of Citizenship

Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD)

The OWD promotes the economic independence of women through partnership initiatives with educators, business and community organizations. These support educational opportunities for girls that will lead to career and life success; promote the participation of women in math, science and technology-based training; encourage the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the skilled trades; and support women's entrepreneurial success.

Phone: (416) 314-0300

Fax: (416) 314-0247

Web site: www.gov.on.ca/MCZCR/owd/index.html

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

Healthy Futures for Ontario Agriculture

The four-year, \$90 million Healthy Futures for

Ontario Agriculture program is aimed at maintaining and building on the success of Ontario's agri-food industry. It focuses on encouraging agri-food businesses to enhance the safety and quality of Ontario food products, capitalize on marketing and export opportunities, and improve the quality and efficient use of rural water resources.

Phone: (888) 588-4111

Fax: (519) 826-4336

Web site: www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA

E-mail: hfoa@omafra.gov.on.ca

Rural Economic Development Program (RED) – a component of Ontario Small Town and Rural (OSTAR) Development Initiative

The five-year \$200 million program is aimed at removing barriers to economic growth in rural Ontario by promoting a diversified business climate; exploring new products and new markets; creating a climate for long-term job growth; and investing in technologies and sectors that contribute to economic development in rural Ontario.

Phone: (888) 588-4111

Fax: (519) 826-4336

Web site: www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA

E-mail: ostar@omafra.gov.on.ca

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) – Taking care of Business in Rural Ontario

Business retention and expansion (BR+E) is a community-based, volunteer-driven economic development tool to encourage the growth and stability of local business. BR+E works to improve the competitiveness of local businesses by evaluating and addressing their needs and concerns.

Phone: (888) 466-2372

Web site: www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA

E-mail: BrandE@omafra.gov.on.ca

Research and Technology Transfer

By developing and transferring innovative technologies to industry stakeholders, OMAFRA is committed to improving the competitiveness of the Ontario agri-food sector. Investment in research is essential to encourage growth and jobs in the sector.

Phone: (519) 826-3800

Fax: (519) 826-3841

Investment and Market Development

OMAFRA supports Ontario's goals of economic growth and job creation through an aggressive investment retention and attraction program. The ministry's Food Industry Division serves as a single window to government for the food industry (food processors, distributors, retailers, food service and related associations).

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INVESTMENT

Phone: (888) 466-2372 ext. 6-4190
Fax: (519) 826-4333
Web site: www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA

MARKET

Phone: (888) 466-2372 ext. 6-4210
Fax: (519) 826-3460

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (MTCR)

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership (OTMP)

The Ontario government established the OTMP in April 1999 to work with tourism industry stakeholders in strengthening Ontario's tourism marketing efforts. The partnership aggressively markets Ontario as a year-round, world-class tourist destination by undertaking consumer research and developing and delivering tourism advertising campaigns for domestic and international markets.

Phone: (800) 263-7836
Fax: (416) 314-7536
E-mail: tourism.partnership@edt.gov.on.ca

Investment and Development Office (IDO) The new Investment and Development Office (IDO) was formed in line with the creation of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (MTCR) in February 2001. The Investment and Development Office (IDO) is dedicated to helping the tourism, culture and recreation industry increase its competitiveness by supporting new product development and investment in Ontario.

IDO works with the industry to develop high-quality, innovative products and destinations; improve service quality; establish dynamic and compelling gateways, as well as friendly and exciting tourism information centres that will encourage extended stays and return visits, and provide support to improve the investment climate and increase investment in Ontario.

Phone: (416) 325-5306
Fax: (416) 327-2506

Northern Ontario Tourism Marketing Association

The Northern Ontario Tourism Marketing Association, also known as the Northern Tourism Marketing Company (NTMC), was established in 1998 as a result of the Ontario government's investment to enhance the marketing of the tourism sector in Northern Ontario. NTMC's marketing programs and products complement

provincial tourism marketing and focus on positioning Northern Ontario as premier tourist destination.

Phone: (807) 346-6862
Fax: (807) 346-6892
Web site: www.ntmc.on.ca
Email: sales@ntmc.on.ca

Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM)

Resource-Based Tourism Diversification Program

The Resource-Based Tourism Diversification Program (RBTDP) is a \$6.3 million, three-year initiative. It is aimed at assisting the Ontario resource-based tourism sector in identifying and effectively accessing alternative and value-added tourism markets which are based on Crown natural resources in Ontario. The program assists the tourism sector in expanding beyond traditional fishing and hunting outfitting markets to newly emerging markets for eco-tourism, adventure tourism and specialty outdoors tourism activities.

The program focuses on providing practical assistance to:

- identify tourism diversification opportunities;
- develop commercially-viable business plans; and,
- access capital for necessary improvements to buildings, equipment, and other infrastructure.

Phone: (866) 326-7526
Fax: (705) 564-7583
E-mail: glenn.warren@ndm.gov.on.ca

Summer Jobs Service

The Ontario government's Summer Jobs Service can assist students find a summer job with businesses (including farm businesses), as well as non-profit or community organizations. The program provides free services to improve job-search and self-marketing skills. It also provides \$2.00/hour wage subsidies for businesses (including farm businesses) and community organizations that employ students for the summer.

For Northern Ontario:
Phone: (807) 475-1678
Fax: (807) 475-1589
Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/summejb.html>
E-mail: raeanne.honey@ndm.gov.on.ca

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New strategy

- Converting all Business Self Help Offices to Small Business Enterprise Centres over the next three years. These centres will help small business owners through their start-up period and the crucial first five years of growth. They offer entrepreneurs access to mentoring, as well as information and services covering management, marketing, financing and technology.
- Expanding the number of Small Business Enterprise Centres to 42 across Ontario.
- Emphasizing *Salute to Small Business Month* as an annual October event to recognize the outstanding contribution small business makes to Ontario's economic well-being.
- Developing a network database with partners, and helping entrepreneurs incorporate e-business into their daily operations. Ontario's small businesses must have all the tools they need to compete in the 21st century.

Another fundamental pillar of the small business strategy is the formation of a Small Business Advisory Council. This council will coordinate research and advise on business trends. It will also develop service quality standards and advise on client and program needs. It will make sure that, province-wide, Ontario's business network is doing all that it can to help its small business community.

"Our government is very serious about working with our partners to help small businesses succeed. This new small business strategy will mean greater support for all entrepreneurs," says Runciman. "Combined with the positive economic conditions our government has put into place, including lower taxes and reduced red tape, it will help entrepreneurs prosper over the long-term."

Visit www.ontario-canada.com for the location of the Small Business Enterprise Centre nearest you.

Young entrepreneurs – link to Ontario's continued prosperity

All across Ontario young people are showing creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and determination as they start and run their own businesses. In this article, we profile two of the many who are succeeding, creating jobs and helping Ontario continue to be a leader in economic growth.

ThisFurniture.com – Anatomy of a start-up

Jennie Bosnali was 25 years old and waiting tables at Casino Windsor when she realized she wanted to start and run her own business from home.

"I decided on an e-business and thought an office-in-a-box business aimed at the small, home-office might be viable," she explains. While there were a few furniture e-businesses, no one had staked a claim on the web-based small office furniture business.

Jennie investigated suppliers, specifically those that offered ergonomic furniture, delivery services and the development of a user-friendly web site. Then with the help of her local Small Business Self-Help Office she established a business plan.

"Right now I'm in the process of refining my niche and exploring creative and inexpensive ways of marketing the business," she says.

So, what does Jennie think it takes to be a successful entrepreneur? "You have to start with a good idea. You have to bring together all the resources needed to ensure success. And, most important, you have to have faith in yourself and be persistent."

Theodore William Group

Theo Margaritis and William Ferguson, partners in a thriving North Bay marketing and communications firm, started their business the day after graduation from the University of Nipissing.

They each contributed \$500 cash and a computer, and went after "premium clients who wanted premium work."

"It was really hard at first," says William. "It's difficult to get high-end accounts without a portfolio, so we had to be patient and persistent."

Five years later, the Theodore William Group is prospering. Its client list includes O.N. Telecom, Ontario Northland and Nipissing University. It has eight full time employees and offers services from graphic design to corporate image development, to media planning and buying.

The two partners also recently jumped into the southern Ontario market, capturing a contract with a large Mississauga-based health care company with more than 1,000 international clients.

"Right from the start we knew what we wanted," William says. "We investigated our competition carefully and patterned ourselves accordingly. We also learned from our mistakes. That's critical to success in any business."



William Ferguson and Theo Margaritis founded their successful marketing and communications firm, the Theodore William Group the day after graduation with \$1000 and a computer.

Student entrepreneurs create jobs and build their future

Hundreds of enterprising Ontario youth had little time for swimming or camping this summer. Instead they were happily learning the ins and outs of running their own business.

The government's four-year Young Entrepreneurs Strategy, launched May 10, 2001, hopes to inspire more young people to choose entrepreneurship as a career and equip them with the tools they need to succeed.

The strategy includes three programs that target various age groups. The *Summer Company* program assists students to start up and run their own summer business. The program provides business training, mentoring and an award of up to \$3,000. Youth 15-29 years of age, who are returning to full-time school in September, qualify.

In addition to the *Summer Company* program, *Future Entrepreneurs* introduces an entrepreneurial mind-set and skills to students in Grades 7 and 8. *My Company* is a business start-up loan program for young people aged 18 to 29. Business training is also provided.

Three *Summer Company* award winners have had a very busy summer. Seventeen-year-old Andrew Oldroyd of Brantford wanted to be a web designer for a long time but was practical about his opportunities. "Business start-up costs are steep," says Andrew. After learning about *Summer Company*, he worked for a week to complete the required business plan and was very excited when it was accepted.

Since June, Andrew's company, *ATM Web Design*, has designed web pages for small businesses including the

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London company experiences solid growth in manufacturing electrical transformers

It's a classic case of taking the ball and running with it. Dan Steinhaur was acting as a consultant in the specification of electrical transformers when one of his clients asked if he could manufacture the product for them. "I was on the phone in my upstairs bedroom at the time," says Steinhaur with a laugh. "I told my client I'd check with Production Control, put my hand over the mouthpiece, had a brief conference with my cat, and then assured him that I could make the eight week deadline."

In fact, Steinhaur had no production facilities at all. He solved that problem by going immediately to his local Small Business Enterprise Centre in the City of London. In London, the Centre also offers a business incubator system. (Business incubators nurture new firms, offering space, as well as services to help them grow. The main goal is to produce "graduates" – businesses that are financially viable and free-standing when they leave.)

Steinhaur rented 400 sq. ft. within the incubator and set out to fill his order. Eight weeks later, the transformer was delivered and Stein Industries Inc. was on its way.

"We stayed in the incubator for five years, growing to a point where we required 15,000 sq. ft. of space," said Steinhaur. "It was a great way to begin. The incubator offered flexibility both in space and lease requirements. We also benefited from the camaraderie of other small businesses. We learned a lot from them æ both what to do, and what not to do."

Three years ago, Stein Industries moved into its own 12,000 sq. ft. building in London. The company now has 18 employees and offers two main product lines. The first is a transformer rectifier set used for air pollution control systems. Transformer rectifier sets power large industrial precipitators that take the soot or dust out of the combustion process, thus

ensuring that the particles are not blown into the air. The second focuses on transformers used to power large industrial buildings. The company also builds transit rectifier transformers to power subway trains and trolley cars.

"About 70 per cent of our business comes from the United States and



about 30 per cent is from Canada," says Steinhaur. "We do well within our specialized niche markets, and plan to continue to concentrate on all three product lines. The air pollution control line, in particular, has been very good to us, and we want to maintain and expand that market. We do have competitors so we are very cognizant of market share." The company provides value-added service by going to the client site to take measurements and ensure the unit is mechanically interchangeable with existing units. Each transformer is made to order, taking six to eight weeks to complete.

Stein Industries has grown by about 25 per cent over the past three years. "Next year we will consciously plateau for a year or so," says Steinhaur. "That's our preferred method of growth. It allows us to work at a steady level throughout the plateau, and at the same time put all the mechanisms in place, build cash reserves, raise the line of credit, and bring new people aboard to enable us to actively grow again."



Above: Coil winding machine at Stein Industries; the company has grown about 25 per cent over the past three years.

Left: Transformer Rectifier Sets, manufactured by Stein Industries, used for Pollution control systems.

He continues, "In another five years, look for us. We'll be at 25 or 30 employees, quietly growing, perhaps building another plant to accommodate product growth. And hiring more Ontarians."

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EfstonScience

Word of mouth also helps build repeat business. "We're seeing parents who are interested in purchasing a higher quality of educational gift for their children. We see parents who have received gifts from our store when they were children who are now coming in to buy gifts here for their own kids," says Nick.

Creativity runs in the Efston family. As if the giant telescope perched on the building's roof wasn't remarkable enough, this fall Irene and Nick plan to have the building's exterior painted with science-related murals to highlight their location as a Toronto landmark. Add to this a keen science sense, and the equation equals success.

Fourth annual Ontario Global Traders Awards launched

On August 24th, Economic Development and Trade Minister Bob Runciman launched the fourth annual 2001 Ontario Global Traders Awards (OGTA) program at the Etobicoke plant of Soheil Mosun Limited, manufacturers of the distinctive awards. Runciman outlined the nomination process and announced that RBC Financial Group was the new lead sponsor for the OGTA. Brockville, Guelph, Niagara Falls and North Bay were selected to host the 2002 OGTA regional ceremonies this spring. The OGTA honours excellence in exporting among small- and medium-sized Ontario companies.



Pictured here admiring a new batch of OGTA awards are from left to right: Soheil Mosun, President, Soheil Mosun; Rob Ford, Councillor, Etobicoke North, City of Toronto; Darius Mosun, Vice-President, Business Development, Soheil Mosun; Minister Bob Runciman; Duarte Miranda, Vice-President, Trade, RBC Global Services; and Cyrus Mosun, Vice-President Sales, Soheil Mosun. Soheil Mosun is a premier exporter world-wide of exclusive, custom-made products and installations in metal, wood, plastic, stone and glass.

WSIB program invites employers to get involved in workplace safety

Despite the hard work and best efforts of employers, workers and government on a typical working day in Ontario, one worker dies from a work-related injury or illness. Three people require amputations, 30 suffer from permanent disability and 400 are injured seriously enough to require time away from work. The average compensation cost of an injury or illness resulting in time off work in Ontario is \$11,000, and the average time off work is 28 days.

Everyone agrees that safer workplaces benefit both employers and employees through increased productivity, efficiency and morale. Yet despite these compelling facts, a considerable number of Ontario companies have not registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). Small businesses are more likely not to be registered.

"Typically small businesses start out as responsible enterprises that grow and expand," says Wayne Weatherbee, General Manager of WSIB's Small Business Services. "A common example is where an entrepreneur starts a business as a one-person operation, which doesn't need

WSIB coverage. However, over time, the business grows, employees are hired and soon you have an unregistered operation."

Until now, many employers who are required by law to have WSIB coverage have been putting off registering – hesitant to come forward because of the possible consequences.

To help these businesses, the WSIB has launched a new Voluntary Registration Program. Under this limited time program, any employer who contacts the WSIB to register voluntarily will pay premiums retroactive only to January 1, 2001, instead of being charged back to the date the first employee was hired. The WSIB will not charge for previous years, and will not pursue any offence charges for non-registration. By taking advantage of the Voluntary Registration Program, employers comply with the law and avoid higher retroactive premium payments.

Employers who are registered with the WSIB receive insurance benefits for their employees for work-related injury and illness. Those benefits cover lost wages, payment for health care costs, and help for an early and safe return to work.

Registered companies also have access to safety programs run by the WSIB and its partner agencies, which help prevent injuries in the workplace.

"The Voluntary Registration Program is in response to the need to ensure there is fairness for employers, certainty of coverage for workers and their families, and prevention programs in every workplace in Ontario," says Wright. "If you are unsure whether you are required to register with WSIB, now is the time to find out."

The easiest way to determine what your business is required to do is to visit the WSIB web site at www.wsib.on.ca. The Small Business Services section of the web site will help you locate your industry sector and a customer service representative who is familiar with your industry. The same information is also available by calling (416) 344-1013 or 1 800 387-8638.

"We are really encouraging non-registered employers to contact their nearest WSIB office and ask to speak to a customer service representative," says Weatherbee. "This is a time-limited offer, and anyone who isn't registered, for any reason, should take advantage of it now."

Business clients get online with government

(www.ontario-canada.com) has come up with an electronic solution, in the form of virtual trade missions (VTMs), a cost-effective way for companies to learn about export opportunities and meet potential customers. Using video-conferencing and the Internet, exporters participate in business matching and product promotion, without the cost of international travel.

Bill Saunderson, Chair of Ontario Exports Inc., emphasizes that the VTMs are not meant to replace trade missions, but to augment them and other OEI initiatives, such as trade shows and incoming delegations.

"It's a very efficient use of technology," he says. "So far, we've conducted five VTMs to Singapore, Malaysia, Italy and the United States, with 26 Ontario companies participating. And it's not

limited to the high-tech sector. We want all sectors of business and industry to take advantage of this service."

Should those exporters want to brush up on a specific Ontario law before embarking on their virtual trade mission, they can log on to the province's e-Laws web site at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca. Here they'll find consolidated laws that are available online within 14 days of their enactment. E-Laws will eventually be enhanced to provide laws online within 24 hours of their enactment.

In the meantime, the government continues its efforts to cut red tape using information technology. The use of electronic forms will grow to include more services, and include other levels of government. Eventually, businesses will have a virtual business passport in the form of an electronic document which

will contain all of their dealings with government.

"Privacy is paramount," says Mr. Evans, "so we are taking a very balanced approach to this. Client privacy is built into our system's design, not just added as a veneer. When these services are joined in the future, clients will have to have a security key to link the various databases. That way, they will be able to change their business address, for example, in one secure electronic transaction that will take care of all their dealings with government."

The expression "red tape" (from the red tape formerly used to bind legal documents in England) may itself become obsolete. Last October, Ontario became the first province to pass legislation that treats electronic and paper transactions and contracts equally.

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Student entrepreneurs create jobs and build their future

local Crime Stoppers and H.D. Brown Enterprises. Andrew feels his strengths are the technical and sales side of the business; he contracts out more complicated design to a friend. "We also design e-mail letterhead with a photo and contact information that suits business people like accountants, financial planners and realtors," says Andrew. "It helps the reader connect with a real person and gives a personal touch to their e-mail."

Metta Van Brugge, age 20, grows, sells colourful gladiolas, thousands of them. Under the banner *Flowers from Metta*, you'll find her booth outside at the popular St. Jacob's Farmers Market in Waterloo. Using her *Summer Company* grant, Metta purchased 10,000 gladiola bulbs, rented a delivery van and with her mother's help, learned

bulb planting skills. During the program, Metta enjoyed learning how to manage finances. She also appreciated the mentoring.

Throughout the summer Metta worked the Market on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On alternate days she cut, packaged and prepared. "I enjoyed being my own boss and meeting customers," says Metta. "I also sold more than planned in my original business plan." *Flowers from Metta* will continue at the Market on Saturdays after Metta returns to school this fall.

Daniel Dale's company, TRIDYNAMIC STUDIO, develops web sites for York Region small businesses and business professionals. Daniel's first customer was his father's accounting firm. Other high profile clients include GEL Inc.

and El-Ad Group, an Israeli real estate developer. Daniel gained business experience last summer working on web design for a venture capital group. He and his associate, Michael Parks, used their start-up capital to invest in new software and upgrades. "This is something I can be proud of," says Daniel. "I feel a sense of accomplishment." He credits the mentoring he received during the program with keeping him focused.

"These young entrepreneurs deserve much praise for their innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. I hope they inspire other young people to think about creating their own jobs," said Economic Development and Trade Minister Runciman. "More entrepreneurs mean more employment opportunities in our province."

Quality workbenches, cabinets create more efficient workplaces

“We are an aboriginal business operating on a reserve,” explains Donna Dunham, owner of Sunrise Manufacturing. Dunham’s evident pride in running a business on the Six Nations Reserve of the Grand River Territory, goes hand-in-hand with her pride in her company’s products. Since 1996, Sunrise Manufacturing has produced high-quality metal workbenches, drawer cabinet systems, lockers and shelving components.

“We were actually involved in the business for some years before that,” said Dunham. “In 1987, my husband and I purchased a minority share in a large company that manufactured metal workbenches and locker components. When that company began focusing on a different product line, we approached them about purchasing the original inventory, machinery and product line

and setting up on our own.” Ultimately, Dunham bought five acres on Six Nations, built a 16,000 square foot facility, and production and product expansion began.

Today, Sunrise Manufacturing’s most popular product is the Titan Workbench. This is an efficient, metal workstation that comes in seven sizes and provides a solid work surface capable of withstanding great pressure. A smaller Series II workbench is also popular. Sunrise offers eight colours for drawers (alongside the standard blue and red), which provides an edge over competitors.

“We are constantly improving our product,” says Dunham. “Right now we are redesigning the pedestal for our workbenches. We are also designing a different variation of cabinet.” Sunrise cabinets are currently available in an almost limitless number of configurations. The company also offers custom fabrications, taking concepts from design stage to finished product.

Dunham explains that Sunrise is a complete manufacturing operation. “We order the steel. We form the product. We weld it. We punch it. We paint it. We do it all,” she says. With a dealer network that stretches across Canada, the company’s products are found in factories, auto shops, schools, research labs, homes and offices across the country and into the United States. “Even though we’re a small company, some of our customers are pretty big,” says Dunham. “We make sure we have a good product, deliver on time and are competitive in price.”



The Titan Workstation – Sunrise Manufacturing’s most popular product. It comes in seven sizes.

Currently operating with five employees, the number of workers at Sunrise fluctuates with the size of the orders. “Last year we had one very large order that brought us up to 11 employees,” says Dunham. “We are also automating the manufacturing where possible, and that means we can accomplish more with fewer people.”

When she looks for employees, Dunham says she never looks beyond the reserve. “Since we opened, I have hired only aboriginal people. I believe there is no reason to go elsewhere.” She also believes it is important for businesses to know that it is very possible to have a light manufacturing business situated on a reserve. “We are not in an industrial park, we’re in a community and we try to think of our neighbours,” Dunham says. “We have a recycling program in place. We’re conscious of noise. We try to keep the traffic down. And even though, for instance, the truck routes are not right here, there’s still a lot that can be done.”

As for the future, Sunrise Manufacturing will continue to improve and expand its product line. Alongside orders from dealers, individual orders regularly come through the company’s web site (www.sunrisemanufacturing.com), and Dunham expects that e-business will be a growing factor in stimulating sales.



Owner Donna Dunham of Sunrise Manufacturing with some of the high-quality metal products she makes on the Six Nations Reserve of the Grand River Territory.

EfstonScience – an extraordinary superstore for scientists and hobbyists

Brother and sister Irene and Nick Efston acknowledge that their father was always ahead of his time. When Evan Efston, an industrial engineer by trade, had the idea in 1970 to open a retail science store, he needed a loan for an early-computerized accounting/database system. Back then even progressive banks weren't yet computer-savvy. Perseverance paid off. Aided by his wife Terri, Efston started the distinctive store and began to build an extensive and loyal consumer and business base.

"If you're one of our science customers today, you're almost guaranteed to be computer-based, too," says Nick. As Vice President of Marketing Communications and President respectively, Irene and Nick now run the family business. Their mother still manages the operation on a daily basis while dad is busy in retirement.

Billed as *The Science and Astronomy SuperStore*, EfstonScience in Toronto celebrated its 30th anniversary last year.



Left: The creative Efston clan – Evan and Terri, flanked by children Irene and Nick – providing products that are creative, educational, useful and unique; Below: EfstonScience, with its giant telescope; the distinctive store celebrated its 30th anniversary last year.



Housed in a unique, passive solar heated building (also Evan Efston's concept, built in 1981 and still modern) there are four floors jam-packed with scientific, technological and educational products for kids, students, amateur astronomers, serious hobbyists, and institutions. You can find anything from life-like rubber brains to powerful computerized telescopes. "We are the most comprehensive science and astronomy store in Canada with the largest selection of telescopes on display in North America," says Nick.

While EfstonScience was still young, it developed a direct mail catalogue. Today, sales from its three primary catalogues are strong. For products to make the catalogues, they have to meet the criteria of being "creative, educational, useful, and unique," says Irene.

Recognizing the Web's potential to reach a wider audience of science enthusiasts, the company ventured into e-commerce two years ago. EfstonScience, at www.e-sci.com, now sells over 8,000 products online from its various catalogues including general science merchandise, quality tools, lasers and complex optical equipment, and telescopes, binoculars and accessories. "Most of our customers are Canadian," says Nick. "But at least 75 per cent of online sales are from the U.S." For up-and-coming science

buffs, the web site caters to e-sci kids with a wide variety of "Smart Science Fun" toys and games featuring Discovery Channel products. A series of online buying guides has tips on how to choose the right telescope, microscope or other product for budding scientists.

EfstonScience is a retail store, warehouse and distribution centre all under one roof. Their experience allows them to keep inventories to a minimum and ship orders quickly. A solid working relationship established with Arizona-based tool giant Jensen Tools, Inc., expedites fulfilment of EfstonScience orders. EfstonScience accepts U.S. orders from the Jensen catalogue and in turn Jensen ships from their Phoenix location.

Many of EfstonScience's customers are other businesses. "Our customers have many technical questions. Our staff must be knowledgeable in specialized areas such as astronomy or industrial. Many of our staff were EfstonScience customers first," says Nick. "They love their hobbies so much they can offer customers their experience and in-depth product knowledge."

THE ONTARIO BUSINESS REPORT

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The focus of this newsletter is on business – successes, news, trends, opportunities, challenges and issues affecting Ontario's business climate. Information is drawn from ministries and agencies across government and from other public sources believed to be reliable. All efforts are made to ensure timeliness and accuracy.

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