

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Kenora Job Fair 2010 Cancellation Announced December 8th, 2009

It is with regret that the Academy for Technical Education & Vocational Training and Reach Marketing announced the cancellation of Job Fair 2010, originally scheduled to be held in late April 2010.

Job Fair Kenora is a much anticipated event with the focus shifting somewhat each year in response to the current economic landscape within the region. It has grown annually since 2001 boasting over 1100 visitors, 70 exhibitors and 40 professionals in 2009, drawing them from the Kenora area and surrounding communities from Thunder Bay to the Manitoba border. Event statistics show that well over 50% of visitors are actively seeking entrepreneurial options, supports to launch a new business or career and employment opportunities. Job Fair 2009 was a tremendous success, meeting and/or exceeding all targets including numbers and scope of exhibitors, visitors and most importantly, job vacancies posted (120) and filled as a direct result of Job Fair (35).

"Historically, the Province (Employment Ontario) has clearly recognized the need for this event and has made it possible through significant funding support representing about 75% of the event budget," stated Carol Leduc of the Academy. "However," she continued, "unforeseeable, sudden and drastic province-wide cuts to many Employment Ontario programs put the viability of Job Fair 2010 at great risk." At a time when they typically would be well into the planning and communication for the event, organizers were instead facing the challenge of sourcing alternative funding - with limited options and very short notice.

Organizers gratefully acknowledge the annual support and participation of over 200 businesses, organizations and individuals, whether as exhibitors, speakers, sponsors and/or suppliers, as integral factors contributing to the high level of success Job Fair attains each year. However, maintaining Job Fair's expected level of quality and professionalism for 2010 depends on accessing a major source(s) of funding, something that even the most aggressive efforts were not able to achieve.

"We have worked 10 years to build Job Fair into an anticipated, even influential event and to create a strong and diversified network of exhibitors and supporters throughout Northwestern Ontario and beyond," says event coordinator, Diane Schwartz-Williams. "I am reluctant to cancel Job Fair for 2010, but am not prepared to sacrifice the quality and integrity of the event by cutting corners as drastically as would be required," she continued.

Both Leduc and Schwartz-Williams were emphatic in their commitment to bring Job Fair back to Kenora in 2011. It is their belief that Job Fair is more than an event – it is a service and an unequalled resource, both unique to Kenora and to much of Northwestern Ontario. "Think about it," said Schwartz-Williams, "For one day – in one location – everyone seeking to start their own business venture or searching for employment, career advancement, a job change or training has the opportunity for face-to-face contact with representatives, employers and owners of up to 110 businesses and organizations." Visitors have direct access to a wide range of business advisors, potential employers, trainers and employment counselors normally not available to them. For one day there are dozens of doors open with no phone calls or appointments required.

Historically this would be time of year when the coordination, planning and initial contacts were already well underway for 2010. This year however organizers will set aside plans for 2010, and begin to scope out plans, focus, and funding for 2011. Leduc commented, "While we expected to be working on Job Fair 2010 at this time, we will instead be playing the hand we have been dealt and we feel it is a winning hand. We will turn this unexpected sabbatical into an opportunity to review, rethink and rework the event."

Leduc and Schwartz-Williams referred to the exhibitor and visitor evaluations which indicate strongly that Job Fair is viable, worthwhile – and needed. They jointly commented that they intend to more than maintain those attributes. It is their intent to take it up a few notches, and suggested that Job Fair 2011 would be the best one yet.

For further information contact Carol Leduc at 807-468-3220 or Diane Schwartz-Williams at 807-466-3357

Email academy@kmts.ca or diane@reach-marketing.ca