

# SHARE

# B R — E

**South Huron  
Business Retention and Expansion  
Final Report  
February 2008**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		
What is Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E)?.....	2	
Project Overview .....	2	
South Huron BR+E Team.....	2	
South Huron BR+E Funding Partners.....	3	
South Huron BR+E Visitation Team.....	3	
Economic Barriers.....	3	
Goals & Objectives.....	4	
Measurable Outcomes.....	4	
PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS OF KEY BR+E FINDINGS		
Company Information .....	5	
Business Climate .....	6	
Future Plans.....	7	
Business Development .....	7	
Business Markets.....	7	
Financial Development .....	9	
Workforce Development .....	9	
Local Community.....	10	
South Huron Community Questions .....	11	
BR+E RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....		15
Community Unity.....	16	
Economic Development .....	17	
Downtown Revitalization.....	18	
Labour and Training.....	19	
Tourism.....	20	
Business Development and Enhancement .....	21	
CONCLUSION .....		22
APPENDICES		
A Message from OMAFRA.....	24	
A Message from SHARE Co-Chairs .....	25	
Map of SHARE BR+E Project Area .....	26	

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## What is Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E)?

"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 promotes a welcoming business environment. It fosters job growth and economic prosperity in Ontario by helping communities identify actions to address both opportunities and barriers facing local businesses."

-Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

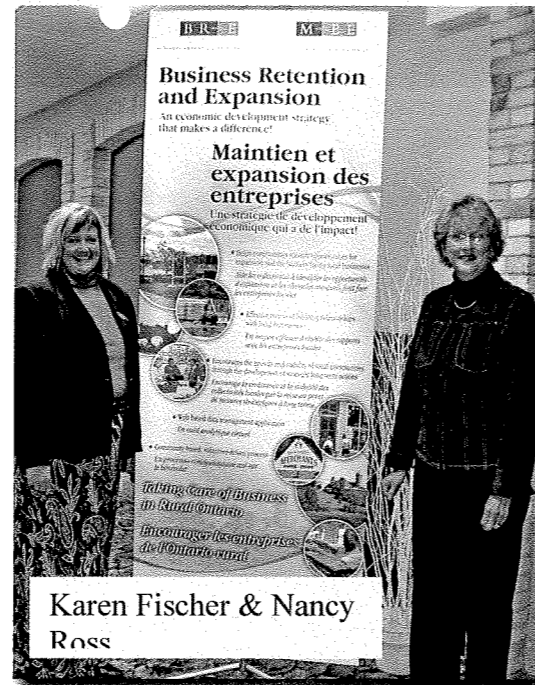
## Project Overview

In 2005, Board Members of the South Huron Chamber of Commerce met to discuss opportunities for economic development in South Huron. Gary Stephens and Nancy Ross from the Economic Development Division of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) were contacted to aide in finding a program or tool to assist in addressing the needs of the community. The concept of OMAFRA's Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) program was introduced and keenly received by the community at a public meeting in October 2005.

## South Huron BR+E Team

Since community support was evident, the South Huron Alliance for Retention and Expansion (SHARE) was formed to coordinate the BR+E program in South Huron. Hugh McMaster and Fred Simmons lead the project as Co-Chairs and Sherrie Broderick was hired as the Project Assistant. June Moore assisted with preparing the surveys. Scott Nixon was the volunteer Public Relations Coordinator. An 11-member volunteer task force guided the project through its various stages. The task force was divided into sectors according to the economic pillars in the community: Agriculture, Industry, Retail, and Tourism. Members of the task force were:

- Hugh McMaster, Project Chair, Tourism
- Fred Simmons, Project Co-Chair
- Frank Palen, Agriculture
- John Feeney, Agriculture
- Jim Bearrs, Agriculture
- Blaine Field, Industry
- Jerry DeBoer, Industry
- Joh Cusveller, Industry
- Cathy Seip, Retail
- Claire Dodds, Retail
- Maria Bakelaar, Retail



## South Huron BR+E Funding Partners

The South Huron BR+E program was made possible through the collaboration of the following local and regional partners:

- South Huron Chamber of Commerce (SHCC)
- Exeter Business Association (EBA)
- Municipality of South Huron
- Huron Business Development Corporation
- County of Huron

A successful application to the Ministry of Ontario Rural Economic Development Program (RED) matched the funding contribution of the local and regional partners and the project got underway.

## South Huron BR+E Visitation Team

One of the major roles in the South Huron BR+E program was to conduct interviews with participating businesses using a structured survey. Through this process, volunteers were able to collect the necessary data required to identify needs and issues in the community. The following individuals assisted with the visitation process:

- Sherrie Broderick
- Karen Britnell
- Tom Burke
- Dianan Cusveller
- Joh Cusveller
- Jerry DeBoer
- Angela Gibson
- Melanie Hardie
- Hugh McMaster
- Pat Palen
- Cathy Seip
- April Smith
- Doug Southon
- Mary Thompson
- Crystal Varley
- Janissa Williams

## Economic Barriers

In the application to the Rural Economic Development Program (RED), SHARE indicated the following economic barriers to be ratified through the South Huron BR+E program:

1. A lack of skilled labour and opportunities and a mismatch of skills, especially in manufacturing.
2. Youth out-migration to larger urban areas due to perceived lack of career and training opportunities.
3. A lack of communication throughout the community leading to the inability to work together for common goals.
4. Limited cooperation between organizations within South Huron.
5. The lack of identification of agriculture, industry or retail development land within the municipality to serve the global market.
6. No comprehensive economic development strategy at the municipal level.

Goals & Objectives

The following short term and long term goals were identified:

*Short Term Goals*

- To demonstrate and provide community support for local business
- To help recognize immediate individual business concerns and address these issues
- To improve communication between the local community and businesses as we as improve the business to business rapport
- To evaluate and address local businesses needs and concerns

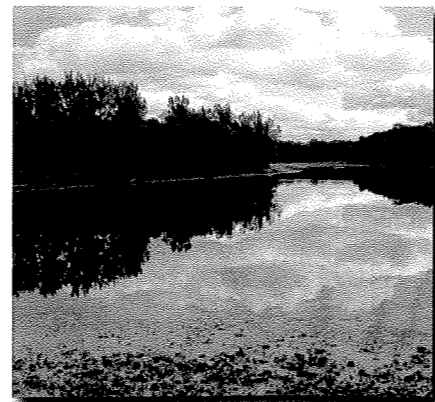
*Long Term Goals*

- Help make local business more competitive
- Help businesses create and retain jobs
- Help create a long term marketing plan for the local community
- Be a liaison between local government and upper levels of government and deal with the common elements of business, retention and expansion
- Help to establish and implement a strategic action plan for local economic development

Measurable Outcomes

The following measurable outcomes were desired by SHARE:

- The creation of an up-to-date business inventory
- Correct the identified negative perceptions of the community
- Create strategies to eliminate the economic barriers or limit the impact of the economic barriers
- Develop resources to resolve issues relative to attraction, retention and expansion as they occur
- Create an opportunity for the business community to unite to forge a stronger, more cohesive and progressive environment for expansion and prosperity

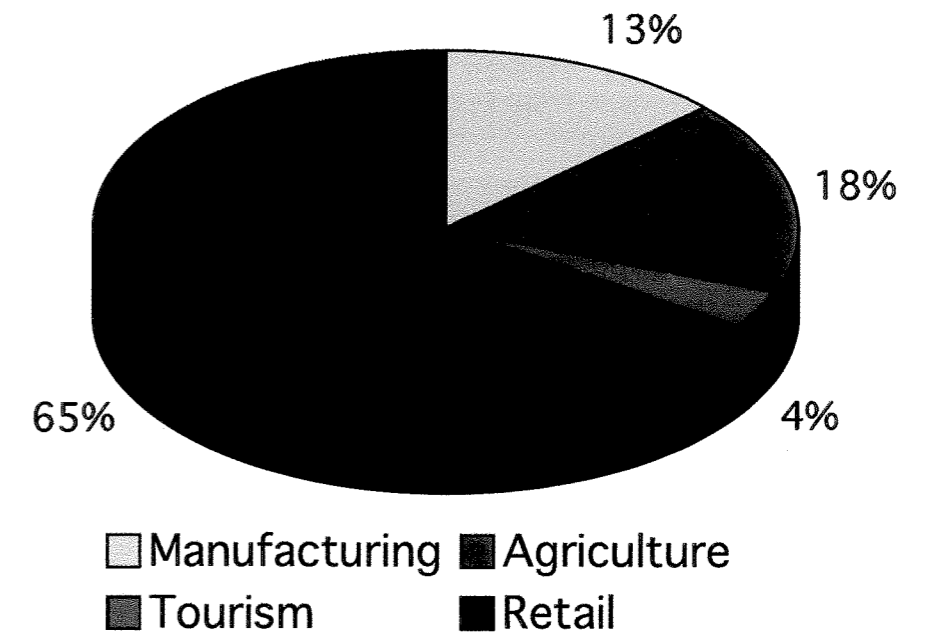


**PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS  
OF KEY BR+E FINDINGS**

Company Information

In total, 84 businesses representing a cross section of the South Huron business community were interviewed. Fifty-nine (59) of the businesses surveyed were family owned businesses and fifty-eight (58) of the businesses have been in the community for more than ten years. Sixty-three (63) businesses had fewer than twenty employees, which demonstrates the significance of small business in South Huron.

**Figure 1 Businesses surveyed by sector**



**Table 1 Legal form of businesses surveyed**

Corporation	61%
Sole Proprietorship	25%
Non-Profit Corporation	1%
Partnership	11%
Cooperative	1%
Other	1%

With over ninety-two percent (92%) of business owners being directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the business, it was alarming that only sixty-five percent (65%) of the businesses had a succession plan in place. Sixty-eight percent (68%) had a business plan and fifty-nine (59%) had a marketing plan.

## Business Climate

The Business Climate portion of the interview covered the owner or manager's perception of the climate and factors that foster or dampen the development of business in the municipality.

Overall, the general impression of the business climate in South Huron was favourable. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the respondents rated South Huron as a good to excellent place in which to do business. Seventy-seven percent (77%) indicated that their attitude towards doing business in the community has not changed over the past three years.

The following were perceived as the top ten barriers to expansion:

1. Availability of skilled labour (44%)
2. Availability of properly zoned and designated land (31%)
3. Lack of proactive new business recruitment (29%)
4. Business insurance (28%)
5. Resistance from local business (25%)
6. Serviced land (24%)
7. Approval processes (24%)
8. Availability of variety of different sized parcels of land (23%)
9. Water/sewage capacity (20%)
10. Business taxes (20%)

The majority of businesses rated the following services provided by the local government and organizations as somewhat satisfied to very satisfied: policing (89%), fire prevention and services (92%), public utilities (83%), street repairs (74%), snow removal (79%), garbage removal (76%), medical and health services (82%), schools (71%), library (71%), and recreational facilities (72%).

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the businesses had no contact with the local training board; however, the availability of skilled labour was identified as one of the top barriers to expansion.

Forty-seven percent (47%) were satisfied to very satisfied with the Exeter Business Association (EBA) although thirty-six percent (36%) of the businesses had no contact with the organization. Sixty-four percent (64%) were satisfied to very satisfied with the South Huron Chamber of Commerce while twenty-nine percent (29%) have had no contact with the organization. Since sixty-five percent (65%) of the businesses interviewed represented the retail sector, businesses appeared to be under engaged in the business improvement area and chamber of commerce.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the businesses interviewed reported having no contact with the local Community Futures Development Corporation (Huron Business Development Corporation).

## Future Plans

In the next three years, 48 of the businesses planned on remaining the same and 29 planned on expanding. The businesses that planned to expand expected that their expansion would lead to an increased workforce (46%), additional investment in equipment and technology (77%) and additional services for customers (62%). One business planned on closing in the next three years due to retirement.

## Business Development

The business development section of the interview involved current location of the business, technology and other competitive factors. The majority of businesses (93%) were satisfied with their current location; over half were owned versus leased. Thirty-three percent (33%) were home-based operations.

The most important factors in ensuring that the business remained competitive were:

- Improved customer service (90%)
- Availability of telecommunication services (79%)
- Strategic marketing (79%)
- Exchange rate for Canadian dollar (78%)
- Business planning (78%)

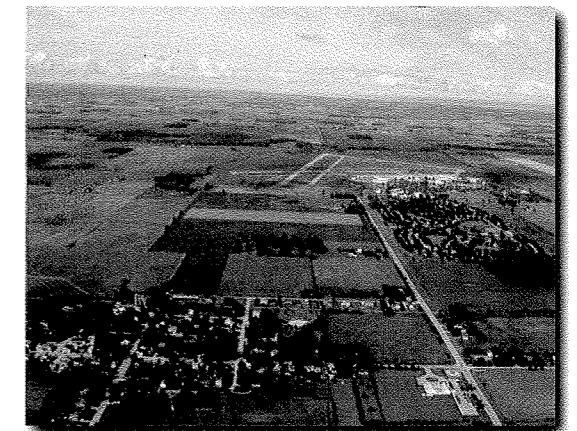
## Business Markets

The business markets portion of the survey considered what businesses do in their market quest to identify customer's needs, stay competitive and increase their sales.

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the businesses expressed interest in collaboration/networking/information sharing and joint marketing with other businesses in South Huron.

Current sales within Canada accounted for approximately ninety-one percent (91%) of the business' total dollar sales with over half of the sales generated from within the area.

During the past three years, the total dollar sales trends at fifty-eight percent (58%) of the businesses increased and twenty-four percent (24%) experienced the same or no significant change in sales. Seventy-four percent (74%) expected sales to remain the same or increase next year even though over half (52%) of the businesses expected competition in their market to increase.



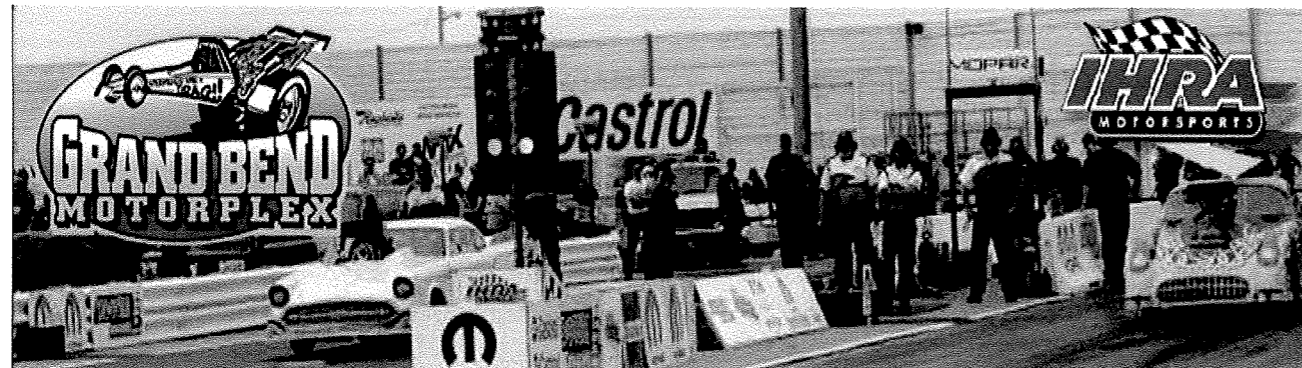
The majority of businesses received market research and/or trend information regarding their sector from the following sources:

- Suppliers (76%)
- Trade shows (75%)
- Industry/sector/association newsletters (65%)
- Business networking (52%)
- Industry/sector/association websites (48%)
- Government publications (43%)
- Government websites (32%)
- Consultants (31%)

Businesses in South Huron identified their customer needs using the following sources:

- Informal customer contact (84%)
- Customer complaints (61%)
- Internet, web page (47%)
- Trade or industry publications (44%)
- Marketing publications (43%)
- Sales calls (43%)
- Customer surveys (29%)
- Customer database management (28%)
- Customer comment cards (18%)

The most common materials used in marketing were the Internet, flyers and brochures, trade shows, general publications, distributors, event sponsorship, and business cards. Word-of-mouth advertising was also included as a commonly used method of marketing.



## Financial Development

The financial development portion of the survey reviewed financial lending sources that have been investigated, secured, used for operations and used for expansion. Financial planning and performance were also examined.

**Table 2 Financial sources for businesses in South Huron**

	Bank	Trust Company	Credit Union	Community Futures	Bus. Dev. Bank of Canada	Private
Secured	10	0	5	1	4	4
Investigated	27	0	5	2	2	3
Used for Operations	61	2	10	2	1	7
Used for Expansion	19	0	3	1	1	2

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the businesses plan their financial performance yearly; ten percent (10%) do not plan financial performance at all. Forty-four percent (44%) of the businesses review their financial plan against their actual performance monthly. Thirteen (13) businesses requested assistance related to financial planning.

## Workforce Development

This portion of the survey explored work availability, workers' skills, training sources and factors responsible for company growth requirements.

In the past three years, the majority of businesses (50) reported that the number of employees have remained the same. Twenty-three (23) businesses increased their workforce and noted the following reasons as being the main factors responsible for the increase: increase in sales, management effectiveness, and new products or services introduced.

Forty-nine percent (49%) rated the availability of workers in the area as good to excellent while fifty-one (51%) percent felt that the availability of workers in the area was fair to poor. Over half (64%) of the businesses rated the quality and stability of the workforce as good to excellent. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the businesses expressed that they did not have difficulty retaining staff. In the next three years, employees in the following areas will be required to fulfill the needs of the businesses: unskilled labour, skilled trades, sales, clerical and business administration. Recruiting sufficient qualified staff was not an issue for sixty-four percent (64%) of the businesses.

The majority of businesses (64-88%) were satisfied with their employees' abilities and did not feel the need for improvement in the following areas: reading, numeracy, oral and written communication, supervisory, computer software or hardware, sales and marketing, financial management, customer service, working with others, health and safety, and quality assurance.

Sixty-four (64) businesses provided in-house training for employees and were ninety-five percent (95%) satisfied that the training met their needs. Businesses that provided training outside of the business experienced a high level of satisfaction when the training was provided by the following sources: local community college (95%), distance education (89%), customized training (93%), university (100%), training offered outside of the area (91%), and company, industry or supplier product training (100%).

The major barriers to providing employees with necessary training were cost and loss of productivity during training period. Distance to training facilities and availability of local training were identified as secondary barriers in training employees.

#### Local Community

This portion focused on the various factors related to doing business in South Huron.

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the businesses interviewed did not know if South Huron had an economic development plan and twenty-seven percent (27%) thought that the municipality had one. Sixty-one percent (61%) stated that they were unaware of what role the Municipality of South Huron was playing in business and economic development and twenty-eight percent (28%) felt that the municipality needed to take a more adequate role.

The following elements were rated as good to excellent for doing business in South Huron:

- Labour costs
- Availability of transportation
- Availability of utilities
- Access to markets/customers and size of local market
- Access to suppliers
- Quality of life
- Water and sewer capacity
- Support from municipality, local residents and local businesses
- Telecommunication infrastructure capacity



The following elements were listed as fair to poor in doing business in South Huron:

- Availability of skilled labour
- Transportation costs
- Availability of properly zoned land
- Land costs
- Cost of construction
- Cost of leasing space
- Local permit process
- Development charges
- Municipal taxes and bylaws
- Access to research and development
- Access to training facilities



Respondents provided suggestions for how a local economic development office or business association could assist the businesses in making South Huron a better place to do business. The suggestions included joint advertising and marketing, marketing seminars, trade shows, business networking sessions, workforce planning, training and attraction and website development.

#### South Huron Community Questions

The South Huron Community Questions were developed by the SHARE BR+E Task Force to identify areas of improvement throughout the community.

#### *Support from Government*

Participating businesses were asked what improvements various levels of government could make to improve services for the well being of businesses in South Huron.

The following outlines specific ideas for improvement categorized by each level of government:

#### Municipality of South Huron (Municipal Government)

- Simplify the permits and zoning process to allow individuals with immediate needs to develop
- Consider an expiry date to ensure that land is developed within a specific time frame
- Continue to improve roads
- Improve the rail line
- Promote a good community image and mentality
- Run programs and services efficiently
- Ensure adequate services for water/sewer system



### County of Huron (Regional Government)

- Increase communication with municipal government
- Promote collaboration and sharing of resources between the municipalities in county
- Support the municipal government
- Investigate solutions to address inter-county transportation issues



### Province of Ontario (Provincial Government)

- Keep the taxes down
- Reduce red tape and labour laws
- Reduce the paperwork for businesses
- Support the municipal government
- Review employment standards to ensure fairness for both employers and employees (Ministry of Labour)
- Increase training opportunities in rural Ontario ie. Centralia/Huron Park



### Country of Canada (Federal Government)

- Develop incentives to make it easier for businesses to buy in Canada
- Keep the taxes down
- Perform regular service delivery reviews to ensure that services are efficient and effective
- Assist in developing global partnerships to increase exporting business
- Enhance the Job Bank to include listing of available local workforce (Human Resources and Social Development Canada)
- Decrease funding approval wait times



### Other government agencies

- Develop attraction programs for new Canadians to settle in rural Ontario
- Encourage better communication between Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment to enhance services

### Improvements for South Huron's Downtown Core

Participating businesses ranked potential improvements in the downtown. The following represents the top five improvements chosen to improve the downtown core:

1. More shops providing variety
2. Address buildings in poor condition
3. Convenient parking
4. Create or renew identity
5. More events to encourage shopping

Several businesses noted the need for better and longer hours of operation for businesses located in the retail section of the downtown core.

### Customer Base in South Huron

Twenty-two (22) businesses responded that over seventy percent (70%) of in-store traffic comes from a radius of greater than 10 km from the business. Sixty (60) businesses responded that less than sixty percent (60%) of in-store traffic comes from a radius of greater than 10 km from the business.

### Tourism in South Huron

Participating businesses were asked questions relating to the tourism capacity of the community and its impact on business.

Several ideas were generated to encourage tourists to stop and do business in South Huron:

- Create more festivals and events (ie. Farmer's Market, etc.)
- Keep an attractive and clean main street
- Enhance the customer service experience with training for all retail employees
- Promote the downtown on websites and in brochures
- Implement façade improvement and beautification projects
- Advertise to target markets (ie. visitors to Grand Bend, etc.)
- Create a downtown identity through branding
- Encourage individual business owners to take responsibility in presenting a clean, fresh, inviting store front
- Improve parking and signage
- Put up attractive seasonal decorations throughout downtown (ie. banners, flags, flower baskets, Christmas decorations, etc.)
- Address the lack of accommodations
- Improve tourist directional signage for public washrooms, parks, tourist areas and attractions



Thirteen (13) businesses were familiar with the Huron Tourism Association and what the organization offers and thirty-eight (38) businesses were interested in receiving more information.

The majority of businesses expressed that special events and festivals would help in promoting South Huron. Thirty-eight businesses offered to work with the community to promote local events. It was recommended to centrally locate a tourism booth in the downtown core.



*Business Creation, Retention and Expansion in South Huron*

Participating businesses were asked to rate several factors in terms of importance in fostering business creation, retention, and expansion in South Huron.

**Table 3 Factors in business creation, retention and expansion and importance**

	Important	Not Important	Not Applicable
Branding or slogan for area	65%	8%	27%
Promoting unity with the White Squirrel	57%	12%	31%
Consistent store hours amongst retailers	69%	4%	27%
Personally shopping in the community	74%	0%	26%
Availability of supplies	57%	11%	31%
Cooperative efforts among businesses	73%	1%	26%
Prices	70%	3%	27%
Attractiveness of stores	74%	0%	26%
Appearance of streets	73%	0%	27%
Business related signage	72%	1%	27%

## BR+E Recommendations for Implementation

Based on the results of the survey and an action-planning meeting of the SHARE BR+E Task Force, several opportunities for South Huron were identified. Recommendations that address the most integral issues delivered in the findings are organized into six categories, in no particular order of priority:

- Community Unity
- Economic Development
- Downtown Revitalization
- Labour and Training
- Tourism
- Business Development and Enhancement

The second phase of the BR+E process is the implementation phase. The success of the South BR+E program will be proven through the ability of the community to deliver the solutions that breakdown the economic barriers and create an opportunity for prosperity and growth.

The following pages reveal specific action items for each category of recommendations. For each item there is a description of the action, a projected timeline for the action to be completed by and a list of potential partners that could contribute. The timeline and partners columns are to be used as guidelines only; the partners who take on the action item will ultimately determine the length of time required to successfully complete the action.

*Partners Abbreviations*

- Municipality of South Huron = SH
- Exeter Business Association = EBA
- Huron Park Committee = HP
- South Huron Chamber of Commerce = SHCC
- County of Huron = County
- Huron Economic Development Matters = HEDM
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs = OMAFRA
- BR+E Implementation Committee = BR+E
- \*\*South Huron Community Economic Development Committee = SHCED
- Huron Tourism Association = HTA

\*\*Development of this committee is indicated as an action item under Economic Development and is expected to have representation from the South Huron Chamber of Commerce, Exeter Business Association, Municipality of South Huron, and Huron Park Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS – Community Unity

Description	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assume projects that foster collaboration of community organizations such as Exeter Business Association, South Huron Chamber of Commerce, Huron Park Committee, and the Municipality of South Huron</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	*Listed in description; County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a local communications plan to provide regular updates to the community via monthly newsletters, press releases and website, etc.</li> </ul>	March 2008	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop relationships with local media to encourage coverage of the initiatives that are being undertaken</li> </ul>	Ongoing	BR+E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mail the BR+E Executive Summary and Action Plan to all businesses in South Huron and encourage participation and support the initiatives</li> </ul>	March 2008	BR+E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the Exeter Business Association, South Huron Chamber of Commerce, Huron Park Committee, and the Municipality of South Huron internally through individual strategic planning and visioning exercises, board development training and role clarification. These processes will help everyone understand roles, goals and objectives of each organization and identify further opportunities for collaboration.</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	*Action to be completed individually by partners listed in description

RECOMMENDATIONS – Economic Development

Description	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form a Community Economic Development Committee to enhance communication between Exeter Business Association, South Huron Chamber of Commerce, Huron Park Committee and the Municipality of South Huron.</li> </ul>	Immediate	*Listed in description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of hiring a Community Development Coordinator to coordinate and execute community and economic development initiatives.</li> </ul>	April 2008	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an all-encompassing comprehensive marketing strategy that includes municipal brand development and website enhancements</li> </ul>	September 2008	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop community economic development strategies to address barriers to expansion</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New community brand development (create or renew identity for South Huron)</li> </ul>	January 2009	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an entrance signage project</li> </ul>	April 2009	**SHCED, County Hwys Dept, County, MTO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a "Living in South Huron" marketing campaign that identifies benefits to living in the community in effort to grow the population base and attract new residents</li> </ul>	April 2009	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility for the Municipality of South Huron to purchase industrial land to service and develop new industrial parks</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete an asset mapping exercise to determine the niche assets of the community to use in marketing</li> </ul>	June 2008	**SHCED, OMAFRA

**RECOMMENDATIONS – Downtown Revitalization**

Description	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in OMAFRA's First Impressions Community Exchange Program to identify areas of improvement</li> </ul>	Immediate	BR+E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a signage project targeted at visitors to identify parking, attractions, public washrooms, downtown, etc.</li> </ul>	April 2009	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate opportunities through a Community Improvement Plan to implement incentive opportunities for businesses and property owners in the downtown</li> </ul>	June 2009	**SHCED, County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop collaborative advertising promotions and events for businesses to participate in</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a streetscape beautification plan (to be implemented at a later date)</li> </ul>	January 2010	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a list of businesses that have a public washrooms and post at key locations throughout the downtown</li> </ul>	April 2008	SHCC, EBA, SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage local service clubs in opportunities to revitalize the downtown, ie. trash cleanup days, etc.</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a "Shop South Huron" campaign to encourage community residents to shop locally</li> </ul>	September 2008	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop partnerships with local property and business owners in the downtown to promote vacancies through signage "Put your business here!" and market listings on local websites</li> </ul>	January 2009	**SHCED

**RECOMMENDATIONS – Labour and Training**

Description	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and distribute a brochure about available labour and training services through the local training board, Huron Business Development Corporation, Human Employment Resource Centre, various government ministries, and other local services, etc.</li> </ul>	July 2008	BR+E, HBDC, OMAFRA, HERC, County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertise employment opportunities or training opportunities on municipal and chamber websites</li> </ul>	December 2008	SHCC, SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop relationship with Huron Manufacturing Association and County Economic Development Officer to create solutions to address workforce and labour skills issues in the area</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work closely with local secondary schools to promote local apprenticeship and co-operative education opportunities</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of a scholarship program for local youth who return to the community for full-time work</li> </ul>	June 2009	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey local businesses to determine labour needs and wage scales. If competitive, promote opportunities in areas such as London, Woodstock, K-W, etc.</li> </ul>	December 2009	BR+E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate the development of business to business partnerships to share expertise and training resources</li> </ul>	Ongoing	BR+E

RECOMMENDATIONS – Tourism

Description	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the feasibility of a Tourism and Information Centre to distribute and provide information about tourism attractions in the area</li> </ul>	March 2009	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the relationship with the Huron Tourism Association and the County Tourism Marketer</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	**SHCED, County, HTA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a visitor's map to identify tourism attractions</li> </ul>	April 2009	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote tourism opportunities on municipal and chamber websites</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	SHCC, SH

RECOMMENDATIONS – Business Development and Enhancement

Description	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use OMAFRA's Business Mix Analysis tool to determine the types of businesses to attract to ensure a optimal variety of business in the community</li> </ul>	September 2008	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP, OMAFRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a community marketing strategy that showcases South Huron as a desired place to live, place to visit and place for business</li> </ul>	April 2009	*SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the feasibility of a Tourism and Information Centre to distribute and provide information about South Huron such as business opportunities, general information about the community and host a resource library of information for businesses</li> </ul>	May 2008	**SHCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host a series of information seminars on topics such as succession planning, business planning, financial planning, marketing and promotion, website development</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide local customer service training opportunities to enhance the customer service experience and promote the community as a "Customer Service Excellence Community"</li> </ul>	Immediate; Ongoing	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business referral program to encourage local businesses to promote and support one another</li> </ul>	July 2008	SHCC, EBA, SH, HP

## Conclusion

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The South Huron BR+E project was effective in gaining a better understanding of the issues that affect local businesses and the community. It has provided opportunities for enhanced strategies that will improve the business climate, eliminate barriers to retention and expansion, and improve communication and relationships between local partners.

The completion and presentation of the SHARE BR+E Final Report is not the end of the project; in fact, it is just the beginning. Through collaboration of community partners, South Huron is equipped for success in implementing the recommendations and will celebrate together in a stronger, revitalized, sustainable community.

## South Huron BR+E Contact Information

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For more information about the South Huron BR+E program, contact:

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SHARE BR+E Final Report written by:  
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Downtown Revitalization Coordinator  
County of Huron

## APPENDICES

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A Message from OMAFRA  
A Message from SHARE Co-Chairs  
Map of SHARE BR+E Project Area

## A Message from OMAFRA

Although OMAFRA provides the “recipe,” training and financial support for BR+E projects, it is the community leaders, volunteers and businesses who make it successful. The project will provide strategies to retain businesses and jobs and to help those businesses prosper and grow to employ even more workers.

Hugh McMaster and Fred Simmons are to be congratulated for their efforts and commitment to leading the South Huron BR+E project through the information gathering and action plan development stages. The support they received from community volunteers, volunteer advisory committee members and municipal government demonstrates that South Huron residents want to work together to make South Huron a place they are proud to live, work and do business in.

There is much work yet to be done but the results of this project in information, strategic recommendations and strengthened local leadership capacity is rightly celebrated, as it will provide a solid base from which to build on.

Congratulations on the work completed to date and best wishes to you as a community as you proceed to implement strategies for success.

Gary Stephens  
Rural Business Consultant  
Rural Community Development  
Economic Development Division  
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

## A Message from SHARE CO-CHAIRS

It has been a long journey from the time our team initially embarked on the South Huron BR+E program to present day; however, it has been a rewarding experience.

The South Huron BR+E program was indeed a team effort and we are appreciative of the many volunteers who through their dedication and commitment enabled us to get this far. As we reflect back on the project timeline, we are thankful to the survey participants who contributed the time to provide valuable insight that we hope will evolve to become the basis of future economic development in the community.

A special thank you to Sherrie Broderick, Project Assistant for the BR+E program. Without her support and tireless efforts, phase one of this program never would have seen completion and we are very grateful to have her on the team.

The SHARE Task Force was instrumental in guiding the process and we thank every member for providing his or her sector expertise and for maintaining momentum throughout the lengthy process.

We wish to thank all of the sponsoring partners for their contributions and unwavering support of our work.

We wish the community of South Huron all the best and great success as the future unfolds. We wish the same success to the businesses that choose to relocate or expand in South Huron. We hope the community will come together to “share” the vision we have set forth and to act upon the recommendations and initiatives being proposed to enhance our business environment.

It has been a pleasure for us to work on this project as Joint Coordinators.

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh McMaster, Chair  
Fred Simmons, Co-Chair  
South Huron Alliance for Retention and Expansion (SHARE)

# South Huron BR+E Project Area

