

OCTOBER 2009 VOLUME XI, NUMBER 10

Small Business

FUNDING REPORT

Your Direct Route to Government Financing for Your Business

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AMBITIOUS ENTREPRENEUR LAUNCHES TWO BUSINESSES IN SIX MONTHS



Halifax Mother Secures \$20,000 in Bank Financing, \$10,000 in Government Loans and \$2,000 in Government Grants.

When the worldwide economies tanked last September, Kerry Derwent-Robb felt the repercussions more than many people. The Halifax, Nova Scotia mother of two quickly lost her assets in a company she'd worked hard to build, along with the financial independence it had given her. But had she not faced that adversity, she probably wouldn't be where she is today, with a freshly minted home staging business and the exciting opportunity to introduce a revolutionary new product to real estate, building, and home staging industries.

Derwent-Robb grew up in Ayr, Scotland, a large town on the southwest coast near Glasgow, and a mere 20 minutes from the world famous Turnberry Golf Course, which has hosted the British Open a number

of times, including last summer. When she was in her teens, her father began 3D Golf plc, a company which offered golf vacations around the world, and soon after she'd finished school, Derwent-Robb decided to join him and her brother in the company. For the next 22 years, she helped build 3D Golf into one of the UK's largest golf holiday specialists.

Six years ago her husband, Alasdair, retired from the Royal Air Force, where he'd worked as an air traffic controller, and started looking for work as a civilian. Toronto's Pearson International Airport needed air traffic controllers, and the family decided to move, landing in Oakville, Ontario. "We flew like Mary Poppins across the Pond," says Derwent-Robb with a laugh. Three years

later, Alasdair found work in Halifax, and the family settled there.

With her stake in the family business helping to support her, Derwent-Robb devoted her time to raising the couple's twin boys, Bradley and Cameron, and doing volunteer work. Then the economic turmoil began, which hit the travel industry hard. That, combined with a drastic decline in the Euro, meant 3D Golf faced some tough challenges, and while the company survived, the financial independence Derwent-Robb had enjoyed for so long was shattered. For the first time since her youth, she needed to look for work.

"I thought oh my god," she says. "I thought, what can I do?" Working out of her home

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would be a drastic change, after years of being there for her growing boys. “I was trying to figure out a way to recoup what I’d lost in a way that I could still look after my boys – still always be here for them.”

One day, Alasdair suggested she consider becoming a home stager. She’d always had a flair for interior design, and had made their own home a showpiece. Home staging has become a big industry in the last decade. While real estate professionals have long prepared homes for sale by “staging” it – that is transforming a home to make it more appealing to potential buyers – staging came into its own as a separate profession in the 90s. Stagers reduce a home’s flaws and accentuate its positives in any number of ways, both inside and out, and research suggests that home staging can reduce a listing’s time on the market by one-third to one-half. It can also help fetch as much as 15 percent more than an empty home or an improperly staged home.

Derwent-Robb seized on the idea. It would put her talents to work and allow her some freedom and flexibility in her workday. She began by enrolling in an online program in order to become qualified, and last March,

she launched Chips and Kerry Home Staging. (The name’s a whimsical play-words of a favourite snack of her Scottish youth – chips and curry.) Qualification in hand and website in place, she was ready to begin looking for clients.

With her sales and marketing background, Derwent-Robb knew the importance of market research. What did her customers – the real estate agents in her area – want from a home stager? She held an open house at her home, inviting a number of Halifax agents, and opened up the floor to their ideas. One desire came across strongly. Many agents wanted to be able to furnish a home at a moment’s notice. In major markets, such as Toronto, staging companies often have warehouses full of furniture they truck to homes to show them off for faster sales, but not in Halifax.

“This is the Maritimes,” says Derwent-Robb. “It’s very different from Ontario. It’s like chalk and cheese. That isn’t here yet.”

And delivering on that need seemed daunting, if not impossible. “Maybe in the high end specialized markets, but for the average Joe, it’s not accessible,” she says. “I thought it just being me, and I have a young family – I couldn’t afford all the overhead and a place to store all the furniture and a big truck.”

Then inspiration struck. “I thought cardboard!” She Googled “cardboard furniture”, and to her delight, she found a U.S. company that was manufacturing and selling furniture made out of cardboard for this exact purpose. NextStage Furniture was only about a year old. Kevin Neilsen, the founder, often found himself called on to help his wife, a home stager, move heavy furniture here and there after he’d already



put in a full day of work. He thought there had to be a better way, and he came up with a rough prototype. He showed it to a friend of his, who designed a more finished prototype, and the two men realized they were on to something. NextStage had begun.

“I thought holy smokes,” says Derwent-Robb. “This is exactly what I need.”

Cardboard furniture suggests something flimsy and cheap looking. But NextStage Furniture is remarkably sturdy (supporting more than 1000 pounds), shaped like real furniture and, once covered, indistinguishable from the real thing. To the stager, the benefits are obvious: A loveseat weighs only 25 pounds, you can fit an entire home’s worth of furniture in a van, or carry around a few rooms in a Honda Civic. And it’s a huge savings – you can own four NextStage sofas for the price of a single real one.



“It’s like the Staples advert,” says Derwent-Robb, referring to the office supply chain. “You press a button, and everything seems to work. That’s how I wanted my company to work. Whatever a client wants in regards to

furniture, they give me one phone call, and it’s taken care of. It’s not a case of, oh my god, I’ve got to organize and get stuff in the warehouse and organize trucks.”

But beyond her own use, she could see a lot of potential for the product. “I thought, well if you don’t ask, you don’t get,” she says. Kerry called up Neilsen, and learned that the Eastern Canadian market was open. And before long, she’d negotiated to become the exclusive agent for Ontario eastward.

While she was already getting staging work, both getting Chips and Kerry going and working on selling NextStage required funding. And that required a business plan. She contacted the Small Business Consumer Centre, and began working with Senior Consultant David Hatton. With the plan in place, she began making the rounds, but was initially frustrated. Hatton suggested that, rather than refer to the NextStage furniture as cardboard furniture – which might seem cheap and flimsy – she call it “Magic Furniture”. She established a relationship with RBC, and was able to secure a \$20,000 loan. Even better, the manager she was dealing with also serves on the Board of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Education and Development (CEED), a Halifax agency which distributes federal funds in the region, including the Seed Capital loan. That loan provides financing for business start-ups or expansion.

She was quickly approved for \$10,000 in start-up financing from the government; she receives \$8,000 initially, and after providing receipts for the expenses it has gone toward, will receive the remaining \$2,000.

With \$30,000 in hand, she’s ready to purchase enough NextStage furniture to do a couple of rooms in two different houses, outfit herself with marketing equipment, such as a Mac Notebook to aid her in sales presentations,

and work on marketing both Chips and Kerry and NextStage. As soon as her first demonstration furniture arrives, she’s already booked to share the CEED booth at the CEED Fresh Ideas 2009 Conference, an entrepreneurship conference directed at youth.

She’s also booked for an intensive three-day workshop offered by Canadian Staging Professionals. In addition to building her staging skills, the workshop will be a perfect NextStage marketing opportunity – as she’ll be networking with a number of fellow home stagers. And CEED, which contributes a grant of up to \$2,000 to loan recipients for business management skills training and counselling, has agreed to fund half of the \$2,000 course, as well as contributing \$1,000 to a basic bookkeeping course.

One short year ago, Derwent-Robb hadn’t even considered home staging as a career; now she’s on her way to the next stage and beyond.

www.chipsandkerryhomestaging.com
www.nextstagefurniture.com



From Employees to Entrepreneurs

Airport snow plow business gets funding, advice and connections through federal program

When ATCO Frontec, the airport operations and maintenance company Barry Smith, Larry Rushton and Garry Wright worked for, decided to end a growth initiative refurbishing high-speed airport snow removal equipment, the three men made a joint decision. The project was worth pursuing. They quit their jobs and launched Airport Technologies Inc. (ATI).

And in a short few years, the company moved beyond “re-lifing” the snow removal equipment to manufacturing and selling an innovative new high speed snowplow.

“This is the hardest thing we’ve ever done, by far,” says Barry Smith. But he wouldn’t have missed it for the world.

While the business was almost exclusively financed by the partners, the Whitehorse Plains CFDC was also a great help with advice and networking, says Smith. “They made a small investment in the early stages, which provided us with some working capital, but a lot of the ways they can help you is not necessarily from a financial standpoint. They’ve been very helpful with respect to their business counsel.”

The team had long recognized the need for a wholly new product – a high speed snowplow built specifically for the airport marketplace. “Typically airports take a vehicle that’s built for the highway, and they modify it,” says Smith. Usually, that vehicle’s a dump truck. “So they take a chassis that’s designed for something else, and turn it

into an airport plow.” The Snow Mauler is something else entirely. “We in fact build an airport plow – something that’s designed specifically for that job.

The Winnipeg Airport Authority (WAA) expressed an interest in the project and became eager to be involved with its



The team behind ATI: (L-R) Barry Smith, Larry Rushton, Garry Wright

development. “That accelerated our wading into product development much sooner,” says Smith, who says they were lucky to have WAA participation. “While it seems like common sense, it’s the exception to the rule to actually be able to get the people who are going to own and use these vehicles involved in the development. They were very much involved in the design of the prototype.”

Airport snow removal has to be fast, but safe. Trying to plow around parked aircraft on a apron can be a tricky business, and the view from the cab of a modified dump truck, eight feet back from nose, is not that great. The Snow Mauler has a cab-forward design, which positions the operator directly over the blade, so the corners of the blade are never out of sight.

In some competitive designs that do incorporate a cab-forward design, the engine is situated below the cab. Maintenance

crews can’t stand them. The Snow Mauler’s engine is midship, where the crew can get at it and work more quickly and easily.

The blade on one of these plows can be close to eight metres long and can weigh nearly 2,300 kilograms. So the Mauler features a heavier front axle than you’d find on a highway truck, which is built to carry weight on the rear rather than the front. All that weight up front means you need ballast in the back. In a dump truck conversion, a big weight box sits on the frame rails wherever they can fit it. On the Mauler, the weight box is built in-frame, which keeps the center of gravity low for safety when the vehicle’s roaring along at 60 kilometres an hour, which is what the job demands.

More horsepower and a heavier duty transmission complete the package.

Operators and maintenance people love it, says Smith. And they should, since they had a hand in designing it. The cab environment went through three different setups before the operators gave it their thumbs up, and ATI completely redesigned the console package after listening to what the operators had to say about the prototype.

Whitehorse Plains CFDC took an interest in ATI as an employer, and helped the partners work through the various levels of government in getting started. “They worked with us on our business plan, and they’ve been great in giving us access and helping open doors.” Smith says another key benefit of working with the CFDC is it provides an instant entrée into an extensive business network. “If you’re looking for something, you can call and

Your Business Growth Tool Kit

*Turn a
dead-end
into a
door-opener.*

**How voicemail can
be one of your most
powerful sales tools**

By Michael Caron

Continued on next page...



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Smith has this perspective on the first few years of a company’s life. “You have to be prepared for some lean times. And if you’re getting into a partnership, you’d better have a very good understanding of your partners and know that you’re going to be able to live with each other in the tough times, because you’re going to have tough times. If you can do that, you’ll be fine. If you can weather that three to five year initial period, things start to get a little bit more relaxed, and you can get on with improving what you do and get growing.”

www.atifirst.com



Are you frustrated constantly by trying to connect to prospects and getting their voicemail? I hear this complaint from many of our clients.

Times have changed. In the early 90s, before voicemail was ubiquitous, studies showed that one business person attempting to contact another business person would get through 22 percent of the time. Sounds low doesn't it? But it gets worse. Today's stats are more like 10 percent. That means that 9 out of 10 times, you're going to get voicemail.

Instead of looking at this marvel of

communication engineering as your enemy, think of it as your friend – at least in the short term. Before you say I've lost my selling marbles, let me explain. How many of you can convey a compelling description of your product's benefits and features in 30 words or less? Some of you may be able, but wouldn't it be nice if you had two full minutes? Of course it would.

Well, that's the difference between getting a prospect on the phone right off the bat and being able to leave a voicemail message. I far prefer to leave a carefully crafted, practiced,

voicemail message as my first voice contact with a prospective customer. You can't get cut off; you can build some "personality" and trust; and, with many systems, you also have the added benefit of erasing it and doing it again if you screw up. Be careful to leave the message as best you possibly can and finish *before* trying to erase it – just in case you can't!

Read the accompanying article by Sian Henderson, Northbound Learning's Program Delivery Director, to learn more about using voicemail to warm up prospects.

Michael Caron is the president of Northbound Learning, Inc., which grows sales in your company by growing your salespeople. Northbound provides unique selling solutions that lead to lasting results — guaranteed — by partnering with you to develop customized programs that work in your industry and maximize your investment in human sales capital. www.northboundlearning.com

How to leave voicemail messages that resonate with prospects.

By Sian Henderson
Program Delivery Director, Northbound Learning

As frustrating as voicemail is when making chase calls to prospects, it's now the norm. And unfortunately, there's an inverse relationship between the size of a company and the ability to connect in person. That is, the bigger and more attractive the prospect company, the lower the chance of your prospect picking up the phone. Like everything else in the prospecting process, you should measure your results in this area. The number of contact attempts divided by the number of connections with your prospect

is called "contact ratio." Sales reps that I've worked with report contact ratios on the high end of 30 percent and a mere 2 percent on the low. With voicemail confronting you so often, how can you increase your chances of being called back?

If you make any of these six all-too-common mistakes, you're damaging your chances at success. Learn how to avoid them, and you'll see immediate results.



1) *You don't actually leave a message*

I had to get this out of the way, because I still run into some salespeople who have been trained to "never leave a message". This makes no sense. Why would you give up the opportunity to get your valuable message into your customer's ear? I actually prefer to get voicemail on the first attempt. Why? Because it paves the way for my next call. Rather than catching him off guard, it lets me give the prospect the purpose of my call and what's potentially in it for him to have a conversation with me. Think about it. When you're interrupted from doing something by an incoming sales call, what's the quickest and easiest way to get back to what you were doing? That's right – saying no. Have you ever quickly said "No thanks" to a telemarketer or a door canvasser and then thought later, Hmm. I might have been interested in looking into that, actually? Even if it's something you might be interested in buying, the natural knee-jerk reaction is to say no. Offering your prospect a

well crafted voicemail prior to speaking with you can prevent that reaction.

2) *You're not ready with a Compelling Business Reason (CBR)*

There must be a reason and perceived benefit for the listener to take time out of their busy day to have a conversation with you. Too many salespeople position the voicemail around how great they are or their company is instead of what might be in it for the prospect.



3) *You ask for too much*

Your first goal in a chase call or voicemail should be to have a two-way conversation. Salespeople shouldn't ask for a meeting without having first established GAS. (value they may be able to Gain for the prospect, future issues they may help them Avoid, or current problems that they might help them Solve. A voicemail should request a very low commitment – for example, a brief conversation to see if there might be a fit between some challenges the prospect has and your company's capabilities.

4) *You "wing it"*

Some salespeople are against using a phone script. Common reasons include: It sounds so fake; you can't predict what the prospect is going to say; or, my personal favourite, I like to mix it up so I sound fresh. Unfortunately, these same people have little success in booking appointments, and after listening to them in the field, it's easy to see why. Their voicemails are all over the map: convoluted, weak and generally pointless in nature. Yes, some people sound like they're reading when they use a script, but

only because they haven't put the time in to practice it until it sounds natural. I do a little bit of amateur acting, and on the first read-through of our scripts, it's terrible. I sound 100 percent like I'm reading, and I am! But after rehearsing my lines hundreds of times over, it's a different story on opening night. A high priced Hollywood actor would never ask to roll the cameras until they know their lines down pat, and neither should you.

5) *You leave too much time in between voicemails*

If you call your prospects once every few weeks, it's easy to become forgotten. On the other hand, if you only leave a couple of days between your calls to a prospect, you'll be forefront in their minds and they'll feel more compelled to respond. At the end of each voicemail, say something like, "If I don't hear back from you by say, end of day tomorrow, I'll try you again at 10:15 on Thursday." Your prospects will very quickly get the idea that you're not going to be giving up any time soon. Strike a reasonable balance between being persistent and pesky.

6) *You act too submissive*

If you act like a lesser business person begging for the prospect's consideration, you have reduced yourself, and the prospect can lose respect for you. You are one business person requesting to speak to another business person to see if there may be a mutual benefit in working together. Approach the call from an Equal Business Footing (EBF). Picture how you might speak to another person you meet in a park while walking your dogs together. You wouldn't be pushy or threatening. That's how you should think of your prospect when you're leaving a voicemail. If you sound relaxed, confident, open and honest, your prospect will be much more likely to want to speak with you.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS R&D FOR LIFESAVING PRODUCT

Ottawa's Safety Turtle an international success

It can happen in seconds – and cause a lifetime of loss. When Ottawa's Bob Lyons learned that a friend's daughter had slipped under a pool cover and hadn't been found for at least 15 minutes, he knew something could be done to prevent similar tragedies. "I had children and realized that even with the best supervision, accidents can happen," he told *Safe Homes Magazine*. "Parents needed a way to immediately know when a child was in danger."

The electrical engineer developed an alarm system, which consists of wristbands worn by young children and a base station (shaped like a turtle), which instantly detects when the wristband is immersed in water and sounds an alarm. So even if an accident occurs while your back is turned for a moment, you're alerted immediately.

The Innovation Canada website reports that the Safety Turtle took two years of research and development. The biggest challenge was designing a product which could be exposed to water without damaging the hardware, software and battery. The alarm needed to go off the instant a child fell in a pool, but not from something as harmless as a sprinkler or rain. And household electronic products couldn't be allowed to interfere with the signals.

The National Research Council Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP) helped with the products R&D, and once the technology was developed, the company turned to a product design company to make it consumer-ready. The Turtle base station came out of this process.

Lyons introduced the product at the International Pool and Spa Show, and Safety Turtle received a big boost a couple of years later when American media, including Oprah Winfrey, picked up on the product and promoted it.

www.safetyturtle.com

Grant Update

NEW AND REVISED PROGRAMS OFFERING FUNDING FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

Apply now for your share. Be the first to get funding from new programs. Our researchers keep you informed of the latest grants and low- or no-interest loans to help you grow your business.

BUSINESS MENTORSHIP INSTITUTE OF SASKATCHEWAN (BMI)	
BUSINESS MENTORSHIP INSTITUTE OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.	
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a culture of mentorship in Saskatchewan To grow and retain business in Saskatchewan through the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience through mentorship
ELEGIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic and business development organizations throughout Saskatchewan To access the services, the organization must be a member of BMI. Memberships cost between \$25 and \$250
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information resources, training, access to a database and a resource library Business leaders lend new entrepreneurs their experience and advice, and offer them encouragement when they need it
CONTACT	BMI 207-116 Research Dr Innovation PL Saskatoon, SK S7H3R3 E-mail us: info@saskmentor.com . 306.964.2011

BUSINESS AND REGIONAL GROWTH PROGRAM	
CANADA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR QUEBEC REGIONS	
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help enterprises improve their performance, become more competitive and engage in more innovation to facilitate their sustainable development To create the right conditions to attract foreign investment and international organizations
ELEGIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs, SME group and associations, non-profit organizations whose main agenda is to support business and economic development, and organizations/institutions dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of knowledge and know-how Projects must fall into one of two components: Sectoral and Regional Growth SME Competitiveness
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding in the form of contributions and grants
CONTACT	Dominion Square Building 1255 Peel Street, Suite 900 Montréal, Quebec H3B 2T9 Phone: 514-283-6412 • Toll free: 1-866-385-6412 • Fax: 514-283-3302

Financing File

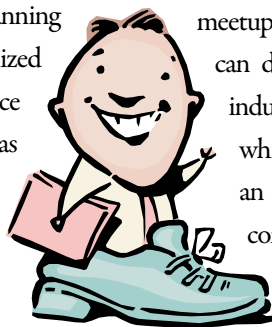
START YOUNG NEW PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ENCOURAGE STARTUPS



Last year, Mike Gillespie of ACE Landscaping in Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia took out a \$5,000 Students in Business loan to buy a lawn tractor. He ended the year by paying off the loan and posting a \$10,000 profit. "I can take on more customers now because I can cover more properties in less time," said Gillespie, when he was honoured with the 2008 Students in Business Award last fall.



Funded by the federal and provincial governments, Students in Business offers loans of up to \$5,000 to Nova Scotian students aged 16 to 34, who are attending, or are planning to attend, high school or a recognized post-secondary institution. Since the program began in 2004, it has loaned a total of more than \$1.9 million to more than 460 student entrepreneurs.



You can find government programs aimed at financing youth-run businesses, launching their careers, or hiring youth at every level of government, and a number of new programs have recently emerged, many deploying funding from the federal

government's economic stimulus package. These include grants and loans.

The SBFC research department has identified these programs, among others:

Venture Connection – Students

This program, run by Simon Fraser University, offers young people in B.C. an opportunity to learn more about business and cooperatives. Open to B.C. post-secondary students, it provides access to student clubs such as Venture Network; workshops to help students start their own business or explore business ideas; networking opportunities such as Venture meetup, a drop in group where students can discuss their business ideas with industry leaders; and venture Labs which help young entrepreneurs an opportunity to develop their companies with the assistance of hand-picked experts and mentors.

Young Entrepreneurs

To encourage Manitoba's young people to start their own full-time businesses and pursue self-employment as a career choice, the



Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth provides grants of up to \$4,000 or 50 percent of start-up costs and capital expenditures to young entrepreneurs between 18 and 29. Participants must attend a three-day Business Start training program, must have a clear business plan, and must work on the business on a full-time basis or plan to.

Youth Strategy Program

The Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions offers personal loans of \$5000 and \$15,000 to young entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 35 who intend to carry out projects within the territory of one of Quebec's Community Futures Development Corporations. Intended to counter the migration of young people to large urban centres by encouraging them to start their own business in their community, the program offers a 24-month interest holiday and the possibility of two-year capital repayment holiday.



Mentors for Young Entrepreneurs

This Canadian Youth Business Foundation

(CYBF) program helps young entrepreneurs succeed by matching them with industry experts who can guide them through business start-up and maintenance. Participants must have been in business for less than 12 months, and includes both face-to-face mentoring from an industry professional who has the skills and expertise to help you succeed as well as the MENT2B Online Orientation program, which allows young entrepreneurs to develop an ongoing relationship with their mentor.

Youth Opportunities Unleashed – YOU

Offered by Enterprise Saskatchewan, this program offers loans of up to \$15,000 to young adults between 18 and 34 to launch a business.

Applicants must provide a complete and feasible business plan including a three-year financial projection; complete a loan application that includes a demand promissory note, a general security agreement and an application fee; provide information to the SBLA related to his/her intentions for training and arranging for a mentor. Loans are granted at competitive interest rates, which vary with each association, up to a maximum of 10% per year, and businesses have up to five years to repay their loans. The program includes workshops and seminars to help you learn what you need to know to become a successful entrepreneur.

CYBF and BDC Start-Up Financing Program

This recently introduced partnership program offers financing to youth in order to start a new business. BDC provides up to \$15,000, matching the CYBF-approved amount. It's open to youth between 18 and 34 years old

who are eligible to work in Canada and who have a viable business plan, and prepared to invest a minimum of 10 percent of the total in the company, and pay a \$50 processing fee.

Summer Jobs Service

An Ontario program financed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, this program offers free job search and self-marketing services for youth and offers employers wage subsidies to hire youth for summer employment. Employers can receive a wage subsidy of \$2.00 per hour when youth are hired for summer employment, and the program, which can provide subsidies for up to 16 weeks, is available from April to September



Western Youth Entrepreneurs Program

This Western Economic Diversification program provides youths between the ages of 18 and 29 with equity investments, loans, and loan guarantees. Administered by Community Futures Development Corporations, it offers loans of up to \$25,000 to youth with business ideas, and terms are tailored to the individual's specific needs and are at competitive interest rates.



Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

This provincially funded program offers students the opportunity to train as registered apprentices while completing credits towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Eligible employers are Ontario businesses seeking to expand their work force, and who are able to provide structured training and supervision for the apprentices, and eligible apprentices are in Grade 11, at least 16 years old, and are seeking to work towards a career

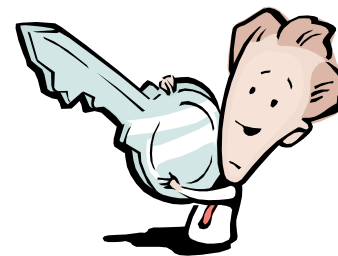
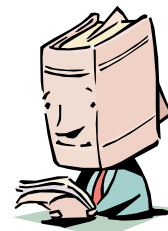
in a skilled trade. The Ministry provides WSIB coverage during the contract, and the program helps employers access subsidies. Employers are able to assess students before committing to an apprenticeship

Career Focus (Youth Employment Strategy)

This program financed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada helps Canadian youth obtain career-related work experience by providing funding for employers. Eligible business can hire youth from 15 to 30 years of age, and receive subsidies to cover the wages of the youth employed. Subsidies are also available for workshops, seminars, coaching support and/or mentoring opportunities to support a client's work experience.

Summer Company

Designed to provide hands-on business training and mentoring for Ontario youth, this program offers grants of up to \$1,500 for start-up costs and up to \$1,500 upon completion of the program. Applicants must be between 15 and 29, as of the application deadline (Early April, yearly) and be returning to school full-time in the fall of the same year. The must propose a new business idea and plan to operate their business in Ontario. Participants also have an opportunity to network with a local business mentoring group for advice.



Stimulus funds for hard-hit communities available till March 31, 2011

\$1 billion program benefits small businesses

The federal government's economic stimulus efforts will continue. Despite some recent bright spots in the economy, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says there's no evidence a sustained recovery is yet under way. The stimulus package is scheduled to run until March 31, 2011, and Flaherty's comments seem calculated to underscore this as well as suggest that Liberal threats to trigger an election could derail the package.

Announced early this year, the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF) will provide \$1 billion over two years to address the short-term economic needs of Canadian communities impacted by the global recession. The national fund will provide an economic stimulus by supporting projects that create jobs and maintain employment in and around communities that have experienced significant job losses and lack alternative employment opportunities.

A base amount of \$10 million of funding support is being provided to each province and territory. The balance of the funding is allocated regionally on a per capita basis.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) will implement the fund in the four western provinces, investing \$306 million to help communities reduce the short-term impacts of the economic downturn. In Ontario FedDev Ontario and FedNor are distributing the funds (In Northern Ontario projects must be completed by March 31, 2011. In Southern Ontario projects must be completed by March 31, 2010 - funding for 2010/2011 will be provided through the Southern Ontario Development Agency.)

In Atlantic Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is responsible for distributing \$100.4 million. Projects must be completed by March 31, 2011.

To be eligible for funding under this initiative, projects will have to meet the following criteria: They can start quickly; and



- They can be completed within the two-year timeframe of the Community Adjustment Fund with no obligation for continued spending.
- Funding priority will be given to projects in rural, single-industry communities that:
- Generate immediate employment;
- Create the most near-term employment per dollar of federal investment;
- Leverage funds from provinces, territories and other funding partners;
- Build on partnership arrangements already in place and existing programs; an
- Provide a legacy of longer-term ecological and/or economic benefits.

The Government of Canada will provide contributions of up to 80 percent of eligible costs for non-commercial projects and, for commercial projects, up to 50 percent of eligible costs for capital projects, as well as 75 percent of eligible costs for non-capital projects.

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