



# Economic Development Task Force - Update

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ALERT

To the attention of the Clerk,  
Council, and Economic Development Staff

ALERT N<sup>o</sup>: 09/031  
May 5, 2009

## AMO Establishes Task Force to Foster Local Economic Development Opportunities

### Introduction:

Ontario's communities, workers and families are facing significant challenges, especially those communities with automotive, manufacturing, and resource industries. In the face of the current economic climate, there is increasing pressure on communities to do all that they can to remain places of opportunity, which are competitive on a global scale.

AMO's Board of Directors has established an Economic Development Task Force with diverse membership to advise and support the Board on all matters related to economic development. The Task Force includes representatives from business associations, economic development staff, the provincial and federal governments, and municipal elected officials and staff.

It is designed to encourage collaboration and information-sharing with other orders of government and stakeholders at a provincial level. All of the organizations represented on the Task Force have well established efforts, programs, and resources which advance economic development in different ways. The Task Force does not intend to duplicate those efforts, but serve as a discussion forum or 'clearinghouse' of ideas to enhance the local economic development efforts of communities across Ontario.

### Resources for Municipalities

At its first two meetings, the Task Force reviewed several papers and positions regarding economic development in Ontario. Below are those papers and some additional links to resources:

- **Investment Ready Communities, Strategy Building Blocks Final Report.** March 2008, Ontario Chamber of Commerce
- **Local Economies in Transition Initiative Final Report.** March 2008, Economic Developers Council of Ontario
- **Partnering to Compete: Strengthening Ontario's Economic Competitiveness.** October 2008, Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review
- **Harmonizing Sales Taxes – Part of a Long-Term Tax Reform Strategy.** April 2009, Presentation to the AMO Economic Development Task Force, Ontario Chamber of Commerce
- **Provincial Government Programs,** listing provided by the Economic Developers Council of Ontario <http://www.edco.on.ca/en/edcoresources/Provincial.asp>

REFERRAL TO \_\_\_\_\_  
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- **Federal Government Programs**, listing provided by the Economic Developers Council of Ontario <http://www.edco.on.ca/en/edcoresources/Federal.asp>
- **Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre (COBSC)**. The Service Centre provides entrepreneurs with free access to accurate, timely and relevant information on federal and provincial business-related programs, services and regulations. Information is available for clients who want to start, sustain or grow a business. Specialized research can also be provided to support well-informed business decisions. The Centre is jointly managed by Industry Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Government Services. It offers over 1,200 business information documents that cover a broad range of topics including business planning, financing, marketing, and human resource management. Information is available at [www.canadabusiness.ca/ontario](http://www.canadabusiness.ca/ontario) or at 1-888-576-4444.

All of the above information can be found at AMO's website, now with a section dedicated to **Economic Development Resources**. This will serve as an ongoing source of information for heads of council, councillors, staff, economic developers, and business partners.

### How to get involved

*Have a good idea your municipality would like to share?* If your municipality has a practice or an idea which is a showcase for others, please pass it on. Each meeting will review a best practice and share those details with all municipalities.

*Want feedback on a proposal?* If you have an idea which you would like the Task Force to consider or would like to make a presentation to get feedback on a proposal, please let us know. Please contact Matthew Wilson, AMO Senior Policy Advisor at [mwilson@amo.on.ca](mailto:mwilson@amo.on.ca).

### The Task Force:

The AMO Board of Directors established the Task Force in 2008. The group has met twice, in February and April of this year and will continue to meet on a quarterly basis. Its general strategic goals are to:

- Set a cooperative example of how competing interests can be aligned to encourage economic development at the provincial level
- Provide AMO members with immediate access to ideas and information arising from or discussed at the meetings including examples of municipal best practice
- Give advice to the AMO President regarding messaging and communications strategies which advance economic development
- Play a key role in shaping concurrent and plenary sessions at AMO led conferences including content and speakers
- Consider emerging issues and provide advice to AMO's Board of Directors

### Topics Discussed:

***Southern Ontario Development Agency*** – The Federal Government is in the planning stages at this time. Responsibility for its creation lies with Industry Canada.

**Business Retention and Expansion Program** – One municipality had great success using information from this program offered by the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs and recommends it to others.

**Changing Nature of Economic Development** - It was stressed that economic development is not just about investment attraction. It is also about workforce development, transition and diversification, and regional cooperation. Good economic development plans must include the role of colleges and universities and emphasize productive local partnerships.

**Just say no to Silos** – Emphasised at both meetings was the need to involve as broad a range of organisations as possible when pursuing local economic development efforts. It is “whole of community” approaches which are the most successful. Some communities have brought different constituencies together in town hall meeting format to chart common directions.

### Task Force Membership

The Task Force includes a mix of four key groups – elected and non-elected municipal officials; the federal and provincial governments; staff devoted to economic development; and business associations. AMO greatly appreciated the dedicated efforts and contributions of the following Task Force members:

**Chair, Doug Reycraft**, Mayor of Southwest Middlesex, AMO Past President  
**Sam Boonstra**, Director, Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre, Government of Canada  
**Trevor Binger**, Director, Municipal Finance Policy Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
**Tom Burton**, Deputy Mayor - Town of Tecumseh  
**Carl Cannon**, CAO, Municipality of Port Hope  
**Roger Caranci**, Councillor, City of London  
**Neil Everson**, Executive Director, Hamilton Economic Development  
**Jeff Garrah**, CEO, Kingston Economic Development Corporation  
**Patrick Gedge**, CEO, Niagara Economic Development Corporation  
**Brian Gregg**, CAO, County of Essex  
**Stuart Johnston**, Vice President, Policy & Government Relations, Ontario Chamber of Commerce  
**Jerry Knox**, Managing Director of Community Services, City of North Bay  
**Heather Lalonde**, Executive Director, Economic Developers Council of Ontario  
**Larry McCabe**, CAO, Town of Goderich  
**Ian McCormack**, Board Member, Ontario Chamber of Commerce  
**Marolyn Morrison**, Mayor, Town of Caledon  
**Aileen Murray**, President, Economic Developers Council of Ontario  
**Larry Petovello**, Director, Economic Development, City of Mississauga  
**Derek Picard**, Senior Policy Analyst, Ontario Chamber of Commerce  
**Delia Reiche**, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Thames Centre  
**Brian Rosborough**, Director of Policy, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
**Irene Sullivan**, Manager, Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
**Bob Wheeler**, General Manager, St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation  
**Matthew Wilson**, Senior Policy Advisor, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
**Kim Wingrove**, Director, Communities in Transition, Ministry of Economic Dev. and Trade

The next Economic Development Task Force Update will be released this summer.

For more information regarding the Task Force, please contact:

**Matthew Wilson, AMO Senior Policy Advisor**

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