

Labour Force Analysis and Human Resource Development Strategy for the District Of Algoma



Prepared For:

Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC)

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Table of Contents

1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	v
	Infrastructure and Planning Related Recommendations	vi
	“Supply Side Strategies”	vii
	Education and Training Strategies	ix
	Other Action Items	xii
2.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.1	Structure of the Report.....	1
2.2	Acknowledgements.....	2
2.3	Terms and Acronyms	3
3.	BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	4
3.1	Rationale for the Project	4
3.2	Scope of the Study.....	5
3.3	Research Requirements	5
3.4	Methodology	6
3.5	Research Limitations.....	7
3.6	Environmental Scan.....	8
3.6.1	Essar Steel Algoma & Contract Negotiations	8
3.6.2	Sault Area Hospital Deficit and Labour Force Requirements	8
3.6.3	Government and Private Infrastructure Funding	8
3.6.4	First Nation Training Fund	9
3.6.5	Educational Program Expansion.....	9
4.	SUPERIOR EAST.....	11
4.1	Regional Profile	11
4.1.1	White River	14
4.1.2	Wawa	14
4.1.3	Hornepayne	15
4.1.4	Dubreuilville	15
4.2	Employment Analysis.....	17
4.3	Skill Demand and Forecast	21
4.4	Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention	25
4.4.1	Recruitment	25
4.4.2	Training	28
4.4.3	Development.....	30
4.4.4	Retention	31

4.5	Human Resource Summary	34
5.	CENTRAL REGION AND SAULT STE. MARIE	36
5.1	Regional Profile	36
5.1.1	Prince Township	37
5.2	Employment Analysis	40
5.3	Skill Demand and Forecast	44
5.4	Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention	47
5.5	Human Resource Summary	54
6.	EAST ALGOMA	55
6.1	Regional Profile	55
6.1.1	Elliot Lake	58
6.1.2	Johnson Township	59
6.1.3	North Shore Tribal Council	59
6.1.4	Blind River	59
6.2	Employment Analysis	60
6.3	Skill Demand and Forecast	64
6.4	Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention	68
6.5	Human Resource Summary	76
7.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	78
7.1	Demographic Challenges.....	78
7.2	Workforce Challenges	78
7.3	Training Challenges	79
7.4	Infrastructure Challenges	80
7.5	Planning and Coordination	80
8.	RECOMMENDATIONS	82
	Infrastructure and Planning Related Recommendations	82
	“Supply Side Strategies”	83
	Education and Training Strategies	85
	Other Action Items	88
	APPENDIX A: Survey of Employers	90
	APPENDIX B: Key Informant Interview Guides	97
	APPENDIX C: Moderator’s Guide (Focus Groups)	115
	APPENDIX D: Site Visit Checklist	119
	APPENDIX E: Training Availability	120
	APPENDIX F: Bibliography	121

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District of Algoma's resource-based economy is recovering from a protracted recession. Significant obstacles remain, however, to full recovery. There is an out-migration of young adults looking for work and the better wages paid in the larger urban areas of southern Ontario. As elsewhere in Canada, the **populations of the Algoma's three regions are aging. It is already difficult for employers to replace** skilled workers who are retiring and the number of retirees is expected to increase throughout the next decade. Conversely, there are not enough jobs for unskilled labour.

While gaps in supply and demand are common in resource-based economies, the recession beginning in 2009 has lasted longer and recovery has been slower than in the past. Additional concerns about the **District's aging population, declining immigration and lack of opportunity for youth prompted the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) to conduct a Labour Force Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy, undertaken in spring and summer of 2010.**

The following report is based upon research conducted across the District including 60 interviews with key stakeholders, nine focus groups, three site visits and a survey of more than 300 employers.

It should be emphasized that this study was not intended to be an economic development strategy for the region, but rather, is intended to identify specific gaps/challenges with respect to the human resource environment in the region. However, it should be emphasized that a human resource strategy cannot be pursued in isolation of a broader regional economic strategy, and some of the recommendations identified in this report may be beyond a strictly defined human resource strategy.

The research completed by the consultant identified a wide array of human resource challenges confronting employers and stakeholders in the region. While not all regions experienced the same challenges, the district as a whole did generally have a variety of human resource challenges that could be grouped under the following headings: Demographics, Workforce, Training, Infrastructures and Planning and Coordination.

The demographic challenge facing the district is the declining population and aging workforce with fewer younger workers. Employers are facing challenges in terms of succession planning, as workers with the right skills are not available to fill positions vacated by retiring workers. The demographic challenge suggests that alternative workforces may need to be accessed (e.g., First Nations, immigrants) to ensure that the region has the workers required to meet current and future labour requirements.

The workforce challenge refers to the type of workers and skills sets needed in the future. Although among employers surveyed there was a feeling that the total number of workers required in the next five years would be lower than the numbers currently employed, there was indication that employers would need to fill a considerable number of supervisory/management positions. The workforce challenge also **includes a recognition that employment growth in the region would likely be in more "non-traditional"** sectors including renewable energy and small business start-ups. Finally, the workforce challenge also encompasses employer reluctance to invest in training/professional development of staff due to the fear of losing such employees.

The training challenge highlights the dichotomy in the training system in the region. While employers and workers in Sault Ste. Marie have easy access to education and training resources, employers in Superior East and East Algoma face considerable barriers in terms of accessing affordable training. Across the region, employers cite a disconnect between the K-12 education system and the world of work, and a lack of specific training programs that meet their needs. However, the research also identified a common reluctance among employers to invest in training, particularly apprenticeship training due to fears of losing the employee once they are trained.

The infrastructure challenge related to the limited ability to deliver college level programs outside of Sault Ste. Marie. While most employers would prefer to access college level programs, it is not feasible to establish college campuses in many of the smaller communities. In addition, the lack of high speed

internet connections further undermines the abilities to provide cost effective training to employers/workers located in remote regions.

The planning and coordination challenge reflects the fact that there are numerous organizations that influence the human resource environment in the District of Algoma. An effective human resource strategy requires the input and coordination from a range of organizations – including the federal and provincial governments, local education and training providers, employers and the First Nations communities. While AWIC represents a good start to such coordination, success of any human resource strategy will require the establishment of a permanent structure to guide and oversee proposed recommendations.

In response to those challenges, there are several recommendations that have been identified by the consultant that could help ensure that employers in the district have access to an adequate pool of labour with the appropriate mix of skills and education to meet current and future needs. These recommendations are provided below under the general headings of Infrastructure and Planning, Supply Side Strategies, Education and Training Strategies and Other Action Items.

Highlighted below are several actions and/or strategies that should be considered in order to address human resource issues in Superior East, Central Algoma, East Algoma and the District of Algoma as a whole. It should be noted that these recommendations are not provided in order of priority, and can be “actioned” by several different parties.

Infrastructure and Planning Related Recommendations

It is clear that the human resource strategy will need to be guided by a formal structure. In addition, a human resource strategy should not be viewed as static – new issues will emerge and new plans or strategies will be required to address these emergent issues. Highlighted below are several action items related to infrastructure and human resources planning in the region.

1. Formalize/maintain a formal group to oversee human resource issues in the region.

As noted previously, a human resource response will require coordinated actions among a multitude of stakeholders, including the federal government, provincial government, education and training providers, and the First Nations communities. AWIC is well-positioned to assure this co-ordination role, however, AWIC would also need to expand membership to include government departments/agencies and possibly other stakeholders. AWIC could also maintain and update on a regular basis labour market intelligence that could direct future labour market planning.

2. Develop a means for employers to communicate their training needs to the training bodies.

Central Algoma, dominated by Sault Ste. Marie, has access to the most training facilities and a site in the District of Algoma, yet proximity to training still presents itself as an issue. Communication between the training bodies and the employers in the region needs to be directed or overseen regularly so that the employers are able to communicate their needs to the training bodies and the training bodies are able to respond. Discussions with the training bodies in the area provide the understanding that employers need to communicate their needs and their lack of needs so that the training bodies are not over-saturating the local market when there are no jobs. A training facility needs adequate time to begin and end their program offering and cannot be expected to respond immediately to training shortages in the region. As a result, employers need to work to provide training facilities with projections of their workforce and what training might be required in the future. AWIC or local EDOs could facilitate much of the oversight for the training discussions between employer and training bodies so that the process is proactive to local employer training and labour needs rather than the current reactive state.

3. Establish a labour market information “dashboard” to provide up to date labour market information/requirements for the region.

Labour market needs and requirements should not be viewed as static, and a process could be established whereby key labour market information can be collected, reviewed and synthesized on an on-going basis. This could be an on-going role of AWIC, or perhaps another institution (**Chambers of Commerce, EDC's or other**). Ongoing data collection would support better planning and program delivery in the region.

4. Economic development strategies need to be developed regionally. Many of the communities throughout the District have individual economic development strategies or plans, **many of which are outdated. Moving forward, as part of the District of Algoma's economic development strategy, the regions (Superior East, Central Algoma, and East Algoma) need to develop a regional plan that addresses each region's unique economic needs. From those** strategies, a District wide economic development strategy can be developed that looks at economic development from a district perspective and utilizes components from each of the regional strategies.

5. Keep innovative youth. Most employers believe they need to invest in innovation and technology. That investment is appealing to youth who want to work in software and hardware fields, but there is minimal opportunity for these employers and potential employees to meet. To facilitate this, an annual business technology forum could be held and promoted at the local high schools and colleges. This would help make innovative youth aware of the opportunities to stay in their community and still realize their career goals.

“Supply Side Strategies”

Declining populations in the region means that the region will face a shortage of qualified workers in the future unless the region adopts pro-active “supply side” policies. Possible activities include:

6. Develop the immigration outreach and assistance programs to ensure immigrants stay in the region.

Sault Ste. Marie has existing programs (i.e. New to the Sault, Local Immigration Partnership (L.I.P.)) that address the naturalization of immigrants to the region. These programs need to be expanded and widely promoted to reach immigrants before they select to come to Algoma. If Algoma wants to increase immigration to the region, they must communicate the benefits of living in the District to the international immigrant population. These programs need to be communicated to immigrants who are living in the region, rather than sought out by immigrants. Understanding the aforementioned labour and training needs can assist those responsible for immigration to attract skilled immigrants to the region to assist in filling those spots.

7. Recognize the importance of First Nations communities in meeting current/future workforce requirements.

First Nations communities represent a large and growing supply of workers in the Algoma region. While First Nations communities have access to limited funds for training and economic development, it would be beneficial to maximize the effectiveness of First Nations resources through better integration of First Nations economic and human resource plans with that of the District as a whole.

8. Consider innovative solutions to encourage youth/young adults to remain in the community.

While it was not intended that this study serve as a far reaching economic development strategy for the region, the out migration of youth will pose a considerable challenge in terms of meeting current and future labour market needs. There are some possible strategies that can be pursued to encourage youth/young adults to remain in the community. Possible strategies include:

- Reduced property tax rates for youth who stay and/or return to the region
- Consider the use of “small business set aside” in which municipal/local government procurement directs a portion of budget to youth run small businesses in the region.

9. Develop a re-training/upgrading strategy to accommodate possible re-opening of plants which are no longer operational.

It appears that several lumber mills and/or mines may re-open in the near future. What is unclear, however, is whether the existing workforce has the skills required to work in these operations. It would be appropriate to approach employers to assess training needs in advance of the re-opening of such establishments.

10. Consider alternative sources of labour and establish a mechanism to connect with such labour.

As the need for administrative, managerial and retail employees increases, consideration could be given to enlisting the support of retirees, who may not want full-time employment, but might be willing to job-share. Employment Ontario Service Providers may want to develop an online site that job-sharers could register for and from which businesses in need might fill seasonal increases in demand.

11. Develop immigration strategies to attract recent immigrants who have settled in other areas of the province.

When immigrants come to Ontario, they are drawn to the urban centres where they are able to access the most services. The District needs to promote Algoma as an immigrant friendly community throughout Ontario to capture those immigrants that are new to Canada and looking to relocate after settling in a southern Ontario urban centre. The District could begin this strategy by reaching out to immigrant groups that have already settled in Algoma and concentrating on attracting more immigrants from those cultural backgrounds that already have roots in the District. This will decrease the initial costs of translation of websites and communication materials for the communities if they concentrate on one or two specific groups to target initially.

12. There are specific programs that employers and community groups could utilize to enhance immigration to the region.

These include:

- Use of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). The Province of Ontario through the Opportunities Ontario Program (http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/pnp/OI_PNPEMPLOYERS.html) allows for employers to recruit a foreign worker through either the general worker or international student route to work in Ontario. A potential strategy would include AWIC and/or other organizations to work with local employers to develop applications for the PNP.
- Use of the Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) Program Citizenship and Immigration Canada (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private.asp>). Under this program, Canadians and other organizations can sponsor refugees to settle in Canada. Under the PSR program, the sponsored refugee would be resettled in the town/region close to the sponsor. While not as straightforward as the PNP program, the PSR program does offer an opportunity for the region to attract immigrants to the region.

13. Provide an internship/ work placement for students in allied and other health professions.

A shortage of doctors exists across the province, but there is a notable shortage of allied and other health professionals in the District of Algoma. Allied Health Professionals (AHP) provide a range of diagnostic, technical, therapeutic and direct patient care and support services and all regions require different AHPs to compliment their existing health related services. Regions could build a relationship with a school that trains these individuals and offer incentives or internships to encourage those individuals to work in the District of Algoma once they graduate. In addition, presentations could be made to students, making them aware of the

benefits of the region as well as the numerous jobs in their profession available throughout the District. Partially or fully sponsoring a student in school in exchange for a certain number of years of work has proved successful for some companies in the District and could be tried for allied health professionals. If successful, such a strategy may be adopted for other skilled professions needed in the region.

14. Support tourism initiatives. To support tourism initiatives such as the building of the Essar Centre, Sault College could review its Hospitality Management program to ensure that graduates are fully capable in the management of large scale events such as conventions and sporting events.

15. Utilize First Nations populations to support maintenance of Huron Central Railway.

The North Shore Tribal Council (NSTC) is well suited to provide maintenance for the projected Huron Central Railway improvements. The First Nations are the fastest growing population whose could be utilized in both the improvements and maintenance of the railway. The NSTC is located along the route of the railway and therefore a coordinated training strategy to address the potential maintenance jobs from the rail could be implemented across the NSTC in all seven First Nations communities. Further research into the skills required as well as the skills these communities already possess to provide this maintenance would assist in the building of a coordinated training strategy for the NSTC.

Education and Training Strategies

It is clear that more can be done to improve employer and employee access to appropriate training in the region. Among the possible education and training strategies include:

16. Develop a strategy to attract graduates of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

The reliance on Health Care as the primary industry of East Algoma necessitates the ability to recruit highly skilled health care and health care service workers. The projected growth in **Ontario's Health Care industry is likely to be experienced at a higher level for Elliot Lake and surrounding East Algoma due to the older retirement population.** The introduction of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine could increase the availability of doctors and health care workers in the North, but East Algoma could specifically target those individuals who are graduating from the first class to ensure they have the resources they will be requiring over the next five years and beyond. These individuals have already been living in Northern Ontario for their education and therefore would likely be looking to continue working in the North. Elliot Lake specifically has been known to offer very attractive incentive packages for physicians and health care practitioners and they need to communicate these incentives to prospective doctors at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

17. Ensure that secondary schools are providing the foundation skills necessary to work in the "new economy".

In contrast to the job market of the 1980s or 1990s, it is unlikely that youth will find long term employment in one industry sector (i.e., forestry, construction). In this context, it is critical that high schools provide students with key foundation skills including communication (reading, writing), numeracy and other basic skills which will enable them to transition to employment in a number of sectors. Sectors that will likely absorb high school graduates are most likely to be in sales and services other than primary industry.

18. Consider online/mobile education options.

Employers noted the high cost associated with the training of employees. Typically training required that employers send staff to a major urban centre at considerable cost. Employers were **also wary of possibly "losing" these employees if they travelled to a major urban centre for training.**

To reduce the cost of training, attention could be given to promoting other training options including:

- Online and/or electronic (CD-Rom) training
- Mobile education (whereby instructors travel to rural locations to provide training)

On-line training would require investments in terms of improved internet connectivity for the region. Mobile education options may require some mechanisms to support the co-ordination of training needs across employers, such that mobile training would be provided to a group of employers who had employees with similar training needs.

19. Consider joint use of K-12 facilities to deliver training programs in rural/remote communities.

While it would not be practical to establish college campuses in all communities in the region, some consideration could be given to utilizing K-12 facilities by colleges to deliver programs/courses to employers. Many employers were supportive of evening or weekend courses which would allow school facilities to be used to deliver specific programs or courses. Contact North could also be viewed as a potential partner, but the hours of operation need to fit the time constraints of local employers.

20. Increased communication between the district school boards, principals and employers in the regions. Although the importance varied by region, study participants felt that youth entering the workforce out of high school were not sufficiently prepared for the work world. Employers would prefer students be encouraged to take occupational health and safety, WHMIS training, and obtain their driver's licence prior to entering the workforce. There is an opportunity to improve student preparedness by hosting a meeting between district school boards, principals and employers to discuss how this training could be provided.

21. Confederation College's business model for satellite campuses could be examined. Confederation College's recent agreement to provide remote campuses and courses regardless of the enrollment levels needs to be reviewed to determine if it is a viable learning source in remote, northern communities. Satellite campuses throughout the Algoma region, from any of the surrounding colleges would allow residents to upgrade their skills and complete programs without having to leave their community.

22. Establishment of a Training Board. The District of Algoma is one of three districts in Ontario that is without a MTCU funded training board. Similar training boards exist in surrounding regions, i.e., Superior North Training Board, and they have been successful in **the community's** eyes in terms of getting the adequate training to the region. A similar training board for the District of Algoma is recommended. If implemented, the training board must have representation from each of the regions. If a district training board is not implemented, provisions must be made for regional training coordinators whose roles would involve identifying training needs and coordinating the provision of that training using the mode appropriate to the subject matter, recipient and available facilities.

23. Annual labour market data collection. Employers' needs are constantly changing; in order to provide adequate services from the education and training providers, they need to be informed of the changing requirements and skill sets in each region. A short (five minute), annual survey of employers in each region will provide up-to-date labour force approximations and predictions for the coming year, as well as address potential upcoming skill shortages. Education and training providers will be able to use these data to begin and end programs so there are more timely responses to training needs as well as capping of programs when the needs have been met. The training board or regional coordinator can also make use of these data to determine where there are sufficient numbers of similar training needs to merit a locally delivered course or seminar.

- 24. Increased basic skills training to prepare the unemployed for skills upgrading.** For those that used to be employed in primary industry (mining, forestry), many began work without a high school diploma. Now, in order to re-enter the workforce, they are required to take upgrading courses, some at the college level. Many of the people enrolling in the upgrading courses have not taken any education in decades, and therefore are not prepared to enter a skills upgrading course that relies on basic literacy and understanding of math. Additional transition programs need to be put in place to help these workers transition back into learning, or the existing skills upgrading programs need to be aware and have policies to address the learning gap of these 'return to education' workers. If the college courses are going to be put in place to address training gaps, local workers that require the courses need to be academically prepared to take the courses.
- 25. Alternatives need to be developed to Internet based training.** Although employers were supportive of Internet based training for its flexibility and its easy dissemination of information, others in the community emphasized the need to develop alternatives. Internet based training is not for everyone and therefore alternatives such as paper based or CD-ROM and paper based learning needs to be considered to accommodate those that are not computer literate enough to learn well from Internet based training. In person training is not always an option and therefore alternatives to Internet based and in person training need to be considered in order to reach the largest audience in remote communities.
- 26. Tailor straight-to-workforce courses for students at risk of dropping out.** Students who drop out of secondary school are in particular need of workforce training. Many schools already operate a career studies or discovering the workforce courses, but guidance counsellors need to encourage at risk students to take these courses.
- 27. Offer essential skills training after hours and on weekends.** Currently, much of the adult education offered by the Algoma District School Board is offered on weekdays. The service is offered free of charge and provides free childcare which makes it an attractive service for adults seeking to upgrade their skills. A more flexible schedule where adults could learn when they are not working (i.e., evenings, weekends) would help more adults achieve the basic skills necessary for continued learning and career advancement.
- 28. Extend resources available to high school students in co-op to all students.** Co-op placements in high school offer a variety of resources (i.e., career development, preparation) to students that take the program. While these resources are very useful and prepare students in co-op for the workforce, they are not available to other students who are ineligible. Consideration could be given to expanding the availability of these resources.
- 29. Build better linkages between the K-12 system and the employer community.** Employers were critical of the K-12 system in terms of the "employability" of local high school graduates. In this context, it would be appropriate to establish an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) to provide a bridge between the employer community and the K-12 education system. Such an Advisory Committee would help ensure that there is an ongoing channel through which employers can communicate expectations/requirements to the K-12 system. Such advisory committees exist at the college level (i.e., Sault College), but it does not appear that such committees exist at the school district level.
- 30. Focus the Community Involvement to include work experience.** Currently the Province of Ontario requires that students complete 40 hours of community involvement in order to obtain their diploma. Community involvement can include participating in many recreational activities (i.e., helping out with a sports team) and focuses on youth getting involved in the community. The local school board could focus the community involvement program to resemble the high school work experience program in British Columbia (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/work_experience_req.htm) to concentrate on work experience rather than community involvement.

- 31. Promote highly needed career pathways to laid off workers.** Based on the success of MTCU's Second Career program in retraining Ontarians to be qualified to work in healthcare related fields and computer science, Employment Ontario could promote these highly needed career pathways to laid off workers.
- 32. Continue to promote OYAP.** The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) was viewed very positively by employers and community stakeholders. It could continue to be promoted to employers, youth and parents (often the primary decision makers about youth's post secondary career choices).
- 33. Utilize the Ontario Skills Training Enhancement Program.** Companies such as Essar and Tenaris could be encouraged to take advantage of the Ontario Skills Training Enhancement Program to develop onsite training for unionized employees and upgrade their training equipment.
- 34. Promote the Apprentice Training Tax Credit to small business.** It is important to make business aware of the tax incentives for taking on apprentices. The Apprentice Training Tax Credit is not well understood, particularly by smaller businesses that can benefit from a credit of up to 45% of the cost of an apprentice.
- 35. Build on the Literacy and Basic Skills program for First Nations.** The Literacy and Basic Skills program offered by Employment Ontario to adult learners is a valuable service that addresses a pressing need throughout the District; however, its implementation on Aboriginal reserves may need to be reviewed because the uptake of the service is primarily by youth (not adults) who have dropped out. The service may still be valuable, but the staff may need additional training for delivering the service to this unintended target audience.
- 36. Develop a "Weekend College" approach to learning.** The College could benefit from offering courses or programs that were only held on weekends. This could accommodate people looking to upgrade their skills without interfering with their regular work schedule.

Other Action Items

In addition to the previously identified actions, there are other recommendations that could also be considered including:

37. Prepare communications materials to address some current myths/ challenges in the region.

Employers note that they are reluctant to engage apprentices due to the high cost of apprenticeship, yet research completed by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)¹ suggests that for each \$1 dollar spent by employers on an average apprentice, the apprentice generates revenues to the employer amounting to \$1.47 during their period of apprenticeship.

Similarly, communications materials could be developed to provide existing (and future potential) employees with information as to the economic/non-economic benefits of working in the region including:

- Lower housing/accommodation costs relative to other regions in Canada
- Ability to access health services

38. Provide education surrounding incorporating succession planning into a business human resource strategy.

Employers in Central Algoma recognize the importance of succession planning, but with many businesses existing in a horizontal structure, succession planning has not been incorporated into

¹ (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, June 2009, [Return on Training Investment for Skilled Trades](#).)

their human resource strategy or business plan. Information and training for employers would be useful to aide in integrating succession planning into their business as well as understanding the need for it. Since many employers have indicated they are unable to provide time off for training, the same approach to training would need to be taken for employers. Succession based planning informational sessions or training would need to accommodate the busy schedules of employers and could be conducted as a “webinar” or another e-learning method in order to reach and assist as many employers as possible, regardless of where they were situated in the District of Algoma.

39. Broaden community input. There is a strong feeling that the District is entirely different than Sault Ste. Marie; and the regions outside of the Sault are generally cautious of Sault centered services and bodies. Many of the funding bodies and education and training boards that make recommendations for the entire District are based in Sault Ste. Marie, which, although convenient and central, does not make it easy for outside regions and communities to take part in these boards. Board meetings could encourage full-District participation by rotating meetings and allow remote-attendance through the use of technology.

40. Encourage employer involvement in community planning. Employers need to participate in the District’s human resource and training strategy. Meetings of community boards and agencies are often scheduled during business hours, making it impossible for small business owners to attend. These employers need to be accommodated. Teleconferences or web conferences may need to be held at off hours to accommodate small businesses that cannot make it into Sault Ste. Marie for the meetings. It is not enough for employers to be part of a group (i.e., Chamber of Commerce), they must actively take part if they want their training and labour needs met. Employers need to be more participatory, but employers’ time also needs to be respected in order to encourage participation.

41. Develop a grouped service delivery model. There are employment, training and skills development services available to employers and workers throughout the District, but there are still businesses that cannot find workers and workers who cannot find employment. The awareness and uptake of these services will increase if they are grouped under one umbrella. Continue to develop and implement the grouped service delivery model under Employment Ontario Information Services.

42. Make available supports to help youth whose families have historically been unemployed/ on assistance. There is a great deal of stigma attached to families that have traditionally been on social assistance and have a family history or low educational attainment. Youth coming from these families need to be provided with the support to overcome these boundaries and perform academically to get a job. Often case management whether at the high schools or separately in the community, can assist these youth in remaining committed to education, job acquisition and employability. College mentoring programs have shown themselves to be successful in increasing uptake of those student services needed to retain these at-risk students.

43. Duplicate the Destiny Model. The Destiny group comprises members of different levels of government and organizations; a similar committee in Superior East and East Algoma, including employers would benefit the region’s economic planning moving forward and encourage the sharing of both resources and information between all groups. Representatives from each regional group could then meet to exchange District wide ideas and partner to implement District wide initiatives.

44. Support agricultural initiatives. Agricultural initiatives in both Superior East and East Algoma have a growing need for physical, unskilled labour. Demand is highest during the summer season and can be weather dependent. These employers have shown a willingness to employ difficult-to-place workers (e.g., those with ADHD) provided they are able to get to and from the farm on their own. Pairing these youth with local employers who have difficulty finding farm labour would benefit both. Consider initiating a farm labour job board that could be posted in

local schools, given to guidance counsellors and provided through Employment Ontario. Other options include the use of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) offered through HRSDC (http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/sawp.shtml).

45. Continue to position Algoma as a centre of excellence for green energy. While wind and solar farms are unlikely to employ large number of graduates from Sault College's Renewable Energy and Green Construction program, the program, coupled with the province's emphasis on alternate energy is vital to the District's plan to be a leader in the field. Furthermore, with the recent introduction of solar panel manufacturing and hydro-electric initiatives, the region may have reached the critical mass to generate full employment for future graduates. The college could continue to promote this program and the community could continue to position itself as a centre of excellence for green energy.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Structure of the Report

This report is divided into eight distinct sections. The first section is an Executive Summary that is a concise assessment of the key findings and recommendations. It serves as an effective means of **disseminating the report to the District's many stakeholders.** The second section is the Introduction and provides the report's background information so that the reader understands the context, the research completed and the limitations of the data collected.

The next three sections are specific to each of the regions within the District of Algoma (Superior East, Central Algoma / Sault Ste. Marie, and East Algoma). These sections are intended individually as standalone reports and will address the lines of inquiry that were stipulated in the study's terms of reference, but will do so from a regional perspective. The topics covered include:

- Employment Analysis: This details the employment profile of the region's various sectors; the employment and training history of the region's current workforce; the diversity and source of its human resources; and the level of competition for those skills (from both inside and outside the region);
- Skills Demand and Forecast: This provides detailed supply and demand information, including recent trends, current occupational skills gaps, and skills projections by sector;
- Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention: This identifies the range of strategies and practices available to address skills shortages and oversupplies; it details recruitment sources by sector as well as the types of training that are currently being offered and where gaps exist in the ongoing development of the region's skill set. The roles of training providers and their ability to meet the region's training needs are also noted; and
- Recommendations: This details the action plan the researchers recommend based on region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The action plan as the name suggests contains a range of actionable recommendations that stakeholders, training institutions and employers can utilize to address the region's human resource challenges.

The final sections, Section 7 and 8, present a summary of findings and recommendations stemming from those findings.

2.2 Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank everyone in the District of Algoma that made this research possible. There is a vested interest that community members share in ensuring that the data this report was based upon accurately portrays their day-to-day economic realities. This study took place over a six-month period including the summer months, when many stakeholders may have been on vacation. Despite that challenge, community leaders from all regions, band councils, educational institutions (school board, college and university), community development agencies and employers gave their time and considered opinions.

Sault College and the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee both played lead roles in setting the terms of reference for the work and in facilitating access to key stakeholders in a region the size of France. The researchers would like to thank Linda Ryan, Jack McGoldrick and Silvia Alves for their support and advice throughout the study.

Finally, the researchers would like to acknowledge the financial support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and from Employment Ontario.

2.3 Terms and Acronyms

The following terms and acronyms are used in this report.

AWIC	Algoma Workforce Investment Committee
BR&E	Business Retention and Expansion
CDC	Community Development Corporations
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporation
COPS	Canadian Occupational Projection System
EDC	Economic Development Corporation
EDO	Economic Development Officer
ELNOS	Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
K-12	Kindergarten to Grade 12
KII	Key Informant Interview
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
NSTC	North Shore Tribal Council
SAH	Sault Area Hospital

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Rationale for the Project

The District of Algoma has witnessed the development of various efforts aimed at ensuring that local businesses are supplied with skilled human resources. Diverse stakeholders including secondary and post-secondary education specialists, government and quasi-governmental entities and industry leaders have been actively pursuing opportunities to develop training and development solutions to meet specific needs. **These efforts have been undertaken in recognition of the region's negative population growth and in recognition of the resulting competition for human resources in all sectors and at all skill levels throughout the region.**

At the same time, the District of Algoma has experienced the closure of several major manufacturing and resource industries that have left skilled and often older workers without jobs. Because of the lack of opportunities for high-paying, stable jobs, young people in the region have been leaving for other jurisdictions to pursue careers that are capable of paying higher wages and offering greater security. This exodus has contributed to the competition for human resources and has made retraining and upgrading options even more important for local employers.

Throughout the region there is a sense that Algoma has a lot to offer as a place to work and live. The natural environment coupled with the low cost of living has made many areas in the region attractive to residents of other jurisdictions. The employment infrastructure (including training options) has successfully attracted new businesses to the region and efforts to recruit for specific vacancies (such as family doctors) have also met with success. In short, the region has found that general and specific needs can largely be addressed through collaborative efforts between government, education and industry stakeholders.

An understanding of the human resource and workforce development risks are required within this context. Skill shortages, for example, have been identified in all areas of the district. Weak links in the education infrastructure – particularly for addressing the training needs of communities outside of Sault Ste. Marie – pose a significant threat to the human resource and growth prospects of the region. While **the District's highly centralized economy can be credited** for creating stability in terms of the overall employment rates, a reliance on resource industries - with their tendency to require stable international markets – has placed the long-term viability of many communities into question. The challenge is in securing industry and a tax base that can support vigorous local economies. Links with areas outside of the District are likely required to develop these kinds of conditions for sustaining (and even growing) the region.

In large measure, success in developing a sustainable workforce for the District of Algoma is dependent on **establishing new training and development structures within the region's private and public post-secondary education and training institutions**. Throughout most of the region, skill shortages and training gaps are evident in senior occupations that require effective leadership complemented by a vision for what can be achieved. It is unclear whether the region possesses or attracts an adequate supply of graduates with this mix of skill and experience. While the training infrastructure can be developed to meet retraining and/or technical skills needs, a consistent vision and leadership is still required.

Although resident leaders have been active in conducting research to retain and grow local business and to provide consultation capacity on workforce development issues, this is the first time that stakeholders across the region have united to create an overarching strategy for human resource and workforce development. While the need for specific skills sets may be different across the region, accessibility and availability is a common challenge that must be addressed. An evidence-based approach to building **human resource capacity requires input from the area's education, government and industry stakeholders** and an integrated human resource strategy that will lay the foundation for sustaining and growing the region in the coming years.

3.2 Scope of the Study

Various committees have been formed to address the labour force issues facing the District of Algoma, although the majority mainly focus their initiatives in the main urban areas, Sault Ste. Marie, Blind River and Elliot Lake. As a result, through funding by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) was formed with the mandate to act as a catalyst for change in the District of Algoma's **labour market by partnering with labour market groups in addressing training and adjustment issues.**

AWIC engaged the services of R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to undertake a research study that will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the labour market issues and skill requirements pertaining to the District of Algoma. A Steering Committee with representation from local labour market groups was established with responsibility for providing overall guidance and direction to the project.

The *Labour Force Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy for the District of Algoma* examines a profile of the labour force in the region. The focus was on the development of a forecast for the next three to five years. Human resource issues explored in this study include:

- Labour force needs and gaps (skills shortages);
- Areas of demand and supply (labour and skills);
- Recruitment and retention of workers; and,
- Training and development issues (at all levels).

The study examines a range of business and industry types across the region through primary and secondary (literature and statistical sources) research that encompassed industry, education and training providers, government representatives and other industry stakeholder groups. The data collected in this research are intended to develop evidence-based action plans for industry, government and educational and training providers as they assist the region in addressing the human resource and development challenges facing industry both now and in the future. The purpose, then, is to produce a workforce development strategy and to develop recommendations that can serve to optimize the labour market conditions in the District of Algoma over the next three to five years.

3.3 Research Requirements

The report provides insight as to numerous human resources in the region including:

- Development of a profile of the labour force in the region, based on primary and secondary data;
- Development of an occupational forecast for the next three to five years;
- An inventory of training and educational programs and an analysis of current and future gaps;
- An inventory of interventions and initiatives that address gaps and shortages in skilled human resources;
- A needs assessment of areas outside of Sault Ste. Marie with respect to workforce participation; and,
- A workforce development action plan with specific targets, methods, strategies and recommendations, for the purpose of developing an integrated human resource strategy to address demand and supply issues in the long term.

3.4 Methodology

The researchers conducted a literature review to help provide context for the study. This review was completed at the community level (Superior East, Central Algoma, and East Algoma) and is included at the beginning of each of the appropriate sections. In doing so it accessed Statistics Canada labour market and demographic data for both the District of Algoma and whenever possible at the census subdivision level that comprise the communities within the District. The review included an analysis of existing reports produced by AWIC and other organizations, focusing on labour market supply and demand and current and future training requirements.

Following a distinction made early in the project between economic and workforce development strategies, the Consultant began research for the project by interviewing six economic development officers (EDOs) from across the region. These interviews were intended to provide an understanding of the current conditions in the District with respect to economic development, in order to ground the workforce development strategy in a local economic context as well as to assist in the creation of the employer survey instrument (see Appendix A). These discussions resulted in the subsequent modification of particular questions and approaches in order to provide the foundation for an integrated human resource strategy.

Following the initial interviews with the EDO's using the Economic Development Officer interview guide, four additional interview guides were developed for specific subgroups including:

- Government and Social Service Agencies;
- Education and Training Providers;
- Union and Association Representatives; and,
- Supervisors and Human Resource Managers.

These guides addressed the specific needs of the interviewed groups and captured information that the key informants were able to provide perspective on. The list of stakeholders was provided by AWIC and supplemented by recommendations from stakeholders during the in depth interviews. A copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix B. The interviews ranged in length from 20 to 90 minutes. Sixty in depth interviews were completed for the project including the initial six interviews with the EDOs. Two of the interviews were completed with stakeholders who provided services across the District of Algoma, sixteen interviews were completed with stakeholders in East Algoma, twenty-three from Sault Ste. Marie and nineteen from Superior East.

At the same time as the key informant interviews were being completed with members of the communities, a survey of employers was distributed across the District. The purpose of the survey was to gather labour market information by occupational type, to identify skills and training gaps, to develop workforce projections and to assess needs. A total of 2,918 employers were mailed a questionnaire with a postage-paid return envelope. Employers were also given the opportunity to participate by telephone or through an online questionnaire. Employers throughout the district were encouraged to participate through newspaper and magazine ads as well as press releases in the local online news sites and newspapers. **EDO's went into their communities and asked business owners to complete the survey,** with some EDOs personally taking the survey to each business in their area to gain participation. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. A total of 312 employers completed the questionnaire. This represents a gross response rate of 11%.

In July 2010, nine focus groups with employers and/or other stakeholders were conducted in total throughout the District of Algoma, three in each region of Algoma to allow each community a chance to participate and have their voices heard. The groups were held in the following locations:

- In Superior East (Dubreuilville, Wawa and White River)
- In Central Algoma (three groups in Sault Ste. Marie)
- In East Algoma (Blind River, Desbarats and Elliot Lake)

The group conducted in Dubreuilville was conducted in French and one of the Sault Ste. Marie groups was conducted with First Nations representatives so as to gather the insight of as many diverse stakeholder groups as possible.

In addition to the focus groups, site visits were conducted with three training sites: Continuing Education and Natural Environment, Technology, and Skilled Trades departments at Sault College; Employment Solutions (formerly Job Connect); and the Native Education and Training Department at Sault College. Although other training locations were approached, many were not able to commit the time especially during the lead up to the start of the school year when the visits were occurring. A data checklist was used to ask representatives of each training site similar questions about program delivery, enrollment and capacity. The checklist can be found in Appendix D. An inventory of training facilities and resources available in each community was completed in order to assess the education and training opportunities that were available in each community. This inventory can be found in Appendix E.

Following the submission of this draft report to the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, four validation sessions will be completed in order to receive feedback on the preliminary findings. These sessions will be held in the communities of Sault Ste. Marie, Elliot Lake, Blind River and Wawa. The validation sessions will include a 1-2.5 hour discussion of the findings and associated deliverables through the use of a PowerPoint presentation and moderated discussion. The Sault Ste. Marie session will be integrated as part of the Growth Strategies & Labour Development of Sault Ste. Marie Conference with a smaller validation session for addressing questions held in addition to the conference presentation. These sessions will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the proposed recommendations and the implications of those recommendations. The issues raised by attendees will be integrated into the final report.

3.5 Research Limitations

The research took place between March and August, 2010. During that time the steelworkers' strike at the Vale mine in Sudbury was still on-going but was resolved in July. In addition, two union locals at Essar Steel Algoma Inc. were in contract negotiations in July. As major employers in the region, the state of both companies' workforce negotiations necessarily impacts both business and consumer confidence within the region. That confidence in turn affects employers' ability to predict their future hiring or training expenditures. The reader is cautioned to review the recommendations in this study within the context they were developed.

The quantitative survey of employers was not conducted using a random sample. As a result, no margins of sampling error are reported in this report. It was intended as a census of all employers in the District; any and all employers were invited to participate. It is therefore subject to potential self-selection bias. The total number of employers participating in the study was 312. A total of two employers did not provide address or business information and as a result their answers could not be combined with others from the District's three regions. Two employers completed the survey from outside of the region (North Bay and Sudbury) and as a result were excluded from the analysis. The distribution of employers by region was as follows:

- Superior East (n=30);
- Sault Ste. Marie (n=252);
- East Algoma (n=26); and,
- Unknown (n=2)

With only 310 respondents, **the researcher's ability to segment the respondents into their respective regions and maintain a high level of confidence is limited. This is particularly true for the regions of Superior East and East Algoma.**

3.6 Environmental Scan

Over the course of the Algoma Labour Force Analysis survey field work and key informant interviews there were a number of events in the District of Algoma that should be considered when reviewing the results of this study. These included:

- Essar Steel Algoma & Contract Negotiations;
- Sault Area Hospital Deficit and Labour Force Requirements;
- Government and Private Infrastructure Investment;
- First Nation Training Fund; and,
- Educational Program Expansion.

3.6.1 Essar Steel Algoma & Contract Negotiations

In July, Local 2251 and 2724 of Essar Steel Algoma were given a newly proposed contract as their current collective agreements were set to expire at the end of July. Contract talks came at a time when Essar Steel Algoma reported low pricing and low volume with a \$330 million loss through the first nine months of the fiscal 2009-2010.² Upon review, some workers were disappointed that the three year contract came with no signing bonuses or wage / salary increase in the first year.

Local 2251 accepted the proposed three year collective agreement; however, doubt loomed over whether or not Local 2724 would accept their agreement which was set to expire days after that of Local 2251. Essar emphasized the desire to remain competitive with other North American steel producers. Local 2724 accepted the proposed four year contract with 59% of members voting in favour of the settlement.

For the first quarter of the fiscal year 2010-2011 Essar Steel Algoma reported a net profit of \$40 million, **the company's first quarterly profit in 18 months. The steel company attributed the recent quarter's profit to high volume and better market prices.**

3.6.2 Sault Area Hospital Deficit and Labour Force Requirements

The Sault Area Hospital (SAH) was reported as having the second highest deficit in the province. Hospital officials and stakeholders acknowledge this problem and have worked to address it over the last year while avoiding layoffs. In May of 2009, the SAH proposed a Hospital Improvement Plan that was set to cut costs with the goal of a zero deficit by the end of the fiscal 2011-2012. Contributing to the issue has been a shortage of hospital beds in the community, the SAH not receiving provincial funding for the declining number of in-hospital primary care physicians and the rising incentive costs of attracting specialists to the community.³ During this time, the SAH also completed renovations opening 289 new beds for the hospital.⁴

3.6.3 Government and Private Infrastructure Funding

In August of 2009, the Huron Central Railway said it would have to shut down its railway between Sault St. Marie and Sudbury due to a lack of infrastructure funding. The Federal government planned for \$15 million of rail infrastructure money to address this need. In August of this year, the federal government was set to formally announce this funding pledge. This financial commitment was outlined in the Canada-Ontario Provincial Territorial Base Fund Agreement.⁵ The provincial government also committed to an additional \$15 million in rail infrastructure funding which will come from the Building Canada Plan, rather than the Provincial Territorial Base Funding Agreement⁶. In addition to these funds, the Northern Ontario

² (Purvis, Local 2251 to vote on contract, 2010)

³ (Dobrovnik, Sault Area Hospital works at solving deficit problem, 2010)

⁴ (Dobrovnik, New hospital expected to be certified for occupancy on Aug. 9, 2010)

⁵ (Della-Mattia, Rail cash on its way, says MP, 2010)

⁶ (Infrastructure Canada, 2010)

Heritage Fund Corporation provided \$1.5 million to the program through the Infrastructure and Community Development Program⁷.

Sault Ste. Marie was awarded nearly \$10 million in federal stimulus dollars that will be used toward \$30 million of planned construction. A deadline of March 31, 2011 has been designated as the end date for all construction projects that depend on this funding. Sault Ste. Marie is confident that all projects are on track to meet this deadline.⁸

Provincial redevelopment funding was provided to the Algoma Manor Home for the Aged to build a new nursing home to replace the current aging one in the Town of Thessalon. Historically, the 21 Algoma municipalities were asked to contribute annually to any operational deficit of the home, but when the new home opened the municipalities would no longer be required to do so.⁹

A conditional offer was made on the bankrupt Crimson Ridge Golf Course. This course had been on the market for the past three years and was selling for \$2.95 million, a \$700,000 reduction in price from its 2008 listing. The course employees 55 staff members.¹⁰

Heliene Canada started production in October 2010 and held an official ribbon cutting ceremony in December 2010. The plant's funding comes from both private investment and provincial investment. The Northern Ontario Heritage fund has provided the project with a \$1,875,000 loan and a \$625,000 conditional grant¹¹. The plant will create 30 administrative and production jobs for the Sault Ste. Marie area; however, the manufacturing of solar modules is largely automated and requires minimal personnel.¹²

3.6.4 First Nation Training Fund

In July 2010, the provincial government announced that it will spend \$45 million over three years to train the First Nation and Métis people of Northern Ontario for resource-based positions. This Northern Training Partnership Fund was created as the result of recommendation from Aboriginal communities and Northern MPPs. The Northern Training Partnership Fund is comprised of two parts: The Skills Training program for Northern Ontario residents is administered by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The Northern Training Partnership Fund – Far North Land Use Planning component is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

A portion of MTCU's Skills Training program for Northern Ontario residents is designed to expand services to Aboriginal peoples that will connect this population to education, training, pre-employment and employment services. This will align with the Ontario government's priorities for economic growth and will ensure that training and support will be delivered that is high quality, culturally aware and responsive, and results driven.

3.6.5 Educational Program Expansion

Sault Ste. Marie's Algoma University has implemented two university level courses at Northern College. The courses will be a part of Algoma University's Social Services program. Northern College President, Fred Gibbons, believes that university courses offered at his college are essential elements in his college's goal of becoming a "Northern educational network". The courses are aimed at part-time students who are employed and looking for advancement opportunities.¹³

In June of 2009, \$22 million in provincial funding was announced to **open the city's first nurse practitioner clinic** offered from Sault College later in the year. It will service approximately 2,400 patients and provide

⁷ (Government of Ontario, 2010)

⁸ (Bellerose D., Stimulus cash projects on track says city CAO, 2010)

⁹ (Rankin, Redevelopment dollars delivered, 2010)

¹⁰ (Bellerose, Crimson Ridge moves closer to sale, 2010)

¹¹ (Government of Ontario, 2010)

¹² (Bellerose D., Solar plant slated for Sept. opening, 2010)

¹³ (McLaren, Algoma University teams with Timmins college campus, 2010)

an opportunity for nurses to gain on the job experience.¹⁴ The development of this facility will combine the delivery of public health programs with an innovative nurse practitioner-led clinic on the site of Sault College while creating expanded research and teaching opportunities. As well, the project will allow for the consolidation of five different Algoma Public Health offices in the community and realize savings of \$100,000 to \$150,000 annually which will help to improve health services. The centre will also include four classrooms equipped with multi-media capabilities.

The provincial government, Extendicare and Sault College are partnering to build a new 256 bed long-term care home that will be located on six acres of the college's campus. The provincial government has invested \$40 million in this project which will allow Sault College students receiving training in program areas including personal support worker, nursing, OTA/PTA, fitness, health promotion culinary services and salon services will be able to gain first-hand on-the-job training at the home in the areas of nursing, dietary management, and facilities management. Construction is planned for Spring 2011¹⁵.

¹⁴ (Dobrovnik, Nurse practitioner clinic at Sault College to open later this year, 2010)

¹⁵ (Soonews.ca, 2010)

4. SUPERIOR EAST

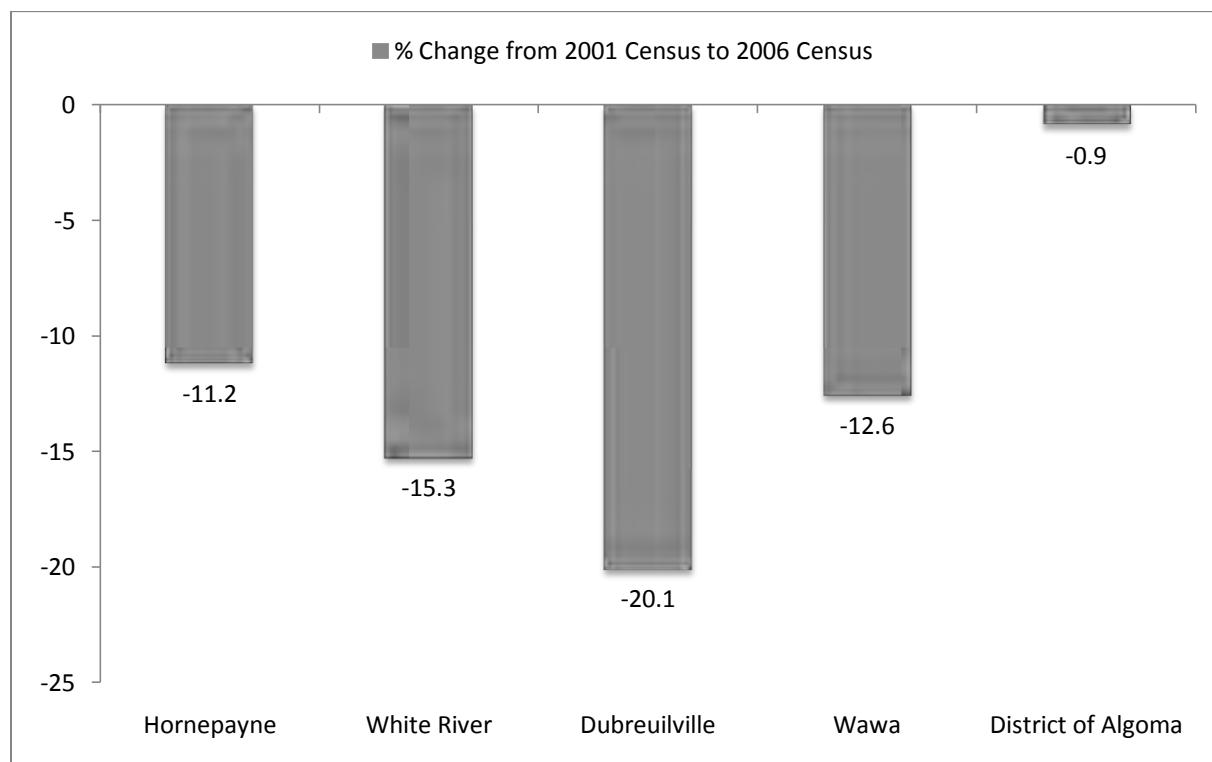
4.1 Regional Profile

Traditionally, Superior East has been classified as a resource based region, with each community relying on one or two employers that employ the majority of the residents. Mining and Forestry have served as the primary industries in this region since its inception, although the recent decline in resource based industries has negatively impacted the region as a whole.

Superior East is primarily populated by four towns: Wawa (3,204), Hornepayne (1,209), White River (841), and Dubreuilville (773); the remaining unorganized population of the region is 5,717¹⁶.

The region of Superior East experienced considerable population losses when compared to the other regions in the District generally over the five year period. Given that cross-sectional comparative statistics regarding employment rates are unavailable, the analysis of employment and unemployment is based upon the 2006 figures. The unemployment rate for the region, while high, is comparable to the figures provided for the District of Algoma as a whole and indicates that job losses have sparked an out-migration from settlements in Superior East. This is confirmed by the population contraction experienced by Hornepayne, White River, Dubreuilville and Wawa, as shown in the chart below.

Figure 4.1
Population Losses in Superior East



Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

¹⁶ (Statistics Canada, 2006)

Although Superior East has historically attracted immigrants, immigration has not offset any of the net losses experienced by region more recently. Superior East has not experienced net population increases due to immigration since 2000. Most immigrants arrived prior to 1991.

The population of the region is mobile. As illustrated in Table 4.2, movement has largely occurred within the same census subdivisions. However, intraprovincial migration has also occurred, mostly in Wawa.

**Table 4.2
Mobility Status – Superior East
(2006)**

Mobility Status:	Hornepayne	White River	Dubreuilville	Wawa	Algoma, Unorganized North Part
Place of Residence 1 Year Ago					
Total population 1 year and over	1190	840	765	3155	5710
Lived at the same address 1 year ago	990	750	640	2665	5355
Lived within same province/ territory 1 year ago; but changed addresses within same census subdivision	125	50	70	285	135
Lived within same province/ territory 1 year ago; but changed addresses from another census subdivision within same province/territory	65	30	0	170	215
Lived in a different province/territory 1 year ago	0	0	50	30	0
Lived in a different country 1 year ago	10	10	0	0	0

Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

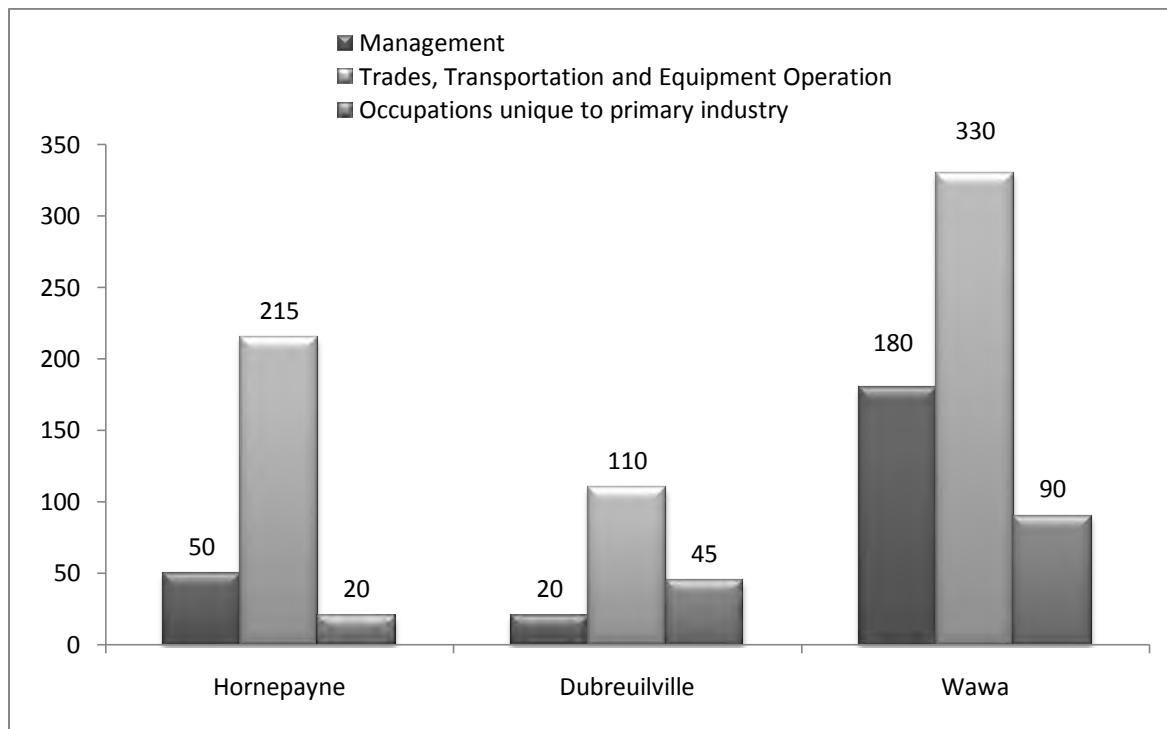
As several centres in Superior East have a relatively high dependence on forestry activities, the region has been impacted by fluctuations in this industry. As illustrated in Table 4.3, the Superior East region is characterized by high participation in management; trades, transport and equipment operation; and primary industry occupations. There is a low participation in education, government service and religion; sales and service; and processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations.

**Table 4.3
Occupations in Superior East as compared to the District
(2006)**

Occupations	Superior East Employed	% Share	Algoma Employed	% Share
Management	310	11.6%	4,430	8.0%
Business, Finance and Administration	345	13.0%	8,225	14.9%
Natural and Applied Sciences	150	5.7%	3,340	6.1%
Health	170	6.4%	3,755	6.8%
Education, Gov't Service and Religion	90	3.3%	4,880	8.8%
Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport	25	0.9%	1,110	2.0%
Sales and Service	575	21.7%	15,630	28.3%
Trades, Transport and Equipment	715	27.0%	9,515	17.2%
Primary Industry	185	6.9%	1,765	3.2%
Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities	90	3.3%	2,540	4.6%
Total, All Occupations	2,650	100%	55,210	100%

Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

Chart 4.4
Selected Occupations in Hornepayne, Dubreuilville, and Wawa
(2006)



Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

In 2007, the Crupi Consulting Group and Dr. B. Moazzami from Lakehead University conducted a Regional Investment Strategic Plan for the Superior East Alliance. This document detailed the economic situation in Superior East while assessing the sustainable employment level, tourism industry potential, mining industry and a SWOT analysis.

The situation presented at the time of the report (September 2007) differs greatly from the current situation in Superior East and therefore much of the assessment and recommendations are no longer **applicable to the present economic situation. In particular, the report emphasizes the region's dependence on resource based industries, particularly mining and forestry.** Since 2007, the Weyerhaeuser Mill in Wawa has shut down operations, Wilderness Reforestation has curtailed operations, cancelling the 2010 tree plant, and Dubreuil Forest Products has ceased operations in Dubreuilville. White River Forest Products has purchased the sawmill in White River from Domtar and has drawn some investment from both Pic Mobert First Nations and a north-western Ontario industry veteran who runs a forestry consulting business in southern Ontario. The mill has plans to open in 2010, but at the time of this report has not resumed operations.

Throughout the past ten years the Superior East CFDC has administered the Local Initiatives Fund (LIF) to communities in Superior East. Funding for the LIF Program is provided by FedNor. It consists of a grant program made up of \$75,000 annually to support regional and locally based community initiatives for not-for-profit organizations. During 2010, the Superior East CFDC supported a total of 22 community projects contributing a total of \$70,925.00. The overall dollars leveraged with local partners for community projects totalled more than \$850,000.00

4.1.1 White River

The White River Labour Adjustment Centre produces statistics about the community; the EDO in White River provided the most recent statistics up to June 31, 2010. The statistics showed the impact of the closing of the Mill on the community since its closure in 2007. The closure affected 238 employees of the mill, and indirectly affected 68 others who included spouses and businesses that supplied the mill or relied on the mill being open to continue their business. As of May 31, 2010, the Labour Adjustment Centre had assisted 87% of the individuals who were eligible or had applied for assistance (n=169).

Since the mill's closure, 59 people who were affected by the closure have moved out of White River, and the EDO estimates the population to be approximately 680-725 (August 2010).

The current EDO in White River has a contract ending August 23, 2010 which is not up for renewal because of a lack of funding. This will have a negative impact overall on the economic development of White River. At this time, White River has not independently completed an economic development strategy or a strategic plan of any kind for the town. The most recent plan of any kind was the Regional Investment Strategic Plan for the Superior East Alliance, which is not exclusive to White River.

4.1.2 Wawa

In 2008, the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa conducted a business survey of 125 businesses¹⁷. The survey results showed a negative perception regarding how business owners felt about the support provided to business by local government. A number of recommendations in the report aimed to improve the perceived relationship gap which focused on improving communications between the EDC, Town of Wawa and local business.

The Economic Development Corporation of Wawa publishes an annual report detailing its past accomplishments and future goals.¹⁸ The objectives of the EDC in Wawa are to create conditions to increase the rate of wealth creation, remove barriers to growth and to build opportunities for increased economic activity. These reports detail the use of the EDC budget as well as the completion of objectives; projects underway and future initiatives/objectives are also noted in the report.

Wawa has experienced some success with their "Step Up" Youth Leadership Development Workshop. This workshop was developed by the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa and is aimed at developing leadership styles, building effective teams that work effectively, improving effectiveness of communicating with others, analyzing community assets and issues, and applying all skills to developing a sustainable strategy for their community. The Economic Development Corporation is working with youth in the community to offer more of these programs and monitor their success.

Recently, there has been some discussion regarding the reopening of the Edwards Mine, located outside of Wawa. Strike Minerals, the owners of the mine, have maintained the surface facilities and the permits since the closure and are currently dewatering the mine to test mineralized zones. This dewatering is the first step in the re-opening of the mine and community leaders feel it is a positive step for their economy.

The most recent development in Wawa, benefitting the entire Superior East region was the opening of a satellite campus of Confederation College. Beginning in February of 2011, the Wawa campus will offer the initial program offerings of Office Administration, Construction Techniques and Mining Techniques. All are 1 year programs.

Graduates of the Mining Techniques program may choose to enter the workforce after receiving their one-year Ontario College Certificate. Alternatively, graduates may choose to enter directly into the second year of the two and three-year mining technician and technologist programs at Cambrian College in

¹⁷ (The Economic Development Corporation of Wawa, 2009)

¹⁸ (The Economic Development Corporation of Wawa, 2009)

Sudbury or into the second year of the mining technician program at the Haileybury Campus of Northern College.

The Construction Techniques Certificate Program is a one year program that is designed as an introduction to the employment realities and working specifics of the construction trades. The benefits of such an introductory program are two-fold.

First, potential skilled trades workers can decide what trades may interest them most in a protected, safe environment without the pressures of production or deadlines.

Second, potential skilled trades workers do not have to first find an employer to decide if they would be interested in such work (apprenticeship program). They can come to an educational institution to explore the specifics of such trades first, which will ultimately make them more marketable to pursue employment in construction or similar trades because of their educational experiences here at Confederation College in the certificate program.

The Office Administration General program is designed to teach practical and transferable skills, attitudes and knowledge to succeed in a variety of office settings. Students learn business applications in math, accounting and communications. They also receive hands-on training using current word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, database and desktop publishing software. Students are encouraged to develop essential problem solving, teamwork, decision making and interpersonal skills.

The Office Administration General program prepares students for an entry-level office job after one year of postsecondary business education. The 4-week field placement in the second semester provides an opportunity to apply new skills and knowledge while obtaining valuable work experience.

Overall, the Confederation College campus in Wawa will provide the much needed training infrastructure in the area as well as increased local education opportunities for residents of Superior East that would have otherwise had to travel to Sault Ste. Marie.

4.1.3 Hornepayne

Hornepayne is a small town located about 420km north of Sault Ste. Marie. In 2009, the Hornepayne Economic Development Corporation published the Hornepayne Community Profile.¹⁹ Using primarily Statistics Canada data as well as municipal data, the profile detailed the labour force and demographics of the town as well as the primary businesses located in the town.

4.1.4 Dubreuilville

Dubreuilville is a small town located approximately 300km north of Sault Ste. Marie. Established as a company town in 1961 by the Dubreuil Brothers lumber company, Dubreuilville was incorporated as a municipality in 1977. The population is primarily francophone, with over 82% identifying French as their first language.

In 2004, the town of Dubreuilville, in conjunction with Algoma University, hired a marketing firm to develop a strategic plan for the community stretching from 2004 through 2014. This plan addressed the labour and economic development issues that the town was currently facing, while proposing solutions that would be implemented over the next ten years to combat these issues. The plans major recommendation was for Dubreuilville to increase tourism through the promotion of their French language heritage with the implementation of French language summer camps and event-destination tourism, among other options. Acknowledgement of the restrictions of these recommendations were taken into account, (e.g., no facilities available for summer camps), but viable solutions as to how to remedy these restrictions were not proposed. Since the time of the report, the only hotel that existed in Dubreuilville has shut down and the only restaurant in Dubreuilville is also facing threat of closure. These

¹⁹ (Hornepayne Economic Development Corporation, 2009)

recent closures have a large impact on the ability of Dubreuilville to implement any of the tourism recommendations from their Strategic Plan.

Additionally, the Strategic Plan suggested maintenance of the forest sector importance by introducing bio-forestry opportunities such as blueberry farming, Canada Yew and scented oils (spruce, balsam, cedar). None of the recommendations have been implemented at the time of the report, although an entrepreneur blueberry farmer from Wawa is assessing land sites throughout Superior East for a future farm; however, Dubreuilville has not been publicly noted as a possibility.

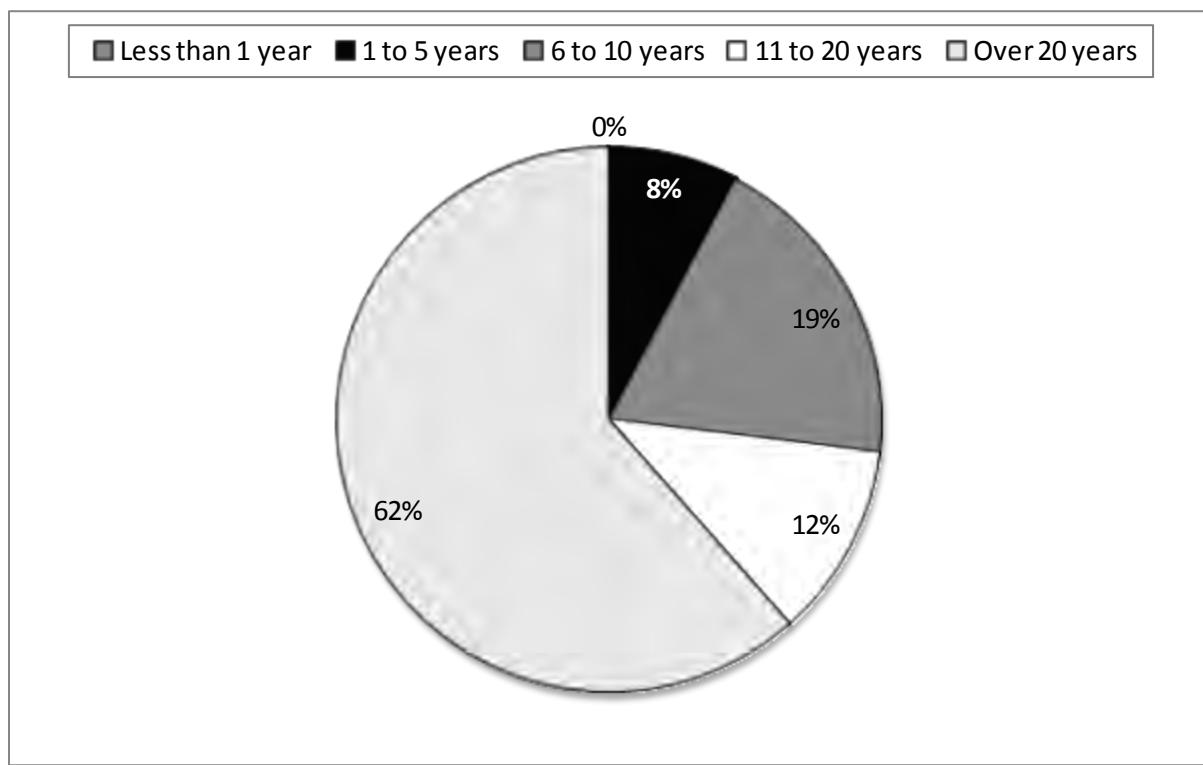
4.2 Employment Analysis

The employer survey asked respondents basic questions about the composition and location of their company in order to generate a profile of responding employers. Twenty-six employers from Superior East responded to the survey. These employers were:

- Located off-reserve (100%)
- Head office in the District of Algoma (80%)
- Not operating under a collective bargaining agreement (70%)

Employers indicated having been in operation in the District of Algoma for an average of over 20 years, representing an employer base that is knowledgeable of labour needs as well as the evolving labour market in the region. Employers responding to the survey were dispersed throughout the public (35%), private (39%), and not for profit (26%) sectors and despite the low numbers of responding employers in the region, the employers that took the time to respond to the survey were well established in the District of Algoma.

Table 4.5
Years of Operation in the District of Algoma



n=26.

Source: Employer Survey, A1. "How many years has your business been in operation in the District of Algoma?"
Note: Caution, small base.

Employers in Superior East focused their primary industry as Wholesale and Retail Trade (23%), and Accommodation and Food Services (23%), while secondary industry focused on Wholesale and Retail Trade (15%), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (15%). As detailed in the regional profile, the traditionally resource based (forestry & mining) region showed only 8% indicating forestry as their primary industry and 12% as their secondary industry.

Table 4.6
Primary and Secondary Industry

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Wholesale and Retail Trade	23%	15%	38%
Accommodation and Food Services	23%	4%	27%
Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services	12%	0%	12%
Educational Services	12%	4%	16%
Other Services	12%	8%	20%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8%	12%	20%
Utilities	4%	0%	4%
Construction	4%	0%	4%
Manufacturing	4%	4%	8%
Transportation and Warehousing	4%	8%	12%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4%	0%	4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4%	15%	19%
Public Administration	4%	4%	8%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0%	0%	0%

n=26.

Source: Employer Survey: A3. "Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates.

Caution: Small base.

Note: Multiple responses permitted.

The key informant interviews described the decline of the forestry industry in Superior East. Domtar shut down the sawmill in 2007. It was purchased in 2009 by White River Forest Products in June 2009, which has been gradually building up operations. Poor economic conditions have stalled efforts to resume operations of the sawmill as there is no demand for the by-products (saw dust and wood chips) of processed soft wood lumber. Although the community has invested over \$90 million in public and private financing²⁰ **the town is still waiting for the political "go-ahead" from** the government. The mill presently sits closed in White River (with some seasonal opening).

There is rising concern that if the mill(s) open, the **unemployed forestry workers won't** have the new credentials or physical ability to return to the forestry industry. Both focus group participants and key informant interview participants expressed a deep hope that the mills would soon reopen and the economy would rebound for the resource based industries. When asked what the community would do if the mill did not reopen, the community members admitted that no plan was in place; the hope of the community currently rests on the reopening of the mill. One of the forestry employers in Superior East noted that they were, "trying very hard to remain in operation, it's very difficult the last few years in the forestry business" (Superior East KII Participant).

Employees that have been laid off, expect that when the mines or sawmills reopen, they will go back to work; therefore, many see this downturn as a temporary situation that their community will overcome. Much of this hope is fuelled by community leaders who assert that they are starting to see signs that the

"We are still in a decline. We're struggling with the effect of three major employers in the forestry industry closing over the past two to three years which has resulted in high unemployment and rising social service applicants."

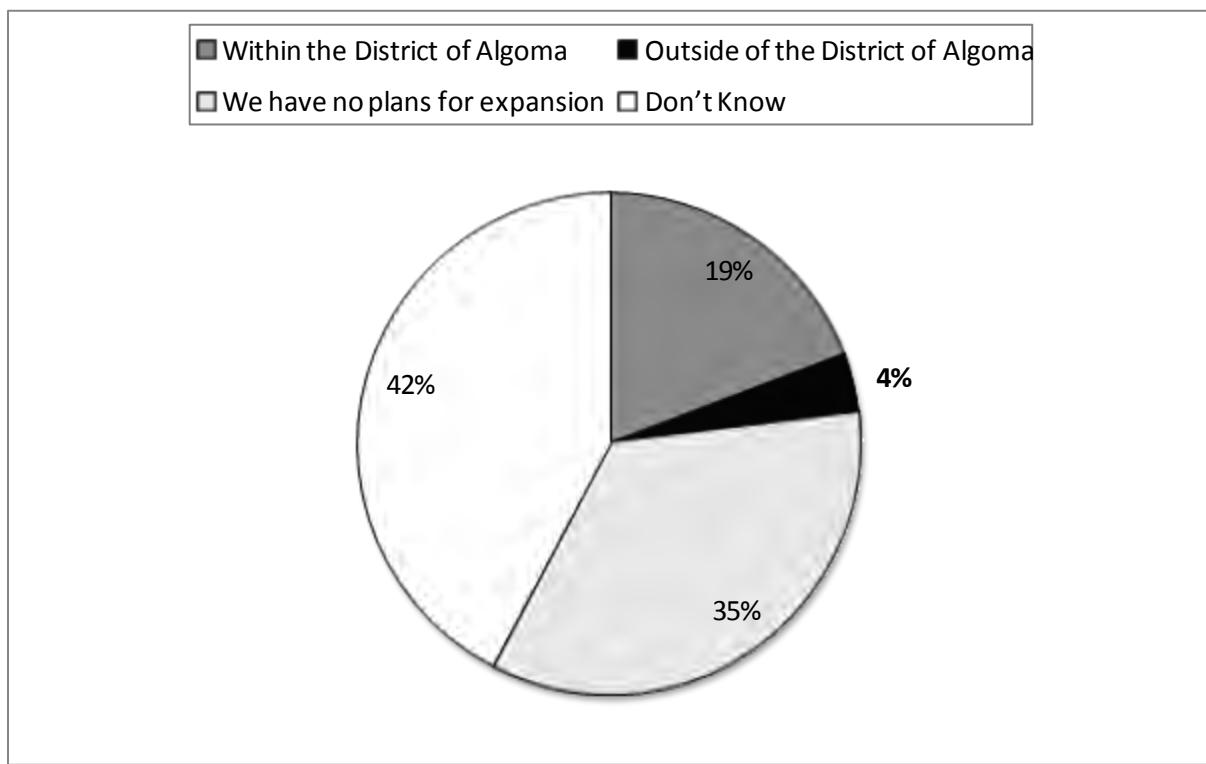
(Superior East KII Participant)

²⁰ (Ross, 2009)

forestry sector is starting to rebound, "in all 3 communities Wawa, White River and Dubreuilville the industry is showing indications toward re-opening" (**Superior East KII Participant**). At the time of the study and at the time of the report, no increase or reopening in resource based industries have occurred in the region, which some attribute to the continued strength of the Canadian dollar. However, it should be noted that the average price for lumber has risen from \$206.01 (1,000 boardfeet, \$CDN) in 2009 to \$239.68 in September 2010, which provides some hope that with higher prices, some mills may re-open.

The positive attitude of Superior East community leaders exists despite 42% of employers not being sure whether their company will expand in the next five years and 35% having no plans for expansion. Those that plan expansions are primarily concentrating their expansion within the District.

**Figure 4.7
Planned Expansion**



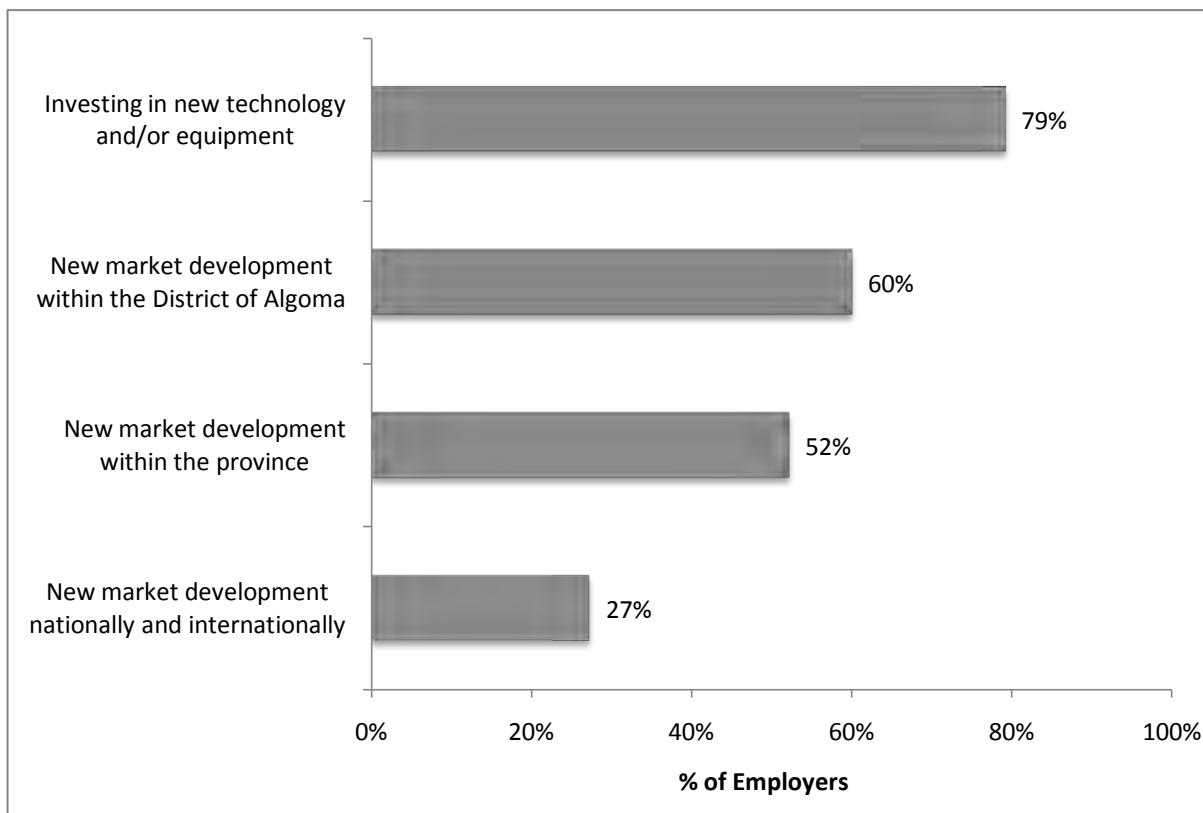
n=26

Source: Employer Survey: B1. "Is your company planning to expand its business operations over the next five years?"

Caution: Small base.

Employers were asked to rate the importance of certain factors in growing and sustaining their business; overall investing in new technology and/or equipment (79%) followed by new market development in the District of Algoma (60%) were most important for employers in Superior East. New market development in the District of Algoma was slightly less important (-9%) than the district as a whole felt it was, while investing in new technology and/or equipment was more important (+5%). A great deal of the increased importance of technology in Superior East can be attributed to the closed sawmills and mines, that, should they reopen, would require some level of upgrading and retooling to meet current safety, environmental, and technology standards.

Figure 4.8
Growing and Sustaining Business



n=25.

Source: Employer Survey: B2. "Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in growing or sustaining your business. Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale."

Caution: small base.

Employers in Superior East noted that they have an aging workforce, especially in the management workforce where most employers noted that they have almost two thirds of their workforce aged 40-54. Females were more likely to dominate the workforce as other production/service workers rather than management where they were split fairly evenly with their male counterparts.

Table 4.9
Age and Gender Composition of Workforce

Select Occupation	Age				Gender
	<25 (%)	25-39 (%)	40-54 (%)	55+ (%)	Female (%)
Management Workforce – all employees designated as executive, operations management, skilled trades, and supervisory staff	27%	29%	62%	44%	53%
Other Production / Service Workforce – all other employees involved in the production, other skilled staff, installation or delivery of a good or service	47%	39%	46%	46%	71%

Source: Employer Survey: D3. "What approximate proportion of your current workforce falls into the following age and gender categories?"

4.3 Skill Demand and Forecast

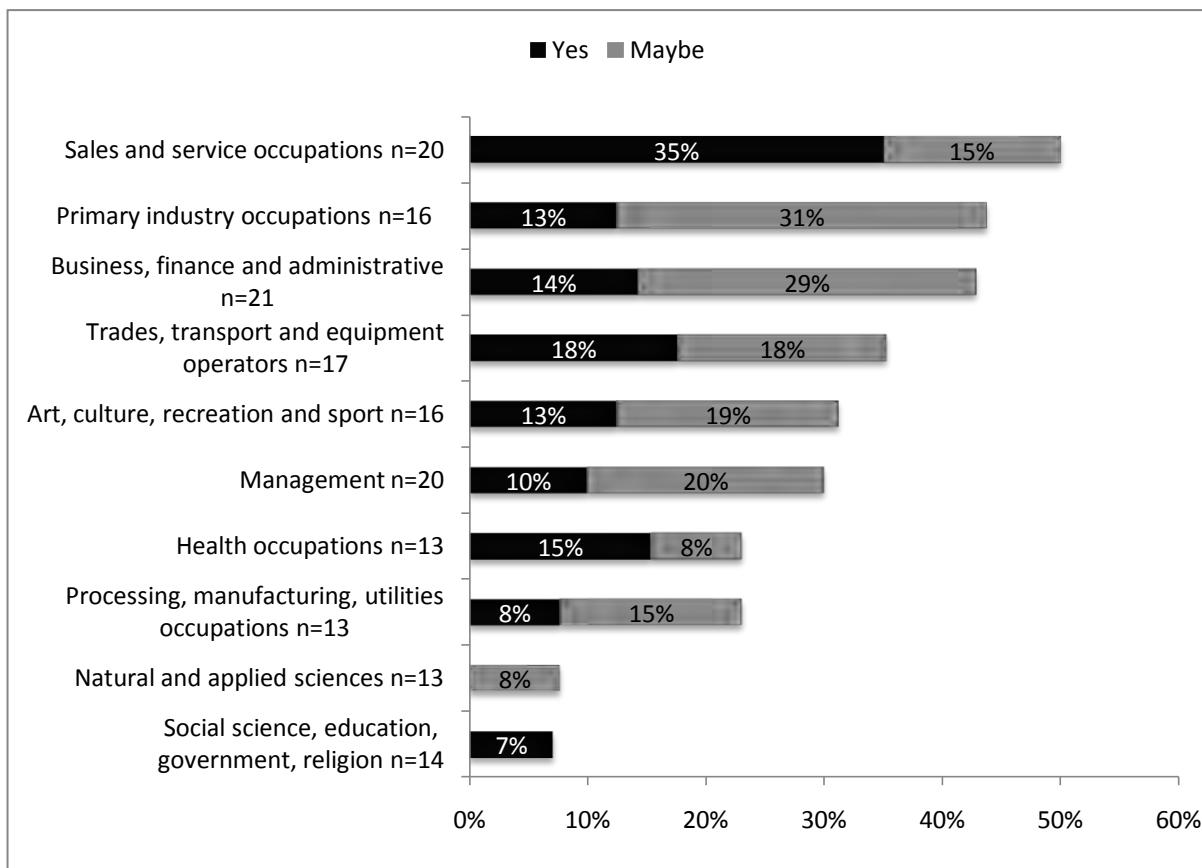
Employers were asked whether they anticipated increasing the number of workers in their business in the next five years; overall employers felt that the increase would take place in sales and service occupations, with 50% indicating that they would or might increase the number of workers in that area. The main issue facing the employers in filling these positions was discussed in the KIIs and focus groups.

Employers and community members felt that although there was a shortage of skilled workers, there were many unskilled workers that were looking for work. Natural and applied sciences were the least likely fields to expect expansion followed by social science, education, government, and religion. Employers and community members alike were aware of the stagnation of education and government positions in Superior East, noting, "Rural community programs [government] are needed, something has to be tailored for the uniqueness of these small communities" (Superior East Focus Group Participant) while understanding that government programs are being cut in the area rather than started or expanded.

"I think we have a general labour force that doesn't have the skills. So we have a general workforce available to work but no jobs, and we have jobs available that require skilled labour that can't be filled.

(Superior East Focus Group Participant)

Table 4.10
Potential Increase in Workers



Source: Employer Survey: B4. "Do you anticipate increasing the number of workers in the following occupations within your Algoma based business operation over the next 5 years?"

Caution: small base.

The focus groups and KIIs provided a unique insight into the potential for expansion in both health occupations and management. Participants in the KIIs explained that management positions are very much in need, but there is not the professional training available for those positions. Often, if someone is interested in one of the managerial positions, they need to work their way up in the company and learn the business and this requires the company retain the worker for long enough to allow them to achieve the managerial competence. The employers in the region find this very difficult and are constantly looking for people who can function in a managerial and/or professional role in their business; as one business owner noted, because of the shortage of professionals and

managers in the community, "We all wear many hats. Most of us as part of the management team do more than one role. We don't go around with titles because we all do what we have to do" (Superior East KII Participant).

Thirty-six percent of employers noted that they expected a potential increase in trades, transport and equipment operators in the next five years in their company. For the most part, companies that participated in the focus groups and KIIs noted that this increase would come from existing employees retraining or upgrading rather than an actual new position being created that required a trade. One of the KII participants explained that their company only provides existing employees with the chance to complete an apprenticeship and get certified in a trade; they do not take on new apprentices from the

community at all. For that company, this method works well to keep employees working during the apprenticeship training and retaining the employee after the training is complete; this is the only method of advancing in the company and therefore it has become a very attractive option to existing employees looking to increase their skills and potential salary.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) produces the Canadian Occupational Projection (COPS) Data for Canada. These data project the growth, replacement, retirement and job openings in different industries and occupational codes in Canada. Most important in the projections are the overall job openings forecasted. This refers to the number of new jobs due to changing economic activity and positions becoming vacant because of death, retirement, occupational mobility and temporary labour force withdrawal.

"If you train people in the community, then they're apt to stay in the community."

(Superior East KII Participant)

**Table 4.11
Projected Growth Based on COPS Data**

	Superior East Primary Industry (n=26)	Superior East Secondary Industry (n=26)	COPS Projected Growth (2010-2015)	Other Replacement Demand (Deaths and Emigrants) (2010-2015)	Retirement Level (2010-2015)	Job Openings (2010-2015)
Wholesale and Retail Trade	23%	15%	7%	6%	23%	20%
Accommodation and Food Services	23%	4%	9%	5%	22%	-58%
Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services	12%	0%	5%	4%	18%	55%
Educational Services	12%	4%	2%	2%	13%	-43%
Other Services	12%	8%	3%	5%	18%	38%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8%	12%	9%	3%	19%	-13%
Utilities	4%	0%	9%	7%	24%	37%
Construction	4%	0%	6%	7%	26%	121%
Manufacturing	4%	4%	9%			
Transportation and Warehousing	4%	8%	9%	4%	23%	0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4%	0%	4%	7%	19%	1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4%	15%	10%	6%	20%	14%
Public Administration	4%	4%	5%	3%	21%	-5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0%	0%	8%	9%	29%	20%

Source: Source: Employer Survey: A3. "Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) Data. Caution: small base. COPS data based on Canada wide projections.

Survey respondents in Superior East represented 229 employees in the region, a number that remained relatively constant over the last three years in their companies, only decreasing by 1%. Employers were asked to predict their projected workforce needs in 2015 dependent on their organization. Employers in Superior East predict that although their management workforce declined slightly in 2010, it will rebound to near 2007 levels by 2015. **Although this doesn't represent a great deal of growth, it is positive that they forecast some degree of increase for their workforce.**

Employers currently employ more part time "other production/ service workers" than full time, an increase from 2007 when the levels were near equal. Employers predict that although they currently employ a number of part time workers, by 2015 those numbers will be reduced by almost two thirds. If the industry that is employing these workers is thought to be declining, part time workers are likely to be the first candidates for lay off.

**Table 4.12
Projected Workforce**

	Past Workforce (2007)			Current Workforce (2010)			Projected Workforce (2015)		
	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)
Management Workforce	100	47	147	90	34	124	96	43	139
Other Production/ Service Workforce	41	43	84	37	68	105	37	21	58
Total	141	90	231	127	102	229	133	64	197

Source: Employer Survey: D1. "Please indicate the total number of full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) workers your company employed in 2007, currently employs (including vacancies) and the projected number of workers needed in 2015.

Projected workforce data provided by Superior East employers suggest the following:

- Employers are simply hoping for a return to 2007 employment levels and that other production/service workers will not recover to even 2007 levels.
- While there has been little change in employment between 2007 and 2010 (229 employees in 2010 vs. 231 in 2007), surveyed employers are expecting that their workforce will shrink by approximately 14% over the next five years;
- While the management workforce will actually increase (by 12%) during the next five years, employers expect that the production/other worker workforce will decline by almost one-half (45%) during the same time frame;
- The ratio of full-time to part-time workers however, is expected to increase, moving from the current ratio of 55:45 in 2010 to 68:32 by 2015.

4.4 Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention

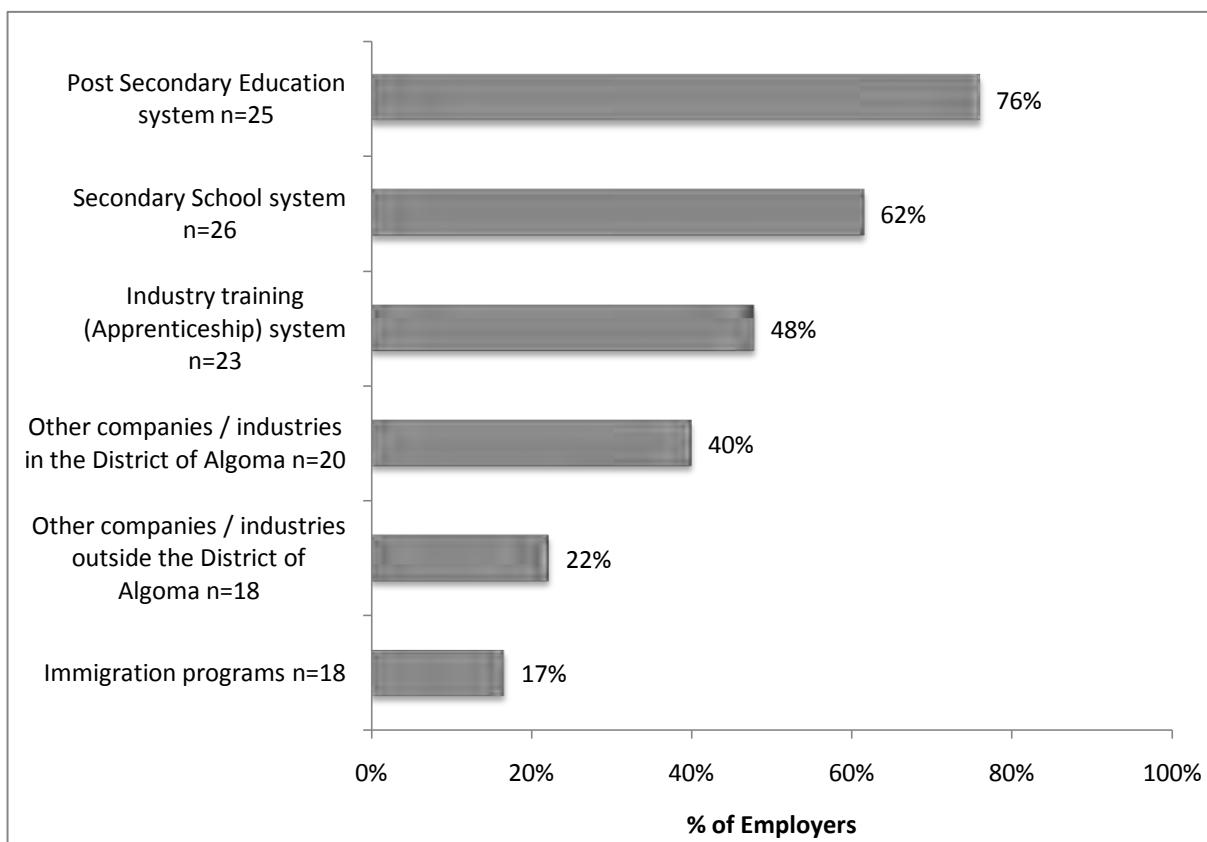
4.4.1 Recruitment

The post secondary education systems, followed by the secondary school system are the primary sources of labour in Superior East. Industry training is a commonly used source of labour, with 48% of responding businesses utilizing apprentices. The use of apprenticeship and industry training was examined in both the focus groups and the KIIs, with many participants expressing the opinion that those sources of labour would be used more frequently if they were subsidized for a longer period of time or if the company taking on the apprentice did not need to take on so much liability to train them. The common risk of training an individual only to have them go to a competitor for more money was expressed once again, especially for new apprentices that had no perceived loyalty to the company.

"The trouble with all of this is we don't have, right now, the industrial base or the journeymen for them to be signed under. That's our biggest dilemma, you have to have that journeymen to get the sponsorship."

(Superior East KII Participant)

**Table 4.13
Sources of Labour**



Source: Employer Survey: C5. "Please indicate the level of importance attributed to the following sources of new skilled workers for your company with 1 being Not At All Important and 5 being Very Important."

Caution: small base.

Note: Top 2 Box (Strongly Agree and Agree) scores represented.

Sixty-five percent of employers indicated that these sources of labour were meeting their labour requirements, while those that expressed that they didn't meet their labour requirements noted that it was because of a lack of training opportunities for the company to draw qualified workers from, both in terms of proximity of the program and access to the program. Employers indicated that in these cases, they needed to draw employees from the local labour market and train them onsite themselves, as there was no existing pool from which to draw employees.

Employers were asked to indicate which jobs they had difficulty filling and why those jobs were difficult to fill. Employers in Superior East named jobs in business, finance and administrative; occupations unique to primary industry; and management as the top three occupations that were most difficult to fill; all of these jobs were difficult to fill due to a reported shortage of qualified candidates in the District of Algoma.

Employers indicated that the jobs were difficult to fill for a variety of other reasons as well. These include:

- Shortage of qualified candidates within the District of Algoma;
- Difficult meeting compensation and benefit expectations; or
- High rate of turnover

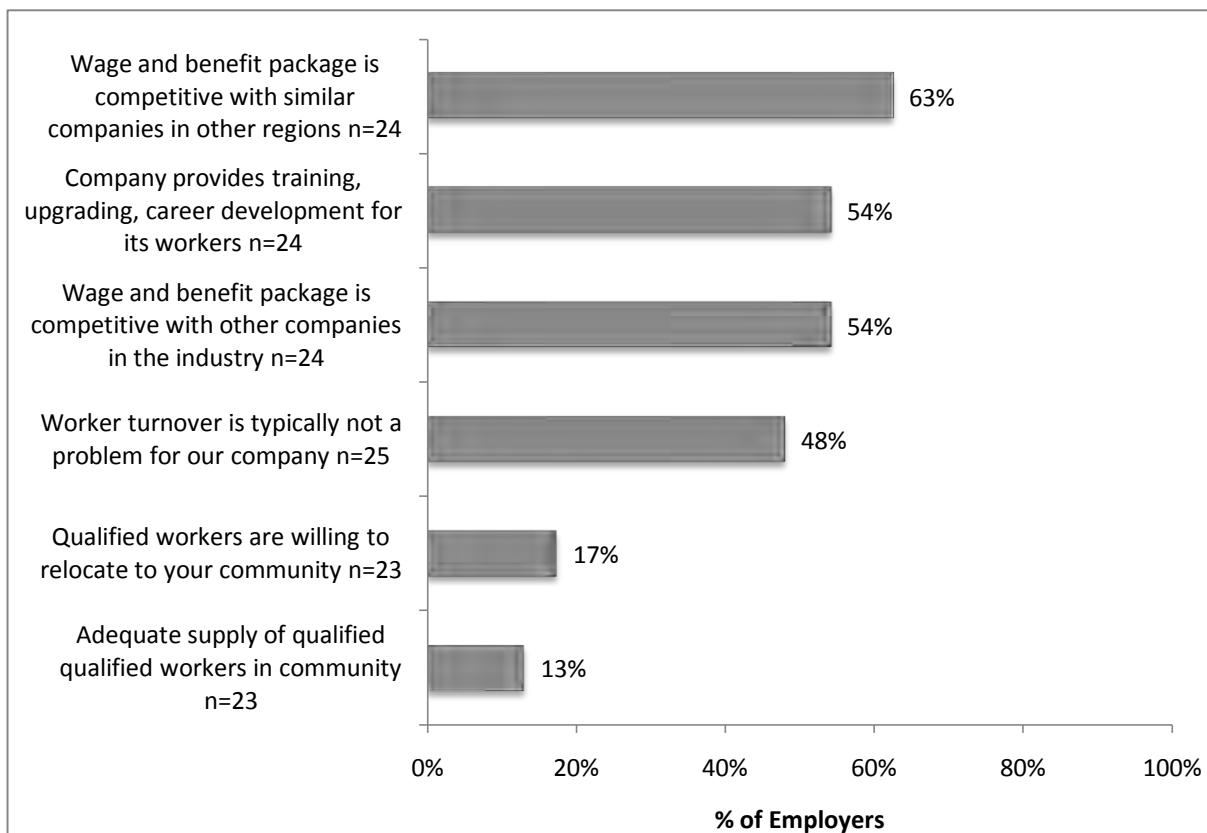
Overall, most employers believed there is an inadequate supply of skilled workers and that qualified workers are not willing to relocate to Superior East. This helps explain why immigration is largely overlooked by employers as a solution to local labour market requirements.

Employers in Algoma felt that while their wage and benefit packages were competitive with those of similar companies in the region, they experienced difficulty attracting skilled/qualified workers and those workers were not willing to relocate to Superior East. Although companies expressed that their wages and benefit packages were equivalent to others within the region, the focus group participants and key informants explained that the wages and benefit packages in Superior East were not competitive with Central Algoma or similar companies located outside of the region.

"Motivation is missing... there appears to be many people around town but most of them have no desire to work. They are looking for the high paying jobs and do not want too work for minimum wage. It takes so long to train an employee and once they just get trained they go for another job higher up on the ladder."

(Superior East Survey Respondent)

Figure 4.14
Recruitment, Competitiveness, and Training



Source: Employer Survey: C3. "Based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements."

Caution: small base.

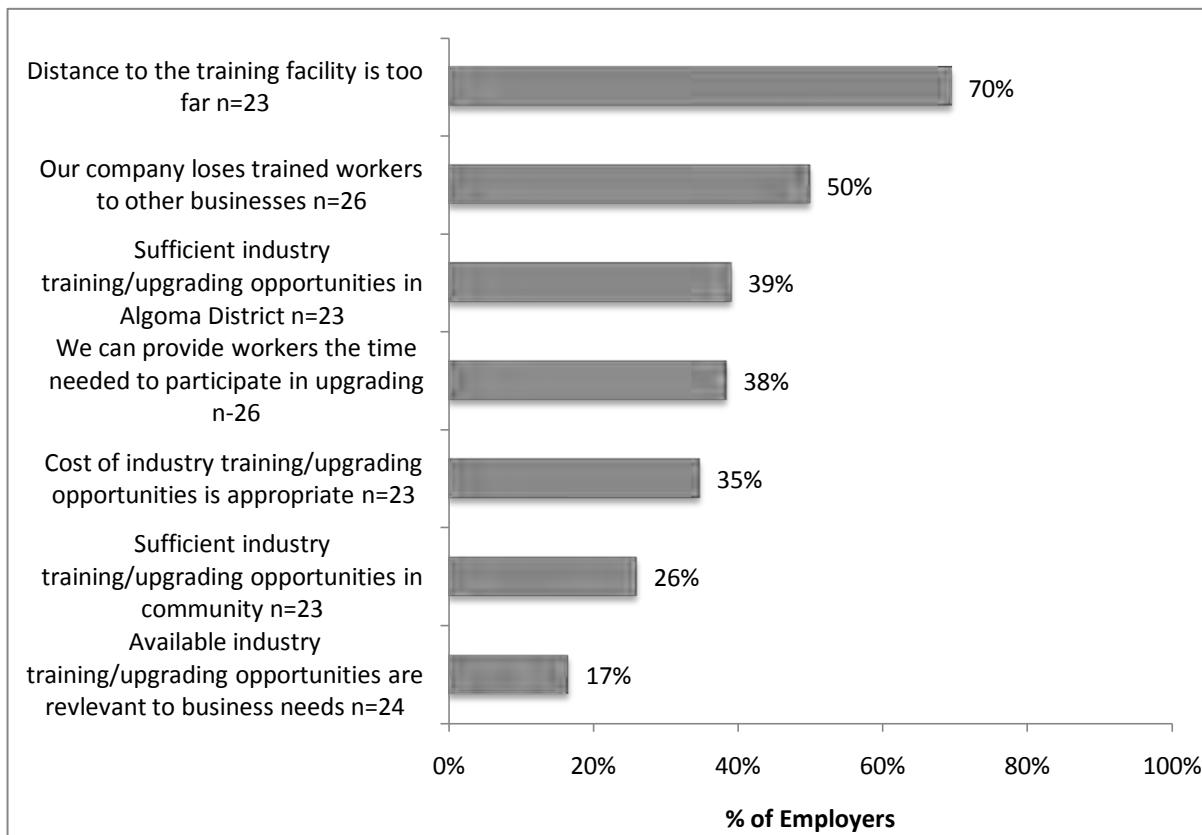
Note: Top 2 Box (Agree and Strongly Agree) represented.

4.4.2 Training

In Superior East, employers and community members felt that the greatest barrier to training was the accessibility of the training; Superior East is far removed from many of the major training institutes, e.g., Sault College, Algoma University, College Boreal, Northern College and as a result people have to travel and require accommodation in order to receive training.

The distance to the training is closely tied to the barrier that the cost is not appropriate to their business. Since the employee has to travel, the company is forced to pay for travel, accommodations, the actual training, as well as make up for the time lost while that employee is away at training.

**Figure 4.15
Barriers to Training**



Source: Employer Survey: C7. "Based on a scale of 1 to 5(where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding barriers to training."

Caution: Small base.

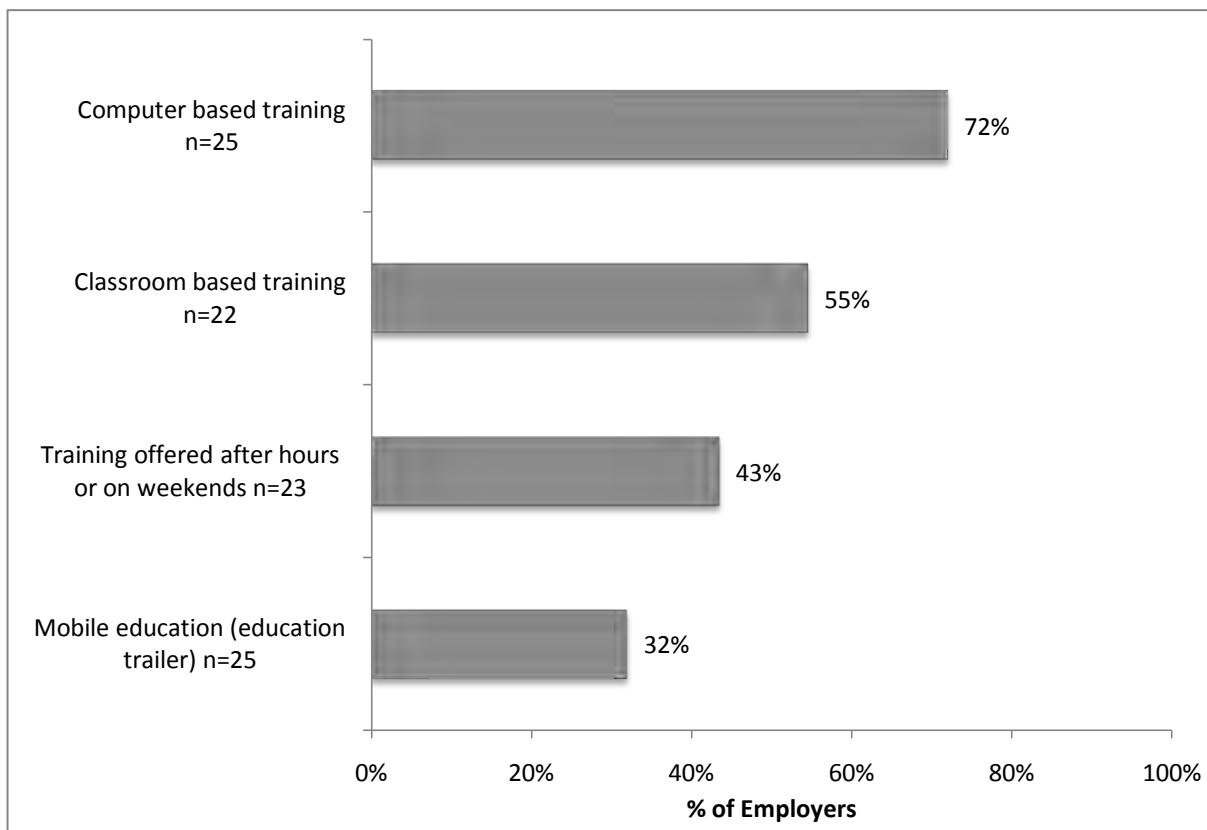
Note: Top 2 Box (Agree and Strongly Agree) represented.

The survey asked employers how interested they would be in a number of different training opportunities for their company and their employees. Computer based training dominated the interest of employers, which the KIIs explained was because that way the employees could participate in the training at home or at work and not have to leave the community. Focus group participants expressed that it is useful in communities where computer based training is used, to have more than one person taking the training so the individuals can help each other. The feasibility of much of the proposed computer based training has been limited in the past by the inadequate technological infrastructure required to support online training solutions. It should be noted that while most communities in the District of Algoma have Contact North locations, these operate on reduced hours due to limited funds.

"We find we're having problems keeping them upgraded because we don't have fibre optics here. Our internet for the most part sucks... when we have to upgrade skills of our staff, it usually means sending them out of town. They're gone for usually 3-4 days, especially if they're gone to Toronto. Plus we have to pay the travel, whereas if we had better infrastructure – fibre optics, better telecommunications, , we could have video conferences, online education for upgrading, if we had easier ways to get into the community – we don't have plane service we have a train that comes twice a week from down south [Sault Ste. Marie] so even having someone come in to provide the education is a challenge"

(Superior East KII Participant)

Figure 4.16
Employer Support for Proposed Training Options



Source: Employer Survey: C9. "How interested would your organization be in terms of the following training options?"

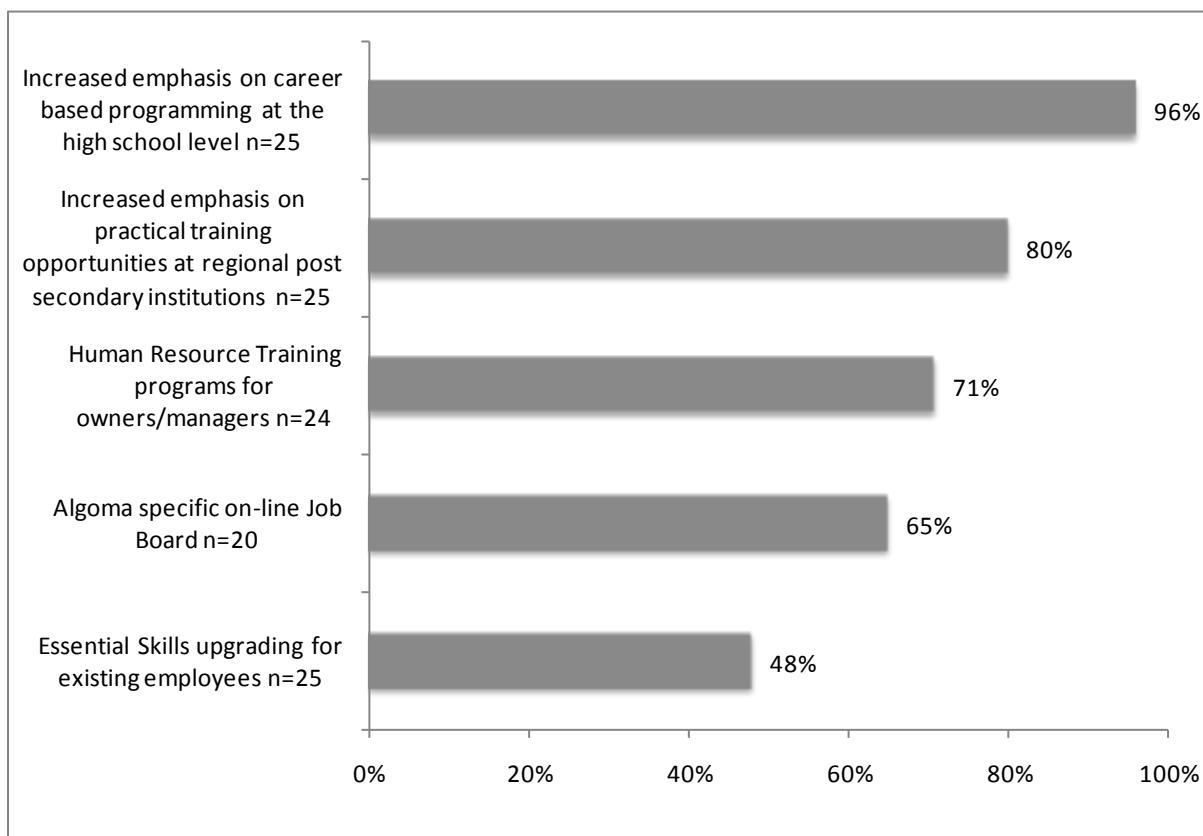
Caution: Small base.

Note: Top 2 Box (Interested and Very Interested) represented.

In a follow up question, employers were asked about possible training solutions that could be introduced to better support them. Overwhelmingly, employers felt that the region needed an increased emphasis on career based programming at the high school level. There was consensus among focus group participants and key informants that there is a need to develop an entrepreneurial spirit. The suggestion was made that high schools need to provide a basic introduction to business so youth can develop into the business leaders of the future. In speaking with the school boards in the region, school board representatives asserted that guidance counsellors are networking with employers through the co-op program and are providing career counselling from grade 7 onward. The schools try to direct students into three streams and emphasize that the workplace is a valued destination, although many parents discount the workplace

after high school and still push children to go to university. Post secondary education providers in the region suggest that these pathways in secondary school may be structurally flawed and do not necessarily mean that the student is prepared for the workforce just because they are in the 'Direct to Workforce' stream. As one education provider mentioned, "they're put in a path rather than remediated" and therefore do not necessarily have the skills to enter the workforce. Employers were aware of many of the secondary school programs to give students access to the workplace and practical experience such as co-op, but many did not use co-op students, with one respondent noting, "as far as the co-op, it's floating around, it's good for some, but we don't have the journeymen" (Superior East KII Participant).

**Figure 4.17
Potential Training Solutions**



Source: Employer Survey: D4. "We are interested in education and training development opportunities that could be introduced to better support Algoma employers. On a scale of 1 to 5 – with 1 being Very Unsupportive and 5 being Very Supportive – please indicate your level of support for the following training strategies **that may be pursued by the sector**."

Caution: Small base.

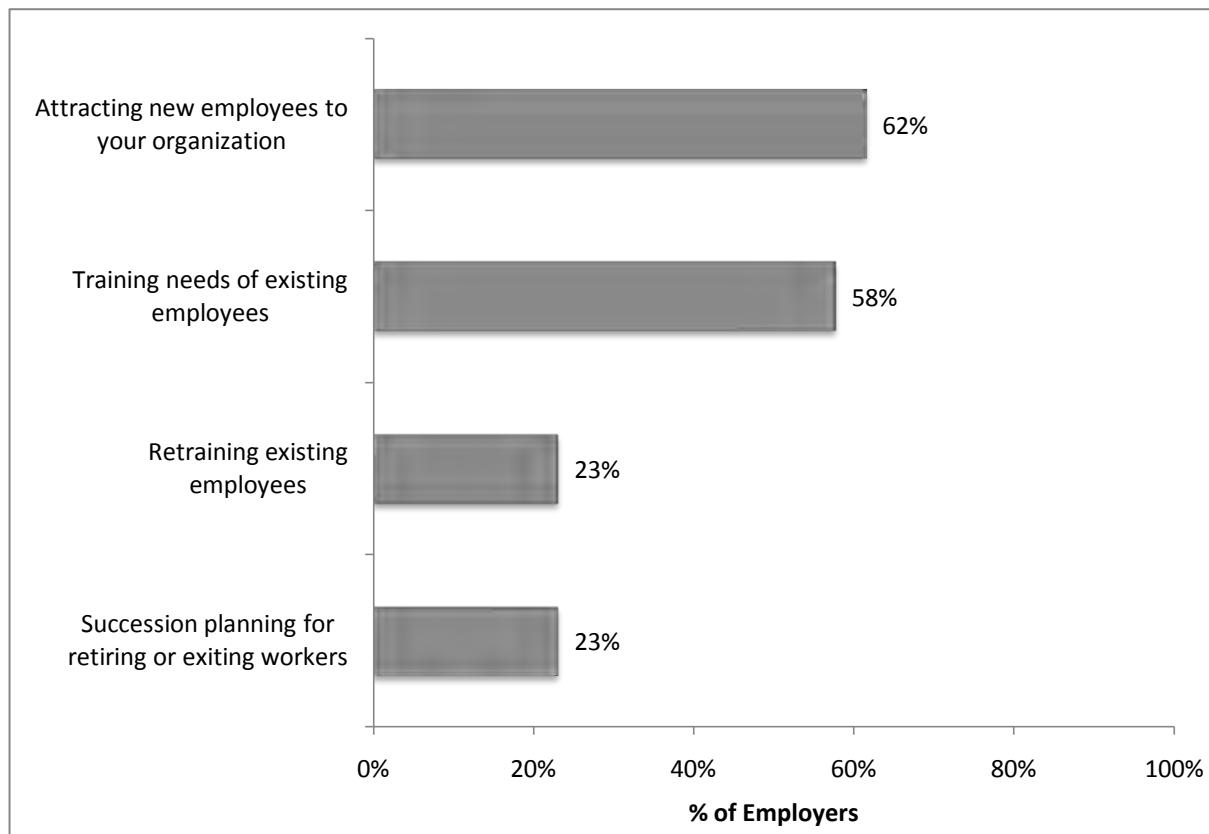
With sufficient training and coordination, home based business owners might develop into 2-3 employee operations. These types of office management/administrative skills need not be delivered through classroom based courses in Sault Ste. Marie. Many of these home based business owners do not have the skills to do web design or accounting/bookkeeping for their business, but would benefit from these services. They do not have the time or the interest in learning to do these services themselves, but if several home based business owners got together, they could outsource their bookkeeping or web design needs to one person therefore creating a job for an accountant or web designer.

4.4.3 Development

The employer survey asked employers if their organization had a formal human resource strategy in place that addressed key human resource activities including attraction, retention and/or re-training strategies.

(Figure 4.18). There were very few employers who had a formal strategy and even fewer whose strategy addressed retraining or succession planning, a finding consistent throughout the region. Many of the businesses in Superior East are small in terms of number of employees and as a result they often turn to the community or region as a whole to develop the strategy rather than developing a specific individual company strategy.

Figure 4.18
Formal Human Resource Strategies Utilized by Employers



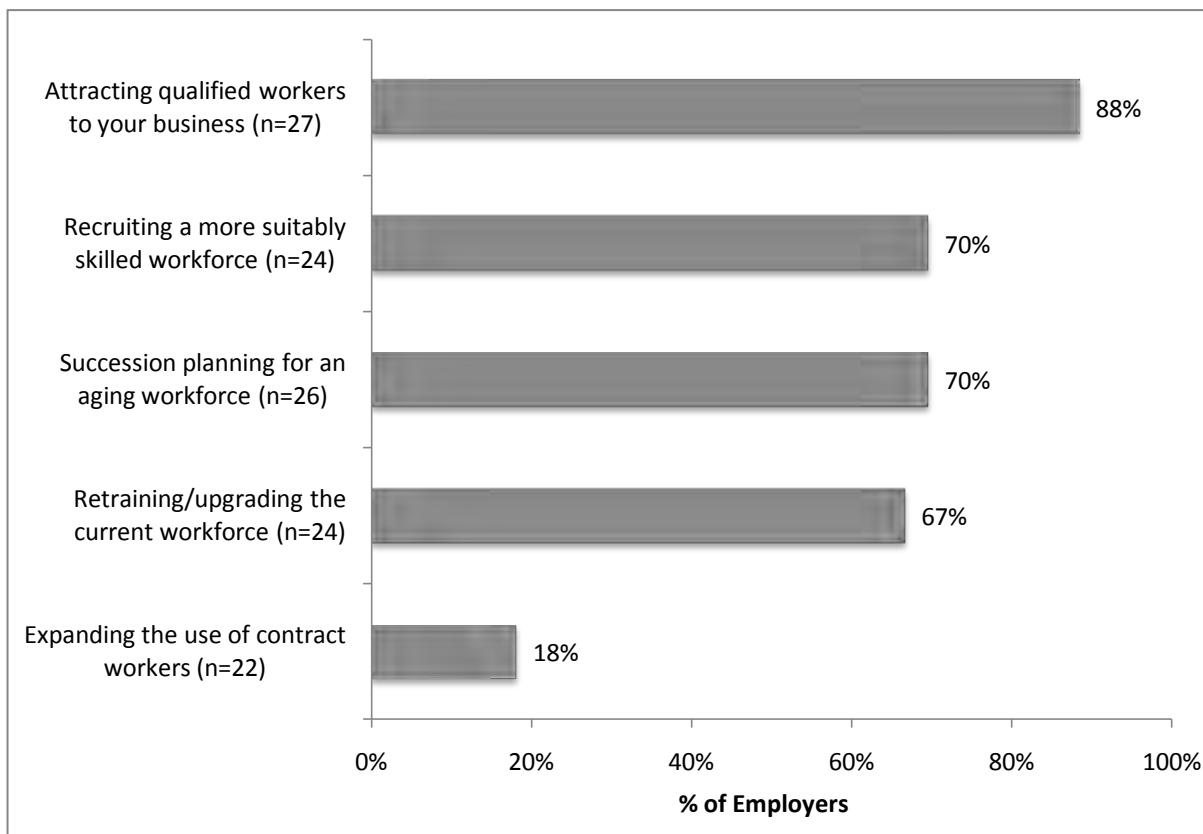
n=26.

Source: Employer Survey: C4. "Does your organization have a formal human resource strategy that addresses the following?"
Caution: small base.

4.4.4 Retention

Employers indicated that the most important factor in developing their workforce was attracting qualified workers to their business, a sentiment echoed throughout the District by focus group participants, survey respondents and key informants. The remote location of Superior East and the inability of many employers to compete with wage and benefit packages offered outside of the region makes attracting qualified candidates a major issue for many employers. Focus group participants noted that many skilled workers are recruited by companies in Western Canada (Alberta, Saskatchewan) that offer higher starting salaries as well as reimbursement of moving costs. Companies in Superior East cannot compete with these lucrative job offers and as a result, many of the displaced skilled forestry and mining workers have left the District.

Figure 4.19
Importance of Workforce Options



Source: Employer Survey: B3. "Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in developing your workforce. Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale."

Caution: small base.

Employers surveyed felt that recruitment, planning and (re)training their workforce were the most important factors in development and sustaining their business in the coming years. The key informants emphasized that particularly in the Superior East region, the focus is on sustaining the current workforce

and until that can be accomplished, employers are not even considering expanding the business or creating new positions. The need to attract skilled workers was paramount for all employers in the Superior East region, although they recognized that they are unable to compete with similar industries or positions in other communities outside of the District of Algoma (i.e., Sudbury, Thunder Bay) or even Sault Ste. Marie. There is a strong need to provide innovative strategies to attract and recruit skilled employees. The remoteness of the community as well as the inability of most employers to meet the wage and/or benefit packages offered elsewhere were felt to be the largest barriers to attracting qualified/skilled workers to the

"We've found that over the years that the only way to retain employees after they were further educated in an apprenticeship program was to take from locals. Over the years we have found ourselves providing opportunities to outside the community or with roots outside the community and once they've been designated they're soon to leave. That's common."

(Superior East KII Participant)

area. One key informant noted, "Attracting youth to our community is a huge challenge...socially, because our community is so small, many youth would say that it's boring here." This attitude from youth is reflected in the increasing rates of out migration of youth from Superior East. "Our biggest challenge right now is our skilled labour force and our youth have left the community. It is a concern because it will be very difficult to have those people come back."

Retraining and upgrading the current workforce was important to employers, but less important than attracting qualified workers to their business. This topic of retraining and upgrading was explored in the KIIs and employers were very willing to share their insight into the issues they were experiencing. Overall, key informants described the remoteness of Superior East in proximity to Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and even Toronto (where much of the training is provided) to be a limiting factor in upgrading and retraining for employees.

Such sentiment illustrates why upgrading and retraining staff is not listed as one of the more important factors to sustaining business in Superior East, as many businesses cannot afford to send their staff away for days and to pay their travel expenses. Businesses in Superior East are generally focused on keeping staff; both the focus groups and the KIIs explored the general wariness of employers to provide training and upgrading to their staff, for fear that with their new qualifications they will go to a more competitive market that can offer higher compensation. This risk, of not being able to capture the training benefit, resonated in East Algoma as well, as both regions recognized that in order to complete any training or

"Our biggest challenge right now is our skilled labour force and our youth have left the community. It is a concern because it will be very difficult to have those people come back."

(Superior East Focus Group Participant)

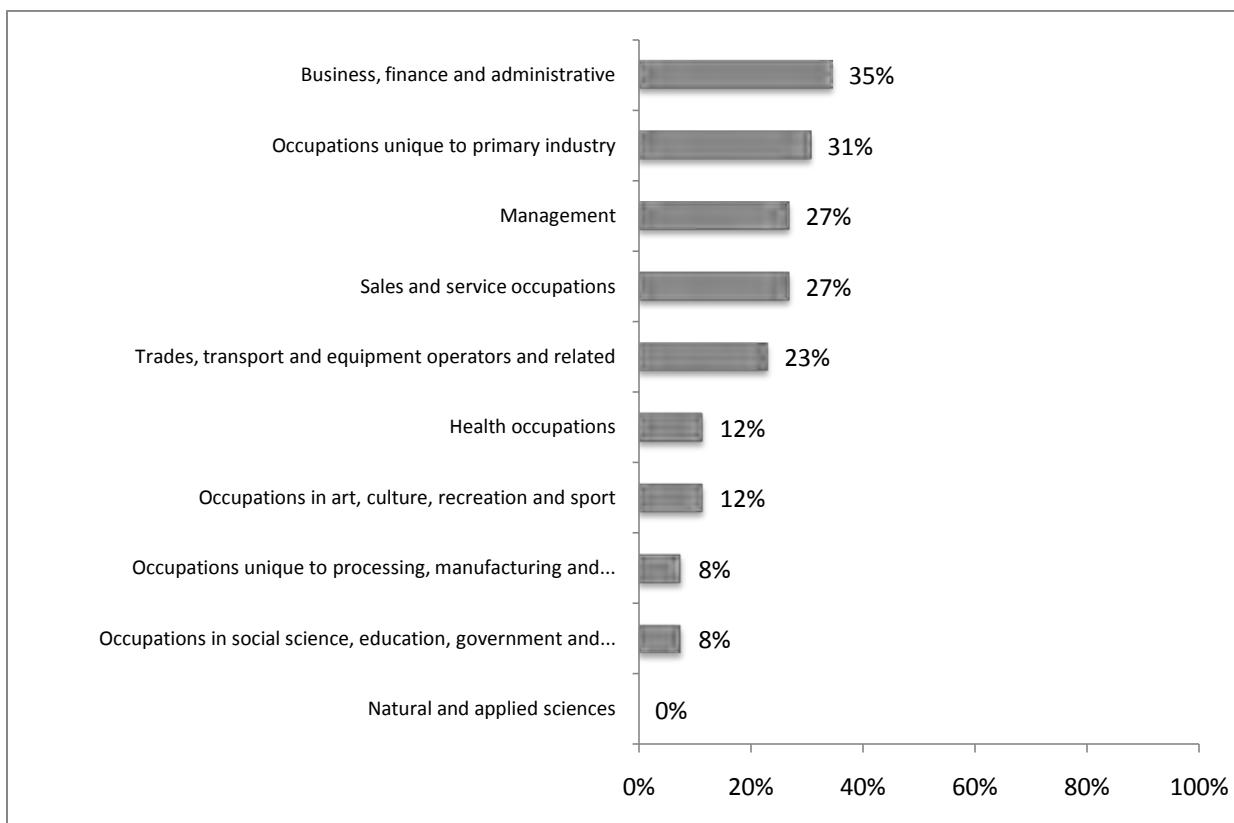
upgrading, employees usually have to travel to Sault Ste. Marie and as a result there is always a risk that they will not return or find a better job with their new skills.

Employers in the survey were given job categories to choose from and asked to indicate which jobs were difficult to fill. The top four positions (see Figure 20) were all difficult to fill because of a shortage of qualified candidates within the District of Algoma. This finding echoes the sentiments of key informants and focus group participants throughout the District; that is, positions are difficult to fill because there is not an adequate supply of skilled workers. It must be noted that the skills needed for sales and service are of a different competency level than those needed for occupations in primary industry. This is true from a number of perspectives including course content, the facility required for course delivery and the credential received. The training resources and sources of existing workers for all of these positions are profoundly different.

"When we are able to attract some of the more skilled labour force... we have to provide jobs to their spouses and in this economy we can't."

(Superior East KII Participant)

Figure 4.20
Positions that are Difficult to Fill



n=26.

Source: Employer Survey: C1. "Please select which job categories you have difficulty filling and identify why these jobs are difficult to fill."

Note: Multiple responses permitted.

Caution: small base.

4.5 Human Resource Summary

Tabled below is a summary of the human resource and training challenges facing employers in the region of Superior East. The issues have been prioritized by the consultant as either Very Important (VI), Important (I) or Somewhat Important (SI), while bearing in mind the priority for addressing these issues is dependent on the resources and timeframe available to community stakeholders and employers. The challenges are organized into four categories – demographic, workforce, training and infrastructure – and are used to inform the report's recommendations.

Table 4.21
Human Resource Summary

HR Challenge	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important
Demographic			
Out-Migration	✓		
Aging Workforce	✓		
Immigration			✓
Workforce			
Employment	✓		
Labour Shortages			✓
Skill Shortages – Management	✓		
Skill Shortages - Production	✓		
Training			
Accessibility	✓		
Cost	✓		
Programming		✓	
Trainers (Journeypersons)		✓	
Infrastructure			
New Technology & Equipment	✓		
Computer Based Training	✓		
HR Development			
Attraction/Recruitment	✓		
Development/Retention		✓	

5. CENTRAL REGION AND SAULT STE. MARIE

5.1 Regional Profile

As the District's urban centre, Sault Ste. Marie is the locus for much of the region's employment activity. The unemployment rate in Central Algoma is lower than that of the district, with a total of 36,420 participating in the workforce. Central Algoma's population increased by 0.5% between 2001 and 2006, representing the only net population gains in the district. Workers in Central Algoma earned incrementally more than those in the district overall. Earnings in Central Algoma were still substantially less (by \$5,686) than compared to the provincial average.

Table 5.1
Central Algoma (Sault Ste. Marie)- Key Statistics

2001 Population	74,566	2006 Employment	37,130
2006 Population	74,948	2006 Unemployment	2,995
% Change	0.5%	Unemployment Rate	8.1%
Algoma % Change	-0.9%	Algoma Unemployment Rate	8.9%
2006 Median Central Algoma Earnings	\$23,649	2006 Median Algoma Earnings (15+)	\$22,738

Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

Due to the size of its population, the economy of Central Algoma is more diversified and less reliant upon primary industry. Steel-making, manufacturing and the call centre industry are major private employers. As illustrated by the following table, occupations in business, finance and administration; natural and applied sciences and sales and service are over-represented compared to the district, while occupations in trades, transport and equipment operation, and primary industry are under-represented.

Table 5.2
Occupations in Central Algoma as compared to the District

Occupations	Central Algoma		Algoma	
	Employed	% Share	Employed	% Share
Management	2,755	7.5%	4,430	8.0%
Business, Finance and Administration	5,940	16.3%	8,225	14.9%
Natural and Applied Sciences	2,625	7.2%	3,340	6.1%
Health	2,625	7.2%	3,755	6.8%
Education, Gov't Service and Religion	3,265	8.9%	4,880	8.8%
Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport	775	2.1%	1,110	2.0%
Sales and Service	10,960	30.1%	15,630	28.3%
Trades, Transport and Equipment	5,350	14.7%	9,515	17.2%
Primary Industry	540	1.4%	1,765	3.2%
Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities	1,580	4.3%	2,540	4.6%
Total, All Occupations	36,420	100%	55,210	100%

Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

Upon closer examination, several occupational categories exhibited considerable fluctuations between 2001 and 2006. While there were decreases in the number of professional occupations and clerical positions in the region, the number of clerical occupations increased by over 35%. Similarly, the number of technical occupations in the natural and applied sciences increased by over 66%. In contrast to these trends, all occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities decreased by over 10% (or 30%), with three sub-occupational categories decreasing by over 25%.

Table 5.3
Selected Occupations in Central Algoma

Occupations	2001 Employed	2006 Employed	% Change
Business, Finance and Administration	5,545	6,305	13.7%
Professional Occupations	610	495	-18.9%
Finance and Insurance Administration	415	465	12.0%
Secretaries	845	685	-19.0%
Administrative and Regulatory Occupations	630	590	-6.4%
Clerical Supervisors	185	185	0.0%
Clerical Occupations	2,860	3,885	35.8%
Natural and Applied Sciences	2,000	2,760	37.7%
Professional Occupations	845	835	-1.2%
Technical Occupations	1,155	1,925	66.7%
Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities	2,435	1,695	-30.4%
Supervisors	360	265	-26.4%
Machine Operators	1,035	745	-28.1%
Assemblers	145	130	-10.4%
Labourers	895	550	-38.6%
Total	9980	10760	21%

Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

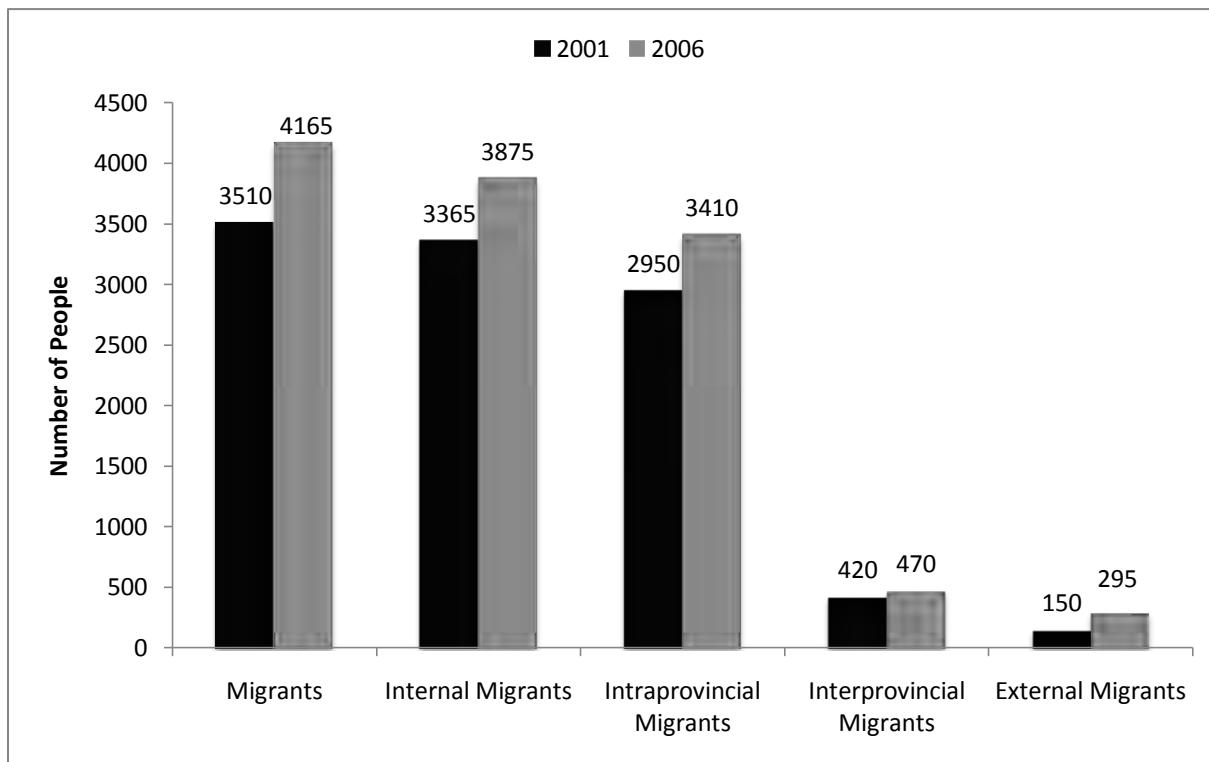
Over the five-year period, Central Algoma witnessed considerable population movement. Illustrated in Figure 5.4 the number of migrants in the district between 2001 and 2006.

5.1.1 Prince Township

Prince Township contains the Prince Township Wind Farm, one of the largest wind farms in Canada, generating enough energy for 60,000 homes. The farm is run by Brookfield Power which currently operates five power generating operations in the District of Algoma (Sault Ste. Marie – 2 sites, Mississauga, Wawa and Prince Township). Prince Township developed an Official Plan in late 2009 which addressed many of the township's issues including labour and training, and provided recommendations for moving forward. Overall, the report recognized "no identifiable industrial or commercial employment base within the Township" and aimed to "foster new employment and create an environment to support the continuation and growth of existing commercial uses"²¹. Within this report, by-law restrictions were outlined for home-based businesses, placing restrictions on the size and scope of a home-based business. The township proposed redeveloping or decommissioning their "Brownfield Sites" which are "former industrial or commercial properties that are underutilized, derelict or vacant".

²¹ (Prince Township, 2009)

Figure 5.4
Migrants in the Central Algoma District, 2001-2006



Source: 2006 Census of Canada.

An indicator of consumer and business confidence is the level of residential and non-residential investment as measured by the value of building permits. As indicated in Table 5.5, there was a significant increase in commercial and institutional building permits issued during 2009. When compared to 2008 figures, there was a 42% increase in the number of permits issued and nearly a two-fold increase (185%) increase in the value of commercial and institutional building permits issued. Overall, this translated into a 20% increase in the total value of building permits for the Central Algoma region, offsetting reductions in residential and industrial values. It is important to note that the increase in building permits in the commercial sector suggests that business confidence is improving in this area.

Table 5.5
**Summary of Building Construction
 (Value of Building Permits Issued)**

	2008 Value	2009 Value	% Change
Residential (including garages, alterations and repairs)	40,215,917	31,496,841	-22%
Commercial (including signs, alterations and repairs)	30,454,574	43,333,739	42%
Industrial (including alterations and repairs)	17,584,007	6,203,083	-65%
Institutional (including alterations and repairs)	14,981,480	42,707,653	185%
Total	103,235,978	123,741,316	20%

Source: http://www.city.sault-stmarie.on.ca/contentadmin/UserFiles/File/CityDepartments/Engineering/Building/YearEnd/Summary%20of%20Building%20Construction_2008_2009_Dec_to_Dec.pdf (accessed 11 March, 2010).

Sault Ste. Marie has a dedicated, strategic partnership called Destiny Sault Ste. Marie. Destiny SSM, Sault Ste. Marie's Economic Diversification Strategy, is a partnership involving all levels of government and key community stakeholders, including the private sector. The key objective of Destiny SSM is job creation, population recovery and a varied economy capable of growth. Destiny SSM facilitates, guides, works, monitors and promotes the generation of economic wealth in the community, through a specific set of targeted growth and diversification initiatives, in order to support an increasing population base.

Since 2008, there have been \$2.2 billion in local investments in the Central Region, some of which include:

- New Sault Ste. Marie District Hospital
- Pod Generating Group
- Essar Steel Cogeneration Plant
- New elementary and secondary schools
- East End Sewer Treatment Plant
- New retail development investments
- Algoma Tubes (steel) investment
- New state-of-the-art Essar Centre
- New academic wing for Sault College
- New headquarters for the Algoma Public Health Unit
- Truck Route Development
- Biosciences Centre for Algoma University

There have also been investments in green energy in Central Algoma with Heliene Canada opening in Sault Ste. Marie. Much of the green energy expansion in the region has been aided by Ontario's Green Energy and Green Economy Act which has been beneficial in attracting companies to Algoma. The fact that Algoma has the most cloud-free days in Canada has also been a means of attracting solar power companies to the area.

Recently, a 5-year Strategic Plan was developed for tourism to Sault Ste. Marie which identified 3 priority areas: Attractions Packaging, Meetings/Conventions/Sports Tournaments, and SSM as a Gateway to outdoor vacation opportunities. The Essar Centre has been successful at attracting tourism to the region recently, with events such as:

- Scotties Tournament of Hearts;
- World Ringette Championships;
- National Aboriginal Hockey Championships;
- 2 Provincial Legion Conventions ;
- 2012 CARHA World Hockey Cup;
- National eSports Games; and,

is scheduled to host the International Hap Ki Do Canadian Open in 2011. All of these events have been successful in bringing in tourism dollars and exposing national and international guests to Sault Ste. Marie and Central Algoma.

Employment Connection offers many workshops for residents that educate them on anything from computer skills to personality dimensions workshops. These programs are offered free of charge and allow residents to upgrade their skills quickly and at no cost.

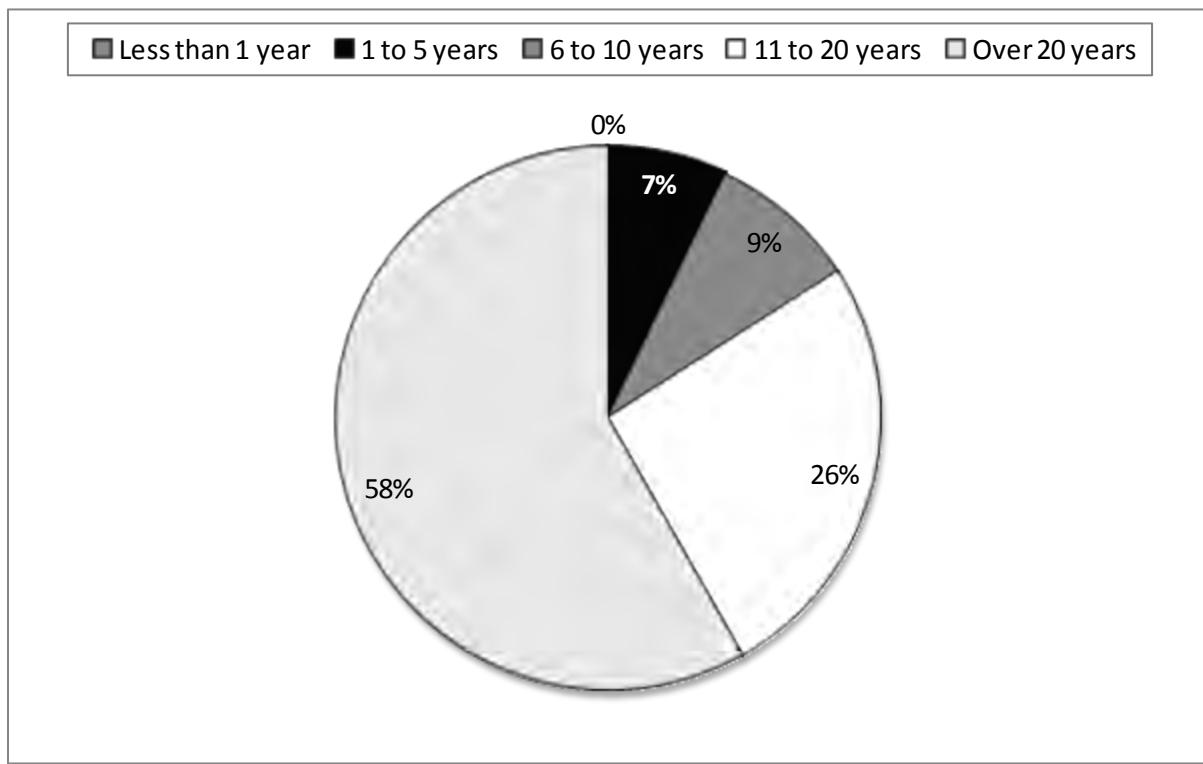
5.2 Employment Analysis

In order to create a profile of the 252 employers that responded to the survey from Central Algoma, employers were asked a number of questions about their business. Employers in Central Algoma indicated that their companies were:

- Located off-reserve (99%)
- Head office in the District of Algoma (79%)
- Not operating under a collective bargaining agreement (75%)

Eighty-four percent of employers had been in business in the District of Algoma in excess of 11 years. This level of experience helps to substantiate workforce trends and identify training requirements in their region. No employers that had been operating for less than a year completed the survey. Employers were primarily operating in the private sector, although representation from both not-for-profit (21%) and public sector employers (20%) was present.

Table 5.6
Years of Operation in the District of Algoma



n=249.

Source: Employer Survey: "How many years has your business been in operation in the District of Algoma?"

Central Algoma employers identified Wholesale and Retail trade and Other Services as their top primary industries. Those who indicated that they operated in a secondary industry specified Other Services most often, followed by Educational Services. Each industry was represented in the survey as both primary and secondary therefore indicating a good distribution of employers across all sectors.

Table 5.7
Primary and Secondary Industry

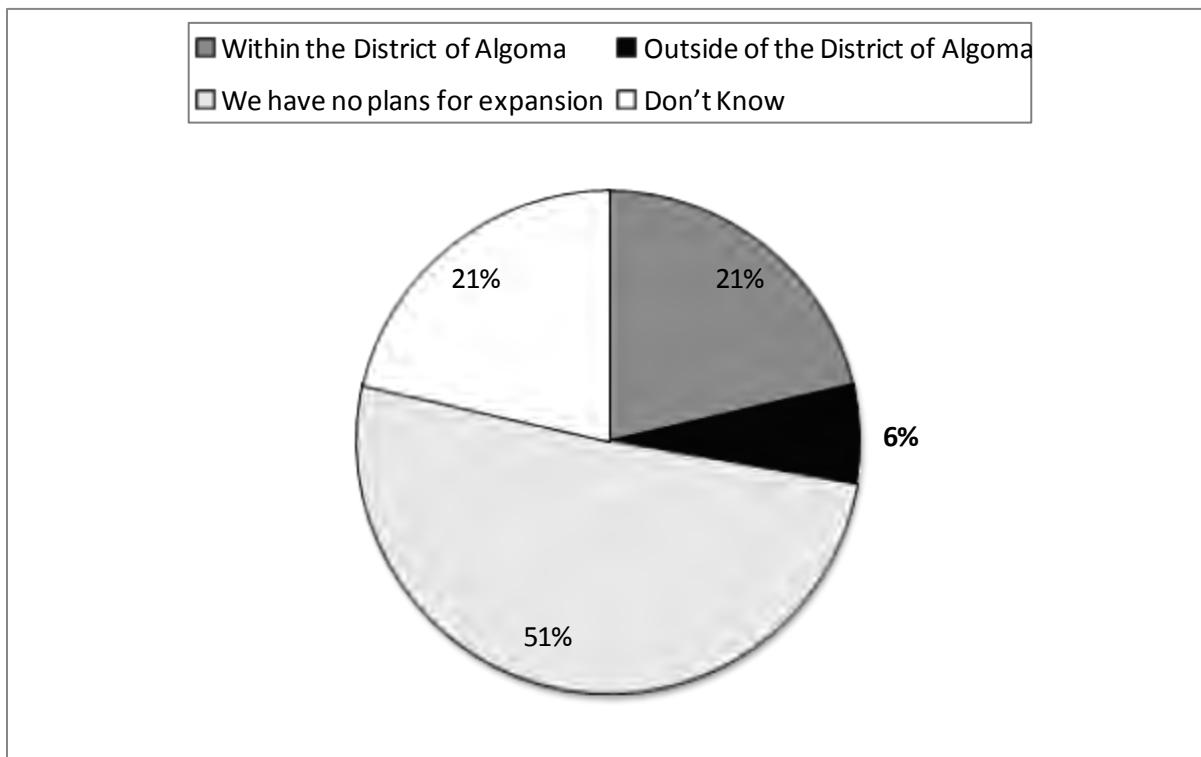
	Primary	Secondary	Total
Wholesale and Retail Trade	20%	6%	32%
Other Services	18%	9%	27%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13%	4%	17%
Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services	11%	4%	15%
Accommodation and Food Services	8%	3%	11%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6%	3%	9%
Construction	6%	6%	12%
Transportation and Warehousing	6%	2%	8%
Educational Services	6%	7%	13%
Manufacturing	4%	4%	8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3%	3%	6%
Public Administration	2%	4%	6%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2%	1%	3%
Utilities	2%	2%	4%

n=249.

Source: Employer Survey: A3. "Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates."

The majority of employers in Central Algoma had no plans for expansion (51%) and many did not know whether they would be expanding in the next five years (21%). Central Algoma had the highest percentage of employers indicating that their business would expand outside of the District of Algoma (6%); this finding is congruent with the fact that they had the lowest percentage of head offices in the District of Algoma compared to East Algoma and Superior East, suggesting these are larger businesses with operations outside of Central and the District of Algoma.

Figure 5.8
Planned Expansion



n=252.

Source: Employer Survey: "B1. Is your company planning to expand its business operations over the next five years?

Employers in Central Algoma felt that the most important factor in growing and sustaining their business was new market development within the District of Algoma. Repeatedly, in groups and interviews, participants discussed the innovative ways in which the District of Algoma was becoming the leading location for clean and alternative forms of energy.

"We are the North American capital for Alternative Energy."

(Central Algoma KII Participant)

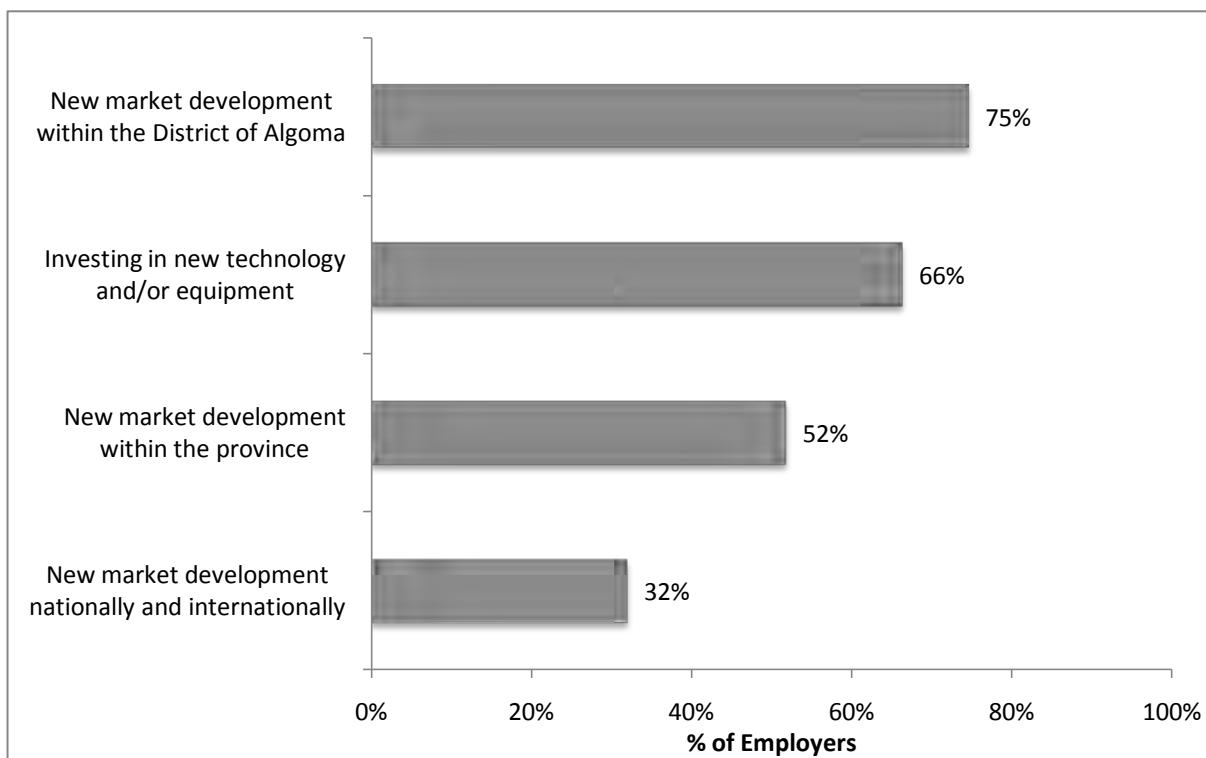
prime location for solar and wind farms. Through speaking with these companies, they have no shortage of skilled employees, recruiting from both within and outside of the District of Algoma. Since these companies are from outside of the District of Algoma, and for some, outside of Canada, they do not experience the inability to match wages, incentives, and benefits, that some of the smaller businesses in the District are experiencing and therefore are inundated with qualified highly skilled workers hoping to work for them.

Study participants were very aware of the benefits of the deep water port, the airport, the transportation systems and the infrastructure in Central Algoma. The potential to make Algoma more a national and international player was touched on in many groups, with the understanding that the region needed to do more to encourage and educate companies and people from inside and outside the region to help stimulate new market development in the District of Algoma.

"North American wide we have to be concerned about a need for a different approach or modernization around labour relations... Global competition - how are other nations able to function with low labour costs and what does that mean for our expectations about collective bargaining, what do unions need to be thinking about in terms of the realities of competitiveness and how that may need to make bargained agreements look different than they have in the past."

(Central Algoma KII Participant)

Figure 5.9
Growing and Sustaining Business



n=225.

Source: Employer Survey: B2. "Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in growing or sustaining your business. Please consider each factor base on a five-point scale."

Note: Top 2 Box (Very Important & Important) represented.

Management workforce in Central Algoma was an aging workforce, with businesses indicating very few staff under the age of 25 (7%) on average. Although other production/service workers had a higher percentage of workers under the age of 25, they still maintained a high average percentage of those 40-54 workers. Females were on average about 50% of the workforce of surveyed businesses.

Table 5.10
Age and Gender Composition of Workforce

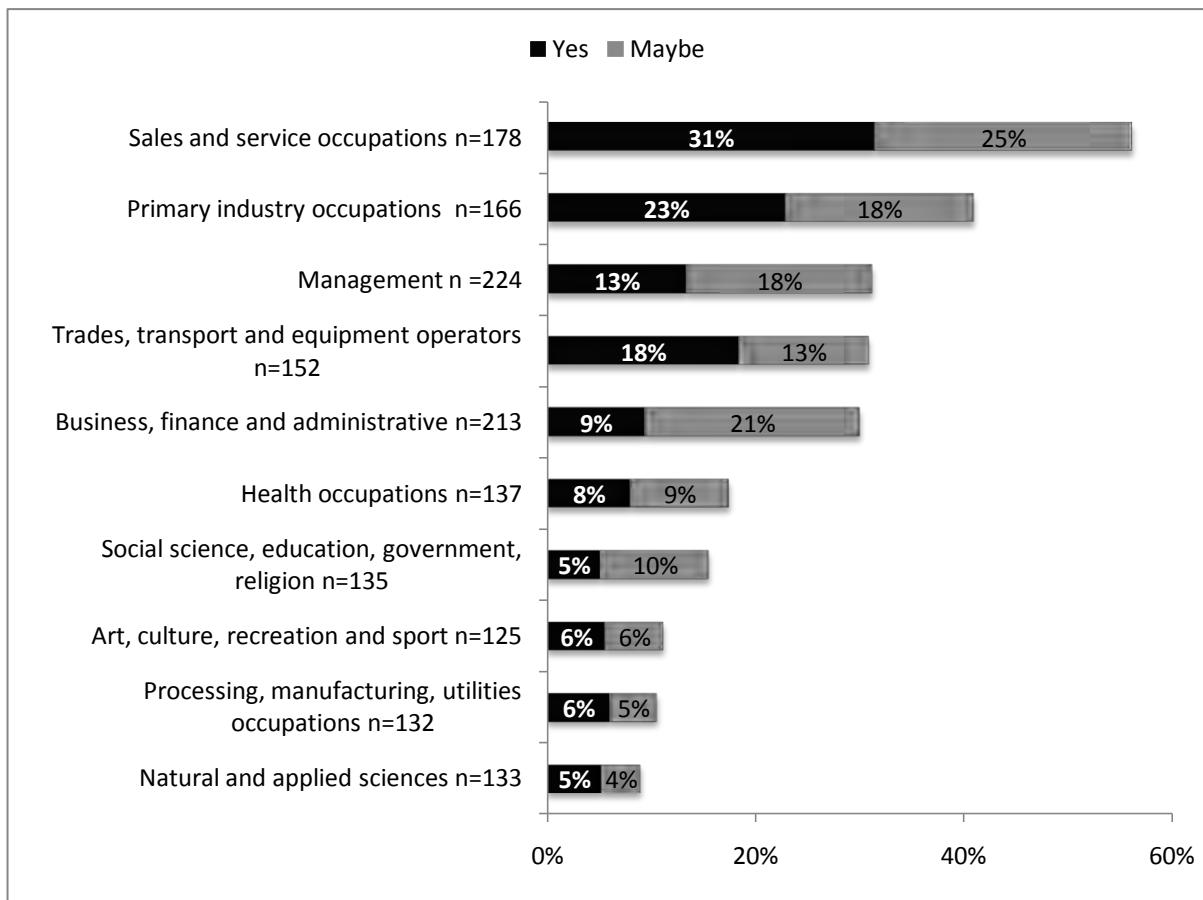
Select Occupation	Age				Gender
	<25 (%)	25-39 (%)	40-54 (%)	55+ (%)	
Management Workforce – all employees designated as executive, operations management, skilled trades, and supervisory staff.	7%	26%	62%	38%	50%
Other Production / Service Workforce – all other employees involved in the production, other skilled staff, installation or delivery of a good or service	25%	38%	43%	24%	55%

Source: Employer Survey: D3. "What approximate proportion of your current workforce falls into the following age and gender categories?"

5.3 Skill Demand and Forecast

Employers in Central Algoma anticipated the most growth in the next 5 years to be in Sales and Service occupations. There was the expectation of potential growth in business, finance and administrative positions, as well as primary industry and management positions.

Figure 5.11
Potential Increase in Workers



Source: Employer Survey: B4. "Do you anticipate increasing the number of workers in the following occupations within your Algoma based business operation over the next 5 years?"

Management workforce in Central Algoma is gradually increasing in both full-time and part-time positions and is projected to increase further by 2015. A large increase in full-time positions for other production/service workers occurred between 2007 and 2010 but is projected to decrease slightly by 2015.

Table 5.12
Projected Workforce

	Past Workforce (2007)			Current Workforce (2010)			Projected Workforce (2015)		
	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)
Management Workforce	2463	172	2635	2495	172	2667	2531	192	2723
Other Production/Service Workforce	4058	1212	5270	4476	1430	5906	4341	1245	5586
Totals	6521	1384	7905	6971	1602	8573	6872	1437	8309

Source: Employer Survey: D1. "Please indicate the total number of full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) workers your company employed in 2007, currently employs (including vacancies) and the projected number of workers needed in 2015."

Projected workforce data provided by Central Algoma employers suggest the following:

- While there was a moderate increase in employment between 2007 and 2010 (8573 employees in 2010 vs. 7905 in 2007), surveyed employers are expecting that their workforce will shrink by approximately 4% over the next five years;

- The management workforce will increase minimally (3%) during the next five years, while employers expect that the production/other worker workforce will decline by 6% during the same time frame;
- The ratio of full-time to part-time workers will increase from 81:19 in 2007 to 83:17 in 2015.

Central Algoma's wholesale and retail trade represents the region's largest industry as measured by total employment. Based on COPS data, this industry is forecast to have a high retirement rate (23%) and a 7% projected growth overall through 2015. Although the HRSDC data represents the industries in Canada as a whole, their growth can be projected onto the District of Algoma.

**Table 5.13
Projected Workforce - Algoma**

	Primary (n=252)	Secondary (n=252)	COPS Projected Growth (2010- 2015)*	Other Replacement Demand (Deaths and Emigrants) (2010-2015)*	Retirement Level (2010-2015)*	Job Openings (2010- 2015)*
Wholesale and Retail Trade	20%	6%	7%	6%	23%	20%
Other Services	18%	9%	3%	5%	18%	38%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13%	4%	4%	7%	19%	1%
Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services	11%	4%	5%	4%	18%	55%
Accommodation and Food Services	8%	3%	9%	5%	22%	-58%
Construction	6%	6%	6%	7%	26%	121%
Transportation and Warehousing	6%	2%	9%	4%	23%	0%
Educational Services	6%	7%	2%	2%	13%	-43%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6%	3%	10%	6%	20%	14%
Manufacturing	4%	4%	9%			
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3%	3%	9%	3%	19%	-13%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2%	1%	8%	9%	29%	20%
Utilities	2%	2%	9%	7%	24%	37%
Public Administration	2%	4%	5%	3%	21%	-5%

Source: Source: Employer Survey: A3. "Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates."; *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) Data.

Caution: COPS data based on Canada wide projections.

5.4 Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention

"We need to start redefining our communities and our businesses to "You don't just recruit doctors, you recruit their families."

(Central Algoma Focus Group Participant)

Similar to Superior East, the majority of new recruits in Central Algoma were drawn from secondary and post secondary sources, with a smaller percentage of workers progressing through the industry training and apprenticeship system. In Sault Ste. Marie, for example, the hospital must compete with other communities in Ontario and beyond to attract doctors, nurses and specialists. The city has had success attracting highly skilled medical practitioners by ensuring that the career aspirations of the spouses of healthcare workers factored into the recruitment effort.

Employers in Central Algoma were also looking outside of the district for skilled individuals. Being one of the only markets within the broader district that was able to compete with wage and benefit packages, they were able to successfully recruit candidates to some of the larger companies within the region. There was a realization in Central Algoma that in order to grow their market, they needed to attract and retain qualified candidates to the region.

"The extent to which it might be said that students from this region are less prepared than those from outside ... I haven't seen any data [to suggest that is the case] and I'm not sure that there is a report that actually has ever undertaken that analysis."

(Central Algoma KII Participant)

engaging youth in their community. It is the role of the high schools to produce good citizens; it is the role of businesses to produce good employees. It was felt that if business leaders get involved with both their high schools and post-secondary institutions, the future workforce would be significantly better equipped.

Only 43% of employers indicated they were using Industry Training (apprenticeship) programs. Focus group participants and key informants suggest that many companies that could take advantage of the apprenticeships and work experience programs (co-op) that exist are not utilizing them. Concern exists in terms of responsibility of hiring an apprentice and that many apprentices, once trained, leave that employer and the District. This was felt strongly by all sizes of companies throughout the region. Some employers felt that hiring an apprentice was "a waste of time", since they needed to take the time to train/mentor them and then they did not see any return on investment if the apprentice left their company.

Central Algoma stakeholders also identified the need for employers considering hiring an apprentice to examine the opportunities of employing a First Nations apprentice. Consistently, both First Nations and other sources indicated that First Nations students experienced increased difficulty finding placements compared to non-First Nations students. As noted in the each regional profile, First Nations peoples are

"Many of these companies now are going to external recruitment practices to try to get the expertise ... Much higher talent level is required to be able to support these companies in regard to their growth."

(Central Algoma Focus Group Participant)

Both key informant and focus group participants in all regions throughout the District of Algoma noted that they felt the secondary school system was not doing enough to prepare students for the labour force. Consistently, employers and community leaders noted that those students who went directly from high school to the workforce did not have the basic training and skills that they would expect or need. In interviews with Sault College, Algoma University, and the school boards, none of the stakeholders felt that this was the case. Stakeholders felt that the students were as well prepared for the workforce as they had ever been. Businesses need to get actively involved in

"The biggest problem with apprenticeships is that as an education provider they can do the educational components, but there is a challenge in finding the employers. The cost to the employer is the hard part. They might be able to do some bridge funding through their employment and training program, but that only lasts 10 months, if the employer can't keep the apprentice on after that they are out there without any hours again."

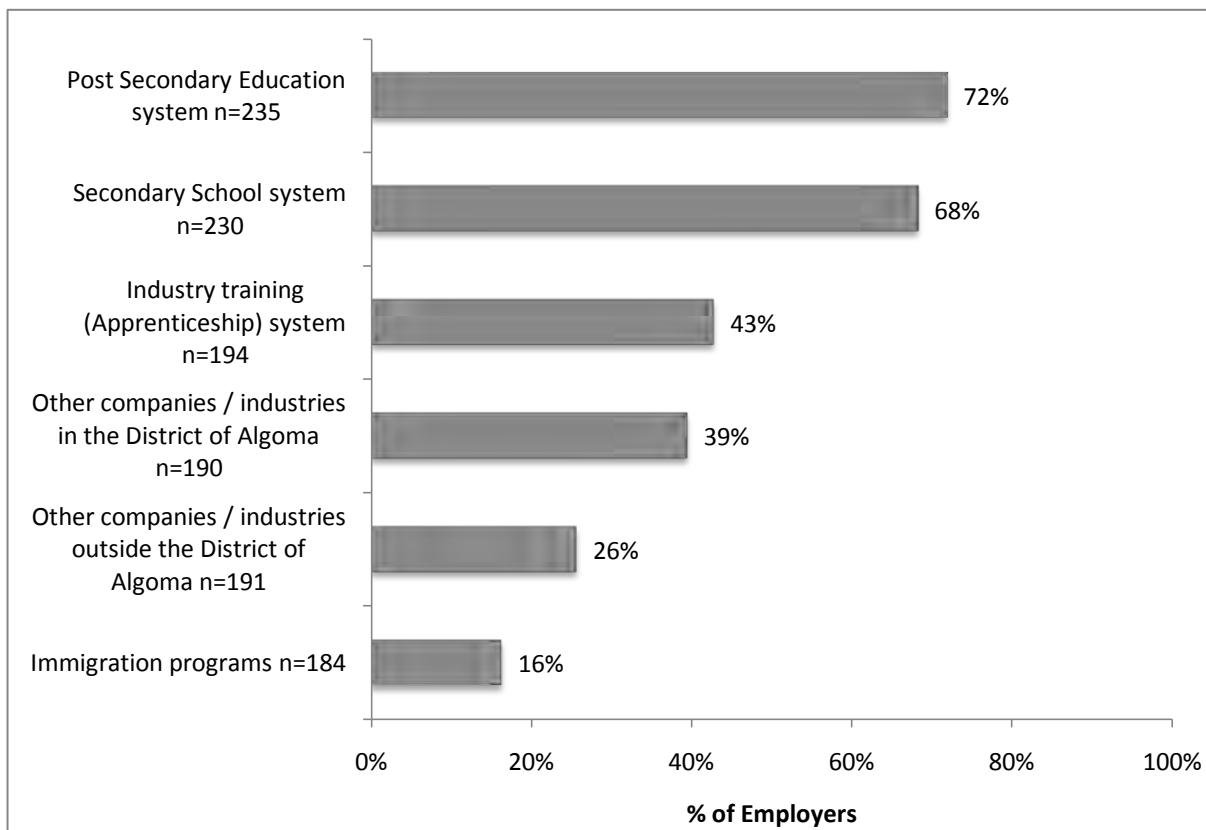
(Central Algoma KII Participant)

the only population in Algoma where the youth population is increasing. Key informants explained that First Nations youth have a strong bond with their communities and the region as a whole, so many are willing to take less pay to stay in the region, despite wage rates that would be lower than comparable positions elsewhere in the province.

"It would be great if Sault College offered more short term education courses specific to hospitality organizations so they could support their staff in learning, without requiring huge time and money commitments ... This would be for taking people who have been entrusted in moving to another level of responsibility, but need more job specific skills and background [for the new position]."

(Central Algoma KII Participant)

**Figure 5.14
Sources of Labour**



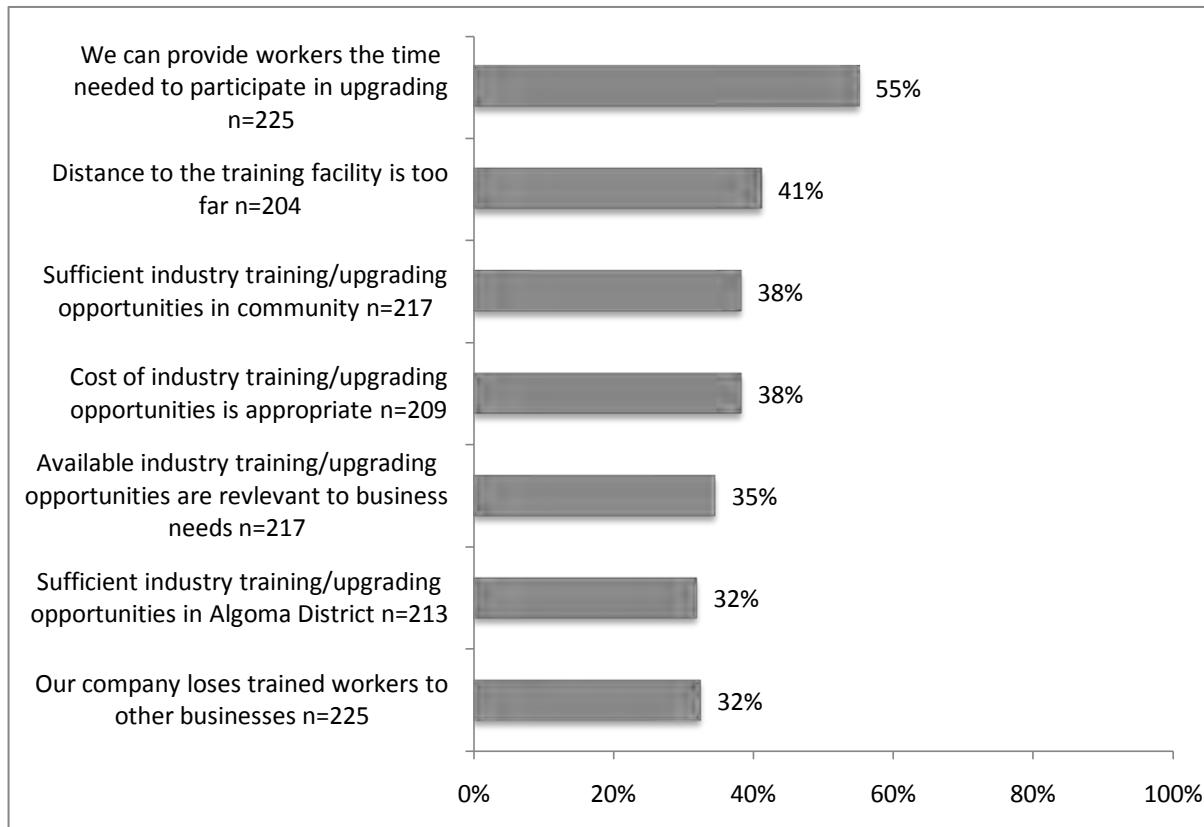
Source: Employer Survey: C5. "Please indicate the level of importance attributed to the following sources of new skilled workers for your company with 1 being Not at all Important and 5 being very Important."

Note: Top 2 Box (Strongly Agree and Agree) scores represented.

Employers felt that the greatest barrier to training was that they were unable to provide the time off to workers that needed to attend technical training. This contrasts with both East Algoma and Superior East who felt that the distance to training was more of a barrier. In Central Algoma, where all of the training is available without distance to travel (see Appendix E), employers still felt that providing time off to employees was the largest barrier.

Although Central Algoma has many training facilities, particularly when compared to the rest of the District, 41% of employers still felt that the distance to the training facility was too far. This is likely a reflection of the existing training facilities not offering the necessary programs that employers require, rather than a situation where they do not have the facilities to offer the training, such as in East Algoma and Superior East.

**Figure 5.15
Barriers to Training**

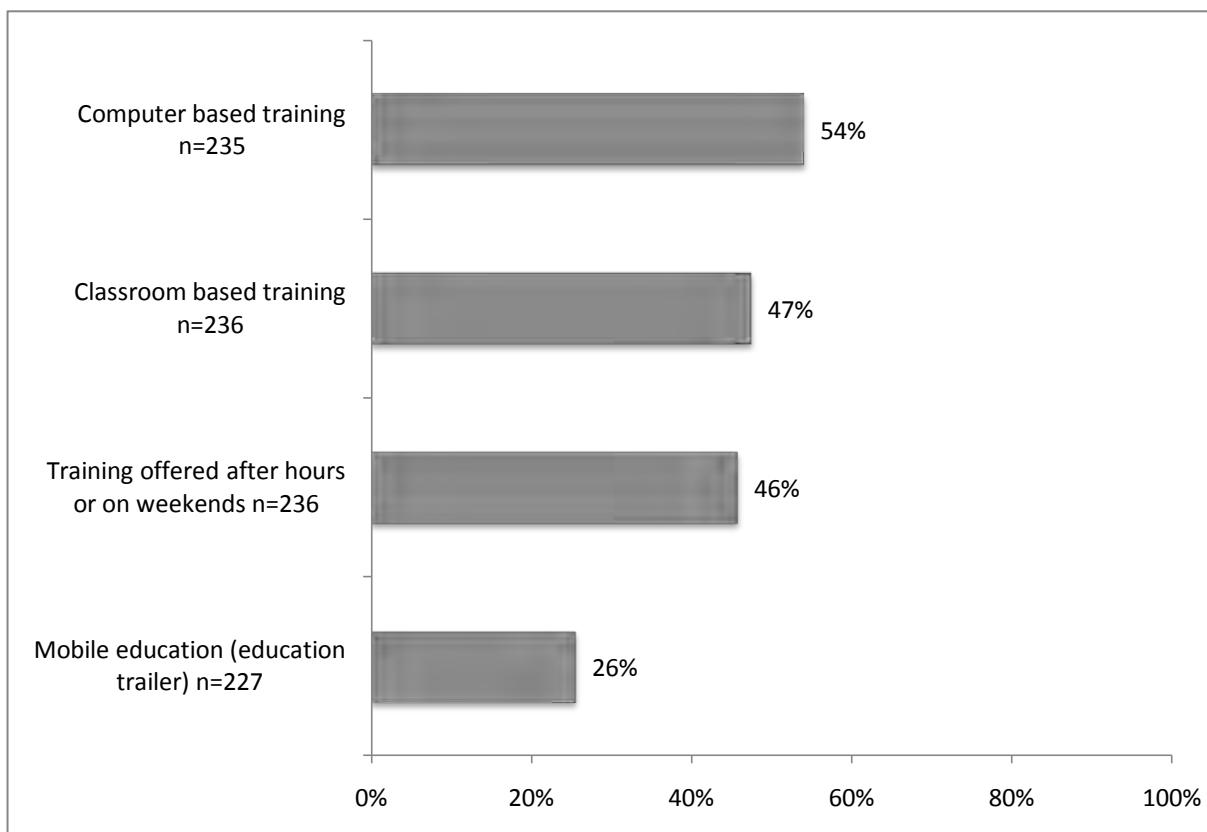


Source: Employer Survey: C7. "Based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding barriers to training."

Note: Top 2 Box (Agree and Strongly Agree) represented.

Employers in Central Algoma felt that three training options would be best for their community: computer based, classroom based, and training offered after hours or on weekends. This closely relates to the barriers that employers identified – not being able to provide employees the time off to complete the training, as well as the distance to training. Once again, the communication needs to be enhanced between employers and the training institutions to ensure training programs suitably meet employers' needs.

Figure 5.16
Employer Support for Proposed Training Options



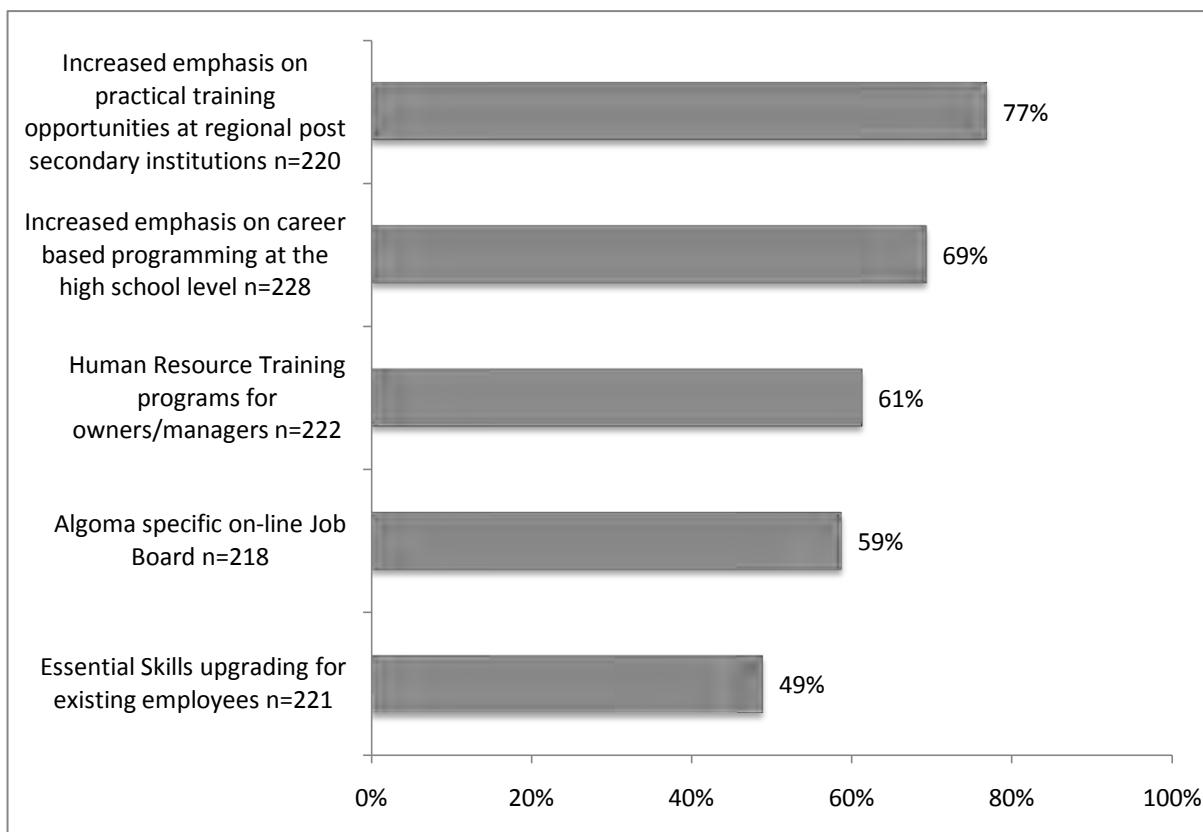
Source: Employer Survey: C9. "How interested would your organization be in terms of the following training options?"
Note: Top 2 Box (Interested and Very Interested) represented.

Similar to Superior East, employers felt that there should be an increase in practical training opportunities at regional post secondary institutions. Despite the call for more practical training opportunities, employers indicated in Table 5.14 that only 43% of employers were taking advantage of industry/apprenticeship opportunities. Through discussions with employers, principals and college representatives, it was evident that it was increasingly difficult to find people to accept a co-op student, particularly if the student was not interested in working in one of the large factories, but rather a smaller more specialized occupation. There were always more students interested in the available opportunities than spots that were available. In some skilled trades, especially electricians in Algoma, the union is the primary trainer of apprentices and only takes one intake per year of a few apprentices. As the majority of electricians in the area are part of the union and work as contract workers as part of their labour agreement, it is very difficult to become an electrical apprentice in the District of Algoma. Many employers expressed that they would like to take on more students in co-op or similar programs, because if the student graduates and comes to work for them, they are already trained in the business.

"The funding models typically have a large portion to do programming, but they always fail to provide dollars for salaries, that is a real handicap."

(Central Algoma KII Participant)

Figure 5.17
Potential Training Solutions

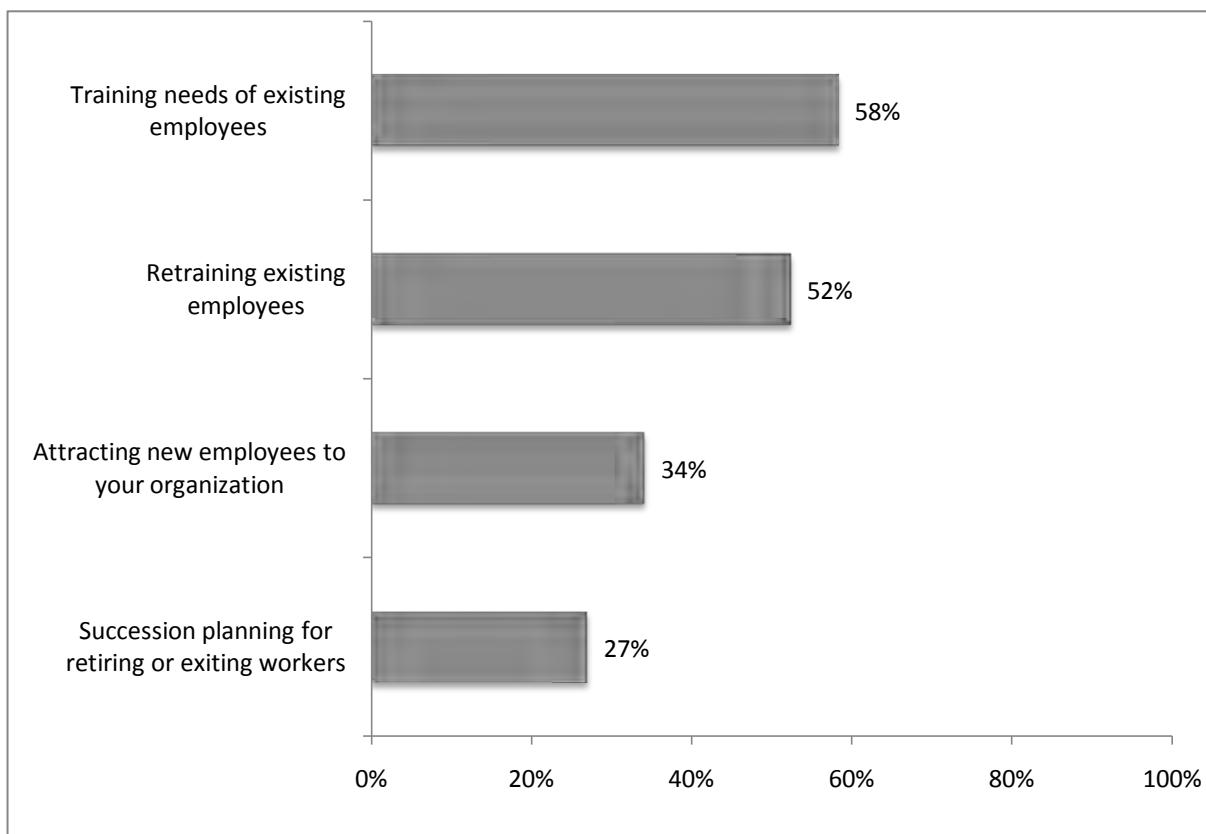


Source: Employer Survey: D4. "We are interested in education and training development opportunities that could be introduced to better support Algoma employers. On a scale of 1 to 5 – with 1 being Very Unsupportive and 5 being Very Supportive – please indicate your level of support for the following training strategies that may be pursued by the sector."

Note: Top 2 Box (Very Supportive and Supportive) represented.

When employers were asked whether they had a human resource strategy and, if they did, what did it include, a sizable number (73%) of employers did not have anything formal that would address succession planning. As Table 5.18 depicts, succession planning was important to employers in terms of developing a workforce and therefore they see a need to implement some degree of succession planning. Succession planning is becoming increasingly important with the aging population throughout Ontario. Retirement levels for the reported top three industry employers in Central Algoma are predicted to range between 18-23% over the next five years, necessitating succession plans as well as workforce development and retention strategies for non-retirement aged workers.

Figure 5.18
Formal Human Resource Strategies Utilized by Employers



n=252.

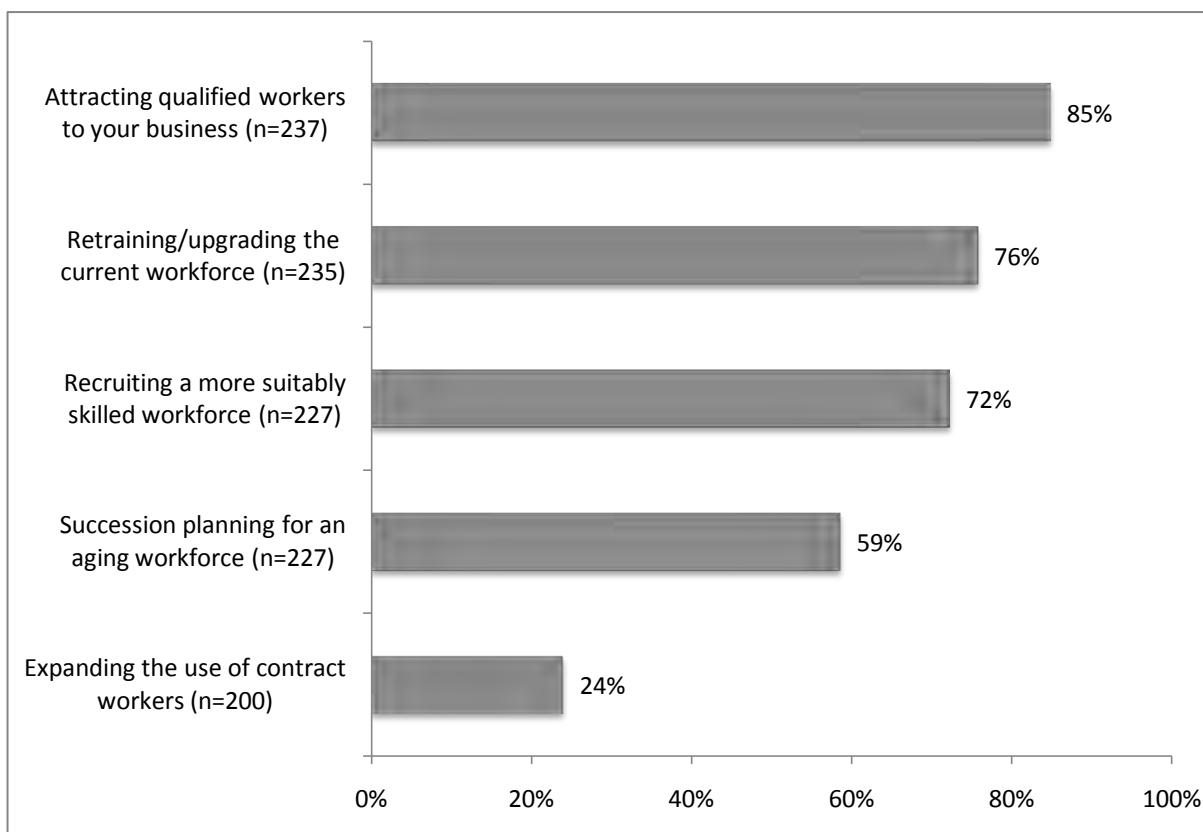
Source: Employer Survey: C4. "Does your organization have a formal human resource strategy that addresses the following?"

The most important factor cited by employers in developing a workforce in Central Algoma was attracting qualified workers to their industries. All sources indicated that it was difficult to find skilled workers for both blue and white collar jobs in Central Algoma. Stakeholders and employers acknowledged that they did not experience the labour shortages and recruitment difficulties that communities outside of Central Algoma did; for Central Algoma, their basis for comparison is Timmins, Sudbury, and Thunder Bay, so in a relative sense, they are still experiencing difficulties attracting qualified workers to the Sault area.

"We have an ongoing shortage of trades people. This community is not generating enough trades people locally, the trade in greatest demand (for them) is electrician/electrical maintenance technician the electrical field is the greatest probably followed by stationary engineers ... To be able to recruit professional people, engineers, accountants, mid to senior level managers is becoming increasingly challenging over the last couple of years.

(Central Algoma KII Participant)

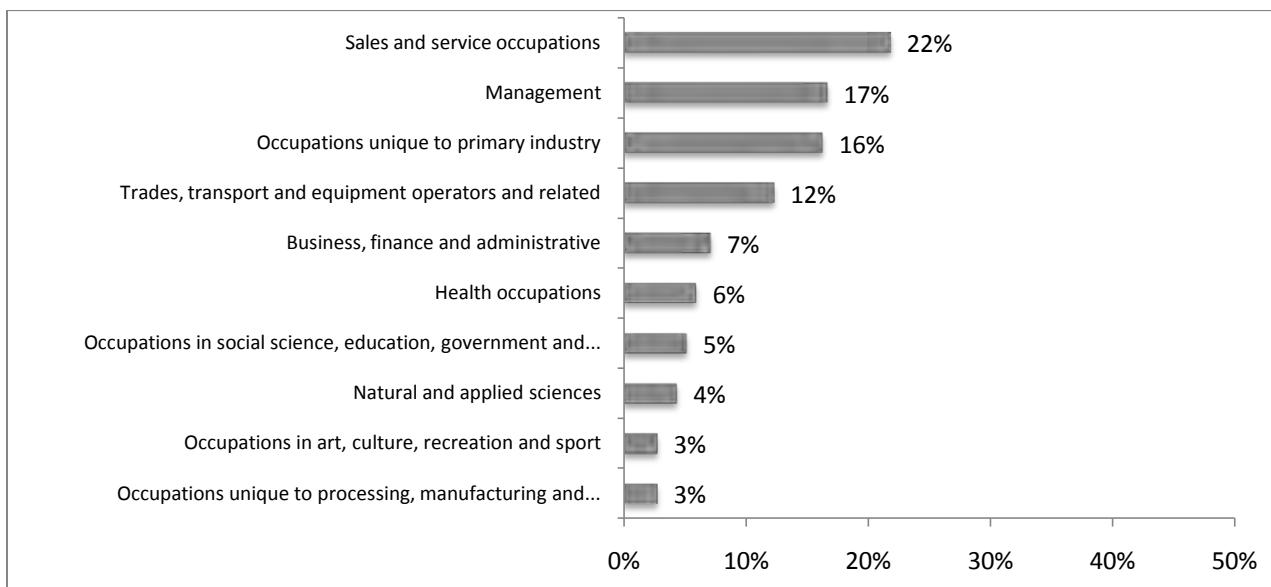
Figure 5.19
Importance of Workforce Options



Source: Employer Survey: B3. "Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in developing your workforce. Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale."

Employers in Central Algoma indicated that the most difficult positions to fill were those in sales and service occupations; while noting that these were the most likely to increase over the next five years, necessitating a strategy to address how Central Algoma will attract these workers with the increasing demand. As a focus group participant mentioned, "**If Essar Steel continues to only take 2 years College over the next 4 years, they're gonna hire every student that graduates College and not fill their need.**" In the case of Essar Steel, they offer students positions in the company after they have completed only 2 years of their college program, and often there are not enough students remaining for the college to offer the third year of the program, as scheduled. There are simply not enough students graduating from local colleges to fill the skilled labour force of the large companies, let alone the smaller companies in the region. A Sault College representative explained, "They [Essar] did that this year with our mechanical students. They grabbed all of them. We were planning on having a 3rd year and they all got snatched up after 2 years" to meet their labour demands.

Figure 5.20
Positions that are Difficult to Fill



n=252.

Source: Employer Survey: C1." Please select which job categories you have difficulty filling and identify why these jobs are difficult to fill."

Note: Multiple Responses permitted.

5.5 Human Resource Summary

Tabled below is a summary of the human resource and training challenges facing employers in the region of Superior East. The issues have been prioritized by the consultant as either Very Important (VI), Important (I) or Somewhat Important (SI), while bearing in mind the priority for addressing these issues is dependent on the resources and timeframe available to community stakeholders and employers. The challenges are organized into four categories – demographic, workforce, training and infrastructure – and used to inform the report's recommendations.

Table 5.21
Human Resource Summary

HR Challenge	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important
Demographic:			
Out-Migration			✓
Aging Workforce	✓		
Immigration		✓	
Workforce:			
Employment		✓	
Labour Shortages			✓
Skill Shortages – Management	✓		
Skill Shortages - Production	✓		
Training:			
Accessibility			✓
Cost (\$)		✓	
Cost (Time off work)	✓		
Trainers (Journeypersons)		✓	
Programming (Entry-Level)	✓		
Computer Based Training	✓		
HR Development:			
Attraction/Recruitment	✓		
Development/Retention		✓	

6. EAST ALGOMA

6.1 Regional Profile

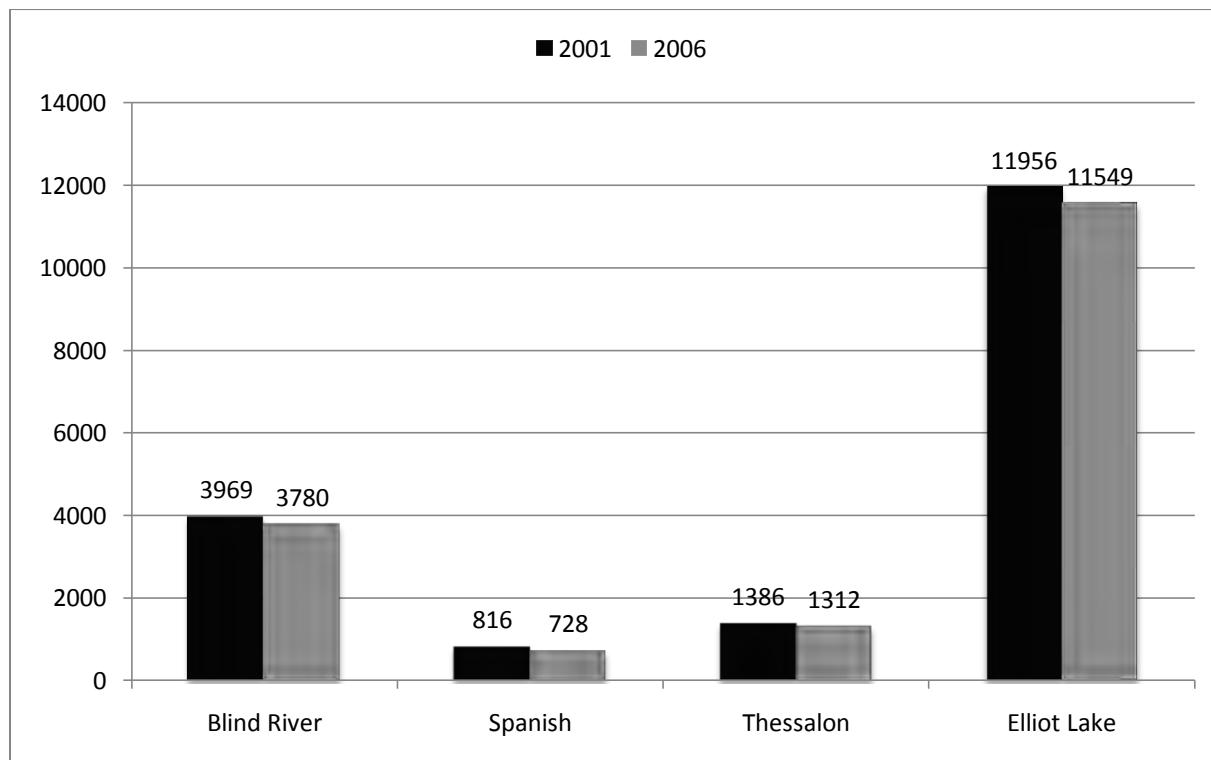
East Algoma is comprised of many small towns and hamlets, and its population is dominated by the second largest city in the District of Algoma, Elliot Lake (11,549). East Algoma also includes the four towns of the District of Algoma: Blind River (3,780), Thessalon (1,312), Bruce Mines (627), and Spanish (728). The remaining population is a combination of townships and hamlets throughout the area.

Table 6.1
East Algoma – Key Statistics

2001 Population	25,624	2006 Employment	8,745
2006 Population	24,599	2006 Unemployment	1,090
% Change	-4.1%	Unemployment Rate	11.3%
Algoma % Change	-0.9%	Algoma Unemployment Rate	8.9%

The region of East Algoma experienced moderate population losses compared to other regions in the district. Because cross-sectional comparative statistics regarding employment rates are unavailable, the analysis of employment and unemployment is based upon the 2006 figures. The unemployment rate for the region is fairly high. However, moderate population decreases indicate that unemployed people in East Algoma are waiting for an economic recovery rather than moving elsewhere.

Figure 6.2
Populations in East Algoma



Source: 2006 Census.

Although 9.4% of the population in East Algoma are immigrants, recent population gains from immigration are modest. Most of the mobility in the region is due to in-migration into Elliot Lake. While a significant portion of this mobility is within the same census subdivision, intraprovincial movement is responsible for 45.9% of all recent mobility within the region.

Table 6.3
Mobility Status – East Algoma

Mobility Status – Place of Residence 1 Year Ago	Blind River	Elliot Lake	Spanish	Thessalon	East Algoma
Total population 1 year and over	3,675	11,335	715	1,195	24,090
Lived at the same address 1 year ago	3,210	9,760	590	1,065	21,290
Lived within same province/ territory 1 year ago; but changed addresses within same census subdivision	270	895	105	55	1,420
Lived within same province/ territory 1 year ago; but changed addresses from another census subdivision within same province/territory	185	645	20	70	1,255
Lived in a different province/territory 1 year ago	15	15	0	0	40
Lived in a different country 1 year ago	0	20	0	0	20

Source: 2006 Census.

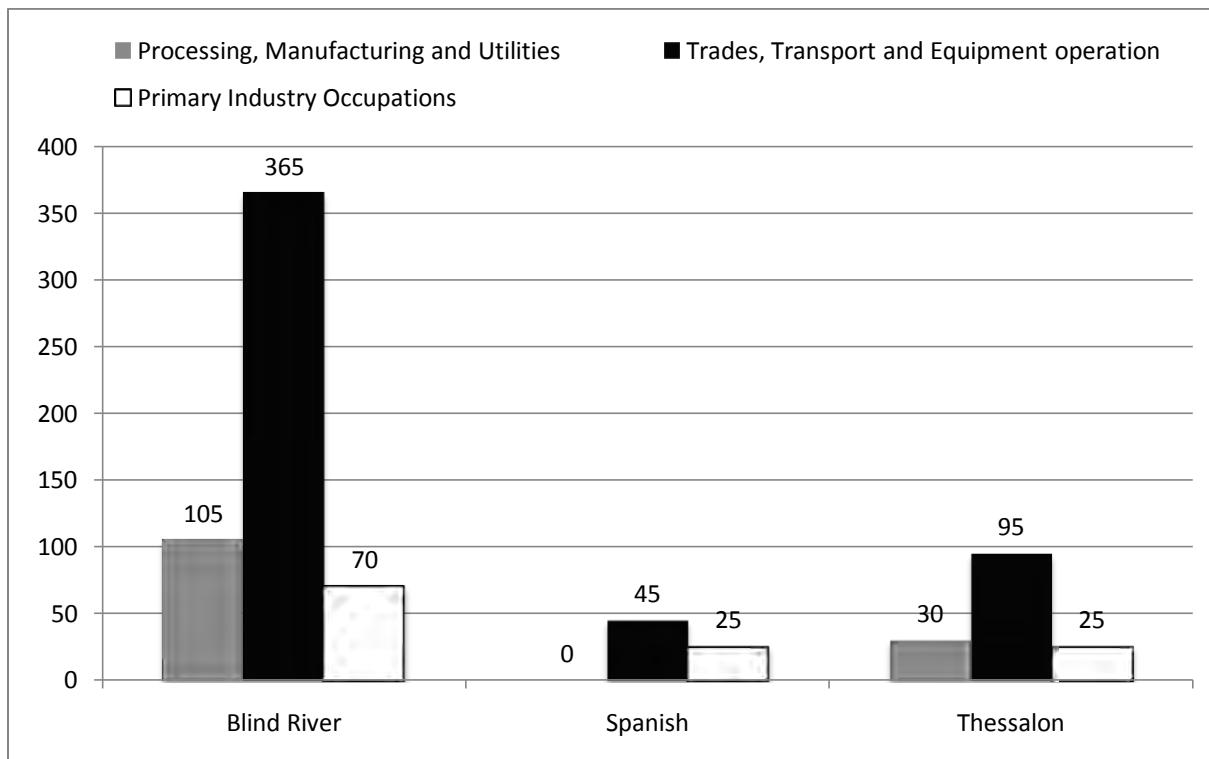
Table 6.4
Occupations in East Algoma as compared to the District

Occupations	East Algoma		Algoma	
	Employed	% Share	Employed	% Share
Management	900	9.3%	4,430	8.0%
Business, Finance and Administration	1,200	12.5%	8,225	14.9%
Natural and Applied Sciences	300	3.1%	3,340	6.1%
Health	690	7.1%	3,755	6.8%
Education, Gov't Service and Religion	845	8.7%	4,880	8.8%
Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport	205	2.1%	1,110	2.0%
Sales and Service	2,550	26.5%	15,630	28.3%
Trades, Transport and Equipment	1,835	19.1%	9,515	17.2%
Primary Industry	670	6.9%	1,765	3.2%
Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities	10	0.1%	2,540	4.6%
Total, All Occupations	9,605	100%	55,210	100%

Source: 2006 Census.

East Algoma is characterized by above average (compared to regional average) employment in management; trades, transport and equipment operation; and primary industry (i.e., forestry and mining) and is characterized by low participation in business, finance and administration; natural and applied sciences; and processing, manufacturing and utilities.

Chart 6.5
Selected Occupations in Blind River, Spanish, and Thessalon



Source: 2006 Census.

Elliot Lake, as the major centre of East Algoma, experienced fluctuations in several major occupational categories between 2001 and 2006. The health care sector grew substantially, adding 145 jobs (%), with gains focused particularly on the technical and related occupations as well as assistive occupations in support of health. A total of 85 jobs were added in the primary industry category, mostly in mining and forestry. The social science, education, government services and religion occupational sector saw the disappearance of 105 occupations over the five year period, with major losses witnessed in the social services and occupations related to education and religion. It must be emphasized however, that these data are based on 2006 census information, and may or may not reflect the current employment profile in the region.

Table 6.6
Selected Occupations in Elliot Lake

Occupations	2001 Employed	2006 Employed	# Change
Health	240	385	145
Professional Occupations	50	45	-5
Nurse Supervisors and Registered Nurses	70	100	30
Technical and Related Occupations	50	110	60
Assisting Occupations in Support of Health	65	125	60
Primary Industry	165	250	85
Agriculture, excluding labourers	15	10	-5
Forestry Operations, Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction and Fishing, excluding labourers	70	185	115
Primary production labourers	80	65	-15
Social Science, Education, Gov't Services, Religion	420	315	-105
Judges, Lawyers, Psychologists, Social Workers, Ministers and Policy and Program Officers	120	85	-35
Teachers and Professors	175	185	10
Paralegals, social services workers and occupations in education and religion	130	50	-80

Source: 2006 Census.

Much like Superior East, East Algoma also commissioned a Regional Economic Development Strategy. The strategy was sponsored by the East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation and Partners and was completed in May of 2007. Many recommendations in the report aided in the economic growth of East Algoma with each of the opportunities detailed for implementation.

6.1.1 Elliot Lake

The City of Elliot Lake is the second largest city in the District of Algoma and is located approximately 200km east of Sault Ste. Marie and 160km west of Sudbury. In 2009, Elliot Lake implemented its Strategic Plan which outlined the **City's priorities, and in conjunction with the action plans, described the** major initiatives that would be pursued in the next five years²². Elliot Lake has completed many studies over the past decade that have helped to inform its strategic plan such as The Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture Master Plan (2007), City of Elliot Lake Retail Study (2007), and the Business Retention and Expansion Study (2006).

The Strategic Plan was created in 2009 and therefore many of the proposed initiatives are beginning to take shape. The goals were identified as being High, Medium or Ongoing and prioritized accordingly; they were further assigned to a specific department within the community (e.g., economic development, administration, etc.) so that departments could be held accountable for achieving their goal. The overarching goal of the Strategic Plan was to increase the population of Elliot Lake to 12,000 by 2011 thus increasing business, number of youth and the tax base to improve infrastructure within Elliot Lake.

Prior to the implementation of the Strategic Plan, Elliot Lake commissioned a Business Retention and Expansion study (BRE) in 2006 in connection with the Elliot Lake Chamber of Commerce, ELNOS Corporation for Business Development, the Government of Ontario, and the East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation. The BR&E report surveyed 100 employers in Elliot Lake of a possible 370 that were sent the survey. The report examined training and labour issues, energy, infrastructure/municipal services, networking, quality of life/community image, and business and people attraction. From the report, action plans were developed to address many of the issues identified.

²² (City of Elliot Lake, 2009)

The City of Elliot Lake conducted a follow-up to the BR&E study in March 2010 using a FedNor intern. Once again, 100 businesses were surveyed and interviewed using similar questions to what was asked in the BR&E questionnaire to provide comparisons over the past four years.

6.1.2 Johnson Township

Township of Johnson, which contains the Hamlet of Desbarats, is located along the Trans-Canada Highway, approximately 60 km east of Sault Ste. Marie.

Recently, an open forum was held for local farmers, stakeholders, and consumers interested in pursuing opportunities in the local goat market. The market for local goat appears to have increased and that more research needs to be done to identify the demand for locally grown animals in the Algoma district. The forum is aimed at understanding how big is the market for goat in Algoma, and how can producers be best positioned to meet it. The increased goat farming in East Algoma will help to diversify and sustain the local communities in East Algoma.

6.1.3 North Shore Tribal Council

Mamaweswen, the North Shore Tribal Council (NSTC) represents seven First Nations. They are Batchewana FN, Garden River FN, Thessalon FN, Mississauga FN, Serpent River FN, Sagamok Anishnawbek and Whitefish Lake FN. All seven First Nations are located along the North Shore of Lake Huron within the Robinson-Huron Treaty area. The NSTC has an economic development department which is responsible for the advancement of economic development as well as business retention and expansion within the North Shore First Nations Communities.

Recently, the NTSC has been holding round table discussions with the seven First Nations by hosting EDO meetings where each First Nation can share their resources.

It was recently announced that the Federal and Provincial governments would provide \$30 million in funding to improve the Huron Central Railway. The railway currently runs through East Algoma, connecting Sudbury with Sault Ste. Marie. The North Shore Tribal Council has expressed interest in training its members to assist with the railway.

6.1.4 Blind River

Recently, Cameco – a refinery company, has seen successes in Blind River schools by promoting its business through student recognition and supporting leadership in schools through its STARS program. In an interview with the Elliot Lake Standard, refinery manager **Chris Astles explained Cameco's strategy**,

"With our aging workforce in Blind River we are looking at a very big turnover of employees in the foreseeable future. We are quite seriously looking at students as our employees of tomorrow. That's why we've gotten involved with a school's welding program and would like to see kids go off to engineering school and come back as engineers. We want these students to recognize Cameco as a good company and want them to come back and work for us."

This strategy has been successful for Cameco, who have also sponsored students through school with the commitment that they would come and work for their company when they graduate. This strategy is very innovative both in East Algoma as well as the Algoma District.

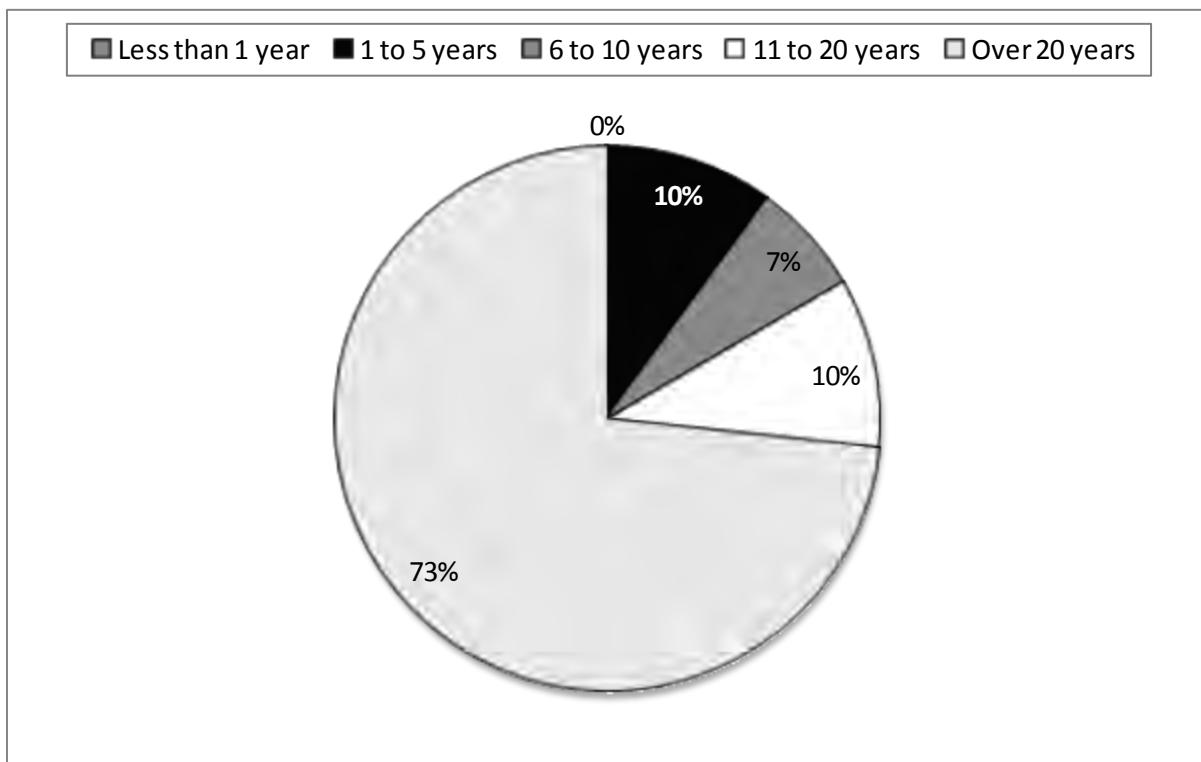
6.2 Employment Analysis

In East Algoma, 30 employers took the time to complete the survey, representing 436 employees in the area. Employers in East Algoma indicated that their company was:

- Located off-reserve (100%)
- Head office in the District of Algoma (88%)
- Not operating under a collective bargaining agreement (75%)

The majority of employers were operating in the private sector (59%) although both not for profit (14%) and public (28%) were represented within the sample. The employers that took the time to respond to the survey were those who had been operating in the District of Algoma for over 20 years, and therefore were very qualified to discuss what issues were facing the area as well as East Algoma.

Table 6.7
Years of Operation in the District of Algoma



n=30.

Source: Employer Survey: A1. "How many years has your business been in operation in the District of Algoma?"
Caution: Small Base.

For East Algoma employers, Health Care and Social Assistance was identified as the dominant industry employer, consistent with the Statistics Canada data of East Algoma presented in the regional profile. The continued promotion of Elliot Lake as a retirement community necessitates the increased health care services to deal with the aging population and their associated increased health care needs.

Although members of Elliot Lake see that they are distancing themselves from the retirement living, the community is still being positioned in media campaigns across Ontario as a retirement destination and therefore Health

"In essence we're still a one industry town, we just went from mining to retirement living"

(East Algoma KII Participant)

Care remains increasingly important to the region as their population continues to age at a rate higher than other communities in Canada.

**Table 6.8
Primary and Secondary Industry**

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Health Care and Social Assistance	20%	7%	27%
Other Services	17%	13%	30%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	13%	7%	20%
Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services	10%	3%	13%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	10%	7%	17%
Accommodation and Food Services	10%	3%	13%
Construction	7%	3%	10%
Public Administration	7%	3%	10%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3%	3%	6%
Transportation and Warehousing	3%	3%	6%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0%	3%	3%
Utilities	0%	7%	7%
Manufacturing	0%	3%	3%
Educational Services	0%	7%	7%

n=30.

Source: Employer Survey: A3. "Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates.

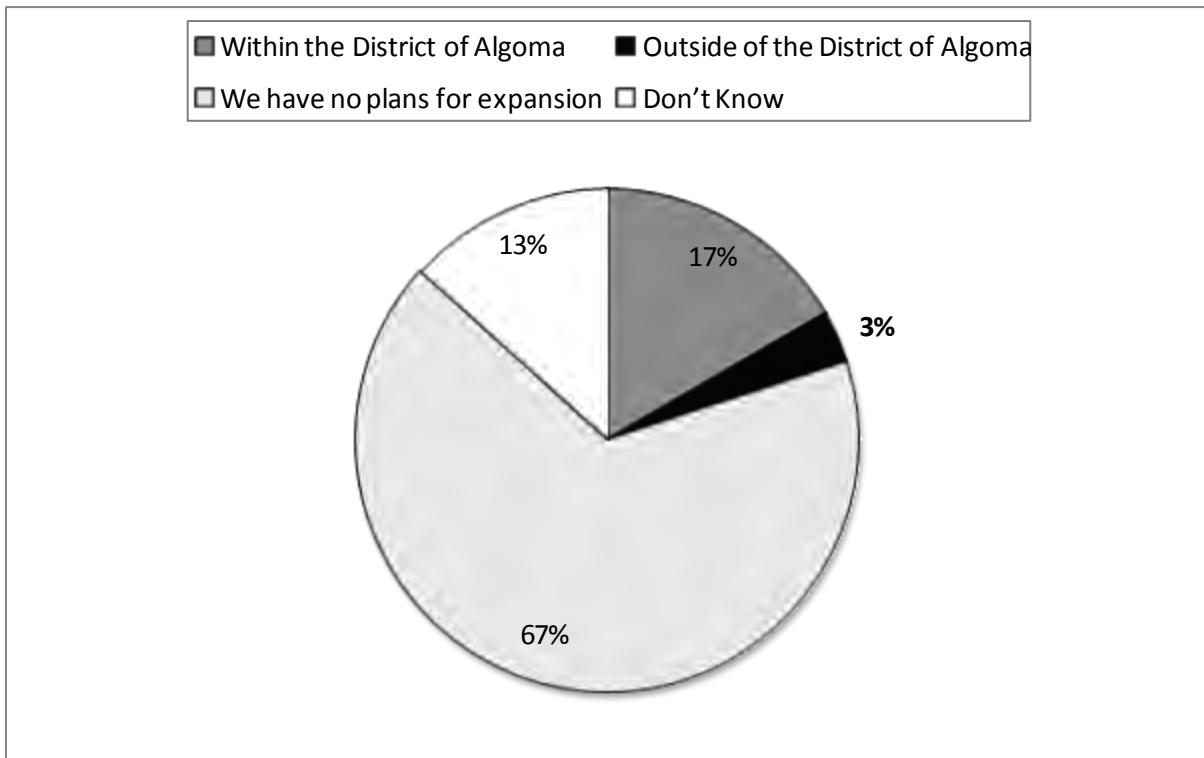
Caution: small base.

"There's a ton of opportunity but unfortunately ... what we're seeing is problems with access to capital, and aging infrastructure. The challenge is putting the infrastructure and investments in place that will turn that around."

(East Algoma KII Participant)

In general, there were no plans for expansion for employers in East Algoma and still a large proportion did not know whether they would expand their business in the next five years. Only 20% of employers felt that they would expand at all, with most of those planning for expansion within the District of Algoma rather than outside. Access to capital proved to be a large barrier to expansion, as well as access to labour for the expansion. Many companies in East Algoma are "small operations" and as a result, they are not looking to expand in a significant way that would in effect create many, if any, jobs.

**Figure 6.9
Planned Expansion**



n=30.

Source: Employer Survey: B1. "Is your company planning to expand its business operations over the next five years?"
Caution: small base.

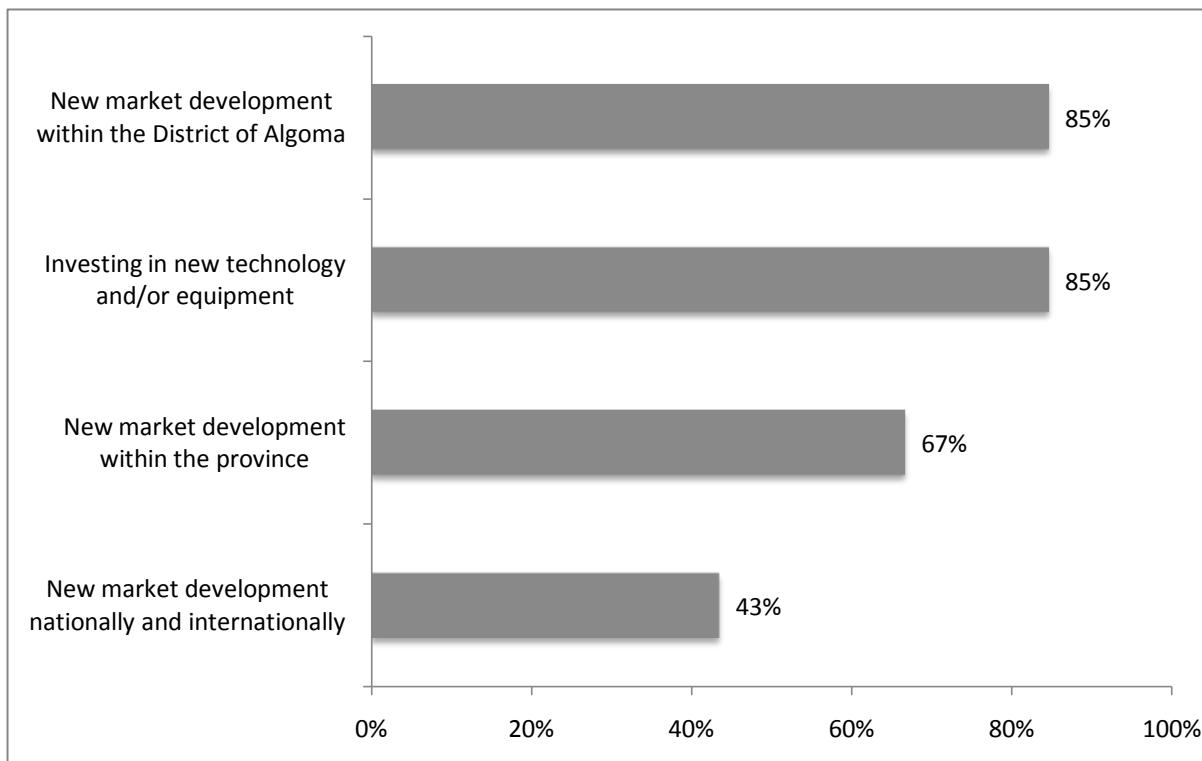
New market development coupled with investing in new technology were identified as the most important factors in East Algoma in terms of growing and sustaining business. In focus group and key informant discussions, employers elaborated on what they felt was key to growing and, more importantly, sustaining business. Employers felt that with the small labour pool, it was important for their business to be flexible and accommodating to employees, especially if they had a highly skilled employee. East Algoma experiences a large problem every year in terms of attracting and retaining full-time, year-round tradespeople. The high demand for skilled tradespeople causes shortages in all areas; it is difficult for **residents to find someone licensed to provide basic "handyman" tasks or to provide basic home** improvements and repairs. Often people have to turn to unlicensed or uncertified tradespeople to construct decks or sheds, or have to pay qualified people under the table in order to have work performed.

"The Province needs to work closer with the municipalities to find a solution. A grant can't do it. There needs to be a little more help. Maybe a salary top-up to help workers stay"

(East Algoma Focus Group Participant)

East Algoma businesses also find it difficult to attract general or unskilled workers. This is largely because employers are not able to provide a competitive wage. Without that it is hard to attract students to work in the summer time. The Summer Job Program does provide employers with \$2 per hour for each student hired, but it is insufficient in the minds of community leaders to merit creating jobs and often businesses cannot meet the criteria for additional funding.

Figure 6.10
Growing and Sustaining Business



n=26.

Source: Employer Survey: B2. "Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in growing or sustaining your business. Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale."

Caution: small base.

East Algoma was least likely of the other regions to have management workforce under 25 years of age. Their management workforce was largely comprised of those over 40 years of age and more strongly **dominated by males than the other regions**. East Algoma's other production/service workers were relatively young, and females were more prevalent than in the other regions.

Table 6.11
Age and Gender Composition of Workforce

Select Occupation	Age				Gender
	<25 (%)	25-39 (%)	40-54 (%)	55+ (%)	
Management Workforce – all employees designated as executive, operations management, skilled trades, and supervisory staff.	0%	22%	74%	62%	40%
Other Production / Service Workforce – all other employees involved in the production, other skilled staff, installation or delivery of a good or service	27%	38%	49%	28%	67%

Source: Employer Survey: D3. "What approximate proportion of your current workforce falls into the following age and gender categories?"

6.3 Skill Demand and Forecast

"People won't come in because the salaries aren't competitive"

"I didn't open my restaurant this year. I couldn't staff it – servers, kitchen staff – none available."

"We're not getting applicants anymore. We used to get up to forty. Now we get maybe four."

"You can offer training, but as soon as they're trained, they want to leave to go for a better wage."

(East Algoma Focus Group Participants)

Employers felt that the largest potential increase in jobs over the next five years would be in primary industry jobs, although 29% of employers indicated that there would definitely be an increase in sales and service occupations. Much of the hope for new jobs in primary industry is based on recent news about the potential for reopening the mines in Elliot Lake. The uranium mines were not depleted when the mines closed; it was simply the state of the economy that made them no longer viable.

East Algoma experiences a large problem every year in terms of attracting and retaining full-time, year-round tradespeople. Skilled tradespeople prefer jobs in Sudbury where they can earn substantially higher wages, particularly on commercial jobs. Contractors are unable to charge Sudbury rates in Elliot Lake and Elliot Lake can't pay Sudbury prices.

It was noted that selected construction workers are somewhat easier to find than previously. This was attributed to the construction program offered at Sault College. This was a recommendation from a previous AWIC study and supports the feedback from interviews with management at Sault College – that the college is ready to support the surrounding communities with appropriate training programs, but cannot do so without timely information to help it plan.

"The Province needs to work closer with the municipalities to find a solution. A grant can't do it. There needs to be a little more help. Maybe a salary top-up to help workers stay."

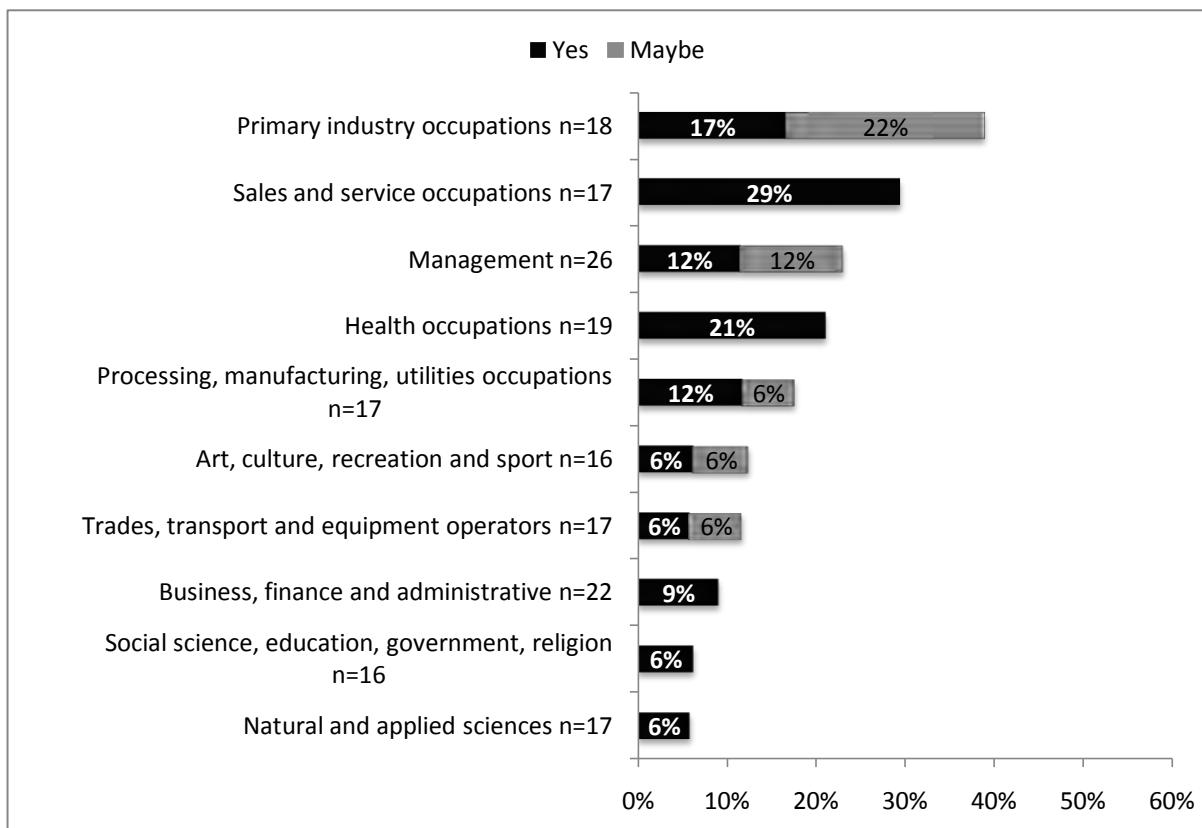
(East Algoma Focus Group Participant)

Another concern is that if employers do train workers, the workers could leave and start to compete against the employer by starting their own business. Despite this inability to find unskilled (general) workers, 29% of employers indicated there will be an increased demand for sales and service occupations in the region over the next five years. As more workers in Elliot Lake and surrounding communities retire, the demand for services increase particularly in sales, service and hospitality related jobs. This deficit is largely because employers are not able to provide a competitive wage. There was consensus among focus group participants in Blind River that potential workers do not want to work there because they can go to Sault Ste. Marie or Sudbury and make significantly more. Minimum wage is not a sufficient incentive, particularly if potential workers have to drive to work or have to pay for childcare.

Students and casual employees that remain in the region are often those who cannot find jobs elsewhere and therefore employers do not find their skills adequate to fill their positions. **Tim Horton's offers** benefits and flexible shifts. For many youth, that flexibility is key. Businesses with more traditional shifts often lose their staff. Many employers with part time positions are offering them to retirees who want to make some extra spending money over youth in the region, although they recognize that this is not a long term solution and that turnover is high.

When the employment centre posts advertisements for workers, it gets very few responses. The community of Blind River needs all types of workers from top management to service workers. Regardless of where employers advertise, even outside the district or outside the province, skilled workers are difficult to find.

Figure 6.12
Potential Increase in Workers



Source: Employer Survey: B4. "Do you anticipate increasing the number of workers in the following occupation within your Algoma base business operation over the next 5 years?"

Caution: small base.

Although the survey of employers could not capture any potential increase in entrepreneurs, the focus groups and the key informants touched on the lack of entrepreneurial spirit within East Algoma. The entrepreneurs in the region are often, for example, someone who knows how to fix cars and therefore opens a mechanic shop out of his/her garage/barn. The focus group participants noted that although these people may be equipped at the profession, they do not know how to run a business and often only start their own home based business so they do not have to pay for a storefront. The idea of home-based businesses and self-employment held a great deal of interest in many of the communities consulted in this study. In communities such as Blind River, where there has been some success with this approach, there is still a need for training, particularly in the areas of small business management; however, the training needs to be accessible locally.

In addition to business management skills, there is a need for human resource management training, particularly if these home-based businesses are successful and begin to expand and hire additional staff. In this case, a train-the-trainer model would be appropriate. These types of business models have a very flat organizational structure and the owner-operator is the trainer/mentor for any new staff. Training the trainer would have to be done in the local community. The demands on the owner-operator's time make traveling to training extremely unlikely.

"There's a lack of leadership. The community is aging, but it's more of a threat that our vision is getting old too."

(East Algoma Focus Group Participant)

A lack of entrepreneurial spirit, coupled with a lack of trainers and an absence of a training strategy, is undermining efforts to build a small business sector that could provide a diversity of products and services.

Employers in East Algoma indicated that their management workforce was likely to stay at the same level for the next five years. Other production/service workers were likely to increase over the next five years, if only very gradually. This is congruent with their projected expansions and workforce needs employers identified.

"If you train people in the community, then they're apt to stay in the community."

(East Algoma KII Participant)

**Table 6.13
Projected Workforce**

	Past Workforce (2007)			Current Workforce (2010)			Projected Workforce (2015)		
	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	Total (#)
Management Workforce	82	16	98	78	16	94	76	15	91
Other Production/Service Workforce	180	173	353	189	153	342	196	168	364
Total	262	189	451	267	169	436	272	183	455

Source: Employer Survey: D1. "Please indicate the total number of full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) workers your company employed in 2007, currently employs (including vacancies) and the projected number of workers needed in 2015.

Projected workforce data provided by East Algoma employers suggest employers are simply hoping for a return to 2007 employment levels and that other production/service workers will not recover to even 2007 levels.

COPS data show **few job openings and modest growth for East Algoma's** dominant industry employer, Health Care and Social Assistance. Although these are Ontario-wide data, it can be assumed that because of **Elliot Lake's retirement community and aging population, the projected growth is likely to have a** greater impact on East Algoma than many other areas in Ontario. With the introduction of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, it is hoped that some of those students will be able to fill some of the job openings in East Algoma to help address the health care needs of the aging population.

"The establishment of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine has made a difference, but they've just graduated their first class of medical students, so now they are going and doing family practice, or other specialties. There is another two years before those students come out. In our interviews with the first graduating class ... most are going to larger centres ... They are not coming to the small rural facilities ... Unless they are receiving a bursary from the Ministry they are not tied to the north."

(East Algoma KII Participant)

Table 6.14
Projected Growth Based on COPS Data

	East Algoma Primary Industry (n=30)	East Algoma Secondary Industry (n=30)	COPS Projected Growth (2010-2015)*	Other Replacement Demand (Deaths and Emigrants) (2010-2015)*	Retirement Level (2010-2015)*	Job Openings (2010-2015)*
Health Care and Social Assistance	20%	7%	9%	7%	19%	1%
Other Services	17%	13%	8%	5%	18%	38%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	13%	7%	9%	6%	23%	20%
Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services	10%	3%	6%	4%	18%	55%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	10%	7%	9%	6%	20%	14%
Accommodation and Food Services	10%	3%	7%	5%	22%	-58%
Construction	7%	3%	9%	7%	26%	121%
Public Administration	7%	3%	5%	3%	21%	-5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3%	3%	2%	3%	19%	-13%
Transportation and Warehousing	3%	3%	4%	4%	23%	0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0%	3%	10%	9%	29%	20%
Utilities	0%	7%	9%	7%	24%	37%
Manufacturing	0%	3%	5%			
Educational Services	0%	7%	3%	2%	13%	-43%

Source: Employer Survey: A3. "Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates.";
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) Data.
Caution: small base. COPS data based on Canada wide projections.

6.4 Recruitment, Training, Development and Retention

East Algoma primarily recruits from the secondary school system, followed by the post secondary school system. There was a wide diversity of opinions on the role of high schools in the preparation of the **District's youth for productive roles in their respective communities.** From grade seven onwards, students are provided with career counselling and are introduced to a number of career pathways. Essentially these pathways lead to university for those academically inclined, college for those who demonstrate an interest in skilled trades, and workforce skills preparation for those who do not fit into the first two pathways. While students are introduced to these pathways, they are not forced or even encouraged to choose a pathway early on.

The actual introduction is intended to be provided by the high school guidance counsellor; however, a recent study (Malatest, 2009) showed that guidance counsellors in Ontario spend only a minority of their time in career counselling activities. Furthermore, with a student-counsellor ratio of approximately 500:1 the only practical way of providing this counselling is in a classroom setting, not one-on-one. This means the pathways are introduced to students in general terms, to make them aware and get them thinking about their future.

Some key informants indicated that they were uncomfortable with career pathways being introduced in grade seven. Others suggested that students need an introduction to basic business skills early on; that it is the responsibility of the high schools to ensure an understanding of the workplace.

The view that entrepreneurial aptitude should be encouraged in high school was more pronounced among both key informants and focus group participants outside the Sault Ste. Marie area. To graduate from high school, students are required to pass a literacy exam; however, there was consensus among **focus group participants that the test is "pretty basic."** The numeracy of high school graduates was also called into question.

Quite a few (of our employers) are small operations. For them to take on an apprentice it takes them more work to teach then they have time for (in a day), because they are so busy ... We do have some concerns about the willingness and ability of local businesses to take on apprentices."

(East Algoma KII Participant)

As a result of recruiting so heavily from the secondary school system, those in East Algoma felt that there was a strong onus on both the high schools and the employers to communicate what both are able to provide and the shortfalls each are feeling.

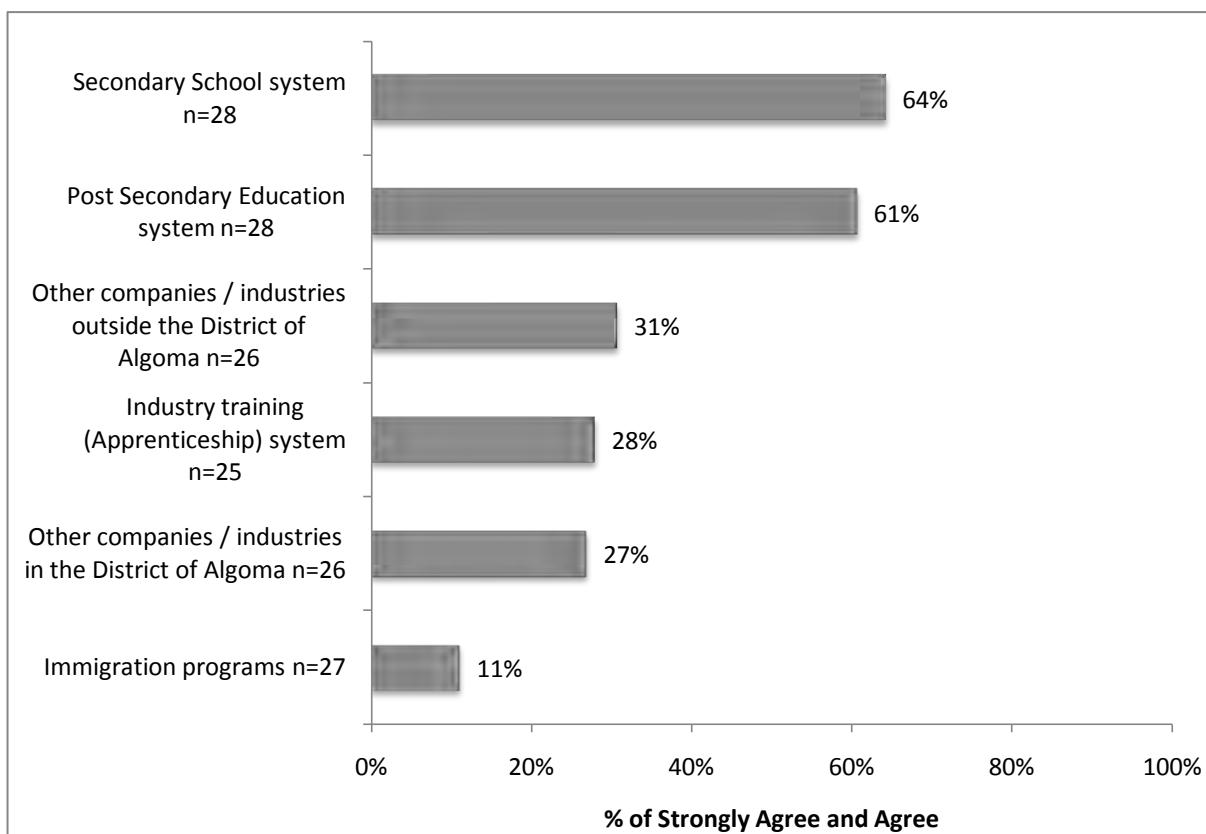
East Algoma was the region least likely to use industry training (apprenticeship) programs in their recruitment of labour. While there was some involvement of employers taking on students from the high school level as a quasi co-op/ skilled trades course, many employers did not participate in the apprenticeship training system

"Some of these students need to be prepared to be self-employed"

"Many don't know how to make change. It's as basic as that... addition and subtraction."

(East Algoma Focus Group Participants)

**Figure 6.15
Sources of Labour**



Source: Employer Survey: C5. "Please indicate the level o importance attributed to the following sources of new skilled workers for your company with 1 being Not at all Important and 5 being Very Important."

Caution: small base.

Note: Top 2 Box (Important and Very Important) scores represented.

In many of the smaller communities in Johnson Township, innovation is key to developing a labour market and retaining the population. The community of Desbarats, in Johnson Township, has successfully **attracted a number of "back-to-the-land" families from Toronto and from Western Canada.** These are families that have capital to invest and are attracted by Desbarats quality of life and the relatively low cost of its agricultural operations. They are ideal immigrants to the area as they are young, energetic, have children and, if successful, will be long-term residents. One of the challenges faced by these agricultural operations is the lack of local labour for agricultural work during the summer months; local workers do not want to pick berries for minimum wage. To help mitigate this shortage, these farms have brought over students from Europe, whose university degree programs require that students complete a work-term overseas. This practice is in its infancy, but it has a number of clear benefits. The workers are paid in room and board, rather than an hourly wage, and therefore are less expensive to the farm operator. The supply is renewable each year. The students are available for the summer only; however, that is the most labour intensive season on the farm. The students must report on their experience and have a vested interest to make it a positive experience, both for themselves and the farm operators.

Like most of the other communities outside of Sault Ste. Marie, Desbarats would also like to develop the sense of community entrepreneurship. Because of the resurgence in agricultural business there is a need not only for on-farm expertise, but in agricultural marketing. Desbarats has its own farmers market, but a group of producers has begun taking their products for sale in Wawa. In speaking to representatives from Desbarats, the researchers found that the community had an understanding that this type of

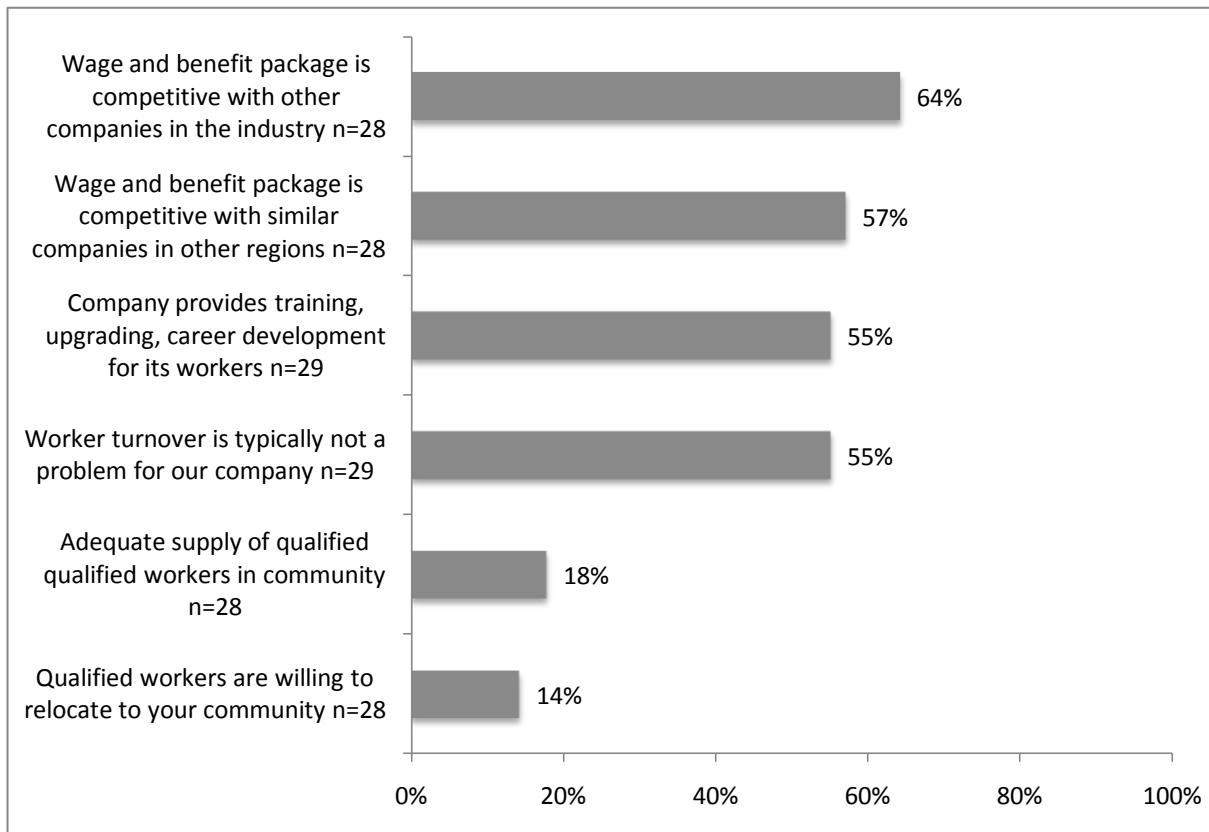
initiative had to be mutually beneficial. The current training and supports required to ensure initiatives like these have the best chance of success include more than a course in business basics.

Training programs should be offered in the off season so that current and future staff of tourism and summer-based businesses are trained in advance of the season. Furthermore, the staff at some year-round businesses take summer vacation, so as focus group participants mentioned, “summer is not an ideal time to offer training.”

“We want the initiative to work for both communities. Ideally, someone in Wawa will see an opportunity to sell our goods in Wawa and send some of Wawa’s goods down to Desbarats for us to sell on their behalf here.”

(East Algoma Focus Group Participant)

Figure 6.16
Recruitment, Competitiveness, and Training

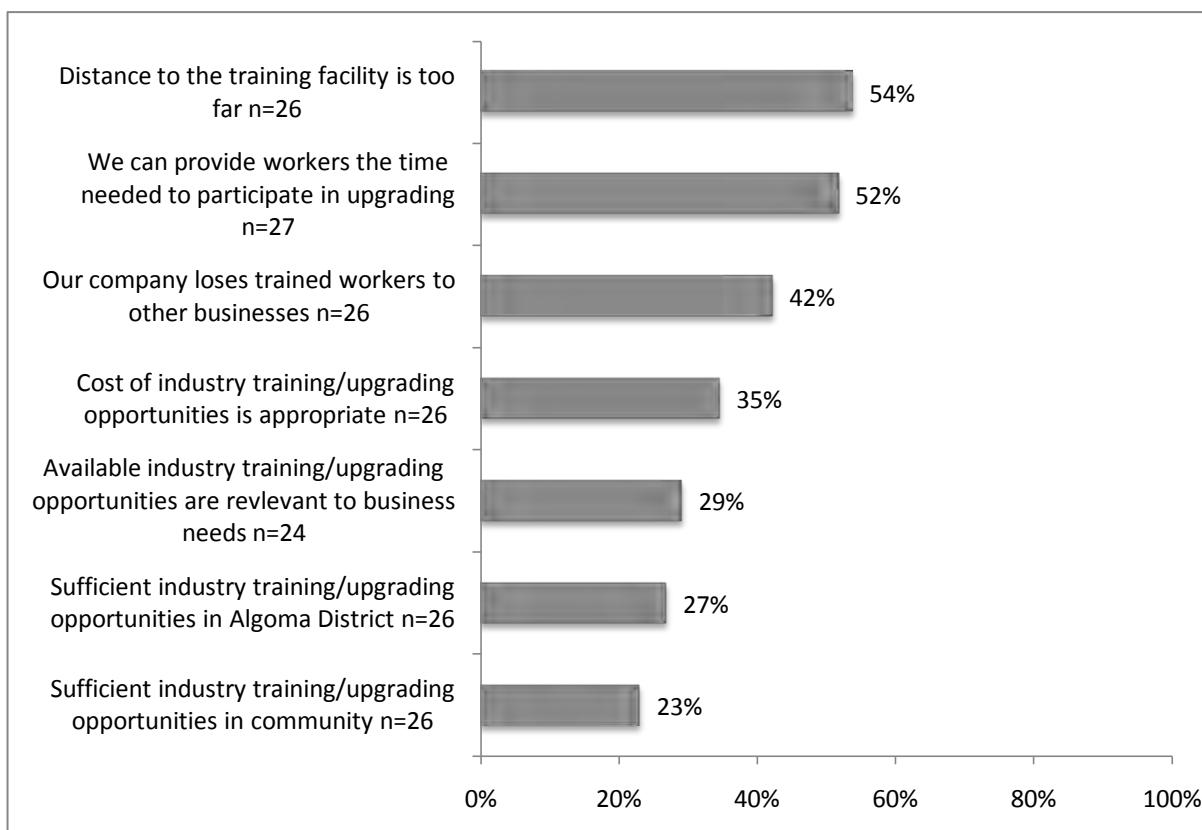


Source: Employer Survey: C3. “Based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.”

Caution: small base.

Key informants and focus groups from East Algoma expressed many barriers to training, as did employers through the survey. The location of East Algoma puts it directly in between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury, both of which house numerous training facilities. As a result, residents and businesses in East Algoma are often forced to travel to training. East Algoma, and primarily Elliot Lake, was a union town until the mine closure. While Elliot Lake received considerable transition support from government to help offset the closure of the mine, there is a feeling that the government is unwilling to extend additional support beyond the resources provided previously that helped establish/develop the “retirement community” model. Stakeholders and focus group participants held the opinion that the provincial government was unwilling or unable to provide additional assistance to the town to help further diversify the economy.

**Figure 6.17
Barriers to Training**



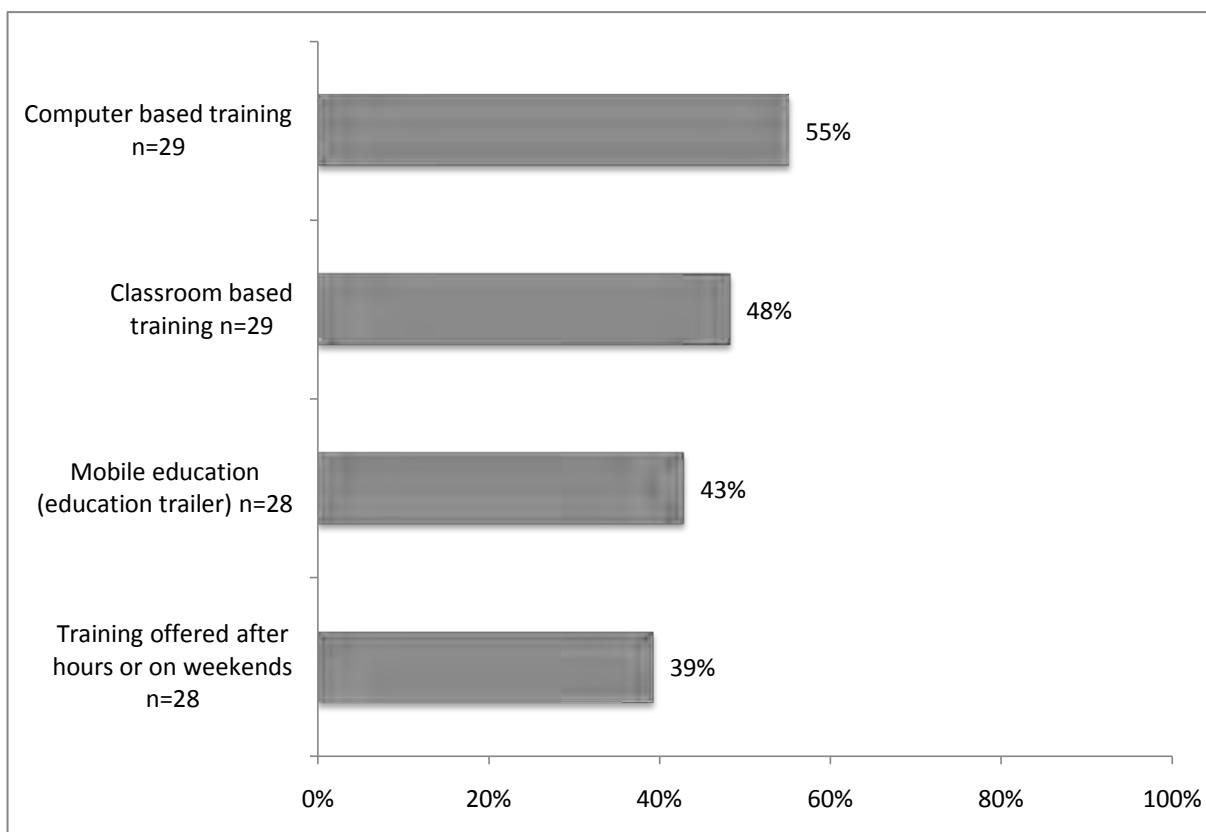
Source: Employer Survey: C7. "Based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding barriers to training."

Caution: small base.

Note: Top 2 Box

East Algoma is situated well within the district in terms of access to different types of training. Although East Algoma is, as previously mentioned, located between two major training provider centers (Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie), its location has much of the infrastructure to facilitate increased training opportunities, especially e-learning. Computer based training was seen as the most important training option for employers in East Algoma, primarily because it allows participants to take part in training both on their own time (i.e., evenings and weekends) and they do not have to travel outside of the region to receive the training. Computer based training includes e-learning, correspondence courses using CD ROM, video conferencing, Internet and email, making it widely accessible to people with differing levels of computer literacy.

Table 6.18
Employer Support for Proposed Training Options



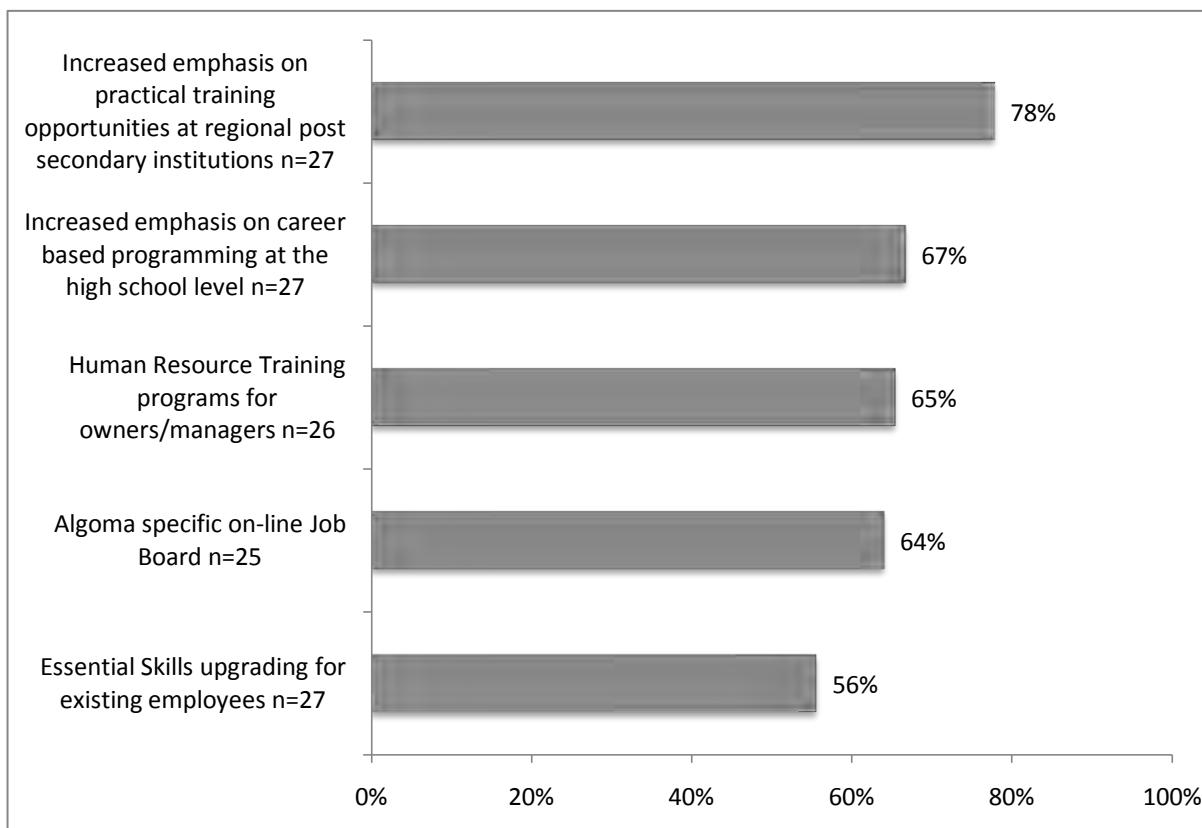
Source: Employer Survey; C9. "How interested would your organization be in terms of the following training options?"

Caution: small base.

Note: Top 2 Box (Interested and Very Interested) scores represented.

Presently there are distance education packages available, but not much in the way of small, "weekend based" courses. For courses that are only a couple of hours or days, residents of East Algoma are often required to travel if they are interested in participating. There was consensus in the Blind River focus group that it would be beneficial if there were smaller e-learning modules that specifically focused on basic job skills including the "soft skills" associated with workplace etiquette, hours and dress code. Focus group participants in all East Algoma groups necessitated the need for increased training in the "soft skills", especially for those working in service and hospitality occupations. All group members felt that these basic job skills training modules would be highly subscribed by employers and potential employees of the region alike.

**Figure 6.19
Potential Training Solutions**



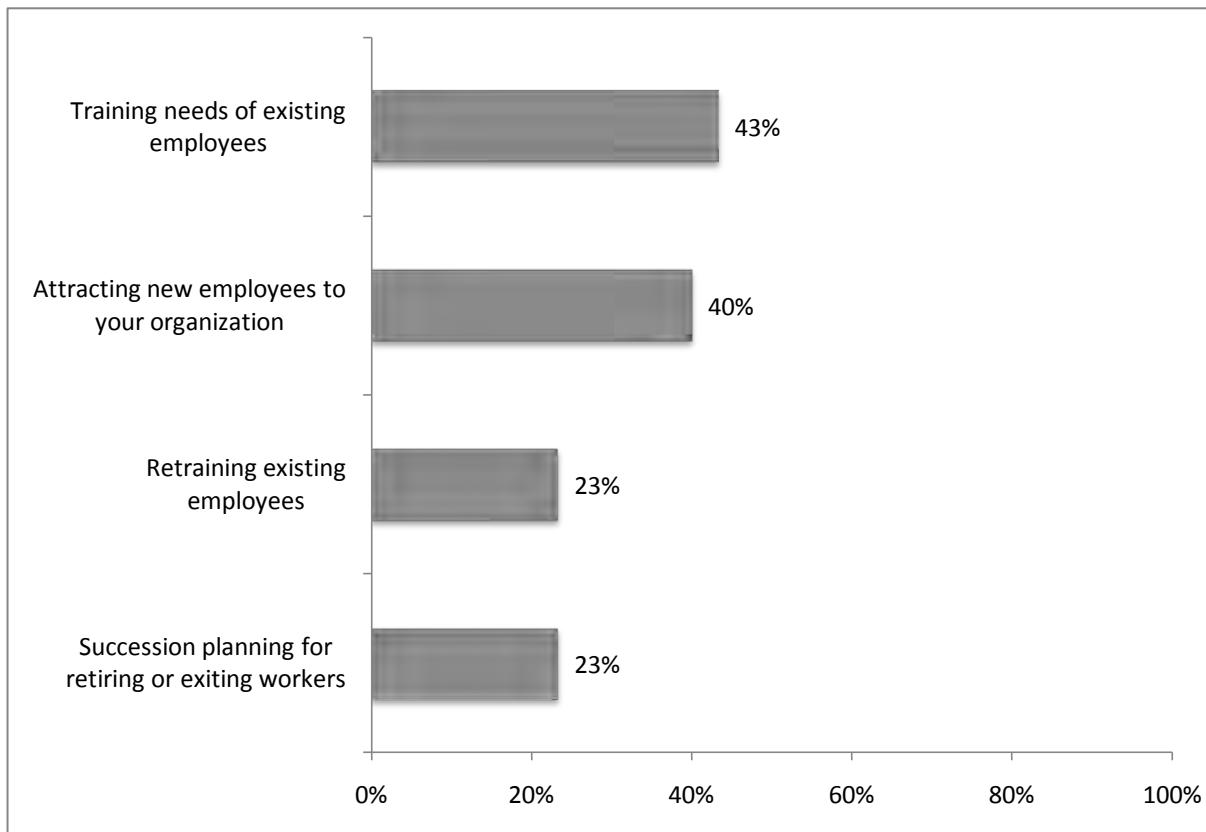
Source: Employer Survey: D4. "We are interested in education and training development opportunities that could be introduced to better support Algoma employers. On a scale of 1 to 5 – with 1 being Very Unsupportive and 5 being Very Supportive – please indicate your level of support for the following training strategies that may be pursued by the sector."

Caution: Small base.

Note: Top 2 Box (Supportive and Very Supportive) scores represented.

All data sources (survey, focus groups, KIIs) reported few organizations that had succession planning in East Algoma. In most jobs, employers provide an opportunity for advancement; it is a career path. Most of the jobs in the smaller communities are not careers; they have a flat organizational structure. There is an owner-operator and all other employees are in the same entry level position. When employers were asked what would happen to their business when they retire, or how employees move up in the company, they did not have an answer, there was little or upward mobility but as Figure 6.20 explains, employers saw the importance of offering a succession plan.

Figure 6.20
Formal Human Resource Strategies Utilized by Employers



Source: Employer Survey: C4. "Does your organization have a formal human resource strategy that addresses the following?"
Caution: small base.

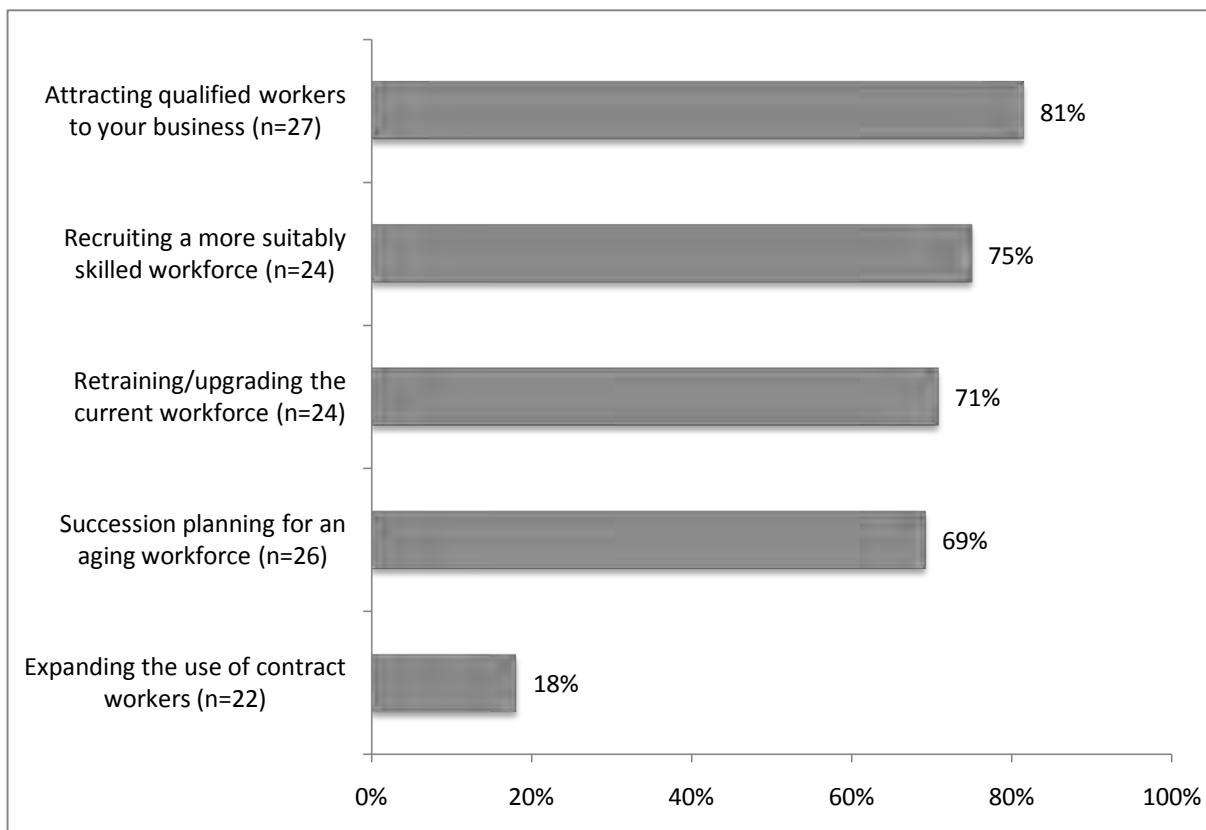
As with the rest of Algoma, attracting qualified workers to their business was the most important factor in developing a workforce for employers in East Algoma. Throughout East Algoma, a fatalistic attitude existed about the loss of their primary industry and their inability to compete both within and outside of Algoma for skilled labour. East Algoma felt that the onus was on the government to subsidize wages or provide incentives to assist their region in attracting qualified workers to the area. Many employers felt that without such an incentive, they would be unable to grow their business and for some, unable to continue operating their business. Although the initial revitalization of Elliot Lake as a retirement community was welcomed, many locals now see it as hindering their chance at a successful workforce and business.

"Elliot Lake has developed a reputation of being a retirement community...and in terms of Canada we are the second or the oldest community in Canada"

"The people who are coming here are coming for the affordability: there isn't a lot of disposable income"

(East Algoma KII Participants)

Figure 6.21
Importance of Workforce Options

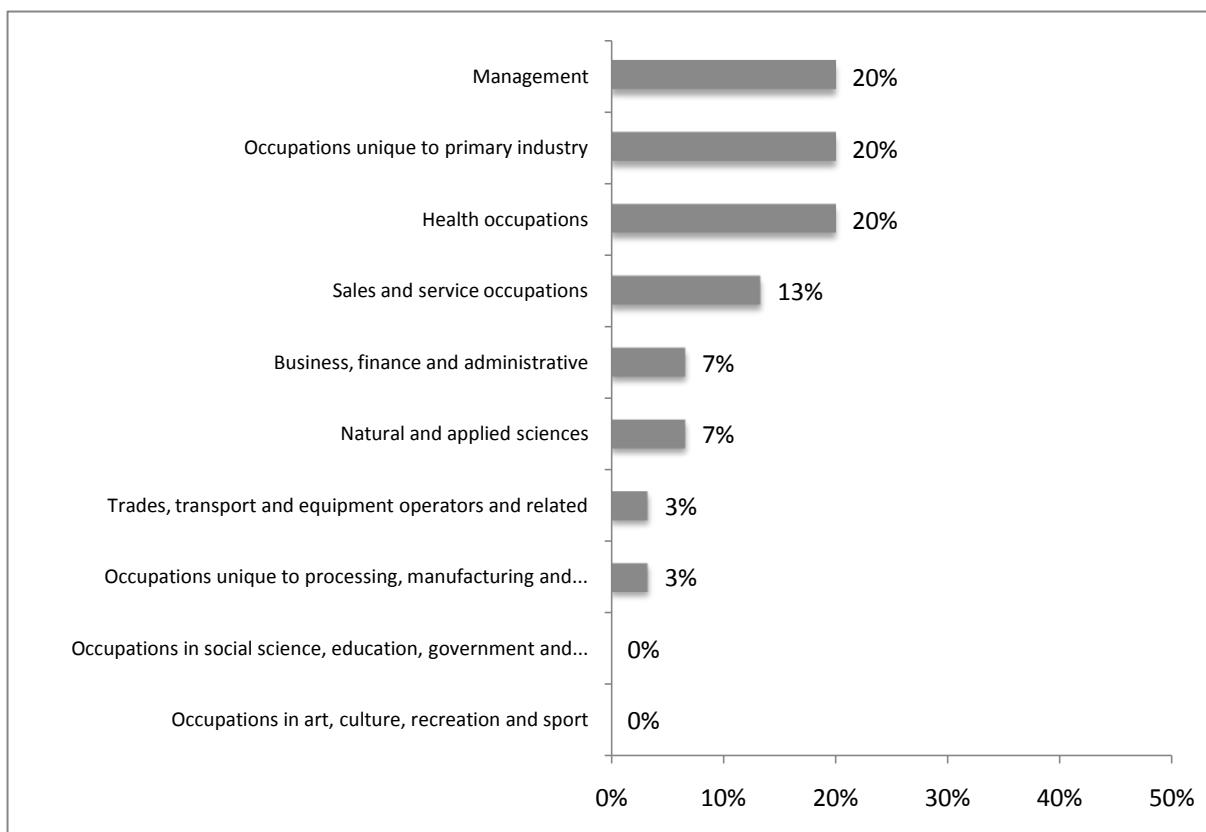


Source: Employer Survey: B3. "Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in developing your workforce.
Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale."

Caution: small base.

Unlike Superior East and Central Algoma, East Algoma found management, occupations unique to primary industry, and health occupations equally difficult to fill, although they shared the same reason behind their difficulty to fill – the fact that there is a shortage of qualified candidates. With the increase in age of the Elliot Lake population and the need for healthcare, employers identified health care occupations as difficult to fill poses a problem for the region.

Figure 6.22
Positions that are Difficult to Fill



n=30.

Source: Employer Survey: C1. "Please select which job categories you have difficulty filling and identify why these jobs are difficult to fill."

Note: Multiple Responses permitted.

Caution: small base.

6.5 Human Resource Summary

Tabled below is a summary of the human resource and training challenges facing employers in the region of East Algoma. The issues have been prioritized by the consultant as either Very Important (VI), Important (I) or Somewhat Important (SI), while bearing in mind the priority for addressing these issues is dependent on the resources and timeframe available to community stakeholders and employers. The challenges are organized into four categories – demographic, workforce, training and infrastructure – and reflected in the report's recommendations.

Table 6.23
Human Resource Summary

HR Challenge	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important
Demographic:			
Out-Migration		✓	
Aging Workforce	✓		
Immigration		✓	
Workforce:			
Employment		✓	
Labour Shortages	✓		
Skill Shortages – Management	✓		
Skill Shortages - Production	✓		
Training:			
Accessibility	✓		
Cost (\$)		✓	
Cost (Time off work)	✓		
Programming (Entry-Level/High School)	✓		
Computer Based Training	✓		
HR Development:			
Attraction/Recruitment	✓		
Development/Retention	✓		

7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Highlighted below is a synthesis of the research findings associated with the various research activities completed as part of this study. These findings have been presented in the context of demographic, workforce, training infrastructure and workforce coordination issues.

7.1 Demographic Challenges

During the period from 2001 to 2006, the region as a whole experienced approximately 1% decline in total population. Population declines were more pronounced in the Superior East (-6.5%) and East Algoma (-4.1%) decline in population, as compared to the Sault Ste. Marie (0.5%) region gain.

Much of the decline in the region's population base can be attributed to the closure of major primary industry sites including lumber mills and mines. The closure of such facilities resulted in many highly skilled workers (and their families) re-locating out of the region to find equivalent employment. Declining population has several ramifications for a human resource strategy for the region. Among these include:

- An aging population and an aging workforce – which will result in succession challenges if young workers are not available to take the place of retiring, older workers;
- Limited labour pool, especially for entry-level positions and/or seasonal positions;
- Renewed importance of re-training programs to help ensure that existing workforce skills are adequate given that new skills are not being brought in by "new workers".

The subsequent population growth in the region also suggests that to date, the region has not enjoyed much success in terms of attracting immigrants to the region.

7.2 Workforce Challenges

Employers in the region remain guarded in their outlook with respect to future employment requirements. However as highlights in Table 7.1 below, it appears that employers do anticipate that the increase in employment witnessed between 2007 and 2010 has abated, and, there will be a modest increase in the number of management positions between 2010 and 2015 (+2.4% growth), although there will be a projected 5.4% decline in the number of production/service workers needed over the next five years.

Table 7.1
Projected Workforce – District of Algoma

	Past Workforce (2007)			Current Workforce (2010)			Future Workforce (2015)			% Change (2015- 2010)
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	
Management	2,645	235	2,880	2,663	222	2,885	2,703	250	2,953	+2.4%
Other Prod/Service	4,279	1,663	5,942	4,702	1,651	6,353	4,574	1,434	6,008	-5.4%
Total	6,924	1,898	8,822	7,365	1,873	9,238	7,277	1,684	8,961	-3.0%
FT:PT Ratio	75	22	n/a	80	20	n/a	81	19	n/a	n/a

Source: Employer Survey.

Although each of the three regions experience different workforce challenges, there was several consistent themes that emerged from the research. Among these include:

- **Need for training for middle management/supervisory positions.** As employers noted it was difficult to attract workers to the region; management/supervisory positions were being filled through the promotion of existing workers. While such workers may possess the necessary technical skills, they often lacked appropriate management skills. This was an issue particularly among employer in the Superior East and East Algoma regions.

- **Inability to attract workers/retain existing workers.** Employers were generally reluctant to invest in training due to concerns that the worker would not remain with the firm. Also mentioned was the concern that employers could not match the wages paid in other regions of the province or country, and that it was difficult to attract workers to the region given prevailing wages in the region.
- **Recognition that employment growth may be in “non-traditional” sectors.** Stakeholders noted that it was unlikely that the region would witness a recovery to the extent that all jobs lost during the recession would return. There was increasing acceptance that future employment would be in the form of self-employment, small business startups and/or in other non-traditional sectors (i.e., green energy). Given the direction of future employment growth in the region, several stakeholders noted that it would be important to establish appropriate training and/or other infrastructure to support entrepreneurship and/or self employment opportunities.

7.3 Training Challenges

The research completed as part of this study underscores the dichotomy in terms of training infrastructure: relatively available and easy to access for employers and employees in the Sault Ste. Marie region, and much less available to employers in the Superior East and East Algoma regions. In this context, the training challenges faced by Superior East/East Algoma employers will be quite different from these employers who reside in the Sault Ste. Marie region. Among these include:

- **Concerns as to the adequacy of the secondary school system to prepare students for the work of work.** Through key informants and focus groups, it was noted by stakeholders that high school students graduating from local high schools did not possess the necessary skills or attributes to allow for the seamless transition to the world of work. In contrast, educational stakeholders were of the opinion that it was not the role of the education system to develop “good workers”, but rather, provide foundation skills to develop “good citizens”. **Needless to say**, the disconnect between employer perceptions and educational stakeholders was a major finding of the research. It was also noted in the research that in general, employers make only limited **use of available “tools” to support better integration** of students in the workforce. For example, many employers noted that they did not make use of co-op students and actually had only limited involved with the K-12 school system.
- **Employer Reluctance to “Invest” in Training.** Employers generally regarded training as a cost, and did not acknowledge the importance in terms of increased productivity, employee retention and/or other benefits. Information provided through the survey and focus groups suggest that employers do not feel that apprenticeship is a worthwhile investment, especially since apprentices may leave their employer once their apprenticeship is completed. Similarly, employers outside of Sault Ste. Marie are reluctant to send employees for training for fear that they will find other jobs with employers in Sault Ste. Marie or other major urban centres. This **attitude of training as a “cost” rather than as an investment was pervasive among employers** throughout the region. This opinion was frequently cited as a reason for not engaging apprentices among employers in the region.
- **Need to Tailor Training to Meet Employer Needs.** While employers in Sault Ste. Marie were generally satisfied with their access to training/other post-secondary education programs, employers in Superior East and East Algoma noted considerable barriers in terms of accessing training. In particular, employers in these regions noted that in most cases, employee training required employers to send employees to Sault Ste. Marie and/or other major centres due to the lack of training available in the local community. Employers also noted other challenges associated by existing training including:
 - Limited amount of training available on weekends/after hours;
 - Training that was too generic for the skills upgrading employers needed; and
 - Limited availability of online, electronic (e.g., CD Rom) or mobile training available.

7.4 Infrastructure Challenges

While Sault Ste. Marie employers enjoyed the benefits of access to significant education and training infrastructure, employers and workers in other regions noted that they lacked easy access to post-secondary education facilities and/or programs. In addition to facing considerable challenges to accessing traditional training sources offered through public college or universities, employers and workers outside of Sault Ste. Marie also reported that the lack of high speed internet access compromised their ability to participate in distance (online) education and training programs.

The research also identified only limited linkups, if any, between the post-secondary education system and the K-12 system in terms of utilizing K-12 facilities in outlying regions to deliver college training programs. While it would not be economically feasible for college to establish campus facilities in small communities, there could be scope to make better use of local high school facilities to deliver specific skills/upgrading program to both employers/workers in the smaller communities outside of Sault Ste. Marie.

7.5 Planning and Coordination

In completing this research, it became clear to the Consultant that while individual communities had developed their own economic development strategies, there was little evidence of an overall **human resource strategy that included collaboration of the local communities' education and training providers**, all levels of government as well as the First Nations communities. A more coordinated approach to a workforce strategy would include multiple levels of government, and would help ensure that employer demands could be accommodated by the current education and training systems. Key partners in such a workforce planning consortium could include:

- **Federal government departments** such as Service Canada (identification of jobs in demand through the National Job Bank, identification of employment opportunities through Canada Service Centres), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (to help direct more immigrants to the region) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (use of targeted funding for older workers, Youth Employment programs).
- **Provincial Government departments**. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is responsible for much of the direct funding of adult re-training in Ontario. It is essential that the District be aware of such programs as the Second Career and Ontario Skills Development (OSD) program and lobby that sufficient funding be provided to the region to support worker re-training. There is also scope for the District to lobby the provincial government to establish **"centres of excellence" in terms of training programs that address new/emerging growth sectors** in the local economy such as renewable (wind, solar) energy and/or other growth industries.
- **Education and Training Sector**. The research identified challenges faced by employers in terms of accessing available training programs. Clearly, it would be appropriate to have better linkages between the K-12 and post-secondary education system to identify scope to utilize K-12 facilities to deliver adult education and training programs in remote communities. There is also scope to coordinate training programs not only between publicly funded post-secondary education institutions, but to also include private training institutions in terms of developing appropriate training programs.
- **First Nations Communities**. The First Nations communities represent a large potential supply of new workers in the region. Given that many First Nations would prefer to work and live in the region, providing training, upgrading to First Nations workers would incur less risk of worker **"flight" that tends to be more common among other workers in the region. The First Nations** communities have access to some resources for training, but coordination of workforce training between First Nations communities and the region as a whole would help maximize the impact of limited First Nations training resources.

A key element in the execution of a future human resource strategy for the District will be the establishment of a permanent organization or body to champion the proposed strategy. This organization could be AWIC, or an entirely new organization. Irrespective of what organization is deemed to be responsible for future workforce planning, it is essential that the organization have appropriate representation from employers, labour, government, training providers and the First Nations communities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlighted below are several actions and/or strategies that should be considered in order to address human resource issues in Superior East, Central Algoma, East Algoma, and the District of Algoma as a whole. It should be noted that these recommendations are not provided in order of priority, and can be “actioned” by several different parties.

Infrastructure and Planning Related Recommendations

It is clear that the human resource strategy will need to be guided by a formal structure. In addition, a human resource strategy should not be viewed as static – new issues will emerge and new plans or strategies will be required to address these emergent issues. Highlighted below are several action items related to infrastructure and human resources planning in the region.

1. Formalize/maintain a formal group to oversee human resource issues in the region.

As noted previously, a human resource response will require coordinated actions among a multitude of stakeholders, including the federal government, provincial government, education and training providers, and the First Nations communities. AWIC is well-positioned to assure this co-ordination role, however, AWIC would also need to expand membership to include government departments/agencies and possibly other stakeholders. AWIC could also maintain and update on a regular basis labour market intelligence that could direct future labour market planning.

2. Develop a means for employers to communicate their training needs to the training bodies.

Central Algoma, dominated by Sault Ste. Marie, has access to the most training facilities and sites in the District of Algoma, yet proximity to training still presents itself as an issue. Communication between the training bodies and the employers in the region needs to be directed or overseen regularly so that the employers are able to communicate their needs to the training bodies and the training bodies are able to respond. Discussions with the training bodies in the area provide the understanding that employers need to communicate their needs and their lack of needs so that the training bodies are not over-saturating the local market when there are no jobs. A training facility needs adequate time to begin and end their program offering and cannot be expected to respond immediately to training shortages in the region. As a result, employers need to work to provide training facilities with projections of their workforce and what training might be required in the future. AWIC or local EDOs could facilitate much of the oversight for the training discussions between employer and training bodies so that the process is proactive to local employer training and labour needs rather than the current reactive state.

3. Establish a labour market information “dashboard” to provide up to date labour market information/requirements for the region.

Labour market needs and requirements should not be viewed as static, and a process could be established whereby key labour market information can be collected, reviewed and synthesized on an on-going basis. This could be an on-going role of AWIC, or perhaps another institution (Chambers of Commerce, EDC's or other). Ongoing data collection would support better planning and program delivery in the region.

4. Economic development strategies need to be developed regionally.

Many of the communities throughout the District have individual economic development strategies or plans, many of which are outdated. Moving forward, as part of the District of Algoma's economic development strategy, the regions (Superior East, Central Algoma, East Algoma) need to develop a regional plan that addresses each region's unique economic needs. From those strategies, a District wide economic development strategy can be developed that looks at economic development from a district perspective and utilizes components from each of the regional strategies.

5. Keep innovative youth. Most employers believe they need to invest in innovation and technology. That investment is appealing to youth who want to work in software and hardware fields, but there is minimal opportunity for these employers and potential employees to meet. To facilitate this, an annual business technology forum could be held and promoted at the local high schools and colleges. This would help make innovative youth aware of the opportunities to stay in their community and still realize their career goals.

"Supply Side Strategies"

Declining populations in the region means that the region will face a shortage of qualified workers in the future unless the region adopts pro-active "supply side" policies. Possible activities include:

6. Develop the immigration outreach and assistance programs to ensure immigrants stay in the region. Sault Ste. Marie has existing programs (i.e. New to the Sault, Local Immigration Partnership (L.I.P)) that address the naturalization of immigrants to the region. These programs need to be expanded and widely promoted to reach immigrants before they select to come to Algoma. If Algoma wants to increase immigration to the region, they must communicate the benefits of living in the District to the international immigrant population. These programs need to be communicated to immigrants who are living in the region, rather than sought out by immigrants. Understanding the aforementioned labour and training needs can assist those responsible for immigration to attract skilled immigrants to the region to assist in filling those spots.

7. Recognize the importance of First Nations communities in meeting current/future workforce requirements. First Nations communities represent a large and growing supply of workers in the Algoma region. While First Nations communities have access to limited funds for training and economic development, it would be beneficial to maximize the effectiveness of First Nations resources through better integration of First Nations economic and human resource plans with that of the District as a whole.

8. Consider innovative solutions to encourage youth/young adults to remain in the community. While it was not intended that this study serve as a far reaching economic development strategy for the region, the out migration of youth will pose a considerable challenge in terms of meeting current and future labour market needs. There are some possible strategies that can be pursued to encourage youth/young adults to remain in the community. Possible strategies include:

- Reduced property tax rates for youth who stay and/or return to the region
- Consider the use of "small business set aside" in which municipal/local government procurement directs a portion of budget to youth run small businesses in the region.

9. Develop a re-training/upgrading strategy to accommodate possible re-opening of plants which are no longer operational. It appears that several lumber mills and/or mines may re-open in the near future. What is unclear, however, is whether the existing workforce has the skills required to work in these operations. It would be appropriate to approach employers to assess training needs in advance of the re-opening of such establishments.

10. Consider alternative sources of labour and establish a mechanism to connect with such labour. As the need for administrative, managerial and retail employees increases, consideration could be given to enlisting the support of retirees, who may not want full-time employment, but might be willing to job-share. Employment Ontario may want to develop an online site that job-sharers could register for and from which businesses in need might fill seasonal increases in demand.

11. Develop immigration strategies to attract recent immigrants who have settled in other areas of the province. When immigrants come to Ontario, they are drawn to the urban centres where they are able to access the most services. The District needs to promote Algoma

as an immigrant friendly community throughout Ontario to capture those immigrants that are new to Canada and looking to relocate after settling in a southern Ontario urban centre. The District could begin this strategy by reaching out to immigrant groups that have already settled in Algoma and concentrating on attracting more immigrants from those cultural backgrounds that already have roots in the District. This will decrease the initial costs of translation of websites and communication materials for the communities if they concentrate on one or two specific groups to target initially.

12. There are specific programs that employers and community groups could utilize to enhance immigration to the region. These include:

- Use of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). The Province of Ontario through the Opportunities Ontario Program (http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/pnp/OI_PNPEMPLOYERS.html) allows for employers to recruit a foreign worker through either the general worker or international student route to work in Ontario. A potential strategy would include AWIC and/or other organizations to work with local employers to develop applications for the PNP.
- Use of the Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) Program Citizenship and Immigration Canada (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private.asp>). Under this program, Canadians and other organizations can sponsor refugees to settle in Canada. Under the PSR program, the sponsored refugee would be resettled in the town/region close to the sponsor. While not as straightforward as the PNP program, the PSR program does offer an opportunity for the region to attract immigrants to the region.

13. Provide an internship/ work placement for students in allied and other health professions.

A shortage of doctors exists across the province, but there is a notable shortage of allied and other health professionals in the District of Algoma. Allied Health Professionals (AHP) provide a range of diagnostic, technical, therapeutic and direct patient care and support services and all regions require different AHPs to compliment their existing health related services. Regions could build a relationship with a school that trains these individuals and offer incentives or internships to encourage those individuals to work in the District of Algoma once they graduate. In addition, presentations could be made to students, making them aware of the benefits of the region as well as the numerous jobs in their profession available throughout the District. Partially or fully sponsoring a student in school in exchange for a certain number of years of work has proved successful for some companies in the District and could be tried for allied health professionals. If successful, such a strategy may be adopted for other skilled professions needed in the region.

14. Support tourism initiatives. To support tourism initiatives such as the building of the Essar Centre, Sault College could review its Hospitality Management program to ensure that graduates are fully capable in the management of large scale events such as conventions and sporting events.

15. Utilize First Nations populations to support maintenance of Huron Centre Railway.

The North Shore Tribal Council (NSTC) is well suited to provide maintenance for the projected Huron Central Railway improvements. The First Nations are the fastest growing population whose could be utilized in both the improvements and maintenance of the railway. The NSTC is located along the route of the railway and therefore a coordinated training strategy to address the potential maintenance jobs from the rail could be implemented across the NSTC in all seven First Nations communities. Further research into the skills required as well as the skills these communities already possess to provide this maintenance would assist in the building of a coordinated training strategy for the NSTC.

Education and Training Strategies

It is clear that more can be done to improve employer and employee access to appropriate training in the region. Among the possible education and training strategies include:

16. Develop a strategy to attract graduates of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

The reliance on Health Care as the primary industry of East Algoma necessitates the ability to recruit highly skilled health care and health care service workers. The projected growth in **Ontario's Health** Care industry is likely to be experienced at a higher level for Elliot Lake and surrounding East Algoma due to the older retirement population. The introduction of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine could increase the availability of doctors and health care workers in the North, but East Algoma could specifically target those individuals who are graduating from the first class to ensure they have the resources they will be requiring over the next five years and beyond. These individuals have already been living in Northern Ontario for their education and therefore would likely be looking to continue working in the North. Elliot Lake specifically has been known to offer very attractive incentive packages for physicians and health care practitioners and they need to communicate these incentives to prospective doctors at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

17. Ensure that secondary schools are providing the foundation skills necessary to work in the "new economy".

In contrast to the job market of the 1980s or 1990s, it is unlikely that youth will find long term employment in one industry sector (i.e., forestry, construction). In this context, it is critical that high schools provide students with key foundation skills including communication (reading, writing), numeracy and other basic skills which will enable them to transition to employment in a number of sectors. Sectors that will likely absorb high school graduates are most likely to be in sales and services other than primary industry.

18. Expand online/mobile education options.

Employers noted the high cost associated with the training of employees. Typically training required that employers send staff to a major urban centre at considerable cost. Employers were also wary of possibly "losing" these employees if they travelled to a major urban centre for training.

To reduce the cost of training, attention could be given to further promotion of other training options including:

- Online and/or electronic (CD-Rom) training
- Expand mobile education options and build on the current infrastructure (whereby instructors continue to travel to rural locations to provide training)

Increased On-line training would require investments in terms of improved internet connectivity for the region. Mobile education options may require some mechanisms to support the co-ordination of training needs across employers, such that mobile training would be provided to a group of employers who had employees with similar training needs.

19. Continue use of local facilities to deliver training programs in rural/remote communities.

While it would not be practical to establish college campuses in all communities in the region, some consideration could be given to utilizing local facilities by colleges to deliver programs/courses to employers. Many employers were supportive of evening or weekend courses which would allow local facilities to be used to deliver specific programs or courses. Contact North would also continue to be a partner with the understanding that the hours of operation need to accommodate the time constraints of local employers.

20. Increased communication between the district school boards, principals and employers in the regions.

Although the importance varied by region, study participants felt that youth entering the workforce out of high school were not sufficiently prepared for the work world. Employers would prefer students be encouraged to take occupational health and safety, WHMIS training, and obtain their driver's licence prior to entering the workforce. There is an

opportunity to improve student preparedness by hosting a meeting between district school boards, principals and employers to discuss how this training could be provided.

21. Feasibility of Satellite campuses could be examined. Since the establishment of a Training Centre in Wawa, Sault College has delivered in the community over the last three years programs in Personal Support Worker, Practical Nursing and Heavy Duty Equipment Technician (Level One – Apprenticeship).

Confederation College recently agreed to provide remote courses throughout the north and has established a centre in Wawa.

Satellite campuses throughout the Algoma region, from any of the surrounding colleges would allow residents to upgrade their skills and complete programs without having to leave their community.

22. Establishment of a Training Board. The District of Algoma is one of three districts in Ontario that is without a MTCU funded training board. Similar training boards exist in surrounding regions, i.e., Superior North Training Board, and they have been successful in the community's eyes in terms of getting the adequate training to the region. A similar training board for the District of Algoma is recommended. If implemented, the training board must have representation from each of the regions. If a district training board is not implemented, provisions must be made for regional training coordinators whose roles would involve identifying training needs and coordinating the provision of that training using the mode appropriate to the subject matter, recipient and available facilities.

23. Annual labour market data collection. Employers' needs are constantly changing; in order to provide adequate services from the education and training providers, they need to be informed of the changing requirements and skill sets in each region. A short (five minute), annual survey of employers in each region will provide up-to-date labour force approximations and predictions for the coming year, as well as address potential upcoming skill shortages. Education and training providers will be able to use these data to begin and end programs so there are more timely responses to training needs as well as capping of programs when the needs have been met. The training board or regional coordinator can also make use of these data to determine where there are sufficient numbers of similar training needs to merit a locally delivered course or seminar.

24. Increased basic skills training to prepare the unemployed for skills upgrading. For those that used to be employed in primary industry (mining, forestry), many began work without a high school diploma. Now, in order to re-enter the workforce, they are required to take upgrading courses, some at the college level. Many of the people enrolling in the upgrading courses have not taken any education in decades, and therefore are not prepared to enter a skills upgrading course that relies on basic literacy and understanding of math. Additional transition programs need to be put in place to help these workers transition back into learning, or the existing skills upgrading programs need to be aware and have policies to address the learning gap of these 'return to education' workers. If the college courses are going to be put in place to address training gaps, local workers that require the courses need to be academically prepared to take the courses.

25. Alternatives need to be developed to Internet based training. Although employers were supportive of Internet based training for its flexibility and its easy dissemination of information, others in the community emphasized the need to develop alternatives. Internet based training is not for everyone and therefore alternatives such as paper based or CD-ROM and paper based learning needs to be considered to accommodate those that are not computer literate enough to learn well from Internet based training. In person training is not always an option and therefore alternatives to Internet based and in person training need to be considered in order to reach the largest audience in remote communities.

26. Tailor straight-to-workforce courses for students at risk of dropping out. Students who drop out of secondary school are in particular need of workforce training. Many schools already operate a career studies or discovering the workforce courses, but guidance counsellors need to encourage at risk students to take these courses.

27. Offer essential skills training after hours and on weekends. Currently, much of the adult education offered by the Algoma District School Board is offered on weekdays. The service is offered free of charge and provides free childcare which makes it an attractive service for adults seeking to upgrade their skills. A more flexible schedule where adults could learn when they are not working (i.e., evenings, weekends) would help more adults achieve the basic skills necessary for continued learning and career advancement. Furthermore Sault College through the Academic & Career Entrance (ACE) program offer academic upgrading on-line and use of this program should be encouraged.

28. Extend resources available to high school students in co-op to all students. Co-op placements in high school offer a variety of resources (i.e., career development, preparation) to students that take the program. While these resources are very useful and prepare students in co-op for the workforce, they are not available to other students who are ineligible. Consideration could be given to expanding the availability of these resources.

29. Build better linkages between the K-12 system and the employer community. Employers were critical of the K-12 system in terms of the "employability" of local high school graduates. In this context, it would be appropriate to establish an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) to provide a bridge between the employer community and the K-12 education system. Such an Advisory Committee would help ensure that there is an ongoing channel through which employers can communicate expectations/requirements to the K-12 system. Such advisory committees exist at the college level (i.e., Sault College), but it does not appear that such committees exist at the school district level.

30. Focus the Community Involvement to include work experience. Currently the Province of Ontario requires that students complete 40 hours of community involvement in order to obtain their diploma. Community involvement can include participating in many recreational activities (i.e., helping out with a sports team) and focuses on youth getting involved in the community. The local school board could focus the community involvement program to resemble the high school work experience program in British Columbia (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/work_experience_req.htm) to concentrate on work experience rather than community involvement.

31. Promote highly needed career pathways to laid off workers. Based on the success of MTCU's Second Career program in retraining Ontarians to be qualified to work in healthcare related fields and computer science, Employment Ontario could promote these highly needed career pathways to laid off workers.

32. Continue to promote OYAP. The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) was viewed very positively by employers and community stakeholders. It could continue to be promoted to employers, youth and parents (often the primary decision makers about youth's post secondary career choices).

33. Utilize the Ontario Skills Training Enhancement Program. Companies such as Essar and Tenaris could be encouraged to take advantage of the Ontario Skills Training Enhancement Program to develop onsite training for unionized employees and upgrade their training equipment.

34. Promote the Apprentice Training Tax Credit to small business. It is important to make business aware of the tax incentives for taking on apprentices. The Apprentice Training Tax Credit is not well understood, particularly by smaller businesses that can benefit from a credit of up to 45% of the cost of an apprentice.

35. Build on the Literacy and Basic Skills program for First Nations. The Literacy and Basic Skills program offered by Employment Ontario to adult learners is a valuable service that addresses a pressing need throughout the District; however, its implementation on Aboriginal reserves may need to be reviewed because the uptake of the service is primarily by youth (not adults) who have dropped out. The service may still be valuable, but the staff may need additional training for delivering the service to this unintended target audience.

36. Expand the current “Weekend College” approach to learning program. The College could benefit from increasing their course offerings or programs that were only held on weekends. This could accommodate people looking to upgrade their skills without interfering with their regular work schedule.

Other Action Items

In addition to the previously identified actions, there are other recommendations that could also be considered including:

37. Prepare communications materials to address some current myths/ challenges in the region.

Employers note that they are reluctant to engage apprentices due to the high cost of apprenticeship, yet research completed by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)²³ suggests that for each \$1 dollar spent by employers on an average apprentice, the apprentice generates revenues to the employer amounting to \$1.47 during their period of apprenticeship.

Similarly, communications materials could be developed to provide existing (and future potential) employees with information as to the economic/non-economic benefits of working in the region including:

- Lower housing/accommodation costs relative to other regions in Canada
- Ability to access health services

38. Provide education surrounding incorporating succession planning into a business human resource strategy.

Employers in Central Algoma recognize the importance of succession planning, but with many businesses existing in a horizontal structure, succession planning has not been incorporated into their human resource strategy or business plan. Information and training for employers would be useful to aide in integrating succession planning into their business as well as understanding the need for it. Since many employers have indicated they are unable to provide time off for training, the same approach to training would need to be taken for employers. Succession based planning informational sessions or training would need to **accommodate the busy schedules of employers and could be conducted as a “webinar” or another e-learning method** in order to reach and assist as many employers as possible, regardless of where they were situated in the District of Algoma.

39. Broaden community input. There is a strong feeling that the District is entirely different than Sault Ste. Marie; and the regions outside of the Sault are generally cautious of Sault centered

services and bodies. Many of the funding bodies and education and training boards that make recommendations for the entire District are based in Sault Ste. Marie, which, although convenient and central, does not make it easy for outside regions and communities to take part in these boards. Board meetings could encourage full-District participation by rotating meetings and allow remote-attendance through the use of technology.

40. Encourage employer involvement in community planning. Employers need to participate in the District’s human resource and training strategy. Meetings of community boards and agencies are often scheduled during business hours, making it impossible for small business owners to attend. These employers need to be accommodated. Teleconferences or web

²³ (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, June 2009, [Return on Training Investment for Skilled Trades,](#))

conferences may need to be held at off hours to accommodate small businesses that cannot make it into Sault Ste. Marie for the meetings. It is not enough for employers to be part of a group (i.e., Chamber of Commerce), they must actively take part if they want their training and labour needs met. **Employers need to be more participatory, but employers' time also needs to be respected in order to encourage participation.**

41. Develop a grouped service delivery model. There are employment, training and skills development services available to employers and workers throughout the District, but there are still businesses that cannot find workers and workers who cannot find employment. The awareness and uptake of these services will increase if they are grouped under one umbrella. Continue to develop and implement the grouped service delivery model under Employment Ontario Information Services.

42. Make available supports to help youth whose families have historically been unemployed/ on assistance. There is a great deal of stigma attached to families that have traditionally been on social assistance and have a family history or low educational attainment. Youth coming from these families need to be provided with the support to overcome these boundaries and perform academically to get a job. Often case management whether at the high schools or separately in the community, can assist these youth in remaining committed to education, job acquisition and employability. College mentoring programs have shown themselves to be successful in increasing uptake of those student services needed to retain these at-risk students.

43. Duplicate the Destiny Model. The Destiny group comprises members of different levels of government and organizations; a similar committee in Superior East and East Algoma, including **employers would benefit the region's economic planning moving forward and encourage the** sharing of both resources and information between all groups. Representatives from each regional group could then meet to exchange District wide ideas and partner to implement District wide initiatives.

44. Support agricultural initiatives. Agricultural initiatives in both Superior East and East Algoma have a growing need for physical, unskilled labour. Demand is highest during the summer season and can be weather dependent. These employers have shown a willingness to employ difficult-to-place workers (e.g., those with ADHD) provided they are able to get to and from the farm on their own. Pairing these youth with local employers who have difficulty finding farm labour would benefit both. Consider initiating a farm labour job board that could be posted in local schools, given to guidance counsellors and provided through Employment Ontario. Other options include the use of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) offered through HRSDC (http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/sawp.shtml).

45. Continue to position Algoma as a centre of excellence for green energy. While wind and solar farms are unlikely to employ large number of graduates from Sault College's Renewable Energy and Green Construction program, the **program, coupled with the province's emphasis on alternate energy is vital to the District's plan to be a leader in the field.** Furthermore, with the recent introduction of solar panel manufacturing and hydro-electric initiatives, the region may have reached the critical mass to generate full employment for future graduates. The college could continue to promote this program and the community could continue to position itself as a centre of excellence for green energy.

APPENDIX A: Survey of Employers

	<p>AWiC ALGOMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COMMITTEE</p> <p>LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA</p> <p>EMPLOYER SURVEY</p> <p>WHAT ARE YOUR HUMAN RESOURCE AND TRAINING CHALLENGES?</p> <p>Take this opportunity to let us know what is impacting the growth of your business and development of your workforce.</p> <p>There are 4 ways to respond:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">BY MAIL: Using the enclosed postage paid envelope</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">ONLINE: www.algoma.malatest.net</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">BY FAX: Toll Free at: 1-866-288-1278</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">BY TELEPHONE: Toll Free at: 1-877-688-5051</td> </tr> </table> <p>The purpose of this research is to gather information from employers and stakeholders in the District of Algoma in order to assist in the formation of a regional workforce development strategy.</p> <p>This project is sponsored by the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) and Sault College with funding support from Employment Ontario. The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) is a community-based planning committee with members from across the region who are knowledgeable about the labour force development issues in the District of Algoma. AWIC's objective is to engage communities in a local labour market research and planning process that will lead to cooperative efforts to find local solutions to local labour market issues. The objectives of this survey are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To gain information as to what training needs you have now, as well as future needs; ➤ To obtain data as to the number of vacant positions in your organization, as well as an idea as to future labour requirements that you may have; ➤ To identify human resource "challenges that you have and to solicit feedback as to how these challenges can be addressed. <p>If you have any questions, please call Adrienne Cardy at R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. toll free 1-800-598-0161 or contact Jack McGoldrick with the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee at (705) 941-9341. We thank you in advance for your participation!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You are kindly asked to return completed surveys by July 31, 2010</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your insights and experiences will contribute to the development of the District of Algoma's Workforce Development Strategy. A summary of the survey responses will be distributed to participants.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">This initiative receives funding from:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>SAULT COLLEGE</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>EMPLOI ONTARIO</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO</p> </div> </div>	BY MAIL: Using the enclosed postage paid envelope	ONLINE: www.algoma.malatest.net	BY FAX: Toll Free at: 1-866-288-1278	BY TELEPHONE: Toll Free at: 1-877-688-5051
BY MAIL: Using the enclosed postage paid envelope	ONLINE: www.algoma.malatest.net	BY FAX: Toll Free at: 1-866-288-1278	BY TELEPHONE: Toll Free at: 1-877-688-5051		

SECTION A: OWNER PROFILE AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

Please provide the name and job title of the person completing this survey:

Name*: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. (First)

(Last)

Job Title:

Email*: _____ @ _____

Telephone*: () -

Fax: () -

Corporate Name:

Corporate Address: (City)

(Postal Code): _____

Is your establishment located: on-reserve off-reserve

Is your head office located in the District of Algoma? Yes No

Does your company's workforce operate under a collective bargaining agreement?

Yes No N/A

*Needed to provide a copy of the summary report.

A1. How many years has your business been in operation in the District of Algoma?

Less than 1 year
 1 to 5 years

6 to 10 years
 11 to 20 years

Over 20 years
 Prefer not to disclose

A2. What is the sector in which you operate? Select one.

Private Sector

Not for Profit

Public Sector

A3. Please indicate the primary and secondary (if applicable) industry in which your company operates:

PRIMARY	SECONDARY	INDUSTRY
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Utilities
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Construction
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Manufacturing
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Wholesale and Retail Trade
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Transportation and Warehousing
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Finance, Insurance, Business and Professional Services
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Educational Services
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Health Care and Social Assistance
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Accommodation and Food Services
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Public Administration
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other Services

SECTION B: COMPANY FORECASTING

This next section asks you to think about future plans for your company.

B1. Is your company planning to expand its business operations over the next five years:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Within the District of Algoma | <input type="radio"/> Outside of the District of Algoma | <input type="radio"/> We have no plans for expansion |
| <input type="radio"/> Don't Know | | |

B2. Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in growing or sustaining your business. Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale.

	Not at all Important	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very Important	N/A
a. New market development within the District of Algoma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. New market development within the province	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. New market development nationally and internationally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Investing in new technology and/or equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B3. Please tell us how important each of the following factors will be in developing your workforce. Please consider each factor based on a five-point scale.

	Not at all Important	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very Important	N/A
a. Attracting qualified workers to your business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Recruiting a more suitably skilled workforce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Retraining/upgrading the current workforce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Succession planning for an aging workforce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Expanding the use of contract workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B4. Do you anticipate increasing the number of workers in the following occupations within your Algoma based business operation over the next 5 years:

	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A
Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business, finance and administrative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural and applied sciences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupations in social science, education, government and religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sales and service occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupations unique to primary industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION C: RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

This section of the survey is interested in your company's ability to hire workers in select occupations and to identify some of the challenges you face in recruiting and retaining workers.

C1. Please select which job categories you have difficulty filling and identify why these jobs are difficult to fill?

Job Category	Please indicate which jobs are difficult to fill within your Algoma operation	If applicable, please indicate why these jobs are difficult to fill at your Algoma operation			
		Shortage of qualified candidates within the District of Algoma	Difficulty meeting compensation and benefit expectations	High rate of turnover	Other
a. Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Business, finance and administrative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Natural and applied sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Health occupations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Occupations in social science, education, government and religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Sales and service occupations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Occupations unique to primary industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C2. If you selected "Other" for any category above, please comment on the other reason(s).

C3. Based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. Currently, there is an adequate supply of qualified workers in your community	<input type="radio"/>					
b. Qualified workers are willing to relocate to your community	<input type="radio"/>					
c. Our company's wage and benefit package is competitive with other companies in the industry	<input type="radio"/>					
d. Our company's wage and benefit package is competitive with similar companies in other regions outside of your community	<input type="radio"/>					
e. Our company provides training, upgrading and career development opportunities for its workforce	<input type="radio"/>					
f. Worker turnover is typically not a problem for our company	<input type="radio"/>					

C4. Does your organization have a formal human resource strategy that addresses the following:

	Yes	No
a. Training needs of existing employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Attracting new employees to your organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Retraining existing employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Succession planning for retiring or exiting workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C5. Please indicate the level of importance attributed to the following sources of new skilled workers for your company with 1 being Not at all Important, and 5 being Very Important.

Source of Labour	Not at All Important	Unimportant	Neither Important or Unimportant	Important	Very Important	Don't Know
a. Secondary School system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Post Secondary Education system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Industry training (Apprenticeship) system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Other companies / Industries in the District of Algoma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Other companies / Industries outside the District of Algoma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Immigration programs (e.g. skilled foreign worker, temporary foreign worker, provincial nominee)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C6. Do these sources of labour adequately meet your requirements?

Yes

No

Please explain:

C7. Based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding barriers to training.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. There is sufficient industry training/upgrading opportunities in your community	<input type="radio"/>					
b. There is sufficient industry training/upgrading opportunities in the District of Algoma	<input type="radio"/>					
c. The available industry training/upgrading opportunities are relevant to my business needs	<input type="radio"/>					
d. We can provide workers the time needed to participate in upgrading programs	<input type="radio"/>					
e. The cost of industry training/upgrading opportunities is appropriate for our organization	<input type="radio"/>					
f. The distance to the training facility is too far	<input type="radio"/>					
g. Our company loses trained workers to other businesses	<input type="radio"/>					

C8. What training barriers, if any, exist for your organization?

Not applicable

C9. How interested would your organization be in terms of the following training options?

Statement	Not at all interested	Uninterested	Neither Interested nor uninterested	Interested	Very Interested	Don't Know
a. Mobile education (education trailer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Computer based training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Training offered after hours or on weekends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Classroom based training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION D: YOUR COMPANY'S WORKFORCE**D1. Please indicate the total number of full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) workers your company employed in 2007, currently employs (including vacancies) and the projected number of workers needed in 2015.**

Note: Part-time employment includes employees working less than 30 hours per week, as well as contract workers hired on a temporary basis. Workforce projections would be based on current workforce (including vacancies) plus projected employment growth.

Job Category	Past Workforce (2007)		Current Workforce (2010)		Projected Workforce (2015)	
	FT (#)	PT (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)	FT (#)	PT (#)
Management Workforce – all employees designated as executive, operations management, skilled trades, and supervisory staff.						
Other Production / Service Workforce – all other employees involved in the production, other skilled staff, installation or delivery of a good or service						

D2. What are the key occupations you need to fill in the next three to five years? (for retirement, turnover, or expansion)

Occupation	Current # of Employees	# of Hires Required (next 3 years)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

D3. What approximate proportion of your current workforce falls into the following age and gender categories?

Select Occupation	Age				Gender Female (%)
	<25 (%)	25-39 (%)	40-54 (%)	55+ (%)	
Management Workforce – all employees designated as executive, operations management, skilled trades, and supervisory staff.					
Other Production / Service Workforce – all other employees involved in the production, other skilled staff, installation or delivery of a good or service					

D4. We are interested in education and training development opportunities that could be introduced to better support Algoma employers. On a scale of 1 to 5 – with 1 being Very Unsupportive and 5 being Very Supportive – please indicate your level of support for the following training strategies that may be pursued by the sector.

Statement	Not at all supportive	Unsupportive	Neither Supportive nor Unsupportive	Supportive	Very Supportive	Don't Know
a. Increased emphasis on practical training opportunities at regional post secondary institutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Increased emphasis on career based programming at the high school level (Co-op, internship, secondary school apprenticeships)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Algoma specific on-line Job Board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Human Resource Training programs for owners/managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Essential Skills upgrading (literacy, numeracy, etc) for existing employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

D5. What other strategies would improve the education and training system to help meet the human resource needs of your sector?

THAT CONCLUDES THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Please return the completed questionnaire by July 31, 2010:

Fax: Attn: Sean Anderson
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.
1-866-288-1278

Mail: R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.
294 Albert Street, Suite 500,
Ottawa, ON, K1P 6E6

Email: reception@malatest.net

APPENDIX B: Key Informant Interview Guides



**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

EDC Guide

The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee has commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to complete a Labour Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy for the District of Algoma. The goal of the study is to gather information so that the training and employment outlook for the District may be improved. The research includes interviews, surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders in the District.

CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY:

This interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will only be heard by the researchers and your anonymity will be protected.

TIMING:

The discussion should take approximately 60 minutes.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Adrienne Cardy, Research Analyst at R.A. Malatest & Associates at 1-800-598-0161 or a.cardy@malatest.com

KII Contact Information

Name:

(First) _____ (Last) _____

Organization/Institution: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____

E-mail: _____ @ _____

Interview Date: _____ Time: _____



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**ALGOMA WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

General

1. What is your title and role in the organization where you are employed?
2. How does your organization contribute to the economic success of the region in which it operates?
3. What is your overall impression of the current state of economic development in your region? (PROBE: What are your region's strength – what would attract new investment/employers? Is that different from the District of Algoma generally?)

Economic Development in Algoma: Past and Present

4. In your region specifically, what have historically been the prominent industries and employers?
5. How have these employers been affected by the economic downturn? (PROBE: Have they been able to retain their skilled workers?)
6. Is the existing labour force in your region sufficient to meet the needs of employers? (PROBE: Do employers compete for skilled workers?)
7. How have gaps in skilled labour been filled in the past?
8. What have been the main challenges to attracting investment to your region?
9. What have been the main challenges to attracting and retaining skilled workers to your region?



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**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

Future Development

10. Are you aware of any partnerships between government and industry that are currently working to develop new economic opportunities for the labour force in your region?
11. What sort of industries or employment opportunities do you foresee becoming more prominent in the next three to five years? [PROBE: Why do you think this? Have you seen any evidence to support your views?]
12. What kind of economic development initiatives have been planned in your region? [PROBE: How do you think this will affect the labour force?]
13. What kind of economic development initiatives are already in place that will shape the labour force in the years to come?

Training

14. What types of skilled workers are employers in your region looking for? (PROBE: Are there differences between existing industries' needs and those in the development plan)
15. Can employers find skilled workers? (PROBE: If not, how do employers deal with the gap)
16. What are the barriers to getting workers trained?
17. What sources of training are available? (PROBE: How effective have government programs been in getting the region's workforce trained?)
18. Are there any other HR issues that you would like to raise?



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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA

Wrap Up

19. Are there any key stakeholders who would be able to provide insight into the current or future labour market and training needs in your region? [PROBE: ask for contact information]
20. Would you mind if we contacted you again in the near future to ask you additional questions or invite you to a community focus group in your region?

Thank you for your time.



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**ALGOMA WORKFORCE
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**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

Education & Training Providers

The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee has commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to complete a Labour Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy for the District of Algoma. The goal of the proposed study is to gather information so that the employment outlook for the District can be improved. The research includes interviews, surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders in the District.

CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY:

This interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will only be heard by the researchers and your anonymity will be protected.

TIMING:

The discussion should take approximately 60 minutes.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Adrienne Cardy, Research Analyst at R.A. Malatest & Associates at 1-800-598-0161 or a.cardy@malatest.com

KII Contact Information

Name:

(First) _____ (Last) _____

Organization/Institution: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

E-mail: _____ @ _____

Interview Date: _____ Time: _____



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ONTARIO**



**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

General

1. Does your education / training institution maintain a formal relationship(s) with local employers within the District of Algoma? Please elaborate.
2. If so, does this relationship(s) involve the development of programs or curricula specific to the needs of industry employers (e.g., program advisory committee)? How often does your institution meet with local employers for this purpose?
3. Would you say that this relationship(s) has been effective in the design and delivering education and training outcomes that meet the needs of local employers? Please elaborate.
4. How is your institution's relationship(s) with local employers changing at this time?

Socioeconomic Challenges

5. Generally speaking, would you agree that most of the graduates / completers of your programs plan to live and work in the District of Algoma?
6. What are the challenges you see in terms of placing graduates into employment positions in the region?

Future Programming

7. Does your institution plan to create/strengthen partnerships with governments and/or local employers to address labour force needs and training gaps in the District of Algoma at this time? Please elaborate.
8. Does your institution have plans to expand facilities or add additional campuses at this time? Will these expansions be in the District of Algoma?
9. Does your institution plan to develop new program offerings that specifically target the changing human resource needs of local employers at this time? Please elaborate.
10. What education / training strategies might you suggest to help ensure that the human resource needs of local employers are met going forward (eg, industry led programming, professional development, other)?



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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA

11. To what extent are strategies required to address the following issues:
 - a. Apprenticeship
 - b. Skills training or re-training
 - c. Essential skills (numeracy/literacy)
 - d. Retirement Issues
12. What strategies might you recommend to help ensure an adequately skilled workforce throughout the District of Algoma?

Wrap Up

13. Would you mind if we contacted you again in the near future to ask you additional questions or invite you to a community focus group in your region?

Thank you for your time.



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**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

Government & Social Service Agencies

The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee has commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to complete a Labour Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy for the District of Algoma. The goal of the proposed study is to gather information so that the employment outlook for the District can be improved. The research includes interviews, surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders in the District.

CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY:

This interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will only be heard by the researchers and your anonymity will be protected.

TIMING:

The discussion should take approximately 60 minutes.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Rob Assels, Project Manager at R.A. Malatest & Associates at 1-800-598-0161 or r.assels@malatest.com

KII Contact Information

Name: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss.

(First) _____ (Last) _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

E-mail: _____ @ _____

Interview Date: _____ Time: _____



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**ALGOMA WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

General

1. What is your role and your organization's mandate?
2. What particular programs does your organization provide that contribute to the economic success and development of the Algoma region?
3. Does your organization work closely with the employer community in Algoma [Please explain]?
4. What other stakeholders are considered important partners in helping carry out your organization's mandate?

Algoma's Changing Economy

5. In your opinion, what is your general impression of the current state of the Algoma economy?
6. What are the key economic developments impacting the Algoma region at this time?
7. In your view, how are these developments impacting employers in the Algoma region [Probe by type of industry: primary; manufacturing; service; public]?
8. In your view, how are these developments impacting workers in the Algoma region [Probe: impact on employment; workforce transition; future education and skill requirements]?
9. If applicable, how are these developments impacting your organization's mandate?

Future Program Initiatives

10. If applicable, what strategies / program initiatives is your organization pursuing to help address the workforce challenges in the Algoma region [Please explain]?
11. Do these strategies involve working with Algoma employers and other stakeholders, including education and training institutions [Please explain]?



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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA

12. In your view, what other human resource development strategies will be needed to help address future workforce requirements in the Algoma region [Probe succession planning, recruitment of a suitably skilled workforce, employment of non-traditional workers]?

Wrap Up

13. Would you be interested in a follow-up phone call to further discuss your perspectives on this subject matter?

Thank you for your time.



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**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

Supervisors and Human Resource Managers

The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee has commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to complete a Labour Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy for the District of Algoma. The goal of the proposed study is to gather information so that the employment outlook for the District can be improved. The research includes interviews, surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders in the District.

CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY:

This interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will only be heard by the researchers and your anonymity will be protected.

TIMING:

The discussion should take approximately 60 minutes.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Adrienne Cardy, Research Analyst at R.A. Malatest & Associates at 1-800-598-0161 or a.cardy@malatest.com

KII Contact Information

Name: <i>(First)</i> _____ <i>(Last)</i> _____
Organization/Institution: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
E-mail: _____ @ _____
Interview Date: _____ Time: _____



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LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA

General

(5 minutes)

1. What is your title and role in the organization where you are employed?
2. What is the main activity of your organization?

Economic Challenges

3. From your perspective, what are the main challenges (local, global) facing your community in terms of sustaining / developing its economic base?
4. How has your company been impacted by recent economic events that began in 2008 (probe closures, layoffs, automation, changing work conditions, more part time, contract employment)?
5. How is your company responding to these changes?



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**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

Human Resources and Training

6. Please provide a brief overview of your company's demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education, skilled, other).
7. Would you agree that the knowledge and skill base of your workforce sufficiently meets the needs of your company? If no, please identify where skills gaps exist.
8. Does your company provide professional development and upgrading for its members?
9. In your experience, are these programs effective in helping workers remain current? If no, please elaborate (i.e., relevance, cost, access).
10. How have skills gaps (i.e., skills, knowledge, competence) been addressed by your company in the past?
11. In your experience, is it difficult attracting new qualified workers (ie, skilled, educated) to your company? Please elaborate (i.e., attraction and recruitment challenges).
12. More generally, would you agree that it is difficult for employers attracting new qualified workers to the District of Algoma? Please elaborate.
13. Are there any other HR issues that you would like to raise?

Future Development

14. To what extent are strategies required to address the following issues:
 - a. Apprenticeship
 - b. Skills training or re-training
 - c. Essential skills (numeracy/literacy)
 - d. Retirement Issues
15. Does your company have a strategy to help transition workers who may be impacted by the current economic downturn? Please elaborate. Does this strategy involve working with external stakeholders (eg, government, training institutions). Please elaborate.
16. What strategies might you broadly recommend to help ensure an adequately skilled workforce throughout the District of Algoma?



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Wrap Up

17. Would you mind if we contacted you again in the near future to ask you additional questions or invite you to a community focus group in your region?

Thank you for your time.



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**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

Union and Association Members

The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee has commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to complete a Labour Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy for the District of Algoma. The goal of the study is to gather information so that the training and employment outlook for the District may be improved. The research includes interviews, surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders in the District.

CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY:

This interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will only be heard by the researchers and your anonymity will be protected.

TIMING:

The discussion should take approximately 60 minutes.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Adrienne Cardy, Research Analyst at R.A. Malatest & Associates at 1-800-598-0161 or a.cardy@malatest.com

KII Contact Information

Name: <i>(First)</i> _____	<i>(Last)</i> _____
Organization/Institution: _____	
Address: _____	
Telephone: (_____)	Fax: (_____)
E-mail: _____ @ _____	
Interview Date: _____ Time: _____	



This project is supported by funding from:





**LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA**

General

1. Please describe your organization's mandate, its affiliations, as well as some history of your organization and its relationship with the employer(s) in the District.
2. How would you characterize your relationship with the employer(s) at this time? Is the relationship changing in any way? Please elaborate.

Economic Challenges

3. From your perspective, what are the main challenges (local, global) facing the District of Algoma in terms of sustaining / developing its economic base?
4. From your perspective, how are these challenges impacting employer's ability to sustain / develop its business or operations?
5. How has your organization (and its membership) been impacted by recent economic events that began in 2008 (probe closures, layoffs, automation, changing work conditions, more part time, contract employment)?
6. How is your organization (and its partners) responding to these changes?

Human Resources & Training

7. Please provide a brief overview of your membership's demographic characteristics (eg, age, gender, education, skilled, other).
8. Would you agree that the knowledge and skill base of your membership sufficiently meets the needs of your employer(s)? If no, please identify where skills gaps exist (ie, occupation).
9. Does your organization provide professional development and upgrading (eg, institutional or in-house) for its members?
10. In your experience, are these programs effective in helping workers remain current? If no, please elaborate (ie, relevance, cost, access).



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FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALGOMA

11. How have skills gaps (ie, skills, knowledge, competence) been addressed by your organization in the past?
12. In your experience, is it difficult attracting new qualified workers (ie, skilled, educated) to your industry (industries)? Please elaborate (ie, attraction and recruitment challenges).

Future Development

13. What other strategies might you recommend to help ensure an adequately skilled workforce throughout the District of Algoma?
14. To what extent are strategies required to address the following issues:
 - a. Apprenticeship
 - b. Skills training or re-training
 - c. Essential skills (numeracy/literacy)
 - d. Retirement Issues

Wrap Up

15. Would you mind if we contacted you again to ask you additional questions or invite you to a community focus group in your region?

Thank you for your time.



This project is supported by funding from:



APPENDIX C: Moderator's Guide (Focus Groups)



INTRODUCTION:

Welcome! My name is _____, I work at R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. I would like to thank you all for participating in today's focus group. We are conducting this focus group on behalf of our client, the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWiC). This project receives funding from Sault College and Employment Ontario.

I would like to take a little time to explain how we will proceed with the discussion:

- The focus group should take about **two hours**. We can take a short break about half way if it is felt to be needed.
- The discussion will be audio-taped to ensure the accuracy of the information reported. The recording equipment is [equipment location – tape-recorder].
- Your participation in this discussion is strictly voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect you in any way.
- Anything you say will remain confidential – that is, your name will not be associated with anything you say.
- I would like to point out that there are no right or wrong answers and that we are not trying to reach a group consensus or agreement. In fact, it is especially important to hear your views if they are different from most other people in the group.
- It is important that everyone have a chance to talk and express their opinion about the topics being discussed. Everyone should feel free to make comments they feel are relevant to the discussion at hand. I would just ask that people talk one at a time and try not to interrupt another person. This will make it easier to follow the discussion and will make listening to the playback of the audio-tape much easier as well.

My main role today is to keep the discussion on track and ensure that everyone has a fair chance to contribute to the discussion. Since I do not work in the District of Algoma, I may not be able to answer all of the specific questions that you may ask. However, I have been involved as one of the primary researchers on this project and will do the best I can.

Any questions before we begin?

This study is being conducted on behalf of the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWiC). The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWiC) is a community-based planning committee with members from across the region that are knowledgeable about the labour force development issues in the District of Algoma. AWiC's objective is to engage communities in a local labour market research and planning process that will lead to cooperative efforts to find local solutions to local labour market issues.

Information collected in our discussion will help AWiC understand the current workforce and training needs of the District of Algoma and aide in the development of a regional Labour Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy.





Before we start, I would like to go around the table and have everyone introduce themselves and provide a little bit of background about what they do in the District of Algoma.

- First Name only
- Company Name
- Size of company (number of employees)
- Type of Industry
- Length of time in Algoma

We're going to begin by discussing some slides that detail the labour market situation as it exists in the District of Algoma. We will come back to discussing some of the facts presented in the slides throughout the group, these facts are just to stimulate conversation and get you thinking about whether you experience any of these issues.

CURRENT TRAINING NEEDS:

Reflecting on your human resource needs over last year, I would like you to think about any skill shortages specific to your organization.

1. Are there any particular types of skills that are especially in need? Please provide specific examples. Are these specific to your organization, industry, city or region as a whole,?
2. Can you explain the reasons why these skills are lacking in the area? Possible reasons (begin reading if necessary to get discussion started)"
 - Lack of education
 - Lack of experience
 - Lack of training
 - Lack of available personnel in the region, elsewhere?
 - Workplace change – innovation and productivity
 - Demographic change – aging, depopulation)
 - New technology – lack of training opportunities
 - Other productivity improvements
 - Weak or lacking linkages between education and training institutions and industry
 - Marketing – locally and outside of the region.
3. What sort of training would be needed to address these gaps? How could this training be executed in your company or region? (begin reading if necessary to get discussion started, prompt with different options)
 - On-the-job training
 - Formal training (classroom setting)
 - Practical training (trades classes)
 - E-learning
 - Mentoring
 - Apprenticeships
 - Strengthen relationships between industry and training – coordinated plan
 - Underrepresented groups to fill gaps
 - In-migration
4. How has your organization traditionally recruited both skilled and unskilled labour? How does it differ? What successes and shortcomings have you experienced with this method?



CHALLENGES

I would like everybody to think about the current changes that are occurring in the District of Algoma as well as your region specifically (e.g. Superior East, East Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie) and potential future changes that are occurring.'

5. What is the main challenge your organization is experiencing? Is this challenge shared by other, similar organizations? How is it the same or different?
6. How does your organization attract / recruit skilled workers? Please explain this process. What are the common barriers or challenges associated with this method?
7. Do you expect the number of skilled employees your organization will require in the next 5 years will stay the same, increase or decrease? Please explain. Beyond your organization, from your perspective, do you think the same is true for the region in which you operate? If different, why?
8. What is the main challenge your organization experiences in terms of retaining skilled workers? Have you had to make any concessions to retain these workers? Please explain.
9. What, if any, types of actions has your organization taken over the past year to address or ease some of the difficulties associated with retaining qualified candidates?
Different methods (begin reading if necessary to get discussion started):
 - Increased pay levels, wages and/or overtime
 - Increased recruitment efforts locally
 - Increased training opportunities
 - Increased benefits
 - Increased worker conditions and flexibility
 - Increased recruitment outside the region
 - Coordinate with other employers to refer/provide employees when operating seasons are complementary
 - Looked for recruitment overseas
 - Sent work to outside contractors
 - Provided recruitment and/or retention bonuses
10. There is a general departure of people from the District of Algoma. In your opinion, what could employers and organizations do to encourage skilled workers to remain in the District of Algoma? Are there any existing efforts in place?



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

We've discussed the challenges you've been facing such as (refer to responses from Q5). Additionally, we discussed challenges that are currently being faced in the District of Algoma, as well as potential future challenges (refer to PPT slides). In response to these needs and challenges, different training methods have been mentioned to address these needs and gaps such as (refer to responses from Q3). Given this combination of needs, challenges, and training methods, we would like to investigate deeper how you think training could best be provided to workers, and new workers attracted and retained in the District of Algoma.

11. Who should provide the training? Please explain.
 - Publically funded institutions (e.g., Colleges, Universities)
 - Employers
 - Industry Associations
 - Private Companies
 - Government
12. Are there any innovative training practices currently being offered in the area? By whom? How are they innovative?
13. Is there sufficient communication between employers and training providers? (Feedback mechanism/forum)
14. The interviews we've conducted to date suggest that employers don't just recruit a skilled worker, they recruit their family. How can employers, government and training providers collaborate to attract families? What supports would this collaboration require?
15. How should the District of Algoma and the employment opportunities that exist within the district be promoted? [Probe: Different methods for within Ontario, Canada, and internationally]

FINAL THOUGHTS

16. Thinking back over everything we've discussed today, what kind of information or recommendation would you like to see come from this study? What would be most helpful to you and your organization?

APPENDIX D: Site Visit Checklist

AWIC	Site Visit Checklist	July, 2010
<p>This site visit is intended to assist the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee in developing its human resource development strategy. Your assistance in helping the research team from R.A. Malatest & Associates understand your training programs is essential in the development of that strategy. The researchers would like to visit your site for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To interview those who are managing the training program. 2. To collect administrative and marketing materials about the program. 3. To observe the facility in which the training is offered and the types of technology used to deliver the training. <p>1. <u>Interview topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When were your programs launched? • How was the need identified? • Who (what type of employer) was consulted in the development of the curriculum? • Who are your programs designed to serve? • How are the programs promoted/marketed? • What has been the uptake/enrolment? • How has enrolment been affected by the economic downturn? • How are the programs delivered? (in-class / online / blended, etc.) • How accessible are the programs (frequency, time of day, seasonality) • How is success measured? (program completion, student interviews, employer feedback, etc.) • Discussion of specific success stories. • Discussion of specific partnerships. • What challenges did you experience? • Are there best practices that other training providers should be aware of? • Planned expansions? <p>2. <u>Materials</u></p> <p>The following materials would help the researchers. They do not have to be available during the site visit; they can be provided by email if available and not subject to privacy concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment data • Marketing materials • Course material (descriptions) • Sample communications with partners (meeting minutes) <p>3. <u>Observations</u></p> <p>It would also be helpful to visit to the facility where the training is delivered. If training is delivered online/e-learning, it would be helpful to have a list of website addresses (and guest username/password). The researchers would like to determine the capacity of the facility to grow and accommodate different learners. As well they would like to witness any innovations in course delivery.</p> <p>On behalf of the research team, thank you in advance for facilitating our understanding of your program. If you have any questions about the site visit, please contact Adrienne Cardy at a.cardy@malatest.com. Adrienne can also be reached toll free at 800-598-0161.</p>		

APPENDIX E: Training Availability

Training	East Algoma				Central			Superior East				
	Elliot Lake	Blind River	Town of Bruce Mines, Township of Johnson & Township of Plummer Additional	Thessalon	Sault Ste. Marie	Goulais River	Garden River	Prince Township	Wawa	White River	Hornepayne	Dubreuilville
Aboriginal Distance Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aboriginal High School					✓							
Adult Learning/ Continuing Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Catholic High School		✓			✓							
College					✓							
College Aboriginal Programs					✓							
College Apprenticeship Programs					✓							
College Co-op Program					✓							
College Distance Education					✓							
Contact North	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Employment Training Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Literacy Programs/Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓
Private Business College					✓							
Private High School	✓				✓				✓			✓
Private Technical College					✓		✓					
Private Trades College					✓							
Public High School	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	
University					✓							
University Aboriginal Programs					✓							

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