

Human Resources, Labour and Employment  
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### **Youth Dialogue Sessions Underway Across the Province**

A key element in the development of Newfoundland and Labrador's Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy is well underway. A series of 11 deliberative dialogue sessions with young adults aged 18 to 30, have begun across the province.

"These deliberative dialogue sessions will engage our youth in helping shape the province they want for the future," said the Honourable Shawn Skinner, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. "Opinions shared during these sessions will help our government develop a strategy that will retain and attract young people to our province."

Dialogue sessions are scheduled throughout September in the following locations: Marystown (September 10); Carbonear (September 12); Happy Valley-Goose Bay (September 13); St. John's (September 14 and 15); Clarenville (September 20); and, Hawke's Bay/Port au Choix (September 27). In addition, dialogues will be held in Alberta and Ontario with young people who have relocated. Dialogue sessions have already been held in Gander, Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor and in Stephenville. Recruitment is still ongoing for the Hawke's Bay/St. Anthony and Clarenville/Bonavista areas.

A series of radio and print ads are running in local newspapers and on radio stations notifying the public of the recruitment process. 2006 Olympic Gold Medalist Jamie Korab has recorded a phone message placed to households, requesting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians aged 18-30 living here or across the country, who are interested in participating in the sessions, to call EKOS Research at 1-800-388-2873. The message contains information on the purpose of the strategy and details of a honourarium and travel expenses paid to participants.

In Budget 2008, the Provincial Government committed \$1.38 million to develop a Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy. The strategy will be designed to strengthen the labour market and counter the impact of youth out-migration.

The Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) is facilitating the dialogue sessions. CPRN's report on the opinions and concerns of young adults and its recommendations will provide the cornerstone in the development of the Provincial Government's Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy. The information will be presented to government in early 2009.

CPRN is an independent and highly-regarded national leader in the public policy dialogue and research. The deliberative dialogue process attempts to capture participant perspectives in a relaxed, open and neutral environment. As a result, the deliberative dialogue sessions are not open to the public or the media.

"The opinions shared during these sessions are important to any strategy our government develops to reverse the out-migration of young adults," said Minister Skinner. "As the sessions continue, we appreciate their enthusiasm and commitment to this important initiative."

In addition to the dialogue sessions, a provincial youth summit will be held in November. Participants will be selected from the regional dialogue sessions. During the summit, youth will examine the issues and options from a provincial perspective. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will also launch a web page so youth, not selected for the regional dialogue sessions, can submit their opinions.