



Economic Development Summary 2024

OUR TEAM



RICK VAN STAVEREN

Director, Economic
Development



JOE TURPIN

Manager, Business
Attraction



GRAHAM ATKINSON

Manager, Business
Development



SAIRA ANJUM

Manager, Enterprise
Services & Millworks



ANTHONY BUFFONE

Coordinator, Small
Business Advisory
Services



JESSICA MAIONE

Marketing & Program
Coordinator



HARLEEN PUAAR

Manager, Enterprise
Services & Millworks
(currently on leave)

MILLWORKS CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

These achievements highlight the positive strides in the development of our entrepreneurial ecosystem. Exploring international partnerships and embracing new economic trends will further amplify these accomplishments, bringing even more prosperity to our community.

MILLWORKS RELOCATION

- **Successful Transition:** The incubator office moved smoothly to a new location, providing an enhanced environment for our valued clients and staff with minimal disruption.
- **State-of-the-Art Infrastructure:** The new office is perfectly equipped with the latest IT and amenities, ensuring a seamless operational flow for both private office and coworking clients.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

- **Dynamic Partnerships:** Millworks continues to flourish with the support of public sector icons such as NOHFC and FedNor, alongside vibrant new relationships with private sector allies like Wishart Law Firm, Stefanizzi Professional Corporation, and Northern Insurance Brokers, enhancing our service offerings for clients.

KEY CLIENT INTERACTIONS

- **Impressive Engagement:** Responded to **628 inquiries** and facilitated **822 consultations**, fostering entrepreneurial spirit and supporting business expansion.
- **Mentorship Success:** **Matched 30 eager clients with expert mentors**, creating transformative professional relationships.
- **Thriving Employment:** **Contributed to the creation of 53 new jobs**, marking a significant impact on local economic vitality.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

SUMMER COMPANY & STARTER COMPANY PLUS

Empowered aspiring entrepreneurs with funding and training, paving pathways to thriving businesses. Participants benefited from insightful mentorship, igniting a passion for continued growth.

STARTUP VISA PROGRAM

A strategic collaboration with the Toronto Business Development Corporation (TBDC), positioned to attract innovative startups to our vibrant community. This partnership opens exciting doors for new ventures.

CONFERENCES & TRADE SHOWS

Attended Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce She Leads, the Huron North Funding Forums, and the SBC Ontario Network Conference, resulting in meaningful connections, skill development, and future opportunities for collaboration.

DIVERSE FUNDING SUCCESS

Supported various businesses through strategic funding initiatives, driving impactful growth and innovation.

PRODUCTIVE WORKSHOPS

Hosted 22 empowering workshops, attended by 575 engaged participants, encompassing cutting-edge business strategies.

PROACTIVE COLLABORATIONS

Actively engaged with key governmental agencies, enhancing program effectiveness and innovation through ongoing dialogues and collaborations.



YEAR-END METRICS

- Remarkable Business Growth: **Launched 51 new businesses and sustained 143 existing ones**, showcasing our community's resilience and entrepreneurial spirit.
- **Optimized Occupancy:** Achieved consistent coworking and private office occupancy, reflecting our attractive and supportive business environment.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION INITIATIVES & ACTIVITIES

SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS INITIATED

- Supported the relocation of the Millworks facility
- Port Development: Continued progress on port projects to boost regional economic activity and capacity.
- Working with various consulates on Foreign Direct Investment (Boston, Chicago)

JOBS AND INVESTMENT

- Direct Jobs Identified: **71 jobs** were created from selling industrial land and other economic activities. These will include positions in transportation, fisheries, and manufacturing.
- Economic Growth: Collaborative efforts with stakeholders to foster a robust job market and economic landscape.

CONFERENCES AND LEAD GENERATION

- DistribuTech: **Achieved 36 leads**, showcasing innovative projects.
- Ontario Forest Industries Association: Secured **2 significant leads** and enhanced industry insights for economic opportunities.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS

- Government Agency Engagement: Collaborated with agencies such as Invest Canada and Invest Ontario to attract businesses and conducted **37 total interactions** across various consulates and governmental bodies.



GREEN HYDROGEN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

GREEN HYDROGEN INITIATIVE

- Reinvigorated prospects with new partners exploring green hydrogen production.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Actively engaging companies to harness wind and solar power, strengthening Sault Ste. Marie's position as a green energy leader. In talks with a major energy producer on developing a significant wind farm in the area.



CLIENT ENGAGEMENT AND POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Building a strong presence with potential for \$50-\$80 million investment and 10-15 jobs, through 8 interactions since an initial conference meeting.

INDUSTRIAL INITIATIVE I

Positioned Sault Ste. Marie as an attractive location with \$500 million potential investments creating 100 jobs. Engaged through 14 interactions.

INDUSTRIAL INITIATIVE II

Created compelling opportunities with our unique resources, attracting a potential \$1 billion investment and 200 jobs, fostered over 14 meetings.

STORAGE INITIATIVE

Progressed with real estate assessments, potentially bringing \$10 million investments and 15 jobs, with 5 key interactions.

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE INITIATIVE

Facilitated investment of \$2.5-5 million, creating 10 jobs, through 7 interactions starting March 2024.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

GREEN HYDROGEN AND BIOMASS HUBS

- Planning to establish these as centers for sustainable growth.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

- Continued collaboration with: First Nations, Government agencies, Canadian consulates, and Michigan partners.

REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- **Gateway Site:** Progressed towards its preparation for sale, optimizing the area's economic potential.
- New Developments in the City: New facilities contributing to urban growth, such as the new Legion, Retail Developments and Real Estate.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS COMPLETED AND INITIATED

PORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

- **Current Status:** The initiative to develop a public access port facility in Sault Ste. Marie is underway, with a focus on enhancing trade and growth opportunities. Key objectives and preliminary studies have been outlined.
- **Stakeholders Engaged:** Initial discussions with municipal, provincial, and federal government entities, as well as industry representatives, have established a foundation for collaboration.
- **Next Steps:** Continue stakeholder consultations to refine project scope, secure funding commitments, and finalize feasibility and environmental studies to advance toward implementation.
- Project is currently on track.

GATEWAY SITE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- **Current Status:** Funding for the Gateway Development Site initiative has been successfully secured through an approved Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) funding request, with additional contributions from the City of Sault Ste. Marie and Economic Development Corporation (EDC). An RFP process has been completed to select a service provider for conducting an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA).
- **Stakeholders Engaged:** Engagement has involved FCM, municipal leadership, EDC, and the selected service provider.
- **Next Steps:** Complete the ESA and prepare the property for marketing to prospective developers.

WOOD PARK CRT & YATES AVE (INDUSTRIAL LAND SALES)

- **Current Status:** Approximately 95% of Yates Avenue properties have been sold, with development and site preparation progressing on most sites. At Wood Park Court, an Environmental Assessment (EA) process was initiated following an RFP. Strategies for marketing and developing the remaining parcels are being actively explored depending on the results of the EA.
- **Stakeholders Engaged:** Discussions are ongoing with businesses and stakeholders in the vicinity who have expressed interest in the remaining available parcels.
- **Next Steps:** Finalize and implement new strategies to attract investment, pursue business opportunities for the remaining parcels, and support continued development on sold properties.





INDUSTRIAL LAND ACQUISITION

- **Current Status:** A geospatial review was conducted by the Economic Development and Planning departments to identify potential industrial land sites for acquisition, guided by criteria aligned with the Economic Development strategic plan. Several promising sites have been identified.
- **Stakeholders Engaged:** Initial outreach with property owners and relevant stakeholders has begun to assess the feasibility of acquisition and development.
- **Next Steps:** Conduct detailed feasibility assessments, continue engagement with stakeholders, and prepare recommendations for acquisition and development strategies.

KEY CLIENT INTERACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Algoma Steel: Discussed EAF project development and Port Development opportunities.

Arauco: Explored potential adjacent land acquisition and Biofuel Upgrade/Expansion Project.

Tenaris: Focused on Long Range Industrial Strategy Committee objectives.

Watco: Collaborated on Long Range Industrial Strategy Committee objectives.

Algoma University: Supported the ongoing Makwa Waakaa'igan Project, including discussions on City funding contributions.

JOBS SUPPORTED

Wolowich Tool Repair (5-7 jobs): Expansion and development of new headquarters/business location funded through NOHFC Grow Stream and City of Sault Ste. Marie Community Development Fund (CDF)

Rolling Pictures Company (12-15 jobs): Expansion and efficiency improvement project funded through NOHFC Grow Stream, NOHFC People and Talent Program, and City of Sault Ste. Marie CDF

Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (20-25 jobs): New JD Aero Hanger Expansion funded through FedNor and City of Sault Ste. Marie CDF

TRADE SHOWS/CONFERENCES ATTENDED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS COUNCIL OF ONTARIO CONFERENCE

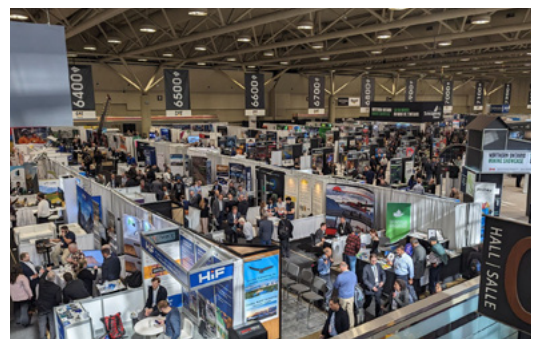
First attendance since 2018. Networked with Ontario's North Economic Development Corporation (ONEDC) reps, Invest Ontario, Invest Canada, and other EcDev stakeholders. Established leads for marketing industrial/commercial land.

PROSPECTORS AND DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (PDAC) CONFERENCE

Annual attendance. Engaged with potential developers and investors. Networked with Northern Ontario contingent to support local projects, including the Port Development Project.

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE BIO-ECONOMY (CRIBE) SYMPOSIUM

Locally hosted by CRIBE to connect stakeholders and thought leaders in the bioeconomy. Participated in workshops to identify opportunities and strategies in the sector.



WORKSHOPS

The **InvestSSM Funding Forum** is an annual event hosted by the Economic Development Department, aimed at fostering collaboration among multi-jurisdictional funders, including private equity groups, traditional lending firms, and government funding agencies. The forum provides a valuable opportunity for local businesses and owners to learn about various funding options and resources to support their growth and success.

This year, the event saw impressive growth, with a 25% increase in attendance, totalling **over 130 participants**—a significant jump from the previous year. The forum was successfully restructured into a more casual evening format, which contributed to the increased engagement and networking opportunities.

Plans are already in motion to host the 2025 Funding Forum, further building on the success of this year’s event to ensure continued support for local business development.



FUNDING APPLICATIONS SUPPORTED

A number of funding applications were supported through various funding sources for a total of over \$700,000.

BUSINESS NAME	FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT GRANTED
Tool Repair Company	NOHFC Grow Stream	\$153,507
Film Company	NOHFC Grow Stream	\$125,000
Film Company	NOHFC People & Talent Program	\$110,000
Tool Repair Company	Community Development Fund	\$15,000
Film Company	Community Development Fund	\$3,500
Warehousing	Community Development Fund	\$100,000
Warehousing	Economic Development Corporation	\$40,000
Gateway Site	Federation of Canadian Municipalities	\$100,000
Gateway Site	Community Development Fund	\$100,000
TOTAL		\$747,007

LONG-TERM INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY TEAM

- Meeting Date: October 2024
- Stakeholders Attending: Representatives from Watco, Algoma Steel, Tenaris, Arauco, Interfor, and City officials.
- Key Themes Identified: Infrastructure and technology development, Funding and capital investment, Access to skilled workers, Access to stable energy solutions
- Next Steps: Develop Terms of Reference and schedule second meeting for 2nd quarter of 2025.



FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES FUNDING GATEWAY

Funding approved by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and a RFP has been awarded for an Environmental Assessment to get the property ready for sale.

REAL ESTATE

See section 1 (most parcels transacted prior to 2024 with site prep and development occurring in 2024). Continued support through 2025 for site development includes work with Steel Speed and Trimount at this time.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR U.S. PARTNERS

A draft Bi-National Agreement has been established in collaboration with US partners and stakeholders, and a critical path for guiding workflow has also been developed.

We continue to advance the relationship and identify potential opportunities for future mutually beneficial growth on both sides of the border.

INDUSTRIAL LAND SALES (YATES AVENUE)

Since the inception of our Industrial Land Sales Strategy in 2021, we have total sales of \$2,000,000 before selling expenses. We are sourcing additional land for future development.

YEAR END METRICS

OUTREACH TYPE	PLANNED	ACTUAL
Business/Client Contact	282	408
Funding Applications Supported	4	6

INVESTMENT FUNNEL YTD

BUSINESS NAME	AMOUNT
Rolling Pictures	\$250,000
Wolowich Tool Repair	\$275,000
Stardust Studios	\$600,000
TOTAL	\$1,125,000

OTHER ACTIVITIES

OTHER ACTIVITIES BY THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP

- Active participation in the **First Nation-Municipal Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI)** sponsored by FCM and Cando. Quarterly working sessions were completed to identify areas where the Nation and the City could collaborate to advance both communities.
- The team has developed a **three-year economic development strategy** based upon the Corporate Strategic Plan 2024-2027, focusing on Area 1 – Community Development – Economic Activity – Develop shovel-ready projects to access available funding – Attract new business and ensure sufficient supply of industrial land – Support Entrepreneurs.
- Produced **Affordable Housing Video** highlighting Sault Ste. Marie’s unique blend of affordability and lifestyle, aimed at attracting new businesses and residents. The video features passionate testimonials from our local advocates, Graham Atkinson, Kirsten Bursche, and Jamie Coccimiglio.
- Produced **Good Things Happening in 2023** video highlighting community growth and development progress in all areas.
- Active participation in **Ontario’s North Economic Development Corporation (ONEDC)** to further the advocacy of growth in the north. Participated in the development of strategic direction and messaging to be used by economic development in our region.
- Facilitated the **Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy Forum** in Sault Ste Marie, which attracted several industry professionals to discuss the future of forest development and utilization in the region. Actively engaged with CRIBE on an ongoing basis.
- Economic development leaders have been Invited to join the **Toronto Metropolitan University Economic Development program advisory committee**.
- Ongoing engagement with **Invest Canada and Invest Ontario** to identify business opportunities that can be supported in Sault Ste Marie.

