

## Key Findings of the BR & E Project

### **Theme 1: Business Development**

- The largest change impacting businesses is negative legislation.
- 58% of businesses identified the community as a barrier to growth.
- Most businesses interviewed felt little to no effect from the global economic downturn.
- Freight and transport costs have been identified as a barrier to growth.
- Industry diversification is important to the business community.
- Many businesses have a positive outlook for the future of the NEER.

### **Theme 2: Workforce Development**

- There are currently a number of unfilled positions due to lack of specific skills in the area.
- When asked to rate the workforce, productivity and stability were often rated higher than the availability and quality of the workforce.
- Skilled labour was identified as the most difficult position to fill.
- 74% of PRIME businesses identified workforce recruitment issues.
- Part time and seasonal workers are hard to recruit and retain.
- 59% of PRIME businesses interviewed identified the community as a barrier to workforce recruitment.
- Most businesses project to need more employees in the future.

### **Theme 3: Quality of Life**

- Low availability of rentals and aging housing has been identified as a problem throughout the region.
- Cellular coverage was identified as the most common utility problem throughout the NEER.
- Rural areas experience problems with internet access and speed.
- Northern areas of the region experience power surge problems.
- Commercial and industrial zones just outside of the town limits are often expected to have their own water and sewer systems, while paying municipal taxes.

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### What's Next?

- The NEER will proceed into year 2 of this project.
- Additional follow up and visits as requested.
- Agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing and tourism sectors will be targeted.
- The NEER will include workforce development, business development and regional marketing into the next's years strategic operational plan.